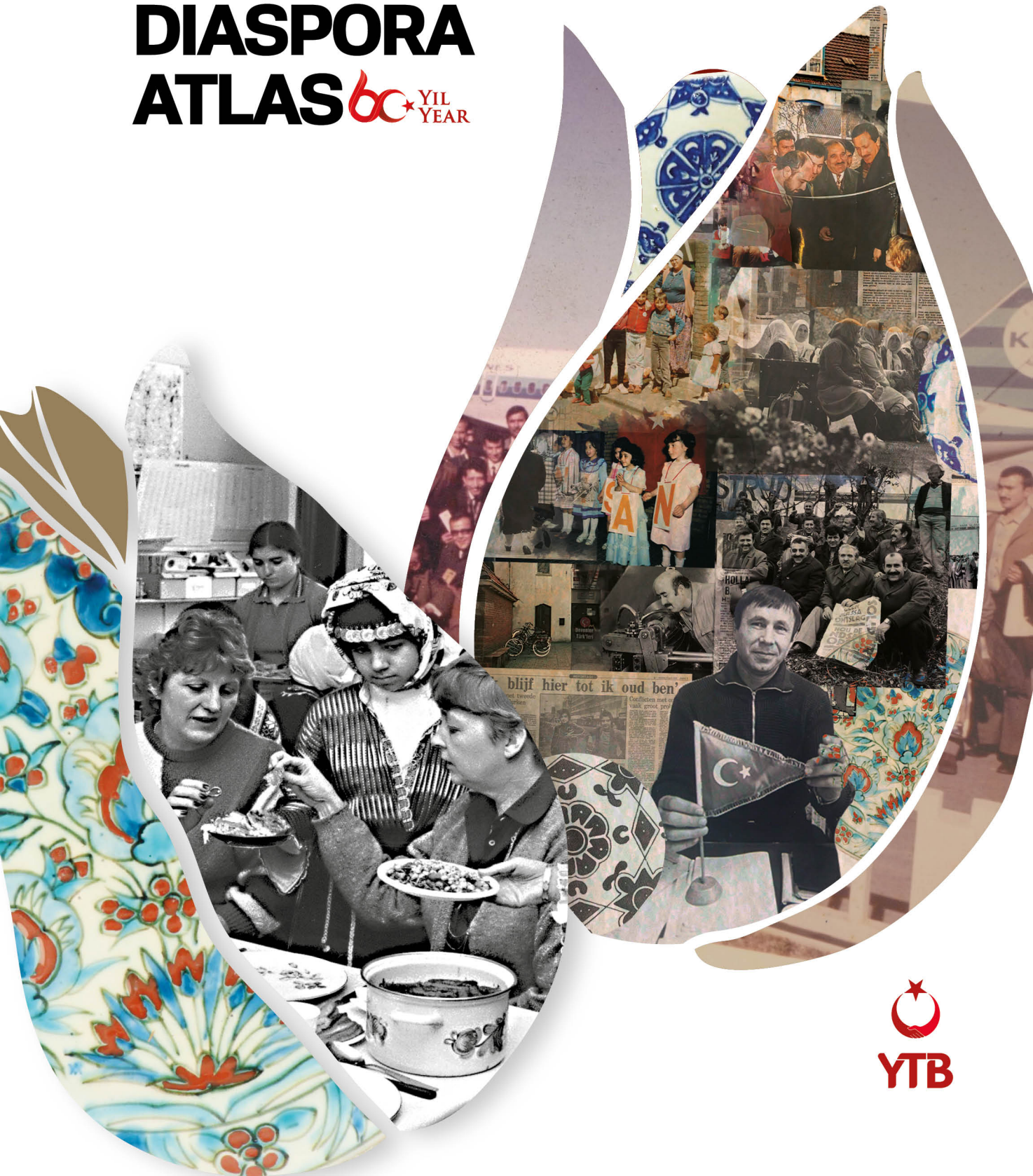
DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA ATLAS

60 YIL YEAR



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DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA ATLAS

60 YIL YEAR

Hasan Güney, department head, conducting a work inspection at VERTO Staalkabel BV, Leiderdorp, 1983.
Source: Turks Archief, turkarchief.nl

FOREWORD

The second half of the 20th century witnessed a period of rapid industrialization and economic growth in Europe. The proliferation of factories, the expansion of cities, and the rapid increase in production capacity created a massive need for labor. International labor agreements, signed to meet this need, reshaped the continent's economic, social, and cultural structure, marking the beginning of a new era.

Among the most significant contributions to Europe's developmental trajectory was the labor migration from Türkiye. Beginning in the 1960s, Türkiye entered into bilateral labor agreements with numerous European nations, with the Federal Republic of Germany serving as the primary partner. The landmark agreement with Germany in 1961 established a precedent that would be followed by subsequent accords with Austria, the Netherlands, and Belgium in 1964, France in 1965, and extending beyond Europe to Australia in 1968.

In the wake of these agreements, Turkish citizens embarked on their journeys with profound determination and abiding longing for their homeland. Through their labor and dedication, they not only supplied the essential workforce that fueled Europe's economic expansion but also established the foundations of what has become a vibrant Turkish community now exceeding seven million individuals. This community has become an integral part of Europe's social and cultural landscape. Over more than half a century, the Turkish diaspora in Europe has built a remarkable legacy characterized by industriousness, solidarity, and social cohesion.

This migration is far more than an economic phenomenon; it is a story of determination, resilience, and sacrifice. The first generation of migrants who came to the Netherlands worked tirelessly—building factories, roads, and cities—while preserving their cultural identity. In doing so, they left behind a lasting legacy. Today, the Dutch Turkish community stands as a testament to this legacy, making significant contributions in fields ranging from education and politics to the economy and culture. Their achievements are a source of pride for Türkiye and an invaluable asset to the Netherlands. After more than six decades, the Turkish community in the Netherlands continues to take pride in this remarkable journey. This volume stands as a tribute to the story of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands and their steadfast efforts to preserve their identity while building a meaningful presence.

The Dutch Turkish Diaspora Atlas traces the transformation from temporary labor migration to established diaspora, analyzing developments across social, economic, cultural, and political dimensions. Through this comprehensive approach, the work seeks to illuminate pathways forward for the Dutch Turkish community. The contributions of distinguished scholars and the insights gathered through interviews provide a nuanced portrait of evolving circumstances spanning from the first generation to the present day.

I extend my sincere commendation to all who have contributed to this significant scholarly endeavor. It is my conviction that this work will serve as inspiring and valuable resource for its readers.

Abdulhadi TURUS

President of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities

PREFACE

Following World War II, Western European countries experienced significant economic growth, leading to labor shortages due to postwar population decline. To address the issue, these nations welcomed workers from various countries, particularly from Türkiye. As a result of the labor agreement signed between the Republic of Türkiye and the Netherlands in 1964, Turkish citizens from different regions of Anatolia embarked on a journey to the Netherlands that would shape the Dutch Turkish diaspora. Today, the Turkish population in the Netherlands has reached nearly half a million, making the country the third-largest host of Turkish citizens in Europe after Germany and France. Over the past sixty years, this migration process has evolved from the arrival of the first generation of guest workers to the establishment of a fully developed diaspora. The transformation has become a rich and significant subject of academic and social research. The Dutch Turkish Diaspora Atlas born as part of these efforts aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of the social, economic, cultural, and political developments that have defined the Turkish community's transition from guest workers to an established diaspora over the past six decades. The Atlas is structured around 14 main themes, each reflecting different aspects of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands. These themes are further divided into subtopics, with dedicated articles and interviews exploring each aspect. The subtopics have been carefully selected to align with the expertise of the contributing authors, while interviewees have been meticulously chosen from individuals regarded as opinion leaders within the Dutch Turkish community or recognized for their significant achievements. The Atlas hence seeks to illustrate the historical evolution and the progress of the Dutch Turkish diaspora.

It is important to note that the views expressed in the articles featured in the Dutch Turkish Diaspora Atlas are those of the respective authors and do not necessarily reflect the perspectives of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities or the editorial team. The themes covered in the study encompass both first-generation immigrants and the newer generations of Dutch-born Turks. While the main themes provide a broad framework, the limitations of the subtopics and the diversity of the Dutch Turkish diaspora make it impossible to address every facet of its presence comprehensively. However, future editions of the Atlas may serve to bridge these gaps.

We extend our gratitude to the contributing authors, the interviewees, and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities for their invaluable contributions to the development of this work. It is our sincere hope that this study will be of benefit to the Dutch Turkish community and all those interested in the subject, and that it will reach an engaged and insightful readership.

Bahar Cebe &
Meryem Özdemir

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Turkish workers who came to the Netherlands with the airline company KLM in 1969
Source: Turks Archief, turkarchief.nl

KLM
PH-DNS
DC-9

Timeline of Turkish Immigration and Integration in the Netherlands

1964

The Labor Agreement was signed between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

1965

• A dormitory, later named Atatürk Dormitory, was built for Turkish guest workers employed in housing and shipbuilding industries in Amsterdam.

• Turkish Airlines commenced its first weekly flights to the Netherlands.

1966

The Social Security Agreement was signed between Türkiye and the Netherlands to protect the rights of Turkish workers.

1967

The first Turkish restaurant, Topkapı Restaurant, opened in Amsterdam.

1968

The Consulate General of the Republic of Türkiye was inaugurated in Rotterdam.

1970

The Turkish Presidency of Religious Affairs dispatched the first religious official to the Netherlands.

1972

• The Turkish Ministry of Labor established the General Directorate of Abroad Workers' Affairs.

• The Dutch Islamic Center Foundation, the first Turkish nonprofit organization for religious social affairs in the Netherlands, was founded.

1974

• Turkish children began receiving education in their native language.

• The Dutch government officially ceased recruiting foreign workers.

• Yunus Emre Mosque, the first Turkish mosque in the Netherlands was inaugurated in the Dutch city of Almelo.

1975

A general amnesty was granted to approximately 15,000 undocumented workers in the Netherlands.

1976

The General Directorate of Workers' Remittances within Türkiye's Central Bank was created.

1977

The Consulate General of the Republic of Türkiye was established in Deventer.

1979

The Dutch government formally acknowledged the permanence of immigrants.

1980

Musa Öztürk became the first person of Turkish origin elected to Rotterdam's municipal council.

1983

The Dutch government published the "Minorities Memorandum," which outlined its immigration policy.

1985

• The Advisory Board for Turks in the Netherlands (IOT) was founded as the official interlocutor with the Dutch government.

• Foreign nationals who possess a valid residence permit and have legally resided in the country for at least five years are granted by law the right to vote and stand for election in municipal council elections.

1986

• After immigrants were granted the right to vote and stand for election in Dutch local elections, 19 Turkish-origin candidates entered municipal councils in the 1986 elections.

• Ali İhsan Ünal became the first deputy mayor of Turkish descent.

• The Supreme Court ruled that Islamic institutions and clergy have equal status to their Christian counterparts.

• The Turkish Islamic Cultural Federation was recognized, and public broadcasting rights were extended to Muslims.

1987

The Turkish Government granted Turkish citizens abroad voting rights at the customs for Turkish elections.

1988

• The first state-supported Islamic school, Al-Ghazali Islamic Primary School, was established in Rotterdam.

• The Public Demonstrations Act equated the calls to prayer in mosques with the tolling of church bells.

1989

The first European Muslim Conference was held in Rotterdam between April 15 and 16.

1990

TRT-INT began broadcasting Turkish television programs to European countries.

1994

Seyfi Özgüzel became the first Turkish-origin individual to complete a doctorate in the Netherlands.

1997

The Islamic University of Rotterdam (IUR) was founded.

1998

• Fadime Örgü and Nebahat Albayrak became the first Turkish-origin members of the Dutch House of Representatives.

• SPIOR (Stichting Platform for Islamic Organizations in Rijnmond) was founded as an umbrella organization for more than 80 Islamic associations in the Rijnmond region.

2001

The Contact Group for Muslims and Government (CMO) was established, representing 400 mosque associations to defend Muslim's rights.

2002

• Famile Arslan became the first headscarf-wearing lawyer in the Netherlands.

• Düzgün Yıldırım assumed office as the first Turkish-origin senator.

2004

• Formal education in immigrant children's mother tongues was abolished.

• CMO was officially recognized by the Dutch government.

• Songül Akkaya and Köksal Gör became the first individuals of Turkish origin to serve in the Provincial Assembly.

2007

Nebahat Albayrak became the first Turkish-origin deputy minister in the Dutch cabinet.

2008

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed to strengthen Turkish-Dutch relations and establish the Türkiye-Dutch Conference.

2010

The Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) was established.

2012

Citizens living abroad were granted the right to vote at diplomatic missions in their countries of residence in the presidential and parliamentary elections in Türkiye, as well as in constitutional referendums.

2014

Voters abroad participated in Turkish presidential elections for the first time.

2015

The DENK political party, advocating for immigrant rights, was founded by Turkish-origin politicians.

2019

• The Consulate General of Türkiye was opened in Amsterdam.

• The Turkish Grand National Assembly established a Sub-Commission on Turks Abroad and Related Communities.

2021

Kauthar Bouchallikht, of Moroccan origin, became the first headscarf-wearing member of the Dutch Parliament.

2022

• Huri Şahin became the first Turkish-origin mayor, serving in Rijswijk.

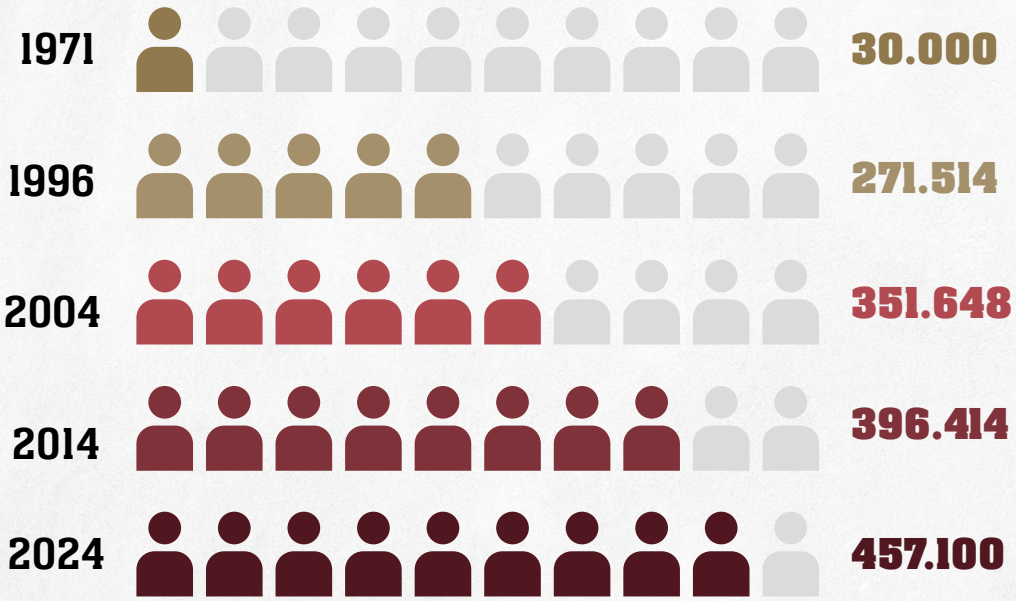
• TRT Türk was restructured to cater to Turkish citizens living abroad, marking the beginning of its new broadcasting period.

2024

The year marked the 60th anniversary of the Labor Agreement signed between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Turkish-Origin Population

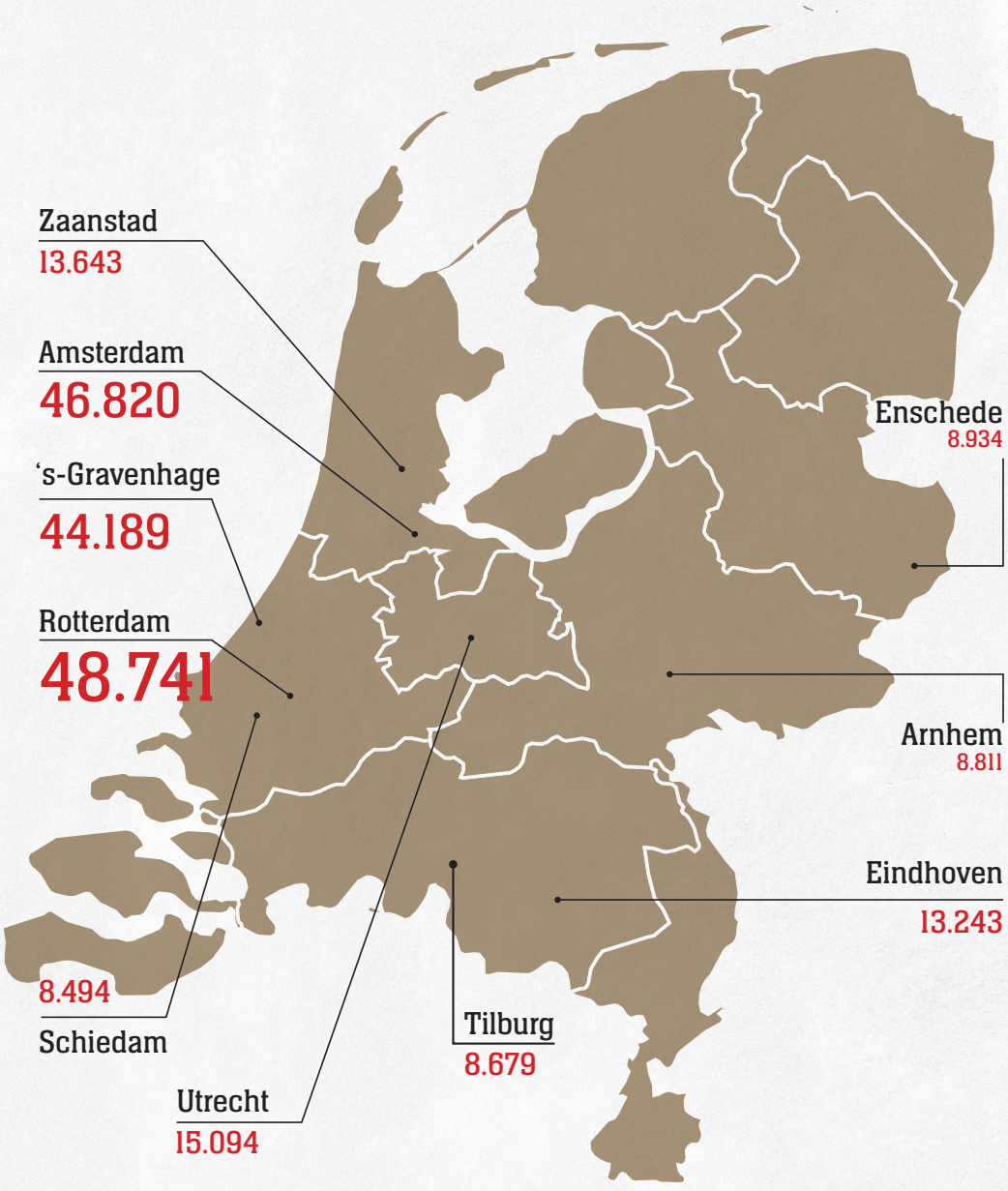
in the Netherlands by Year



Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS)

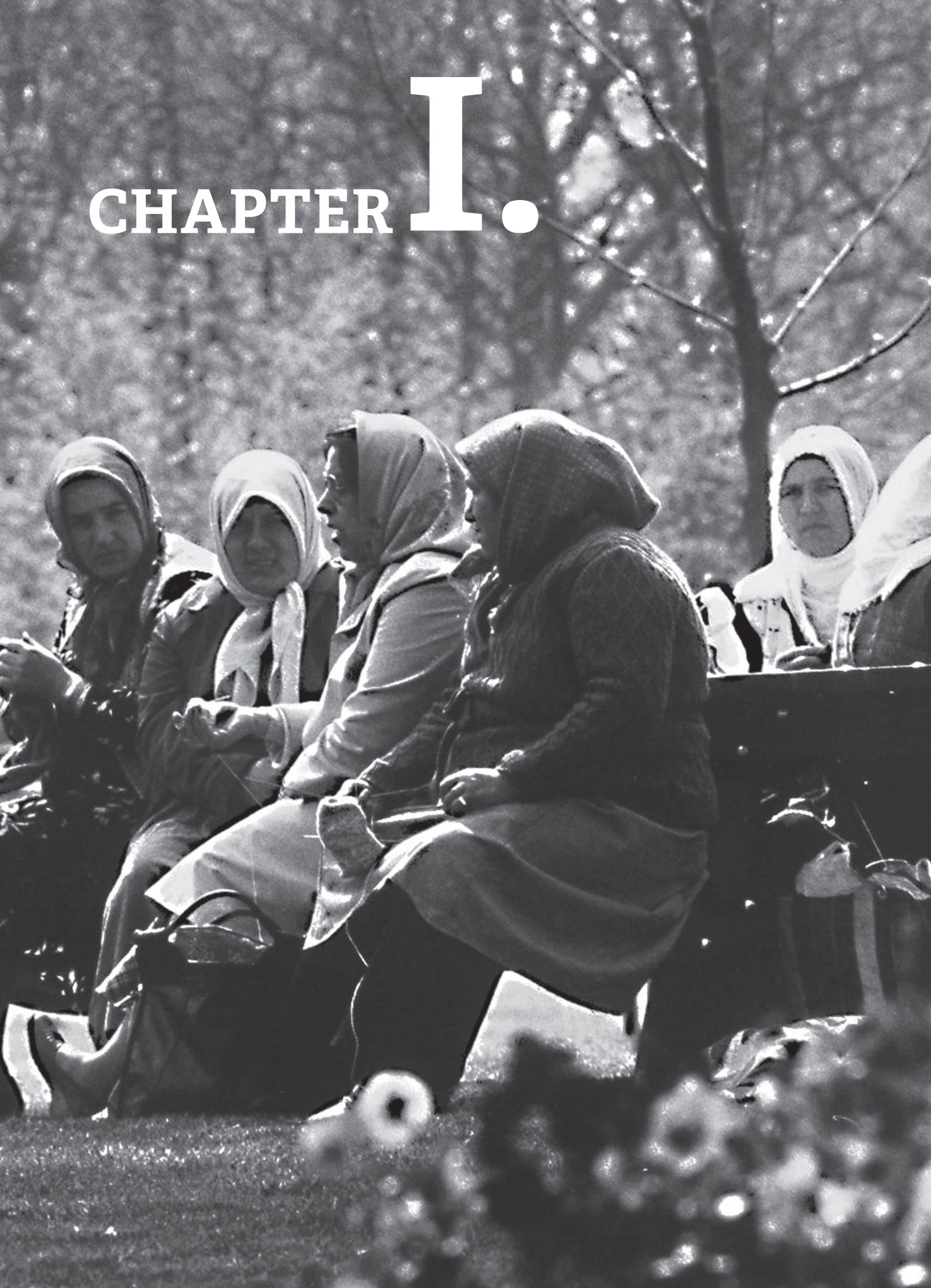
Top 10 Municipalities with the Largest Turkish Population in 2024,

the 60th Anniversary of Migration



Source: Statistics Netherlands (CBS)

CHAPTER I.



FROM GUEST LABOR TO DIASPORA

FROM TÜRKİYE TO THE NETHERLANDS, FROM GUEST LABOR TO DIASPORA: THE DUTCH TURKISH COMMUNITY

Bahar Cebe & Meryem Özdemir

INTERVIEW WITH THE FIRST TURKISH-ORIGIN MAYOR OF THE NETHERLANDS: HURİ ŞAHİN'S INSPIRING JOURNEY

Huri Şahin

DIPLOMATIC BRIDGE FROM ANKARA TO THE NETHERLANDS: AN INTERVIEW WITH JOEP WIJNANDS, AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS TO ANKARA

Ambassador Selçuk Ünal

DIPLOMATIC BRIDGE FROM ANKARA TO THE NETHERLANDS: AN INTERVIEW WITH JOEP WIJNANDS, AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS TO ANKARA

Ambassador Joep Wijnands

FROM TÜRKİYE TO THE NETHERLANDS, FROM GUEST LABOR TO DIASPORA: THE DUTCH TURKISH COMMUNITY

BAHAR CEBE[1] & MERYEM ÖZDEMİR[2]

Introduction

The foundation of relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands dates back to 1569 when the Ottoman Empire extended its support to the Netherlands during its struggle for independence, following a letter sent by Prince Willem van Oranje. The relationship was formalized in 1612 with the appointment of Cornelis Haga as the first Dutch ambassador to Istanbul. This paved the way for the development of commercial and cultural relations. On August 16, 1924, following the establishment of the Republic of Türkiye, a Treaty of Friendship was signed between two countries. A significant milestone in the bilateral relationship occurred on August 19, 1964, when the two nations signed a labor agreement to address the Netherlands' demand for a workforce. This agreement laid the foundations for the establishment of the Dutch Turkish community, which has since grown to encompass nearly half a million individuals. During the 1960s, several agreements were concluded that elevated the trajectory of bilateral relations, chiefly the Agreement Creating An Association Between The Republic of Türkiye and the European Economic Community (the "Ankara Agreement") which played a pivotal role in strengthening these ties. In this later phase of the four-century-long official relationship, the Dutch Turkish community emerged as an increasingly influential element in shaping the policies of both nations, functioning as a natural bridge.

Historical Relations Between Türkiye and the Netherlands

The arrival of Cornelis Haga as the first Dutch ambassador to Istanbul in 1612 is widely regarded as the official beginning of relations between the Netherlands and the Ottoman Empire (Lhotská, 2014). However, the historical ties between the two nations predate this formal invitation. During the

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Eighty Years' War, also known as the Dutch War of Independence which started in 1568, the Netherlands secured support from the Ottomans in its search for alliances to bolster its fight for religious freedom against major European armies. In 1569, Prince Willem van Oranje sent a letter to the Ottoman ruler Selim II, requesting support against Spain, which imposed religious oppression. The Ottoman Empire, known for its policy of religious tolerance towards its subjects across its territories, responded favorably to this request (t Hart, 2022). The war waged by the Ottoman Empire against the Spanish Empire for Mediterranean dominance in the 16th century benefited the Netherlands by dividing Spanish forces. This Ottoman assistance influenced Dutch perceptions of the Ottoman Empire. Due to the support provided by the Ottoman Empire, Dutch soldiers adopted certain cultural symbols inspired by the Ottomans, such as growing moustaches and emulating the attire of the Janissaries. A notable slogan from this period, "liever Turks dan Paaps" ("rather Turkish than Popish"), encapsulated the Dutch preference for Ottoman religious tolerance over Spanish oppression. This sentiment was represented through crescent-shaped medallions produced in 1574, which signified their alignment with the Turks (Dohmen, 2000). These medallions have been on display at the Den Briel Museum in Rotterdam for almost five centuries (Historisch Museum Den Briel, 2023). It is also noteworthy that a town in Zeeland was named "Türkiyee." It is assumed that the town, believed to have adopted the name in 1604, might have been

"The official relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands extend for over four centuries. However, it is the presence of the Dutch Turkish community, particularly over the last six decades, which has significantly strengthened the connection between the two nations through labor agreements and expanded cooperation."

the stronghold of the Dutch mercenary naval forces (Watergeuzen), known as the 'Sea Beggars,' who used the slogan "rather Turkish than Popish" and fought against Spain. Hence the name "Türkiyee" may have been given to the town (Dohmen, 2000).

An important development that fostered closer interaction between the Ottoman Empire and the Netherlands was the introduction of tulips to the Netherlands. Between 1554 and 1562, Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, a special envoy of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, took an interest in tulips, which were then unavailable in his country. Tulip bulbs made their way to the Netherlands, becoming a vital cultural and economic element and a symbol of exchange between the two nations (Dolunay et al., 2019). During this period, Dutch merchants traded in Ottoman territories under the flags of France and England. In 1610, Halil Pasha requested the Netherlands to send an ambassador to deepen relations. In 1612, with the appointment of Cornelis Haga as the Dutch ambassador to Istanbul, Sultan Ahmet I issued an ahidname, a decree granting privileges to foreign non-Muslim communities in Islamic states, thus formalizing bilateral relations (Vanneste, 2021). With Cornelis Haga, born in

Schiedam in 1578 and a law graduate of Leiden University, named ambassador to Istanbul, the Ottoman Empire became the first state to recognize the Netherlands as an independent state. Thereafter Dutch merchants traded across Ottoman territories, including in the Middle East, North Africa, and Southeastern Europe. The ahidname granted religious freedom to Dutch merchants and provided them with significant benefits, such as access to Ottoman ports for naval repairs, provisions and ammunition as well as emergency supplies in times of food scarcity. Ottomans also gave privileges to Dutch merchants. For instance, Protestant Dutch merchants enjoyed a reduced tax rate of 3%, in contrast to the higher rates imposed on Catholic merchants ('t Hart, 2022).

Until the reign of Selim III, the Ottoman Empire had largely refrained from maintaining resident embassies abroad, a practice that changed with the appointment of Yahya Karaca Pasha as the first permanent Ottoman representative in The Hague in 1859 (Canatan, 2024). Trade remained the central focus of Ottoman-Dutch relations during this period. The establishment of the Republic of Türkiye brought a new phase in the institutionalization of Turkish-Dutch relations. The Netherlands was among the first European nations to officially recognize the Republic of Türkiye (Lhotská, 2014). The first agreement established between two countries following the foundation of the Turkish Republic was the "Treaty of Friendship between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands," commonly referred to as the "Treaty of Friendship", signed on August 16, 1924 (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, n.d.). The agreement was a milestone in reaffirming the continuity of diplomatic relations and cooperation in various fields between the two countries. Over time, trade relations between the two nations strengthened, positioning the Netherlands as Türkiye's largest direct investor (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, 2023).

The Treaty of Friendship remained the cornerstone of Turkish-Dutch political relations, defining the framework of political relations between the two parties, until the establishment of the European Economic Community (EEC). The 1960s ushered in a new era, with the signing of the Agreement Creating an Association between Türkiye and the EEC. Subsequent implementation documents, such as the 1970 Additional Protocol and the 1996 Association Council Decision No. 1/95, acted as a key driving force in the relations between the two nations (Mehter-Aykın & Kahraman, 2018). Since 2005, relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands have been shaped by the Negotiating Framework established between the European Union (EU) and Türkiye. On 26th March 2008, the two countries signed a Memorandum of Understanding to Strengthen the Relations between Türkiye - Netherlands and for the Establishment of Türkiye - Netherlands Conference. Türkiye-the Netherlands Wittenburg Conferences are held alternately in both countries. Moreover, the NATO alliance between Türkiye and the Netherlands adds another critical dimension to their relationship.

Türkiye - the Netherlands Labor Force Agreement

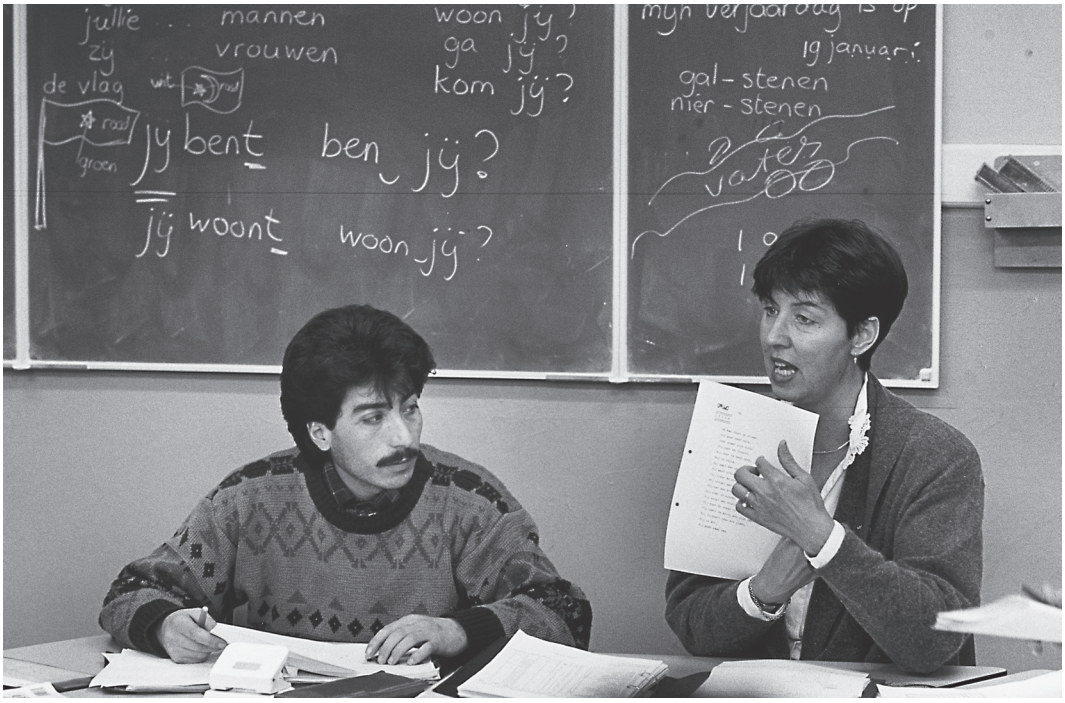
Relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands entered a new phase with labor migration in the 1960s. Prior to World War II, the Netherlands experienced significant emigration due to population growth and high unemployment rates (Van Dalen & Henkens, 2007). However, with the post-war economic recovery and reconstruction by the mid-1950s, labor shortages became apparent in the country. Beginning in the early 1960s,

"The labor migration agreement between Türkiye and the Netherlands was initially predicated on the assumption that Turkish workers would return to their home country after a temporary period. This assumption influenced state policies aimed at preserving the cultural identity of migrants, such as providing mother tongue education to help children reintegrate into the Turkish education system upon their families' eventual return."

the Netherlands sought to address these shortages by recruiting "guest workers" from countries such as Italy, Spain, and Yugoslavia, and later from Türkiye, Morocco, Suriname, and the Antilles (Bruquetas-Callejo, 2007). The labor agreement signed on August 19, 1964, between Türkiye and the Netherlands officially initiated labor migration between the two nations. Like many other European destinations, this migration was initially perceived as temporary since Turkish workers largely envisioned returning to Türkiye to build better futures for their families they had left behind, making no plans for permanent migration. These migrants primarily worked in sectors such as textile, construction, and shipping, concentrated in cities such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Utrecht, and Twente-Midden-Brabant (Adıgüzel, 2009). The 1973 Oil Crisis marked a turning point, as the demand for foreign labor declined, leading to restrictions on worker recruitment. While most guest workers arrived under a rotational system, this system was not as rigorously applied to Turkish migrants. Consequently, migration continued through family reunification after the crisis (De Vries & Wolbers, 2004). A marked increase in female migrants from Türkiye in the late 1960s underscores this trend, reflecting the growing significance of family reunification (Engbersen et al., 2020). During the 1980s, family reunification accelerated, particularly among Turkish and Moroccan labor migrants. Between 1995 and 2002, a significant proportion (approximately one-third) of those migrating to the Netherlands for family reunification originated from Türkiye and Morocco. Furthermore, even among second-generation migrants born and raised in the Netherlands, the preference for spouses from their country of origin remained prevalent (Nicolaas et al., 2004).

The Transition of the Turkish People in the Netherlands from Guest Workers to a Diaspora

The labor migration agreement between Türkiye and the Netherlands was initially predicated on the assumption that Turkish workers would return to their home country after a temporary period. This assumption influenced state policies aimed at preserving the cultural identity of migrants, such as providing mother tongue education to help children reintegrate into the Turkish education system upon their families' eventual return. However, the continuation of migration through family reunification after the 1973 Oil Crisis signaled a shift in intentions, as many Turkish workers began to settle permanently in the Netherlands. This period also coincided with the independence of Suriname in 1975, which triggered



An image from a Dutch language course organized for Turks in Dordrecht in 1999

the migration of approximately 130,000 individuals of Surinamese origin to the Netherlands, contributing to the formation of diverse ethnic minority groups within the country (Entzinger, 2021).

By the 1980s, with the assumption that first-generation labor migrants and their families were becoming permanent residents of the Netherlands, the Dutch state began implementing policies to promote the inclusion of these groups into Dutch society (Tesser et al., 1999). This shift was formalized with the publication of the 1979 "Ethnic Minorities" report by the Scientific Advisory Board for Government Policies (WRR). The report, based on research by Rinus Penninx - widely regarded as the founder of integration policies in the Netherlands - laid the groundwork for the inclusion of ethnic minorities (Penninx, 1979). The report, the first in a series published periodically to this day, addressed key issues such as the conceptual framework of ethnic minorities, their levels of social participation shaped by their socioeconomic disadvantages, identity preservation, cultural belonging, and the attitudes of the host society toward these groups.

With the emergence of cultural and religious needs essential to preserving the identity and sense of belonging of immigrant communities (De Vries & Wolbers, 2004), the Dutch government recognized the importance of granting minority groups a voice in policy making. This approach sought to address the needs of ethnic minorities while contributing to the formulation of a holistic immigration policy. However,

Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Nederlandse taalles voor mensen van Turkse afkomst, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_331114, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/1EB1C151F6A5C-660F49A4F86769C631E/showbrowse*

the government determined that the organizational and advocacy capacities of these minority groups were underdeveloped, and that immigrant rights and interests were predominantly represented by Dutch individuals rather than by the minority communities themselves (Entzinger, 2021). To bridge this gap, the National Advisory and Consultation Structure of Minorities Policy (LAO) was established in 1985, aiming to involve ethnic minorities in the policy making process. To serve this purpose, the Turkish Advisory Board (IOT) was created, becoming one of the seven groups representing the Turkish community to the Dutch government (Kasem et al., 2016). By offering membership to numerous Turkish civil society organizations, the IOT fostered unity and collaboration within the Dutch Turkish community. From the state's perspective, ethnic minority organizations were generally viewed as facilitators of integration, which led to continued government support (Van Heelsum & Tillie, 1999). The encouragement provided by the Dutch government during the initial institutionalization of the Dutch Turkish community played a critical role in supporting this process.

This support coincided with the Turkish diaspora's efforts to protect its identity, advocate for civil and political rights, and strengthen solidarity. These priorities spurred the creation of workers' associations, hometown organizations, and other civil society entities. Such organizations not only sought to leverage material and social opportunities in the host country (Ökten-Sipahioğlu, 2020) but also aimed to preserve and pass on cultural, religious, and national values to future generations through social networks. The formation of associations and civil society organizations has played a pivotal role in structuring social networks within the Dutch Turkish community. For instance, the Committee for the Independent Residence Rights of Migrant Women (Komitee Zelfstandig Verblijfsrecht voor migrantenvrouwen), established in 1987, focused on improving the quality of life for migrant women. It campaigned for rights such as access to education, language courses, and the elimination of prejudices (BMP, 2023). Similarly, in the realm of education, the Dutch Constitution's Article 23, which guarantees the right to establish schools, provided a unique opportunity for institutionalization. Over the past six decades, Turkish and Moroccan communities, which represent the majority of Muslims in the Netherlands, have successfully established Islamic schools. Dr. Bahaeddin Budak's research on the institutionalization of these schools between 1988 and 2013 highlights their role in fostering the participation and integration of Muslims in Dutch society (Budak, 2021).

Political participation has been another crucial avenue through which Turkish migrants have sought to articulate their needs and demands. The Turkish community has been identified as the most active group in terms of organizational networks, electoral participation, and effective representation in both national and municipal elections (Aydemir & Mügge, 2024). In 1986, legal reforms permitted immigrants who were not Dutch citizens to participate in local elections, marking a milestone in political inclusion. Hence, around these years, 47 immigrant representatives were elected as municipal councillors, 19 of whom were of Turkish origin. The level of political engagement was significantly higher among individuals of Turkish origin compared to other immigrant groups (Fermin et al., 2021). To further reduce the legal disparity between immigrants and the local population, the Dutch government introduced policies to grant citizenship (Van Oers et al., 2010).

During the 1980s, the significant decline in demand for low-skilled labor and the tightening of access to welfare services led to an unemployment rate of 40% among men of Turkish and Moroccan origin by 1989. While this situation sparked political debates at the time, improvements in the economy eventually facilitated greater social participation among immigrants, resulting in reduced unemployment rates and gradual increases in the educational achievements of children from immigrant backgrounds. However, the early 2000s marked a shift in public perception and policies toward immigrants and Muslims, influenced by global and local events such as the September 11 attacks, terrorist incidents across Europe, the rise of anti-Islamic rhetoric by politicians like Pim Fortuyn, and the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh. These developments contributed to increasingly negative portrayals of immigrants and Muslims, with multiculturalism called into question. For instance, Paul Scheffer's widely debated article argued for the failure of multicultural policies, highlighting growing skepticism about cultural pluralism in the Netherlands. During this period, the focus of integration policies shifted from socio-economic integration to socio-cultural alignment. This shift led to significant policy changes, including the removal of mother tongue education for immigrant children from the national curriculum and the dissolution of advisory boards designed to represent minority voices (Entzinger, 2021). Immigration remained a prominent issue in Dutch politics, with far-right ideologies steadily gaining traction. For example, in the 2023 general elections, 78% of voters attributed the housing crisis to refugees, while 48% expressed concerns about the perceived threat immigrants posed to Dutch culture. Over time, as shifts occurred within mainstream political parties, the marginalization of immigrant communities led to the emergence of political movements such as DENK, BIJ1, and NIDA, signaling a new phase of active citizenship among underrepresented groups. This period also saw growing political confidence among the second generation (Voogd et al., 2024). Additionally, the low electoral threshold in the Netherlands facilitated political representation for immigrant communities (Vossen, 2017).

Although the Dutch Turkish diaspora comprises diverse and heterogeneous communities, its demographic profile has diversified significantly due to recent migration trends. According to data from Statistics Netherlands (CBS), 15,096 Turkish nationals migrated to the Netherlands in 2022, marking an upward trend in migration flows since 2014 (CBS, 2023). Notably, Türkiye ranks as the second-largest source of highly skilled migrants (referred to as Kennismigranten or Knowledge Migrants) in the Netherlands after India. 1,880 Turkish skilled migrants relocated to the Netherlands in 2023 (Van

"With the emergence of cultural and religious needs essential to preserving the identity and sense of belonging of immigrant communities, the Dutch government recognized the importance of granting minority groups a voice in policy making."

Uffelen, 2024). This shift highlights a transition in the composition of the Turkish diaspora from what could be defined as the first wave of labor migration to a new wave characterized by the migration of highly qualified professionals.

Türkiye's Services for the Citizens Abroad

The diasporaization process of the Dutch Turkish community cannot be analyzed in isolation from Türkiye's initiatives and services for its citizens living abroad. Türkiye's efforts to address the evolving needs of its expatriate citizens can be divided into four distinct periods: the era of forced migration abroad due to population exchanges (1923–1960), the labor migration period, particularly to Europe (1960–1980), the phase of migration driven by economic liberalization and political asylum (1980–2002), and the diaspora-focused period beginning after 2000 (Sağlam, 2020). While Türkiye undertook initiatives to support its citizens abroad throughout these migration periods, it was only after 2000 that diaspora-centered services were systematically implemented. Prior to the 1980s, workers sent abroad and the remittances they generated were primarily viewed as significant economic resources for the development of the Turkish state. However, following the 2000s, the economic identity of the diaspora began to shift toward a focus on cultural identity and belonging, as reflected in policies and studies related to the diaspora (Düzenli, 2022). Over the last six decades, various public institutions have aimed to provide services for Turkish citizens living abroad. The initial wave of migration to Europe was facilitated by the Turkish Employment Agency (Türkiye İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu - İİBK), which managed labor migration programs. In 1967, the Ministry of Labor and Social Security expanded its role in this process by establishing the Abroad Organization of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security to safeguard the rights and interests of Turkish citizens abroad and address their issues with host institutions (Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Labor and Social Security, n.d.). Similarly, the Presidency of Religious Affairs began sending temporary religious officials abroad during Ramadan and Eid al-Adha starting from 1971, based on a Cabinet decision (Presidency of Religious Affairs, 2018). The Ministry of National Education also played a role in this context, dispatching teachers to Germany in 1965 to deliver mother tongue lessons to Turkish children living abroad (Şen, 2020). As the permanency of Turkish citizens abroad became increasingly recognized, consular services provided by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were added to the range of state-supported initiatives. The most transformative step in diaspora-focused services came in 2010 with the establishment of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı - YTB). As a dedicated diaspora institution, the YTB was tasked with coordinating efforts aimed at addressing the needs of Turkish citizens living abroad. Thus, the Turkish state has formally recognized the permanency of its citizens residing abroad and has undertaken initiatives to address their needs and challenges both in their host countries and within Türkiye.

Conclusion

Though official relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands extend over four centuries; it is the presence of the Dutch Turkish community, particularly over the last six decades, which has significantly strengthened the connection between the two nations through labor

agreements and expanded cooperation. While Dutch immigration policies have varied across different periods, the existence of approximately half a million individuals of Turkish origin - reaching the fourth generation today - remains an undeniable reality. Individuals with immigrant backgrounds constitute 27.9% of the Netherlands' population, amounting to 5,001,194 people, of whom 457,100 are of Turkish origin, making them the largest immigrant group (CBS, 2024). This figure would likely increase if third- and fourth-generation individuals, now categorized under Dutch origins in official statistics, were included. Over time, the Dutch state has implemented policies aimed at fostering the participation and integration of the Turkish community within the Netherlands. Simultaneously, Türkiye has gradually institutionalized its initiatives for citizens living abroad.

The Dutch state's policy of "inclusive neutrality," rooted in the principle of equality, has played a pivotal role in the institutionalization of the Dutch Turkish community (Pels, 2020). This approach ensures individuals and groups the right to express themselves and live according to their beliefs, including in public spaces, while mandating impartiality and equal treatment by the state. Additionally, the Netherlands' tradition of fostering horizontal relationships between the state and its citizens, as opposed to hierarchical ones (Beugelsdijk, 2019), has supported the successful integration of immigrants. Efforts to prevent the formation of ethnic enclaves (Entzinger, 1991), coupled with an education system that provides disadvantaged groups with better opportunities for upward mobility compared to other nations (Crul et al., 2009), and a low electoral threshold for political participation have further facilitated the Turkish diaspora's successful integration into the Dutch society. Currently, 27% of the Dutch Turkish community has attained higher education (CBS, 2024). Furthermore, a 2021 survey revealed that 41% of immigrant students pursuing higher education had transitioned from vocational schools (De Winter-Koçak et al., 2021). The Turkish community has also emerged as a key player in Dutch Turkish trade relations. In a 2022 report, the Advisory Council on International Affairs (AIV) described the Dutch Turkish community as the "backbone" of bilateral trade, highlighting Türkiye's strategic geopolitical importance (AIV, 2022). Presently, while 3,022 Dutch companies operate in Türkiye, Turkish entrepreneurs lead approximately 23,000 businesses in the Netherlands, generating a turnover of 8 billion euros. Between 2005 and 2023, the Netherlands became Türkiye's leading foreign investor, with direct investments totaling $28.4 billion (Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Türkiye, n.d.). The presence of the Turkish diaspora has also fostered significant cultural exchange, resulting in unique cultural syntheses such as the development of the Dutch Turkish diaspora cuisine. A notable example is the popular "kapsalon," a fusion of Dutch fries and Turkish döner. Turkish culinary traditions, initially gained prominence in workers' hostels during the early years of migration, have since evolved into a medium of cultural and public diplomacy between the two countries (Güngör, 2022). One recent example of this cultural synthesis is the "Baklouce," a blend of Dutch tompouce and Turkish baklava, created by artist Emin Batman and introduced during a 2024 reception in Rotterdam commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Dutch Turkish diaspora (Batman, 2024). Furthermore, many accomplished Dutch Turks have become cultural ambassadors, strengthening ties between the two nations through their achievements in sports, arts, culture, and various other fields.

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Interview

INTERVIEW WITH THE FIRST TURKISH-ORIGIN MAYOR OF THE NETHERLANDS: HURİ ŞAHİN'S INSPIRING JOURNEY

HURİ ŞAHİN
First Turkish-Origin Mayor in the Netherlands

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself? Where in Türkiye is your family originally from, and when did your journey to the Netherlands begin?

My parents are from Adana, Türkiye. My father emigrated to the Netherlands in 1965 as a single young man and a guest worker. At the time, his father opposed the idea and wished for him to remain in Türkiye, but my father chose to go. He married my mother a year later. However, due to severe housing shortages in the Netherlands - similar to what we experience today - my mother stayed in Adana for five years before joining him. In those years, guest workers often lived in boarding houses, as their income was insufficient to rent individual homes. When it became clear that their stay would be long-term, many workers brought their families to join them, as was the case with my mother. I grew up in a loving household that valued education. I spent my childhood in Deventer, a city historically significant and known as a workers' hub. Later, I lived in Leeuwarden, in the northern Netherlands, before relocating to The Hague, which I found better suited for work and educational opportunities.

I am married, and my husband, Murat, is originally from Giresun, Türkiye. We have two sons - our younger son, Kaya, is 16, and our older son, Arman, is 26. From a young age, I developed a love for libraries and spent most weekends there. I remember reading voraciously, particularly a Turkish magazine titled Kadınca, edited by Duygu Asena. Feminism and women's rights captured my interest early on, as I observed gender inequality both within my family and society at large. This fueled my belief that all women deserve opportunities to excel.

✍ What is your educational background?

After completing my preparatory scientific education (VWO - Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs) in high school,

Mayor of Rijswijk Huri Şahin

I began studying law at the University of Groningen. However, my desire to work prompted me to enroll in a one-year training program to qualify as a private secretary in institutional settings. This decision allowed me to balance professional work and education. That choice and my career path led me to the Council of State, where I worked as a private secretary. In the Netherlands, the President of the Council of State is the monarch - either the King or Queen. My role here ignited my interest in public administration and politics. I realized that while practicing law enables one to defend individuals, being active in politics provides the opportunity to influence decisions with far-reaching societal impacts. My political journey began in Zoetermeer, the municipality where I lived, where I served as a council member for ten years. Subsequently, I joined the Provincial Council of South Holland as a deputy and served as the group leader for the Green Left Party (GroenLinks). I continued to refine my political skills by taking on roles in other municipalities and actively seeking new opportunities to contribute. My professional career complemented my political activities. After my time at the Council of State, I worked in various municipalities and eventually at the Dutch Municipalities Association, focusing on improving local governance. During this period, I also contributed to a project in Ankara titled Local Administration Reform. As part of this initiative, we trained female council members, city council representatives, and chief village officials (mukhtars) in Türkiye. During this period, I frequently traveled between Türkiye and the Netherlands as an expert representing the Dutch Municipalities Association. My involvement extended beyond conventional politics to encompass public administration and political activities within my professional sphere.

One particularly esteemed institution in the Netherlands is ProDemos, also known as the House of Democracy and the Rule of Law where I hosted several Turkish

representatives. This organization is widely recognized for its contributions to civic education, offering information to citizens - particularly youth - on topics such as the functioning of democracy, the principles of the rule of law, and the fundamentals of political engagement. ProDemos also organizes courses on these subjects, one of which I had the opportunity to update in collaboration with colleagues. Today, this course is offered in over 200 municipalities across the Netherlands. Through my involvement with this course, I observed a consistent interest among participants in becoming politically active. In fact, my familiarity with the municipality where I currently serve as Mayor began through delivering this course. Before assuming my current role, I served as a director at an institution in Rotterdam dedicated to advancing democracy. Additionally, I worked with various organizations focused on social issues. Among these roles, I served as president of an institution committed to promoting and monitoring children's rights in the Netherlands. Throughout my career, I have consistently sought to engage with society and address pressing concerns. Presently, I am a member of the Dutch Council for Public Administration *(Raad voor Openbaar Bestuur),* which provides guidance to the state and parliament on matters of public administration and advises various ministries. I carry out this work in conjunction with my responsibilities as Mayor. My professional endeavors have consistently intersected with politics, underscoring its significance as both an area of interest and a central focus of my career.

✍ Can you tell us about your appointment as mayor? How were you selected, and how did you feel when you learned the outcome?

In preparation for the new term, Rijswijk Municipality requested that I provide training for newly elected municipal council members. I accepted the invitation, and during my visit, the municipality captured my attention. It was then that I learned they were searching for a new mayor. Unlike in Türkiye, mayors in the Netherlands are not elected directly by the public but are instead appointed by the King. The municipal council outlines the qualifications they seek in a mayor, and candidates apply based on this profile. I decided to apply, believing I aligned well with the qualifications Rijswijk Municipality required. The application process involves submitting a letter of intent addressed to the King, which is forwarded to the provincial governor (commissaris van de koning), the King's representative. The municipal council establishes a committee to evaluate applications, comprising the committee chair and representatives from each political party. I was invited for an interview, which, like the entire process, was highly confidential. By law, applicants' identities remain undisclosed. Following the interview, the committee informed me by phone that I was their top choice. This news brought me immense happiness. After a six- to seven-month process, the Rijswijk Municipal Council announced its decision to present my candidacy to the Ministry of the Interior. The Ministry conducted a security clearance before forwarding my application to the Council of Ministers. Once the Council approved, the King signed the official appointment document. My tenure as mayor formally began after the oath-taking ceremony, held by the City Council on December 12, 2022. I assumed office the following day. Although I am affiliated with the Green Left Party (GroenLinks), the position of mayor in the Netherlands is non-partisan. Municipal elections occur every four years, but the mayoral term lasts six years. However, if the municipal

"My primary motivation has always been to serve as a voice for those who cannot make themselves heard."

council loses confidence in a mayor, they can request a change because, unlike me, they are representatives elected by the public.

You are the first female mayor of Turkish origin in the Netherlands. How did your family, close circle, and the community respond to your appointment?

The response was overwhelmingly positive and filled with pride. My family and the Turkish community were incredibly happy, and this sentiment was reflected in the media. For instance, Anadolu Agency promptly reported the news, leading to congratulatory calls from Türkiye. Their joy only added to my happiness. It was particularly meaningful for me to receive congratulations from some of my father's friends, despite my father's passing on December 2, just days before my appointment ceremony. However, I had already informed my father of the approval by the Council of Ministers, and knowing he was aware of it was a great source of pride for me. The public's positive reaction, both within the Dutch and Turkish communities, reinforced my sense of responsibility. It reminded me of the importance of setting an example while acknowledging the inherent challenges and limitations of the role. Sometimes there can be difficulties that come with being a mayor of Turkish origin or being a woman. As a mayor, I am deeply motivated by humanitarian reasons. My goal has always been to serve as an accessible, compassionate leader who genuinely addresses citizens' concerns. Receiving feedback that I am "approachable, non-discriminatory, and solution-oriented" has been especially gratifying. However, the role also comes with challenges, particularly when making decisions that may not be popular. For example, difficult situations arise in matters involving law enforcement, such as drug-related interventions or dealing with misconduct by employers. While such decisions are aimed at ensuring public welfare, they are not always well-received.

When and how did your interest in politics begin?

My interest in politics emerged in the early 2000s during my position as a secretary at the Council of State. The September 11 attacks in the United States were a pivotal moment, ushering in a profoundly different political climate. While the Netherlands of that time bore many similarities to the present, the events of 9/11 marked a turning point for me. From a positive perspective, I recognized that politics could offer solutions to societal problems and serve as a platform for helping individuals. My interest in politics grew out of these aspirations. I wanted to assist those in difficult circumstances, whether they were children, women, or others in need. Even as a mayor today, I strive to empathize with people, always considering that I, too, might face challenges one day. My primary motivation has always been to serve as a voice for those who cannot make themselves heard. While some individuals can express their concerns, many cannot, whether due to domestic violence, fear, or poverty. These individuals often remain unheard, even within their own homes. For me, public administration is about being present for these silent voices. A government's most critical role is to stand beside its most vulnerable citizens.

Mayor Huri Şahin speaking at a program with former Council of State President Herman Tjeenk Willink, an early career mentor and source of inspiration.

✍ Is there anyone who has inspired you in your political career?

Recently, I participated in an event alongside Herman Tjeenk Willink, the former President of the Council of State, with whom I had the privilege of working earlier in my career. At the age of 83, he remains an inspiring figure. I was 25 when I worked with him, and many of the principles and approaches I adopt today stem from what I observed and learned under his guidance. From Türkiye, İlber Ortaylı has been a significant source of inspiration. I deeply admire his books, conversational style, perspective on life, and intellectual curiosity. His passion for research, travel, and his thoughtful advice resonate strongly with me.

✍ Has your multicultural identity contributed to your role? If so, how?

Absolutely. My multicultural identity has been an immense asset, offering me a broader perspective and enabling me to view life through diverse lenses. This dual perspective allows me to communicate more effectively with people from varied backgrounds. For instance, while I am not of Afghan origin, Afghan women often feel comfortable approaching me to share their concerns.

✍ How does your multicultural background directly influence your work? Can you provide a specific example?

On significant cultural and religious occasions, the value of being multicultural

"As a mayor, I am deeply motivated by humanitarian reasons. My goal has always been to serve as an accessible, compassionate leader who genuinely addresses citizens' concerns."

becomes particularly evident. For example, understanding the importance of Ramadan for Muslims and Easter for Christians allows me to empathize with and celebrate the diverse traditions within my community.

One moment of pride occurred last year when the King of the Netherlands, Willem-Alexander, expressed a desire to attend an iftar at Rijswijk Municipality during Ramadan. It was a deeply meaningful event for me. As mayor, I was deliberate in ensuring that the iftar was inclusive, inviting representatives from various religious groups alongside the Muslim community. This approach reflects my philosophy as a mayor for everyone, regardless of their faith or background. By inviting people from all walks of life, I emphasized the inclusive spirit of the *iftar*. Such moments reaffirm the broader meaning of the *iftar*.

✍ As a woman with an immigrant background, have you faced prejudice in your career? If so, how did you address it, and what strategies did you employ?

Prejudice is an enduring reality. Even individuals who are neither women nor of Turkish origin encounter prejudice in various forms. In the Netherlands, for instance, the representation of female mayors remains significantly below parity, with the number of female mayors not even comprising half of the total. While progress in this area has been gradual, the imbalance has never deterred me. I have been fortunate to receive support from my spouse and those around me. For example, in recognition of International Women's Day on March 8th, I recently sent invitations to the female council members in my municipality, inviting them to a breakfast meeting. The aim of this initiative was to foster solidarity, highlight the municipality's commitment to gender equality, and inspire greater involvement of women in political processes.

✍ What advice would you offer to young people and women of Turkish origin who are at the beginning of their careers?

My foremost advice is for them to cultivate a genuine passion for their work and to focus on careers that align with their personal aspirations. It is essential to prioritize one's desires over family approval. I encourage young people to chart their own unique paths. Curiosity is another critical factor. A curious mindset fosters continuous learning and personal growth. As a mayor, I am particularly inspired by individuals who extend support to others. For instance, the municipality recently recognized a citizen who saved a disabled man who had fallen into the water. I attach importance to acts of selflessness and care for others.

✍ What were your primary goals upon taking office as mayor? Is there anything you would like to elaborate on?

One of my primary goals has been to serve as a mayor who is approachable and deeply engaged with citizens, addressing their concerns earnestly. This vision extends beyond my personal approach to leadership and reflects my broader ambition to inspire

similar practices among other mayors. Rijswijk is a rapidly growing municipality. With our population currently exceeding 60,000 and projected to reach 80,000 within the next decade, managing this growth effectively is a significant priority. Additionally, addressing violence against women is a critical focus area, as the Netherlands tragically experiences a femicide every eight days. I am committed to supporting women who face violence.

✍ What needs and challenges have you observed among the residents of your municipality, particularly those of Turkish origin?

While I have not conducted specific studies targeting the Turkish-origin population, I have identified several overarching challenges affecting residents, including housing. Education and care are other prominent concerns. Furthermore, with the aging population, the needs of individuals over the age of 70 are increasingly evident. Older residents often require comprehensive care.

✍ Do you know the number of Turkish-origin residents in your municipality, and how is your relationship with them?

While I do not have precise data on the number of Turkish-origin residents, I am aware that immigrants constitute approximately 37% of Rijswijk's population. This is significantly higher than the national average of 25%, highlighting the municipality's cultural diversity.

✍ How is your relationship with citizens of Turkish origin? Do you believe that having a mayor of Turkish origin has influenced their sense of belonging to the Netherlands and the municipal government?

Assessing this impact would require systematic research, but anecdotally, citizens of Turkish origin often express their happiness and pride in my role. This sentiment was particularly evident during the aid efforts organized for the victims of the February 6, 2023, earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş, Türkiye.

✍ You mentioned the housing shortage in the municipality. What are your plans to address issues like housing shortages or institutional discrimination?

In the Netherlands, these matters fall outside the direct purview of the mayor. For example, I do not possess the authority to mandate the construction of a specific number of social housing units within the municipality. Instead, such decisions are shaped by the deputy mayors, who operate within a coalition system. As no single political party holds power, coalitions are formed to collectively decide on issues like housing and discrimination. My role, therefore, is to facilitate and manage coalition meetings. However, when citizens approach me with concerns, such as cases of discrimination, I take these issues seriously. For instance, if an individual feels excluded or discriminated against by the police, I can intervene by initiating discussions with the Chief of Police to investigate the matter. Additionally, I liaise with ministries on national issues when necessary. I have greater influence in the domain of public order.

✍ Can you share your greatest achievement or a moment of pride during your tenure as mayor?

During my term, I encountered three tragic cases of femicide. My efforts to support the families and communicate transparently with the public were widely appreciated. Additionally, I often hear that I am regarded as a visible and accessible mayor who effectively represents the Municipality of Rijswijk within the Hague region.

✍ Do you have any projects planned to enhance the quality of life for Dutch society and minority groups?

King Willem-Alexander at an iftar hosted by Rijswijk Mayor Huri Şahin during Ramadan 2023.

My focus is on fulfilling my responsibilities effectively during this term. For me, the greatest accomplishment lies in contributing positively to society, serving as a role model, and striving to be a good person.

How do you evaluate the progress of the Turkish community in the Netherlands over the past 60 years?

This question arises frequently, and the answer depends on one's perspective. From a positive standpoint, there are numerous success stories by a mayor, athletes, and artists of Turkish origin. However, as in any community, there are individuals who face significant challenges. It is important not to expect every member of the community to reach prominent positions. The Turkish community's greatest strength lies in solidarity, especially during times of crisis, as demonstrated by the earthquake relief efforts. On the other hand, issues related to belonging remain areas for improvement. For instance, greater participation in elections and a stronger focus on developments in the Netherlands would enhance the community's visibility.

What advice would you give to young people of Turkish origin who are growing up in a multicultural environment?

I encourage young people to view their multicultural identity as a strength. They should embrace their Turkish heritage, speak the language confidently, and never feel inadequate. Growing up with two cultures is an immense asset, offering opportunities. Additionally, I urge them to pursue careers aligned with their passions. The Netherlands is a country with a robust democracy and abundant opportunities, and I recommend making the most of these resources.

Interview

DIPLOMATIC BRIDGE FROM THE HAGUE TO TÜRKİYE: AN INTERVIEW WITH SELÇUK ÜNAL, AMBASSADOR OF THE REPUBLIC OF TÜRKİYE TO THE HAGUE

MR. SELÇUK ÜNAL

Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to The Hague

This year marks the centennial of the Friendship Treaty between the Netherlands and Türkiye, as well as the 60th anniversary of labor migration from Türkiye to the Netherlands. Could you evaluate the events held in the Netherlands in this special year, particularly in the context of these significant anniversaries?

The year 2024 holds a distinctive place in Turkish-Dutch relations. I would particularly emphasize the importance of August, as it marks two pivotal milestones: the signing of the Friendship Treaty between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands on August 16, 1924, and the Labor Agreement on August 19, 1964. As the Embassy of Türkiye in The Hague, in collaboration with relevant institutions and organizations - including the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) - and with the support of the Turkish community in the Netherlands, we have curated a range of events to commemorate these anniversaries. These activities have been strategically distributed throughout the year to highlight the evolution of Turkish-Dutch relations over the past century and to explore avenues for further development in the future. The 60th anniversary of labor migration, a cornerstone of the Turkish community's establishment in the Netherlands, provides an opportunity for reflection on the community's journey. We aim to assess the progress made, the challenges faced, and the contributions of this community over six decades. It is also an occasion to strategize on measures to safeguard the rights, interests, and well-being of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands moving forward. The range of planned activities includes talks, conferences, exhibitions, concerts, comme-

Mr. Selçuk Ünal, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to The Hague

"Over the past six decades, the Turkish community in the Netherlands has achieved significant progress."

morative events honoring Turkish contributors to society, and even football matches. Collaboration with Dutch authorities has been integral to the planning and execution of these events. High-level bilateral visits have added further significance to this special year. Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte visited Türkiye, while our Foreign Minister, Mr. Hakan Fidan, visited the Netherlands on April 18-19, 2024, for the 10th Türkiye-Netherlands Wittenburg Conference. This long-standing consultation forum, initiated in 2008, fosters comprehensive dialogue between the two nations. During his visit, Minister Fidan engaged in pivotal discussions with his Dutch counterpart, aimed at further deepening bilateral relations. The visit of YTB President Abdullah Eren to the Netherlands for the event titled From Generation to Generation: 60th Year of the Turkish Diaspora in the Netherlands, held in Rotterdam, also garnered significant interest. The event was widely attended by the Dutch Turkish community.

Additionally, significant collaborative efforts have been made by the Dutch Turkish community to celebrate these anniversaries. The unveiling of the Monument of Gratitude to Immigrants in Utrecht, a project involving multiple immigrant communities, exemplifies such efforts. The Almelo Yunus Emre Mosque, under the Dutch Diyanet Foundation, opened its new complex to serve all communities. Notably, the original Yunus Emre Mosque has become the first mosque to gain

museum status under the Dutch Grand Museums Association. Furthermore, the Netherlands-Türkiye Museum was fully relocated to this mosque this year.

✍ Can you evaluate the migration from Türkiye to the Netherlands?

The migration of Turkish workers to the Netherlands was a response to the post-World War II economic recovery and industrial expansion, which created significant labor shortages in Western Europe. Similar to other nations in the region, the Netherlands sought to fill these gaps by employing foreign workers. Alongside workers from Italy, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Morocco, Turkish workers began migrating to the Netherlands following the Labor Agreement signed in 1964. In the initial years, Turkish migrants were predominantly male, but over time, the participation of female workers increased significantly.

These workers found employment in labor-intensive and sometimes hazardous industries such as construction, shipbuilding, mining, and manufacturing. Initially, their intent was to return to Türkiye after gaining skills and economic stability to contribute to their home country's industrial development. However, the landscape shifted in the mid-1970s, largely due to the 1973 oil crisis, which led Western European nations to cease the employment of foreign labor. Despite these changes, many Turkish workers remained in the Netherlands. Factors such as their resilience and adaptability, the retention efforts of Dutch employers for skilled workers, and family reunification policies contributed to the permanent stay of the Turkish community. Through family reunification, the community expanded over the following decades. Today, the Turkish population in the Netherlands spans approximately 500,000 individuals, encompassing three generations, with a fourth generation and newcomers now actively contributing to Dutch society.

✍ You maintain close contact with the Turkish community on various occasions. Considering your observations in these encounters, how do you evaluate the development of the Turkish community living in the Netherlands in the last 60 years?

Over the past six decades, the Turkish community in the Netherlands has achieved significant progress and established itself as a vital part of Dutch society. Initially arriving as guest workers to fill labor shortages, Turkish migrants made invaluable contributions to the Netherlands by working in sectors that were critical to the country's economic development, including industries with high occupational risks such as shipbuilding and chemical manufacturing. We extend our heartfelt prayers for divine mercy upon those who lost their lives while engaged in these demanding occupations.

The most remarkable achievement of the Turkish community is its successful transition from a temporary labor force to a permanent and dynamic social group. Today, members of the community actively engage in diverse sectors, including politics, trade, education, culture, arts, and sports. Additionally, many have moved from employee roles to becoming employers, reflecting their entrepreneurial spirit and adaptability. The Turkish community's integration into Dutch society highlights its resilience and capacity for meaningful contributions. These accomplishments underscore the community's dual role as both an integral part of Dutch society and an exemplary diaspora.

"Regarding the Turkish community, I have observed a particularly strong commitment to their homeland, language, faith, customs, and traditions. This commitment is complemented by their notable success in organizing civil society structures."

How do you evaluate the institutionalization process of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands? What is the place of Turkish civil society organizations in the Netherlands?

We are pleased that the Turkish community in the Netherlands has demonstrated commendable success and effectiveness in terms of civil society organization. This achievement is deeply rooted in the strong organizational abilities of the Turkish people. Over the years, the Turkish diaspora has established numerous civil society organizations across diverse sectors, including economy, trade, employment, culture and arts, education, and humanitarian aid. These organizations, which encompass various fellow countrymen's associations, play a pivotal role in safeguarding collective interests and fortifying the unity and solidarity of the Turkish community. Some of these organizations address essential needs, such as providing education in the mother tongue for children. Moreover, associations and unions established by Turkish entrepreneurs and businesspeople in the Netherlands contribute significantly to enhancing employment opportunities within the community while fostering economic and commercial ties between Türkiye and the Netherlands. Additionally, the approximately 140 mosque associations affiliated with the Dutch Diyanet Foundation serve as vital institutions that strengthen the spirit of unity, togetherness, and solidarity within the Turkish community. It is heartening to observe that these structures are widely embraced by diverse segments of society. Our Embassy maintains close dialogue with those civil society organizations, which operate across various domains.

Do you think there are any characteristics that distinguish the Dutch Turkish community from the Turks living in Türkiye? If so, what are they?

The roots of the Dutch Turkish community span the entirety of Türkiye, reflecting the rich diversity of Türkiye and Anatolia. In this regard, the diaspora's distinctiveness lies not in its differences from Turkish society, but in its ability to preserve the characteristics that define the Turkish identity. This is evident in the strong ties maintained with the homeland, as well as in the preservation of cultural, linguistic, and religious identities over decades. At the same time, Dutch Turks, particularly the younger generations born in the Netherlands, have integrated into the Dutch way of life.

Are there any characteristics that distinguish the Turkish community in the Netherlands from the Turkish diaspora communities living in other countries? What is your most interesting observation or experience on this subject?

The global Turkish diaspora has surpas-

sed 7 million individuals, with a significant portion residing in Western European countries. Naturally, drawing comparisons between Turkish diaspora communities worldwide falls within the specialized domain of migration studies. While there are similarities in the migration processes, socioeconomic conditions, and challenges faced by Turkish communities across these countries, each host nation's unique conditions shape the specific characteristics of its Turkish diaspora. Regarding the Dutch Turkish community, I have observed a particularly strong commitment to their homeland, language, faith, customs, and traditions. This commitment is complemented by their notable success in organizing civil society structures. An exemplary demonstration of these qualities took place in the immediate aftermath of the twin earthquakes of February 2023. The Dutch Turkish community exhibited remarkable generosity, excellent organizational capability, and swift action to provide support to the affected regions. Their contributions to recovery efforts remain ongoing at every level.

What is the role of the Turkish diaspora in the development of bilateral and economic relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands?

The relationship between the Turkish and Dutch peoples spans approximately 470 years. The Friendship Treaty, of which we are celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, symbolizes the shared understanding and cooperation between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, rooted in nearly five centuries of historical ties. The Netherlands was among the first nations to formalize diplomatic relations with the Republic of Türkiye by signing this Treaty, following the establishment of the Republic after the conclusion of Türkiye's national independence war. Today, Türkiye and the Netherlands are not only friendly nations, but also NATO allies, maintaining robust and mutually beneficial relations at both bilateral and multilateral levels. Within this dynamic, the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands holds a vital and influential position. Since 1964, Turkish workers in the Netherlan-

ds have made honest and invaluable contributions to the country's economic development, progress, and transformation into the prosperous society it is today. Currently, the Dutch Turkish community is an integral part of the Netherlands' economic, industrial, and commercial sectors, encompassing approximately 25,000 employers. Turkish diaspora serves as a critical bridge in enhancing Turkish-Dutch economic relations by leveraging the opportunities provided by the favorable business environments in both countries.

✍ The Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands is also quite diverse. What are the biggest common issues that unite the Turkish community? What are their attitudes towards these issues from the past to the present?

The Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands has demonstrated notable success in integrating with the broader Dutch society. This success is acknowledged by the Dutch authorities. Considering that the Dutch society has also experienced significant emigration, it can be argued that the Turkish community's adaptation to the sociocultural fabric of the society has been more successful compared to other communities, particularly in terms of proficiency in the Dutch language. However, as observed in other European countries, xenophobia, racism, and intolerance have become more pronounced in the Netherlands since the early 2000s. Actions targeting our holy book, the Quran, have increased, reflecting broader structural challenges evidenced by reports from official institutions and organizations in the Netherlands established to address these issues. As far-right and radical political ideologies gain traction across Europe, the Turkish diaspora increasingly confronts those challenges. Our community already shows determination and awareness required to combat these problems. This awareness has been cultivated over decades. The community began to assert its rights both at the European Union level and at Dutch national legal systems.

✍ What are your observations about the Turkish youth, especially those born in the third generation and later? Where do young people differ from previous generations? What are their priorities and areas of interest in general?

The third and fourth generations of the Turkish community in the Netherlands demonstrate a higher degree of integration into the Dutch society compared to their predecessors. This pattern is typical for subsequent generations of immigrant communities worldwide. The first generation of Turkish migrants, facing linguistic and cultural barriers, often formed close-knit communities, primarily interacting with fellow Turks. This approach was a natural response. Over time, however, as proficiency in the local language improved, employment opportunities expanded, and economic stability increased; the social networks of these migrants broadened. Today, members of the third and fourth generations are well-acquainted with the socio-cultural environment of the Netherlands. The country's cosmopolitan and multi-identity landscape has further facilitated their integration.

✍ How do you evaluate the relations of the Dutch Turkish community with sister diasporas? In which areas do they carry out joint work?

The Dutch Turkish community has maintained harmonious relationships with other immigrant communities, particularly those

who, like themselves, arrived as guest workers. It has consistently fostered solidarity with these groups. Notably, there are more frequent interactions between the Turkish community and Muslim immigrant groups, especially those of Moroccan and Indonesian descent. Additionally, it is encouraging to observe the strong dialogue between the Dutch Turkish community and other communities with cultural affinities to Türkiye. In this context, the Dutch Turkish community congregates with other communities during unifying occasions, including religious, national, and cultural holidays, as well as shared social and cultural events.

✍ What are the social, political, and cultural support services that Türkiye offers primarily to the Turkish diaspora and specifically to its citizens in the Netherlands?

The Turkish state consistently supports the Dutch Turkish community in safeguarding the rights and legal protections of its citizens. It endeavors to protect the personal and commercial interests of both its citizens residing in the Netherlands and the broader Dutch Turkish community, in cooperation with its relevant institutions and organizations. The Turkish Consulates General offer continuous consular services to citizens in this regard, and in 2023 to 2024, mobile consular services have been made available, bringing those services directly to the community.

As in all countries, including the Netherlands, Türkiye's Consular and Attaché offices work to meet the social security, educational, and personal needs of the community, while also ensuring the preservation of cultural and linguistic ties. Furthermore, institutions such as the Yunus Emre Institute and the Maarif Foundation, which have representatives in the Netherlands, conduct activities aimed at both the Dutch population and the Turkish diaspora. The Dutch Diyanet Foundation, founded by the Dutch Turkish community, focuses on religious services and humanitarian assistance.

✍ Today, more than 25% of Dutch society has an immigrant background. As a diplomat with experience in other nations, how do you compare the Netherlands to other countries in terms of its approach to multiculturalism?

As a former colonial power, the Netherlands has a long history of interaction with its colonies, particularly in regions such as Indonesia, the Caribbean, and Suriname. Although colonialism and its associated systems, including slavery, formally ended over 150 years ago, there has been a continuous flow of people from former colonies to the Netherlands. Additionally, following World War II, the Dutch government sought to support for its rapidly developing industries by employing foreign labor, contributing to the country's current multicultural and cosmopolitan demographic and outward-looking stance.

In general, Dutch society exhibits a welcoming attitude toward foreigners. However, as is the case in many other societies, there are extreme elements that can sometimes give rise to discriminatory practices, both at the official level and within the private sector. While the Dutch state has established institutions and legislation aimed at combating discrimination and racism, instances of discriminatory behaviour, whether individually or institutionally, occasionally occur. It is encouraging to note that in such situations, affected individuals are increasingly vocal and active in pursuing their legal rights. Overall,

the relationship between Dutch society and immigrant communities remains positive.

✍ Young people often experience a sense of being caught between two countries and cultures. Research indicates that, even after four generations, immigrants continue to encounter racism and discrimination in various aspects of life. What are your views on this issue, and what advice would you offer to young people to help them navigate these feelings?

Our greatest aspiration is for our young people to not feel caught between two countries and cultures. Instead, we hope they will embrace the positive aspects of both societies, thus enriching their cultural capital. Members of the third and fourth generations of the Turkish community tend to display more outgoing profiles compared to their parents. This shift is influenced by being born and raised in the Netherlands and participating in the Dutch educational system. Naturally, given the distinct social and cultural backgrounds of our community and Dutch society, experiences of alienation and exclusion, as you have mentioned, do occur. However, we hope that these instances remain minimal for the Dutch Turkish community. In addressing such challenges, both governmental and civil society initiatives exist to guide young people and offer solutions to the problems they face.

✍ What are your expectations of the new cabinet in the Netherlands, particularly regarding the Turkish diaspora and bilateral relations?

Following the general elections in the Netherlands in November 2023, coalition negotiations lasting approximately seven months led to the formation of a new government in July. The Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid - PVV) emerged as the leader in the elections, establishing a right-leaning government comprising four parties. It is an undeniable fact that the rise of far-right and radical movements across Europe has raised concerns among immigrant communities, particularly within Muslim societies. New articles published in the Dutch press regarding the election results suggest that such concerns are present in the Netherlands as well. Those media predictions indicate that xenophobia, anti-Muslim sentiment, and discrimination may intensify in the near future.

Through successful integration, the Dutch Turkish community has firmly established itself as equal citizens and earned respect as part of Dutch society over the past 60 years. Its political, economic, commercial, and cultural contributions to the Netherlands have been indisputable especially considering that the country is heavily reliant on foreign trade and has experienced waves of emigration. These contributions cannot and should not be ignored, questioned, or altered. Bringing them into question would be incompatible with the principles of fairness and integrity that are fundamental to the Dutch society. While our community undoubtedly faces challenges, these are issues that can be resolved through open dialogue. We hope these challenges will be minimized and that our community will continue to serve as a bridge of friendship between the two nations.

I firmly believe that the resilience of the Dutch Turkish community will enable it to remain strong in the face of any adversity. In other words, our community is firmly established here, and it is not going anywhere. The

Embassy will continue to engage in dialogue and cooperation with Dutch authorities and the Dutch Turkish community in addressing possible discrimination, racism, xenophobia, Islamophobia, and any other issues regarding our society.

✍ How do you evaluate the social and political participation of the Turkish community in the Netherlands? What are the biggest challenges and advantages they face?

The Turkish community in the Netherlands has an active and responsible presence in all facets of social life, firmly established as equal citizens within the country. Over the past 60 years, the community has made significant progress not only in economic and commercial sectors, but also in areas such as politics, education, culture, arts, and sports. This progress is reflected in political representation: the current Dutch House of Representatives includes five members of Turkish origin out of 150 members, and the previous Senate also had senators of Turkish descent. Additionally, there are Turkish-origin mayors, deputy mayors, and municipal council members across the Netherlands. We hope to see continued political engagement by the Turkish community, recognizing that participating in the country's decision-making processes is both their right and civic responsibility.

✍ Can you evaluate the interest of the Dutch Turkish community in the Turkish elections? How does their engagement compare with citizens in other countries?

Turkish citizens abroad have consistently maintained a strong connection with their homeland. Since the 1950s, citizens living abroad have been asking to be able to vote in Turkish elections though it was initially limited. Since 2014, when Turkish citizens abroad were granted the right to vote in elections held in their countries of residence, participation rates have steadily increased. For instance, abroad voter participation in the 2014 elections was 18.9%. In the two-round elections of May 2023, the participation rate of Turkish citizens registered in overseas voter roll at ballot boxes established by the Turkish diplomatic missions in 73 countries increased to 55.6%. The participation rate in the Netherlands during the May 2023 elections exceeded this average. Under the auspices of the Embassy, extensive efforts were undertaken to facilitate the participation of citizens in the democratic decision-making process of Türkiye. Voting centers were established by the Consulates General in Amsterdam, Deventer, and Rotterdam. Notably, a ballot box was introduced for the first time in Eindhoven, a city within the jurisdiction of the Consulate General in Rotterdam, providing citizens in this region the opportunity to vote locally for the first time.

✍ Migration to the Netherlands has occurred in several distinct waves over time. Recently, a new wave of migration has emerged, characterized by the increasing relocation of highly skilled individuals, including a significant number of well-educated Turkish youth, to the Netherlands. What are your observations regarding the increasing migration of this group to the Netherlands?

Recent demographic shifts in the Netherlands, such as an aging population and declining birth rates, have created skilled labor shortages in various sectors. Despite the public perception regarding immigration and asylum, which in recent years has been influenced by the rhetoric of extremist circles, I feel that the business community and ent-

repreneurial organizations in the Netherlands view foreign labor migration as essential for addressing the shortage of skilled labor. In this context, Turkish white-collar workers have increasingly been arriving to the Netherlands, alongside other professionals from countries like India and China. This trend highlights the growing demand for the expertise of educated Turkish individuals. While this influx of highly skilled immigrants is a source of pride, it raises concerns about a potential long-term brain drain. Striking a balance between short-term employment opportunities abroad and permanent emigration is crucial. We hope that these skilled professionals return to Türkiye after gaining valuable knowledge and experience, contributing to the development of their homeland. To address this issue, our Embassy and Consulates General maintain active dialogue with all segments of the Dutch Turkish community, including this recent wave of "newcomers."

✍ How do you assess the phenomenon of reverse migration from the Netherlands to Türkiye?

Initially, many citizens who migrated to the Netherlands 60 years ago intended to return to Türkiye after saving enough to secure their futures and resume their lives in their homeland. Over time, however, new goals emerged. Life took different directions, and the present-day Dutch Turkish community was established.

Reverse migration, though at low rates, has been observed throughout this 60-year period and continues today. A portion of the community chooses to return to Türkiye for various reasons, such as having fulfilled their goals and responsibilities, homesickness, or pursuing opportunities for a new life, economic advancement, or retirement in Türkiye. This trend represents a natural part of life's progression. We extend support to citizens during this process, particularly concerning social security matters.

✍ Could you share a significant moment during your tenure in the Netherlands?

Shortly after assuming my post on February 1, 2023, devastating earthquakes struck Türkiye on February 6. We promptly established a Crisis Center at our Embassy, coordinating efforts among the Embassy, our Consulates General, and Turkish NGOs in the Netherlands. These entities worked tirelessly to aid citizens affected by the disaster. What stands out vividly is the exceptional unity, solidarity, and cooperation demonstrated by the Dutch Turkish community during this period. Their swift organization and unwavering commitment to collecting and delivering aid, all while maintaining public order, embodied the shared sentiment: "Today, we in the Netherlands cannot stop or despair under any circumstances." This collective effort will remain unforgettable. Equally memorable were the contributions of the Dutch government. Their immediate deployment of a search-and-rescue dog team, which saved 12 earthquake victims, 1 dog and 1 bird, along with a second team providing medical (transport) assistance, was a profound gesture of solidarity and humanity.

✍ You have been living in the Netherlands for a while now. What aspects of the Netherlands' social and cultural life do you enjoy most?

The Dutch society's openness, communicative nature, and emphasis on cooperation are qualities I deeply appreciate.

✍ Do you have a favorite Dutch dish?

During my time in the Netherlands, I have enjoyed exploring the country's cuisine. Local delicacies such as *bitterballen* (beef croquettes), haring (pickled herring), *kibbeling* (fried fish bites), and *stroopwafels* (caramel-filled waffles) have been particularly delightful.

✍ What are your observations regarding the Turkish diaspora's culinary presence in the Netherlands?

The Dutch Turkish community, composed of individuals from various regions of Türkiye, reflects the full richness of Turkish culinary traditions. The availability of diverse and authentic regional dishes in the Netherlands brings immense satisfaction to the community. It is encouraging to witness the growing number and quality of Turkish restaurants, their efforts to promote Turkish gastronomy more intensively, and their increasing professional solidarity through organized initiatives. Additionally, the rising interest of Dutch citizens in Turkish cuisine is a noteworthy development. This year, over 1.2 million Dutch citizens visited Türkiye, setting a new record. Their exposure to Turkish cuisine during these visits further grows familiarity.

✍ Would you like to share a final message with our readers?

The almost five-century-long history of relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands holds exceptional significance. The 100th anniversary of the contemporary Türkiye-Netherlands friendship, which began in the Republican era, was commemorated in 2024 - a year of notable importance for Turkish-Dutch relations and the Turkish community in the Netherlands. Since 1924, both nations have undergone substantial changes and transformations. The scope of our bilateral relations has expanded significantly, with increased areas of cooperation. The Netherlands has emerged as Türkiye's largest investor, and in the last two years, it has also become the leading destination for Turkish foreign direct investment. Our first and only Honorary Consulate General opened abroad in 2024 was established this year after a long time in Amersfoort. In addition, our Embassy's Treasury and Finance Counselor's Office has resumed operations. We welcomed the reopening of the Trade Attaché of our Consulate General in Amsterdam, which was forcibly closed in 1940 during World War II and still stands as our oldest commercial representation here since the Ottoman era. Our dialogue is growing exponentially. In addition, the representative office of the Investment Office became operational in Amstelveen. We hope this positive momentum will persist, enabling the vast potential of Turkish-Dutch relations to be utilized more effectively in the coming period. A key driver of this potential is undoubtedly the Dutch Turkish community, which serves as an integral part of Dutch society and a bridge of friendship between the two countries. The Dutch Turkish community will undoubtedly continue to fortify the historical ties between Türkiye and the Netherlands.

YTB
KUŞAKTAN
KUŞAĞA:
HOLLANDA'DAKİ
TÜRK
DİASPORASININ
60. YILI

Interview

DIPLOMATIC BRIDGE FROM ANKARA TO THE NETHERLANDS: AN INTERVIEW WITH JOEP WIJNANDS, AMBASSADOR OF THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS TO ANKARA

MR. JOEP WIJNANDS

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Ankara

As you know, this year marks both the 100th anniversary of the Friendship Treaty between the Netherlands and Türkiye and the 60th anniversary of labor migration from Türkiye to the Netherlands. Could you share your feelings on this important year along with the activities you are undertaking?

Indeed this year we celebrate these two remarkable milestones. In 1924 the friendship between our nations was codified in an official Friendship Treaty, and in 1964 the Dutch government invited Turkish workers to come and help develop the Netherlands economically. Of course, our diplomatic ties go back way further, all the way to 1612 when my long time predecessor Cornelis Haga arrived in this country. To celebrate our long-lasting friendship we have been organizing many activities throughout the year to showcase the breadth and strength of our bilateral relations: from our economic cooperation, to our collaboration as NATO allies, to our many cultural ties. In July the flagship event of this Friendship Year took place, with a friendship concert in Ankara by Dutch Turkish singer Karsu attended by more than 20,000 people. To mark the 60th anniversary of the Labour Agreement, we have a travelling photo exhibition telling the story of the women who came from Türkiye to the Netherlands 60 years ago, a perspective that is often overlooked. This exhibition travels to many cities in Türkiye until May 2025.

Mr. Joep Wijnands, Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Ankara and Mrs. Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş, Minister of Family and Social Services of the Republic of Türkiye

There is an increasing economic cooperation between Türkiye and the Netherlands. There are over 3,000 Dutch companies operating in Türkiye. Similarly, Türkiye invests more in the Netherlands than in any other country. How do you evaluate this bilateral relationship?

The economic relations between our countries are very strong and developing every day. The fact that the Netherlands is the biggest foreign direct investor in Türkiye according to Turkish statistics underlines this fact. Beyond the numbers, Türkiye and the Netherlands share a strong trading tradition going back centuries. Both of our countries are outward looking and have a real entrepreneurial spirit. More so, there are many Dutch entrepreneurs with Turkish roots, and I often find they are active in both countries, further strengthening our trading ties.

Could you provide information about the projects carried out by your Embassy to build bridges between Turkish and Dutch communities? Which of these projects would you like to mention in particular?

Building bridges and stimulating cooperation between our countries is the

"The economic relations between our countries are very strong and developing every day."

core task of our Embassy and extends to the work of all our departments. From political consultations organized by our Political Department, to trading missions & agricultural field visits organized by our Economic Department, to the support provided to Turkish-Dutch citizens residing in Türkiye through our Social Affairs & Consular department to the concerts and expositions organized by our Cultural department: with all our activities we want to bring people in the Netherlands and Türkiye even closer together, because that is what makes our relationship truly special: the abundant people-to-people contact between our countries which takes place on a daily basis

✍ **It can be really tough being caught between two countries, especially at a young age. According to the National Coordinator Against Discrimination and Racism (NCDR) people with a migration background still deal with racism and discrimination in several areas of life. What would you suggest to help the Dutch Turkish youth to feel more at home in both countries?**

Everyone in the Netherlands is entitled to equal treatment. This right is considered so important that it is enshrined in Article 1 of the Dutch Constitution. Discrimination on any grounds is prohibited. Unfortunately, racism and discrimination still occur in Dutch society. Although it is difficult to provide specific advice on how to feel more at home, I want to stress that the Dutch government actively and continuously fights discrimination and racism, together with many national and local authorities. Central in this effort is the National Coordinator against Racism and Discrimination, Rabin Baldewsingh, who is in close contact with stakeholders throughout society, from neighborhood centers to schools, businesses and places of worship. These conversations provide valuable insights for the implementation of the National Programme against Discrimination and Racism.

✍ **What are the noteworthy and well-known success stories of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands according to you?**

Dutch people with Turkish roots are active and successful in all walks of life. Of course, there are famous individuals like the musician Karsu Dönmez I mentioned previously. But that is just the tip of the iceberg: from entrepreneurs and bankers to school teachers and doctors, from designers and nurses to parliamentarians and engineers, Turkish-Dutch people contribute to all parts of our society and economy.

✍ **You have been living in Türkiye for a while. Did you have the opportunity to see different regions of Türkiye? What are your observations about Türkiye and the Turkish people? How is your life here?**

I feel very lucky to have had the opportunity to visit many beautiful places in Türkiye, including Istanbul; the Aegean, Black Sea, and Mediterranean coasts, Bursa, Hatay, Gaziantep and Yozgat. But there

are still countless other places I would love to visit. From the first day I arrived in Ankara I have felt at home. It is said of many countries how hospitable their people are, but truly, I have never experienced a people as welcoming and hospitable as the Turkish people. Wherever I go, people are so incredibly friendly it feels like a "warm bath" as we say in the Netherlands.

✍ Do you have an unforgettable memory?

I have many, but one of the most pronounced memories I have is related to the devastating earthquakes which hit Türkiye in 2023. In the aftermath of the earthquakes I visited Hatay and Kahramanmaraş multiple times and what I remember very strongly is the remarkable resilience and solidarity the people there showed. The heroic efforts of all those humanitarian workers, healthcare professionals and citizens who worked around the clock to save lives made an unforgettable impression on me.

I am proud to say The Dutch people also expressed their sympathy by generously donating a total amount of 128 million euros to support the earthquake victims in Türkiye and Syria. I myself contributed a small amount as well by participating in the Bosphorus Swim in 2023, raising funds for the Karsu Foundation.

✍ What can Türkiye learn from the Netherlands and what can the Netherlands learn from Türkiye?

I already mentioned the incredible hospitality of the Turkish people, I think that is something the Netherlands could be

"From entrepreneurs and bankers to school teachers and doctors, from designers and nurses to parliamentarians and engineers, Turkish-Dutch people contribute to all parts of our society and economy."

inspired by. The Netherlands is the world champion of cycling and I am proud to say we are the only country with more bicycles than inhabitants. I think it would be nice to see more cyclists in Türkiye as well, and I champion the efforts of municipalities across the country who invest in making their towns more bicycle friendly.

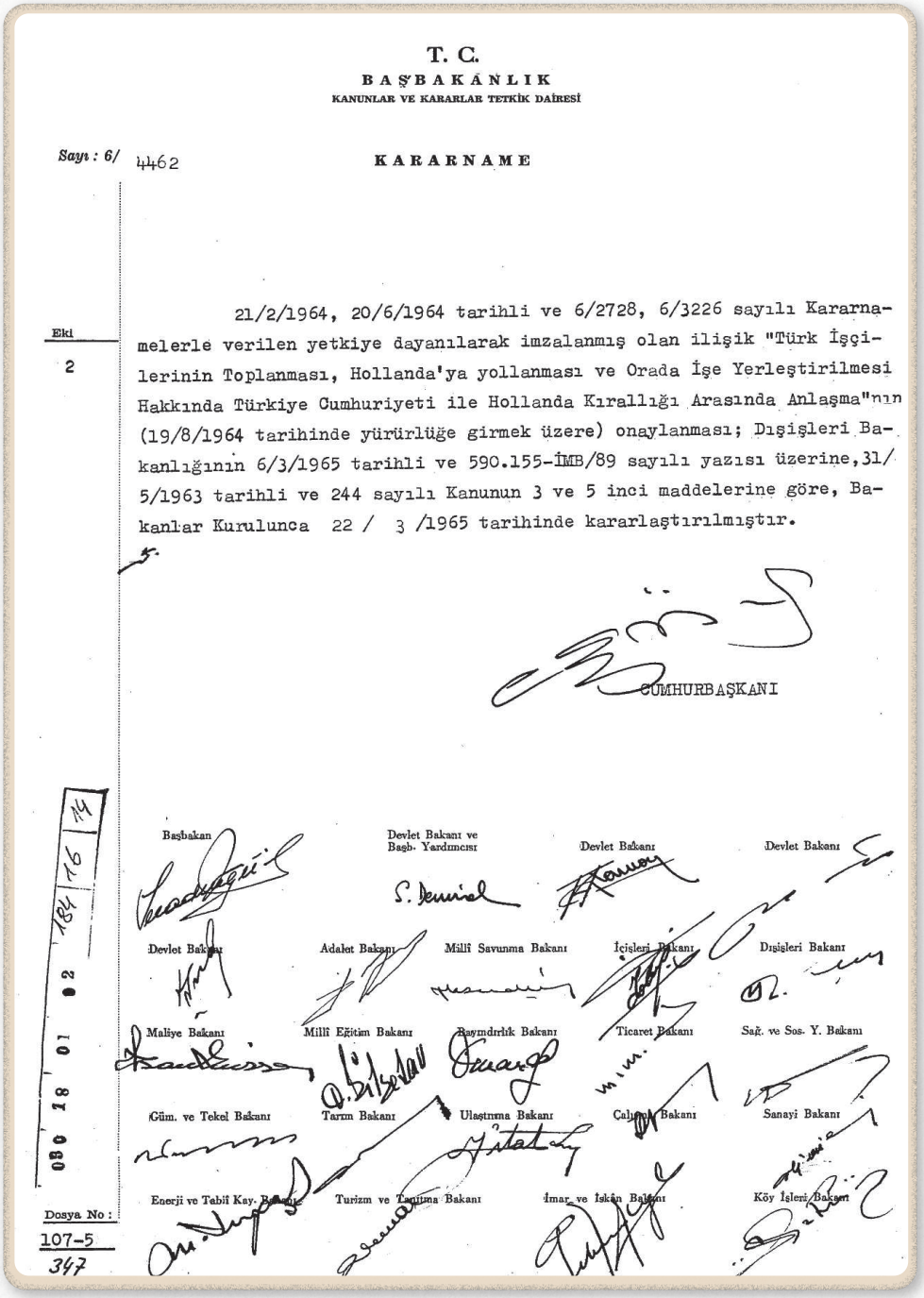
What do you think about the popularity of Turkish cuisine and cultural events in the Netherlands? What are your favourite Turkish dishes?

I am glad to say there is a lot of cultural exchange between our countries and Turkish music and art are very popular in the Netherlands. Turkish food is engrained in Dutch society: Döner and lahmacun are nowadays basically as Dutch as liquorice and peanut butter. I myself love Turkish food as well. I have a real sweet tooth so I love Turkish desserts in particular, such as künefe, sütlaç, and irmik helvası.

Finally, is there a message you would like to give to the readers of this interview?

I am very grateful for our century of friendship and I look forward to our next one hundred years of friendship. That is also why I think it is very important to invest in the next generation. As an embassy we organize many activities for young people, from translating Dutch children's literature to children's theatre and art therapy for children affected by the earthquakes. We believe children are the future. Let me finish by saying: *Bu güzel dostluğumuz sonsuza kadar sürsün.* (May our cherished friendship last forever.)

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE



T. C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
KANUNLAR VE KARARLAR TETKİK DAİRESİ

Sayı : 6/ 4462

KARARNAME

Eki
2

21/2/1964, 20/6/1964 tarihli ve 6/2728, 6/3226 sayılı Kararnamelerle verilen yetkiye dayanılarak imzalanmış olan ilişik "Türk İşçilerinin Toplanması, Hollanda'ya yollanması ve Orada İşe Yerleştirilmesi Hakkında Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Hollanda Kırallığı Arasında Anlaşma"nın (19/8/1964 tarihinde yürürlüğe girmek üzere) onaylanması; Dışişleri Bakanlığının 6/3/1965 tarihli ve 590.155-İMB/89 sayılı yazısı üzerine, 31/5/1963 tarihli ve 244 sayılı Kanunun 3 ve 5 inci maddelerine göre, Bakanlar Kurulunca 22 / 3 /1965 tarihinde kararlaştırılmıştır.

CUMHURBAŞKANI

Başbakan
Devlet Bakanı ve Başb. Yardımcısı
Devlet Bakanı
Devlet Bakanı
Devlet Bakanı
Adalet Bakanı
Millî Savunma Bakanı
İçişleri Bakanı
Dışişleri Bakanı
Maliye Bakanı
Millî Eğitim Bakanı
Bayındırlık Bakanı
Ticaret Bakanı
Sağ. ve Sos. Y. Bakanı
Güm. ve Tekel Bakanı
Tarım Bakanı
Ulaştırma Bakanı
Çalışma Bakanı
Sanayi Bakanı
Enerji ve Tabiî Kay. Bakanı
Turizm ve Tanıtma Bakanı
İmar ve İskân Bakanı
Köy İşleri Bakanı

Dosya No :
107-5
347

Ratification of the 1964 agreement between the governments of Türkiye and the Netherlands on the selection, dispatch, and employment of Turkish workers in the Netherlands. The appendix to this document consists of eight pages and is presented on the following two pages.

Source: *Directorate of State Archives*

TÜRK İŞÇİLERİNİN TOPLANMASI, HOLLANDA'YA YOLLANMASI
VE ORADA İŞE YERLEŞTİRİLMESİ HAKKINDA TÜRKİYE
CUMHURİYETİ İLE HOLLANDA KRALLIĞI
ARASINDA ANLAŞMA

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti ile
Hollanda Hükümeti

İki memleket arasındaki dostluk bağlarını ve karşılıklı işgücünün ihtiyaçlarının gözönünde tutarak,

Türk işçilerinin Hollanda'da çalıştırılmalarının sağlanmasının her iki memlekette yararına olduğunu kabul ederek,

Türk işçilerinin toplanması, Hollanda'ya yollanması ve orada işe yerleştirilmesi hakkında bir anlaşmaya varmak arzusu ile,

aşağıdaki hususlar üzerinde mutabık kalmışlardır.

GENEL HÜKÜMLER

Madde 1

Türk işçilerinin toplanması, Hollanda'ya yollanması ve orada işe yerleştirilmesi konusunda:

Türkiye yönünden, Ankara'da İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu (Bundan sonra Kurum olarak geçecektir) yetkilidir.

Hollanda yönünden, Lahey'de Sosyal İşler ve Sağlık Bakanlığı İşverme Müdürlüğü (Bundan sonra Direction olarak geçecektir) yetkilidir.

Madde 2

1 - Direction, yetkili Türk makamlarına gerekli tedbirleri zamanında alabilmelerini ve işçi taleplerini karşılayabilmelerini sağlamak üzere, emsaline göre bir Hollanda sanayiinin türk işgücü ihtiyacını, iş ve sanayi kolları ile meslekler belirtilmek suretile, Kuruma bildirir.

2 - Kurum, mevcut işçilerle taleplerin ne nisbette karşılanabileceğini toptan Direction'a bildirir.

030 18 01 02 184 16 14

Madde 3

1 - Direction, iş ve ücret genel şartları ile yaşama şartları hakkında işçilerin aydınlatılmalarını sağlayabilecek bütün bilgileri Kuruma verir.

2 - Direction, Hollanda sanayiinin çeşitli kesimlerindeki ortalama ücretler ve ortalama çalışma süreleri, vergi, sosyal sigorta primleri ve saire için ücretlerden yapılacak kesinti miktarları ile genel olarak fiatler ve geçim şartları hakkındaki bütün bilgiyi verir.

3 - Bu konuda gerektikçe tamamleyici bilgi verilir.

İŞÇİLERİN TOPLANMASI VE İŞE YERLEŞTİRİLMESİ

Madde 4

1 - Direction, 2 nci maddede belirtilen bilgiyi dikkate alarak, Hollanda işverenlerinin iş tekliflerini Kuruma bildirir.

2 - İş teklifleri, işin niteliği, nevi ve müddeti, brüt ve net ücretler, çalışma şartları, işçilerin işe ve ibate imkânları ile diğer lüzumlu ve faideli bilgileri tam olarak kapsamalıdır.

3 - Bir iş teklifi müsait karşılandığı takdirde, Kurum, bu iş teklifinin şartları ile diğer yararlı bilgilerin, ilgili işçilere tezelden duyurulmasını sağlayacak tedbirleri alır.

Madde 5

Türk işçilerinin Hollanda'da çalışabilecekleri yaş hadleri aşağıdaki şekilde tesbit edilmiştir:

Kalifiye olmayan işçiler için, 21 - 35 yaş arası.

Kalifiye ve uzman işçiler için, 23 - 45 yaş arası.

Bu yaş hadleri, ismen işçi istenmesi halinde veya özel hallerde Kurum ile Direction'un anlaşması ile değiştirilebilir.

Madde 6

1 - Hollanda'da bir işe yerleştirilmek üzere aday gösterilen işçilerin sağlık muayeneleri Kurumca sağlanır. Adaylar, meslekî ehliyet ve Direction'un koyduğu diğer özel şartlar bakımından Kurum tarafından yoklamaya tâbi tutulur.

./.

030 18 01 02 184 16 14

2 - Her adayın tâbi tutulacağı bu yoklamanın sonucu, şekli müştereken tesbit olunan formülere işlenir.

3 - Kurum, sabıkâ sicilleri temiz olmayan ya da sosyal ve ahlâkî bakımlardan kötü tavır ve hareketleri bilinen adayların tekdim edilmemesi hususuna itina eder.

4 - Kabul edilen adayların listesi ve herbiri için doldurulan formülerler Kurumca Direction'a gönderilir.

Madde 7

1 - Direction, Kurum tarafından tekdim edilen adayların kesin seçmesini yapmakla görevli bir hey'eti Türkiye'ye gönderebilir.

2 - Kurum, yukarıda adı geçen hey'etin incelemelerini etkili ve çabuk yapabilmesi için, müştereken tesbit edilecek seçme yerlerinde lüzumlu bina ve vesaiteri hey'et emrine verir.

Madde 8

Direction, kesin olarak kabul edilmiş bulunan adayların bir listesini, mümkün olduğu kadar çabuk, Kuruma gönderir.

Madde 9

1 - Direction, kesin olarak kabul edilen her işçi için, müştereken tesbit edilen bir modele uygun olarak Türk ve Hollanda dilleri ile iki nüsha halinde hazırlanmış ve işveren tarafından imzalanmış bir iş sözleşmesini Kuruma gönderir.

Bu iş sözleşmesi işçi tarafından Türkiye'den hareketinden önce imzalanmış olmalıdır.

2 - İş sözleşmesinin geçerlik süresi bir yıldır. Müştereken kabul edilecek özel hallerde iş sözleşmelerinin süreleri, sekiz aydan fazla olmak kaydiyle, bir yıldan az olabilir.

Madde 10

1 - 9 uncu maddede bahsi geçen iş sözleşmesinin alınmasını müteakip Kurum işçiye pasaport çıkarılmasını sağlar.

2 - İşçi, ayrıca, medenî durumunu, bekâr ile yükümlü olduğu aile fertlerini gösterir belgelerle 5 nci maddenin 3 üncü bendinde zikredilen adlî iyi durum belgesini de hâmil olmalıdır.

030 18 01 02 184 16 14

Madde 11

1 - Kurum, kabul edilmiş olan işçilerin, Direction'la müştereken tesbit edilen tarihlerde ve yerlerde hareketa hazır bulunmalarına itina eder.

2 - İşçilerin hareket yerinden Hollanda'ya nakilleri, Kurum ile danışmadan sonra Direction'ca düzenlenir ve masraflar Direction tarafından doğruca ilgililere ödenir.

3 - Bu maddede sözü geçen nakil masrafları işverenlere aittir. İşverenler bu masrafları Direction'a ödemeyi taahhüt etmekle mükelleftirler.

Madde 12

Türk işçilerinin Türkiye'den Hollanda'ya hava yolu ile nakledilmeleri halinde nakil içinc iki memleketin havayolu müessseseleri iştirak edebilir.

Madde 13

Hollanda işverenleri, Direction'un veya hey'etin işçinin meslekî ehliyetine müteallik kararına karşı ancak işçinin işindeki ehliyetsizliği aşikâr şekilde sabit olduğu takdirde Hollanda Çalışma Büroları nezdinde itirazda bulunabilirler. Bu gibi hallerde, Hollanda Çalışma Büroları ilgililere meslekî ehliyetlerine uygun iş teminine çalışırlar.

Madde 14

İsmen yapılan taleplcr ancak Hollanda'da oturan Türk işçileri ile veya Hollanda'da yerleşmiş işverenlerle ilişkileri olan Türk işçilerine ait olduğu takdirde Direction tarafından Kuruma intikal ettirilir. Bu talepler hakkında yapılacak işlemi Kurum kararlaştırır.

Madde 15

1 - 5 nci madde gereğince yapılacak ilk seçmeye ait masraflar Türklere aittir. Bu masraflar, işçilerin tıbbî muayene ve meslekî seçme masraflarını, oturdukları yerlerden mülâkat ve seçme mahallerine kadar olan seyahat giderlerini ve seçme yerlerindeki ikametleri süresince işçe ve ibate masraflarını kapsar.

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2 - Hey'etin yaptıracağı özel tıbbî muayene ve meslekî seçmeye ait masraflar Hollanda'lılara aittir.

3 - Hey'etin çalışma masrafları Hollanda'lılar tarafından karşılanır.

Madde 16

Direction, bu Anlaşma çerçevesi içinde Hollanda'ya varan işçilerin listelerini, işverenlerin adresleri ile işçilerin Hollanda'daki ilk adreslerini belirtmek suretiyle, Lahey'deki Türkiye Büyükelçiliğine gönderir.

GENEL ÇALIŞMA ŞARTLARI

Madde 17

1 - Hollanda'da çalışan Türk işçileri, Hollanda'lı işçiler için uygulanan ücret, (ücretli izin dahil) ve çalışma şartlarından, kanun hükümlerinden, toplu iş sözleşmeleriyle meslekî örf ve mahallî âdetlerden aşağı şekilde faydalanırlar.

2 - Türk işçileri, işçi sağlığı ve iş güvenliği ile lojman konularındaki kanunların uygulanması bakımından Hollanda'lı işçilere sağlanan hak ve himayelerden Hollanda'lı işçilerle eşit şekilde faydalanırlar.

3 - Türk işçileri, Hollanda mevzuatının (aile yardımları dahil) sosyal güvenlik konusunda Hollanda'lı işçilere sağladığı avantajlardan, mevzuattaki şartları yerine getirmeleri kaydiyle, faydalanırlar.

4 - Hollanda makamları, bu hükümlerin uygulanmasına ve özellikle işçinin Hollanda'ya varışı anında işe alınma şartlarının mezkûr hükümlere uygun olmasına itina gösterirler.

5 - Türk işçilerinin, ayrılma, iş anlaşmazlığı halinde, Hollandalılara uygulanan aynı şartlar dahilinde, yetkili idarî veya adlî Hollanda mercilerine müracaat etmeye hakları vardır.

Madde 18

Türk işçileri tasarruflerinin tamamını Hollanda'da yürürlükte olan hükümler dairesinde Türkiye'ye gönderebilirler.

080 18 01 02 184 16 14

Madde 19

1 - Yetkili Hollanda makamları ve Hollandalı işverenler, Türk işçilerine, özellikle istihdamlarının başlangıç devresinde, yeni muhitlerine intibaklarını sağlamak bakımından gerekli her türlü yardımda bulunacaklardır.

2 - Akit tarafların yetkili makamları, Hollanda ve Türk sosyal ve dinî teşekküllerinin, Hollanda'daki Türk işçilerinin intibakını kolaylaştırmak gayesine matuf bütün teşebbüslerini hayırhahlıkla tetkik ve tervic edeceklerdir. Yukarıda zikredilen Türk ve Hollanda teşekkülleri arasında işbirliği yapılması da kolaylaştırılacaktır.

Madde 20

1 - Hollanda makamlarının müsaadesile iş sözleşmesi uzatılmayan veya yeni bir işe girmiyen işçi, iş sözleşmesi süresinin sonunda Türkiye'ye dönmek zorunluğundadır.

2 - İş sözleşmesinin sona ermesi veya bozulması hallerinde memlekete dönüş masrafları Hollanda'lı işverenlerce karşılanır. Bununla birlikte, sözleşme işçinin ağır bir kusuru sonucunda bozulmuşsa veya bozma için işçinin ileri sürdüğü sebepler varit değilse, dönüş masrafları işçi tarafından ödenir. Bu konuda karar verme yetkisi işyerinin bulunduğu bölgenin Çalışma Bürosuna aittir.

3 - İlk iş sözleşmesi yenilenen işçi izalni Türkiye'de geçirmek isterse, gidiş-dönüş yol masrafları işveren tarafından karşılanır. Müteakip yenilemelerde işçilere böyle bir kolaylık gösterilmesi zorunluğu yoktur.

SON HÜKÜMLER

Madde 21

Hollanda makamları, bu anlaşma çerçevesi içinde sevkiye işçileri, kamu düzeni ve güvenliği sebepleri ile Türkiye'ye iade edebilirler.

080 18 01 02 184 16 14

Madde 22

1 - Akit taraflardan birinin isteği üzerine, en çok üçer temsilciden mütekkil bir Karma Komisyon kurulabilir. Taraflar gerektiği kadar uzman bulundurabilirler.

2 - Bu Anlaşmanın uygulanması sırasında çıkacak güçlüklerin çözümlenmesinde Kurumla Direction arasında bir mutabakata varılamadığı takdirde, Karma Komisyon bu güçlüklere çözüm yolu bulmaya çalışır.

Bundan başka Karma Komisyon, Türk işçilerinin toplanması, Hollanda'ya yollanması ve orada işe yerleştirilmesi ile ilgili genel nitelikteki meselelerle de meşgul olabilir.

Gerekirse ele aldığı meselelerle ilgili olarak Akit Taraflara teklifler yapar.

3 - Karma Komisyon iç teşkilâtını ve çalışma tarzını kendisi tesbit eder. Toplantılar sırasıyla Türkiye'de ve Hollanda'da yapılır.

Madde 23

Bu Anlaşma hükümleri, Hollanda bakımından Krallığın sadece Avrupa'daki toprakları için uygulanır.

Madde 24

İşbu Anlaşmanın bir Türkçe tercümesi Türkiye Hükümeti tarafından Hollanda Hükümetine, bir Flemenkçe tercümesi ise Hollanda Hükümeti tarafından Türk Hükümetine tevdi edilecektir.

Madde 25

1 - Bu Anlaşma imzası tarihinde yürürlüğe girer.

2 - İşbu Anlaşma 31 Aralık 1934 tarihine kadar mutebardır ve hitamından en az üç ay önce akitlerden biri tarafından diplomatik yolla feshedilmediği takdirde bir yıl daha uzatılmış sayılır.

080 18 01 02 184 16 14

Yukarıdaki hususları doğrulamak için Akit Tarafların yetkili temsilcileri işbu Anlaşmayı imzalamışlardır.

19 Ağustos 1934 günü Lahey'de Fransızca olarak iki nüsha yapılmıştır.

Türkiye Cumhuriyeti Hükümeti Adına İmza	Hollanda Krallığı Hükümeti Adına İmza

080 18 01 02 184 16 14

Hollanda İrtibat Bürosu - Ankara

HOLLANDA'YA ÇALIŞMAĞA GİDECEK İŞÇİLERE ÖNEMLİ DUYURU :

1. İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu aracılığı ile gönderilmiş olmanıza rağmen Hollanda'da çalışabilmeniz için çalışma müsaadesine ihtiyacınız vardır.
2. Bu çalışma müsaadesi ilk olarak işverence verilecek, Hollanda'ya varışınızı müteakip bulunduğunuz bölgede Hollanda İşçi Bulma Kurumunca yenilenecektir.
3. Verilecek olan çalışma müsaadesi adınıza düzenlenecek ve 12 ay kontratlı olarak çalışabileceğiniz işveren firma için geçerli olacaktır. Bu firmanın adı da verilecek olan çalışma müsaadesinde belirtilecektir. Yani bu çalışma müsaadesi ancak halen çalışmakta olacağınız firma için geçerli olacaktır.
4. Çalışma müsaadesinin bitiminde tekrar uzatılabilmesi, ancak eski işyeri ile işçinin karşılıklı anlaşması ile mümkündür.
5. Hollanda'da uzun süre çalışabilmeniz için bir yıllık kontrat yaptığınız firmada verimli bir çalışma içinde bulunmanız gerekli ve menfaatınız icabıdır. Anlaşmaya vardığınız takdirde kontratınızı yenilemeniz mümkün olabilecektir.
6. Hollanda'da bulunduğunuz süre içinde, yukarıda izah edilen konuları herhangi bir sebeple yerine getiremediğiniz takdirde - kendinizce çözüm bulmadan önce - bulunduğunuz bölge İşçi Bulma Kurumuna müracaat ederek yardımlarını istiyebilirsiniz.
7. Herhangi bir sebeple çalışma müsaadeniz 12 ay süre ile yenilenmediği takdirde Türkiye'ye dönmek durumunda kalacaksınız.
8. Çalışma müsaadeniz olmadan veya yenilenmediği takdirde Hollanda'da çalışmanız imkânsızdır.

Yukarıda izah edilen konular tarafımdan okundu, kabul edildi ve iki nüsha olarak Ankara'da imzalandı.

Tarih: 23/.../19..73

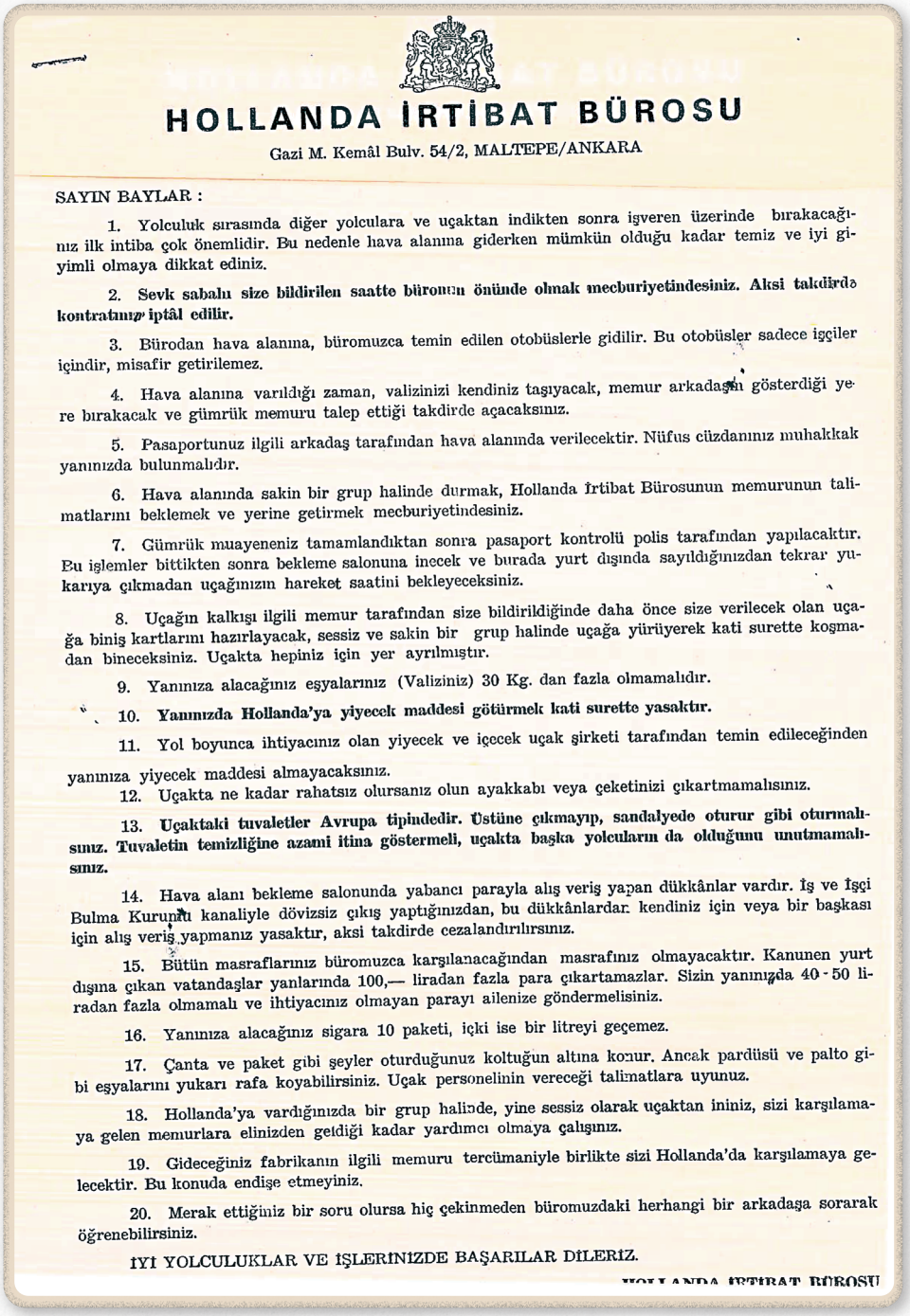
İmza

Doğum tarihi : .....

Adı Soyadı : .....

Doğum yeri : .....

Declaration signed by workers in 1973 at the Netherlands Liaison Office in Ankara regarding work permits for those going from Türkiye to the Netherlands.
Source: *Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ankara*



HOLLANDA İRTİBAT BÜROSU

Gazi M. Kemâl Bulv. 54/2, MALTEPE/ANKARA

SAYIN BAYLAR :

1. Yolculuk sırasında diğer yolculara ve uçaktan indikten sonra işveren üzerinde bırakacağınız ilk intiba çok önemlidir. Bu nedenle hava alanına giderken mümkün olduğu kadar temiz ve iyi giyimli olmaya dikkat ediniz.

2. **Sevk sabalı size bildirilen saatte büronun önünde olmak mecburiyetindesiniz. Aksi takdirde kontratınız iptâl edilir.**

3. Bürodan hava alanına, büromuzca temin edilen otobüslerle gidilir. Bu otobüsler sadece işçiler içindir, misafir getirilemez.

4. Hava alanına varıldığı zaman, valizinizi kendiniz taşıyacak, memur arkadaşın gösterdiği yere bırakacak ve gümrük memuru talep ettiği takdirde açacaksınız.

5. Pasaportunuz ilgili arkadaş tarafından hava alanında verilecektir. Nüfus cüzdanınız muhakkak yanınızda bulunmalıdır.

6. Hava alanında sakin bir grup halinde durmak, Hollanda İrtibat Bürosunun memurunun talimatlarını beklemek ve yerine getirmek mecburiyetindesiniz.

7. Gümrük muayeneniz tamamlandıktan sonra pasaport kontrolü polis tarafından yapılacaktır. Bu işlemler bittikten sonra bekleme salonuna inecek ve burada yurt dışında sayıldığınızdan tekrar yukarıya çıkmadan uçağınızın hareket saatini bekleyeceksiniz.

8. Uçağın kalkışı ilgili memur tarafından size bildirildiğinde daha önce size verilecek olan uçağa biniş kartlarını hazırlayacak, sessiz ve sakin bir grup halinde uçağa yürüyerek kati surette koşmadan bineceksiniz. Uçakta hepiniz için yer ayrılmıştır.

9. Yanınıza alacağınız eşyalarınız (Valiziniz) 30 Kg. dan fazla olmamalıdır.

10. **Yanınızda Hollanda'ya yiyecek maddesi götürmek kati surette yasaktır.**

11. Yol boyunca ihtiyacınız olan yiyecek ve içecek uçak şirketi tarafından temin edileceğinden yanınıza yiyecek maddesi almayacaksınız.

12. Uçakta ne kadar rahatsız olursanız olun ayakkabı veya çeketinizi çıkartmamalısınız.

13. **Uçaktaki tuvaletler Avrupa tipindedir. Üstüne çıkmayıp, sandalyede oturur gibi oturmalısınız. Tuvaletin temizliğine azami itina göstermeli, uçakta başka yolcuların da olduğunu unutmamalısınız.**

14. Hava alanı bekleme salonunda yabancı parayla alış veriş yapan dükkânlar vardır. İş ve İşçi Bulma Kurumu kanaliyle dövizsiz çıkış yaptığınızdan, bu dükkânlardan kendiniz için veya bir başkası için alış veriş yapmanız yasaktır, aksi takdirde cezalandırılırsınız.

15. Bütün masraflarınız büromuzca karşılanacağından masrafınız olmayacaktır. Kanunen yurt dışına çıkan vatandaşlar yanlarında 100,— liradan fazla para çıkartamazlar. Sizin yanınızda 40 - 50 liradan fazla olmamalı ve ihtiyacınız olmayan parayı ailenize göndermelisiniz.

16. Yanınıza alacağınız sigara 10 paketi, içki ise bir litreyi geçemez.

17. Çanta ve paket gibi şeyler oturduğunuz koltuğun altına konur. Ancak pardüsü ve palto gibi eşyalarını yukarı rafa koyabilirsiniz. Uçak personelinin vereceği talimatlara uyunuz.

18. Hollanda'ya vardığınızda bir grup halinde, yine sessiz olarak uçaktan ininiz, sizi karşılamaya gelen memurlara elinizden geldiği kadar yardımcı olmaya çalışınız.

19. Gideceğiniz fabrikanın ilgili memuru tercümaniyle birlikte sizi Hollanda'da karşılamaya gelecektir. Bu konuda endişe etmeyiniz.

20. Merak ettiğiniz bir soru olursa hiç çekinmeden büromuzdaki herhangi bir arkadaşa sorarak öğrenebilirsiniz.

İYİ YOLCULUKLAR VE İŞLERİNİZDE BAŞARILAR DİLERİZ.

HOLLANDA İRTİBAT BÜROSU

Information sheet prepared by the Netherlands Liaison Office in Ankara on travel and reception for workers going from Türkiye to the Netherlands.
Source: *Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in Ankara*

Passport of a Turkish worker in the Netherlands.
Source: *Turks Archief, turkarchief.nl*

Image of first-generation Turkish workers attending a traffic lesson in Deventer in 1970.
Source: *Collectie Overijssel / Photographer Dirk Willem Nijland*

HOLLANDA 7 BİN TÜRK İŞÇİSİ İSTİYOR

ROTTERDAM, AA

Hollanda resmî makamlarının açıkladığına göre 1970 yılı içinde Hollanda, Türkiye'den yedi bine yakın işçi alacaktır. Hâlen Hollanda'da 18 binin üzerinde olan işçi sayısı gözönüne alınırsa önümüzdeki yıl Hollanda'daki işçi sayısının 25 bine yaklaşacağı sanılmaktadır.

Newspaper report on the Netherlands' plan to recruit nearly 7,000 workers from Türkiye in 1970.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 14-12-1969*

HOLLANDA'YA İLK KEZ KADIN İŞÇİ GÖNDERDİK

LAHEY, KÂMURAN SÜMERCAN bildiriyor

Hollanda Hükûmetinin isteği üzerine, ilk kez Hollanda'ya Türkiye'den kadın işçi gönderilmesine başlanmıştır. İlk grup olarak 40 Türk kadın işçisi Hollanda'ya gelmiş ve Amsterdam şehrinde turistik otellerin temizlik işlerinde çalışmaya başlamışlardır.

Altı aylık bir kontratla gelen Türk kadın işçileri verimli oldukları takdirde, Hollanda bundan böyle kadın işçi ihtiyacını Yugoslavya'nın yanında Türkiye'den de karşılayacaktır.

Newspaper report on the first female workers sent from Türkiye in 1971 at the request of the Dutch government.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 13-04-1971*

P.W.RUSSEL gehoord en gezien

ISMAIL GÖKDEMIR LEEFT VOOR ZIJN UITVINDINGEN

DE DIEF GAAT OP DE FOTO

Türk işçisi İsmail Hakkı Gökdemir'in buluşundan bahseden bir Hollanda gazı

Türk işçi, hırsızı yakalatan bir sistem icad etti

Hollanda gazeteleri oto hırsızlarını yıldıran bu buluşa geniş yer verdi...

LAHEY, KÂMURAN SÜMERCAN bildiriyor

36 YAŞINDAKİ Türk işçisi İsmail Hakkı Gökdemir, otomobil hırsızları na karşı sesli ve fotoğraflı bir sistem icat etmiştir. Hollanda gazeteleri Türk işçinin bu icadına büyük yer vermişlerdir. İsmail Hakkı Gökdemir, sekiz hafta önce kapısının önüne bıraktığı otomobilin camı kırılınca hırsızlara karşı bir çare bulmayı düşünmeye başlamıştır. Yeni icadı için bir hafta düşünen Gökdemir, sonunda buluşunu kendi otomobilinde uygulamış ve başarı kazanmıştır.

Gökdemir sistemi izah ediyor...

BULUŞUN ÖZELLİKLERİ

Bir hırsız, otomobili çalmak için kapıyı açınca, otomatik fotoğraf makinesi derhal çalışmaktadır. Fotoğrafının çekildiğinden habersiz olan hırsız, birden acı acı çalmağa başlayan klâksonla da şaşkına dönmektedir. Neye uğradığını bilmeyen hırsız, arabanın uzun farları ile sinyallerinin de yandığını görünce, ya kaçabilmekte, ya da yetişenler tarafından yakalanmaktadır. Bütün bu sistemi bir anda durduracak düğme ise ancak otomobilin sahibi tarafından bilinmekte ve bu düğme de, her arabanın ayrı bir yerine monte edilmektedir.

Buluşun bir başka özelliği de tehlikeli durumlarda uyarma klâk sonu çalmasıdır. Otobanlarda araba âni fren yapınca, arkadan gelen arabaların dikkatini çekmek için klâkson yine acı acı çalmaktadır. Eğer otomobil bir kazâ geçirip denize veya göle düşerse, suya gömülünceye kadar klâkson otomatik olarak çalmağa devam etmektedir.

Otomobilin içine yerleştirilen fotoğraf makinesi, hırsızın resmini çekiyor....

ASSUBAYLIKTAN AYRILMIŞ

Asuubaylıktan ayrılan İsmail Hakkı Gökdemir, çocukluğundan beri yeni buluşlar peşinde olduğunu, tahta bisiklet yaparak onunla dolaştığını söylemektedir. Beşiktaş'taki atölyesi istimlâk edilince Avrupa'ya gelen Gökdemir, sekiz yıl Almanya'nın Oberhauzen şehrindeki ziraat makineleri yapan bir fabrikada tamirci olarak çalışmıştır. Gizli bir aşk nedeniyle Almanya'yı terkederek iki buçuk yıl evvel Hollanda'ya gelen Gökdemir, Katwijk şehrindeki Slotboom N. V. fabrikasında yine tamirci olarak çalışmakta, haftada 220 florin almaktadır.

BAŞKA BULUŞLAR İÇİN ÇALIŞIYOR

İsmail Hakkı şu günlerde Hollanda'da günün adamıdır. Bütün günlük gazeteler kendisi ile fotoğraflı röportajlar yapmaktadır.

İsmail Hakkı Gökdemir son zamanlarda çoğalan banka soyguculuğunu önlemek gayesiyle soygun ânında kendiliğinden kapıları dışardan kilitlenecek buluşun çalışmalarına başladığını söylemektedir.

Newspaper report on the invention by a Turkish worker in the Netherlands that helped catch car thieves

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 02-12-1972*

Photo of Turkish worker Remzi Şen with his Dutch colleagues at the Verto Factory, which produced steel cables, in 1987

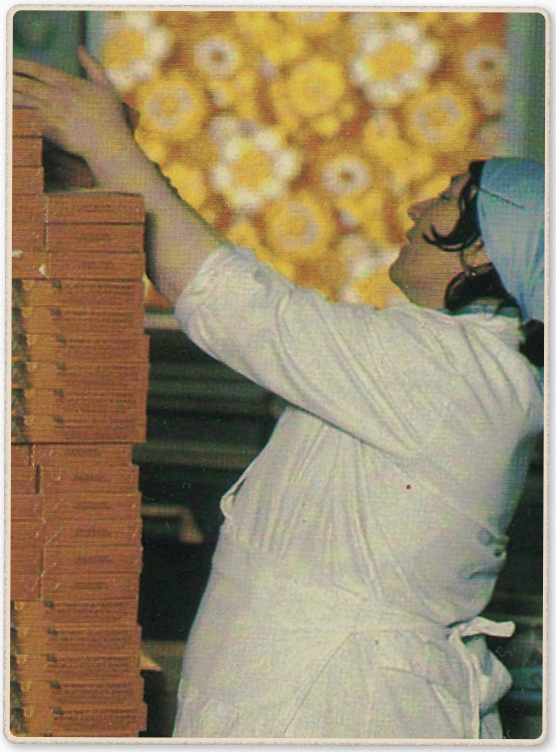
Source: *Turks Archief, turkarchief.nl*

Turkish workers at the Boddaert iron foundry in Middelburg in 1975

Source: *Zeeuws Archief, Photo Archive Dutch J. den Hollander, no. 119*

A Turkish worker reading a newspaper in Dordrecht

Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Collectie Turkse Dordtenaren, 669_1327,https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/BE76DB84AC8711E489FB00163E535DC5/showbrowse*



Turkish female worker at the Droste chocolate factory in 1978

Source: *Noord-Hollands Archief / 1100 - Beeldcollectie van de gemeente Haarlem, Productie proces Droste pastilles/chocolade. Foto: Het opstapelen van de verpakte Droste pastilles. Anoniem, 22294, https://hdl.handle.net/21.12102/B57D0219C2484123907B411AADC624CB*

Turkish worker at the Droste chocolate factory in Haarlem in 1978

Source: *Noord-Hollands Archief / 1100 - Beeldcollectie van de gemeente Haarlem, Productie proces Droste pastilles/chocolade. Foto: De Droste pastilles krijgen vorm, Anoniem, 22291, https://hdl.handle.net/21.12102/ECF7E0142001462FB5B3ECF7B4E5DF62*

Hazırlayan: CANDAN SELEK ATAÖV

bir bilene soralım

Yurt dışındaki işçiler için...

ÇALIŞMA MÜŞAVİR ve ATAŞELERİN GÖREVLERİ

Çalışma Müşavir ve Ataşelerimizin görevleri, yabancı ülkelerde çalışan Türk işçilerinin hak ve menfaatlerinin korunmasında bağlı oldukları misyona yardımcı olmak ve işçilerin işverenle olan münasebetlerini düzenlemek; Birleşmiş Milletler ve buna bağlı ihtisas teşekkülleri ve diğer milletlerarası teşekkülleri, Çalışma Bakanlığının görev alanındaki çalışmalarını izlemek; sanayide ileri gitmiş memleketlerin işgücü, sosyal güvenlik çalışma şartları, işgüvenliği ve meslek eğitimi konularında aldıkları yeni tedbirleri takip ve tesbit edip Çalışma Bakanlığına bildirmek ve bu çerçeve dairesinde bulundukları memleketlerdeki işçi ve işveren kuruluşlara ile bağlantı kurmaktan ibarettir.

GÜVEN TÜRKMAN
Çalışma Bakanlığı
Yurtdışı İşçi Sorunları
Genel Müdürü

ALMANYA
Müşavir Bekâm Bilaloğlu
Türkische Botschaft
Arbeits — Und Sozialabteilung
53 Bonn—Bad Godesberg
Mehlen Utestrasse, 47
Ataşe Yr. Şahabettin Normanlıgil
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
1 Berlin 12
Kantstrasse, 115
Ataşe A. Daniş Doğru
Türkisches Konsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
43 Essen
Hindenburgstrasse, 7
Ataşe Ceyhun Güney
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
6 Frankfurt/a. Main
Fahrgasse, 26
Ataşe Fahri Yücel
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
2 Hamburg 50 (ALTONA)
Schlee Strasse 12
Ataşe Erol Tunçsiper
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
3 Hannover
Jakobistrasse, 23
Ataşe Fuat Aydemir
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
5 Köln 80
Arnsbergerstrasse, 11
Ataşe Erol Acar
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
8 München 19
Menzingerstrasse, 3
Ataşe Yr. Erdoğan İçen
Türkischen Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozialattache
85 Nürnberg
Westtorgraben 1, 11 Stock
Ataşe Erciment Elibol
Türkisches Generalkonsulat
Arbeits — Und Sozalattache
7 Stuttgart 1
Hirschtrasse, 29
HOLLANDA
Ataşe Cavit Demir
Turkish Embassy
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Jan Evertstraat, 15
Den Haag
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Ataşe Hüseyin Pekin
Consulat General de Turquie
Bureau de l'attache du travail
Lavater Strasse, 61
8002 Zurich

Newspaper report listing the duties and names of Labor Attachés and Advisors working abroad

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 29-09-1973*

ziekteverzuim buitenlandse arbeider laag

De buitenlandse werknemer heeft in Nederland het imago van vaker ziek te zijn dan zijn Nederlandse collega.

In de wachtkamer bij de huisarts is de gastarbeider een vertrouwd beeld geworden.

Het blijkt echter dat dit vaker ziek zijn en het daarmee gepaard gaande ziekteverzuim toch niet hoger ligt dan bij de Nederlandse werknemer. Uit een interview dat Cisca Dresselhuys in het dagblad „Trouw" had met twee doktoren van het GAK te Dordrecht, blijkt dat beide geneesheren daar een heel andere mening over hebben. Zij, S. K. Schalema, huisarts en tevens verzekeringsdeskundige van het GAK te Dordrecht, en de arts E. Stapper, geneeskundig adviseur van ditzelfde GAK, menen dat het ziekteverzuim bij de buitenlandse werknemer lager ligt dan bij de Nederlandse arbeider.

Wel stellen zij dat de buitenlandse werknemer vaker ziek is dan de Nederlander, maar meestal duurt dit ziek zijn ook veel korter. Daardoor durven zij ook te stellen dat het totale ziekteverzuim bij de gastarbeiders lager ligt.

De grootste moeilijkheid die de artsen ondervinden is het stellen van een diagnose. Zij kunnen hun patiënt vaak nauwelijks verstaan. Daardoor komt het ook vaak voor, dat een gastarbeider grondiger onderzocht wordt, omdat alleen op deze wijze het stellen van een diagnose mogelijk is.

Maagklachten komen het meest voor. Vooral Turken schijnen hiermee te kampen. Het blijkt nogal eens dat zo iemand een maagzweer heeft.

Bij aankomst hebben gastarbeiders ook nogal eens last van hun luchtwegen. Deze moeilijkheid duurt meestal niet al te lang, zij weten zich vlug aan het klimaat aan te passen.

Buitenlandse arbeiders zijn vaak wel eerder het slachtoffer van bedrijfsongevallen dan de Nederlandse arbeider. De taalbarrière is o.a. een van de oorzaken. Bedrijfsvoorschriften kunnen ze niet lezen. Waarschuwingen van Nederlandse collega's worden vaak niet verstaan. Een andere oorzaak is nog het feit dat het grootste gedeelte van deze buitenlandse arbeiders oorspronkelijk van het platteland afkomstig is. Tot voor hun vertrek naar het buitenland hebben de meesten van hen dan ook nog nooit in een fabriek gewerkt. De AKU-bedrijfsarts uit Arnhem P. G. Vertin, constateerde dat ongeveer 70 pct uit de agrarische sector komt. Hij deelt de mening van de biede Dordtse artsen, dat het verzuimpercentage bij de buitenlandse arbeider beslist lager ligt dan bij zijn Nederlandse collega.

Dutch newspaper report in 1970 on the low absenteeism rates among foreign workers

Source: *Mediahuis Noord, De Krant van Toen, 21-05-1970, https://dekrantvantoen.nl/vx/article.do?id=FRI-19700521-3005*

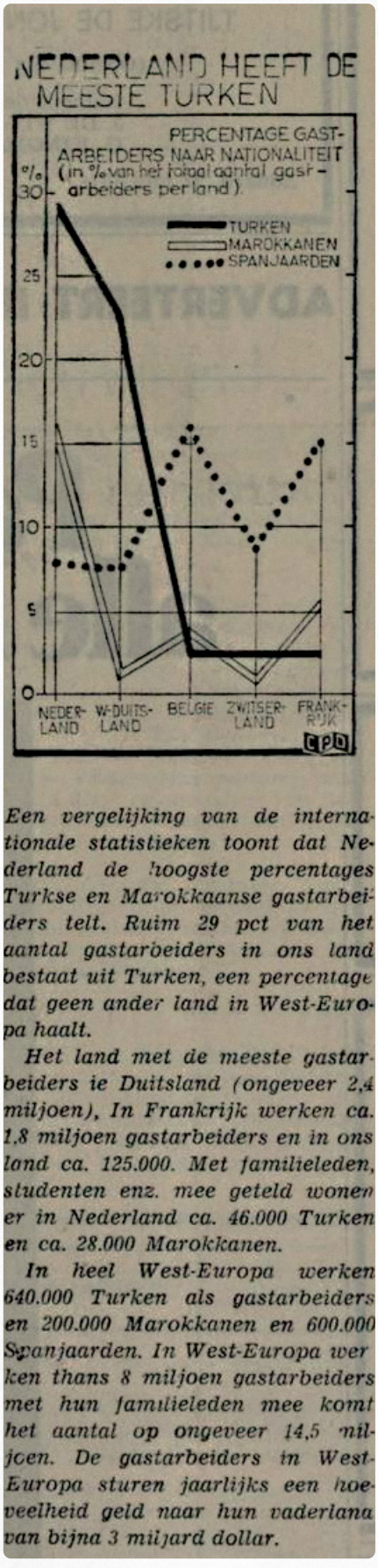
Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 22 maart 1973, blz.31

Twee gastarbeiders in scheepsruim gestort

Twee gastarbeiders zijn dinsdag tijdens werkzaamheden bij de Nederlandse Dok- en Scheepsbouwmaatschappij in Amsterdam van zes meter hoogte in het ruim van een Noors schip gestort en met ernstig inwendig letsel naar het Sint Lucasziekenhuis gebracht. Het ongeval deed zich voor toen een losse verplaatsbare steiger, waarop de twee mannen zich bevonden, werd verreden. De gewonden zijn de 30-jarige Turk H. Cakmak en de 49-jarige Joegoslaaf J. Risojevic.

Newspaper report from 1973 on guest worker H. Çakmak falling into a ship's hold while working under harsh conditions

Source: *Mediahuis Noord, De Krant van Toen, Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 22-03-1973, https://dekrantvantoen.nl/vw/article.do?id=NVHN-19730322-AE0031004*



NEDERLAND HEEFT DE MEESTE TURKEN

PERCENTAGE GASTARBEIDERS NAAR NATIONALITEIT (in % van het totaal aantal gastarbeiders per land).

Een vergelijking van de internationale statistieken toont dat Nederland de hoogste percentages Turkse en Marokkaanse gastarbeiders telt. Ruim 29 pct van het aantal gastarbeiders in ons land bestaat uit Turken, een percentage dat geen ander land in West-Europa haalt.

Het land met de meeste gastarbeiders ie Duitsland (ongeveer 2,4 miljoen), In Frankrijk werken ca. 1,8 miljoen gastarbeiders en in ons land ca. 125.000. Met familieleden, studenten enz. mee geteld wonen er in Nederland ca. 46.000 Turken en ca. 28.000 Marokkanen.

In heel West-Europa werken 640.000 Turken als gastarbeiders en 200.000 Marokkanen en 600.000 Spanjaarden. In West-Europa werken thans 8 miljoen gastarbeiders met hun familieleden mee komt het aantal op ongeveer 14,5 miljoen. De gastarbeiders in West-Europa sturen jaarlijks een hoeveelheid geld naar hun vaderland van bijna 3 miljard dollar.

Dutch newspaper report from 1974 stating that among Western European countries, the Netherlands had the highest proportion of Turkish guest workers at 29%

Source: *"Nederlands dagblad: gereformeerd gezinsblad / hoofdred. P. Jongeling... [et al.]". Amersfoort, 02-07-1974, s. 7. Delpher'den 21-01-2025 tarihinde alınmıştır, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010633350:mpeg21:p007*

Turkse minister drie dagen in ons land

SCHIPHOL — Op zijn rondreis door Duitsland, Nederland en Zwitserland is gistermiddag de Turkse minister van arbeid, de heer Seyfi Özturk uit Hamburg op Schiphol aangekomen. Evenals in Duitsland hoopt hij zich in Nederland gedurende een verblijf van 3 dagen zo goed mogelijk op de hoogte te stellen van het wel en wee der Turkse gastarbeiders in ons land.

Nederland begon precies 6 jaar geleden in Turkije met een officiële wervingscampagne voor gastarbeiders.

Een half jaar later bevonden er zich 4000 in ons land. Tegenwoordig zijn het er naar schatting 17.000 tot 18.000, van wie 700 tot 800 vrouwelijke. Ongeveer Ongeveer 1100 van deze gastarbeiders hebben thans van onze regering een permanente werkvergunning gekregen, nadat zij intussen dankzij geregelde verlenging van hun 1-jarige contracten in totaal reeds meer dan 5 jaar in ons land hebben gewerkt.

Dutch newspaper report from 1970 on the three-day working visit of Turkish Minister of Labor Seyfi Öztürk to the Netherlands to assess the situation and needs of approximately 18,000 Turkish workers

Source: *"Trouw", Meppel, 13-08-1970, Accessed from Delpher on 21-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010818493:mpeg21:p010*

Turkish workers having a meal at a guest house in Deventer

Source: *Collectie Overijssel / Photographer Dirk Willem Nijland*

Bruynzeet tahta ve kontraplak Fabrikasında 500'e yakın Türk çalışıyor. Fabrika yöneticileri hepsinden memnun üsteki Fotoğraflarda Fabrika bahçesinde göndere çekilen Bayrağı selamlayan işçilerimiz.

HOLLANDA'DAKİ BİR FABRİKANIN BAHÇESİNE BAYRAĞIMIZ ÇEKİLDİ

HOLLANDA'nın Zaandam şehrinde, 500'e yakın Türk işçisi çalıştıran Bruynzeek tahta ve kontraplak fabrikının bahçesine her sabah Türk bayrağı çekilmeye başlanır.

Bir görevli tarafından her sabah, fabrikanın bahçeki göndere çekilen bayrağımız işçilerimiz tarafından ile selâmlanmaktadır. Fabrikanın bahçesine bayrazın çekilmesi kararı, hem çok sayıda işçimizin çalış; hem de Cumhuriyetimizin 50'inci yılının idrak nesi dolayısıyla alınmış ve büyük sevinç yaratmıştır.

Bu arada, Türk işçilerinden son derece memnun kalan ika yöneticileri, işçi gazinosunun bir köşesini Atatürk esi haline sokmuşlardır. Köşeyi, Atatürk'ün bir büstü emektedir.

İŞÇİLERİMİZ FABRİKAYI KURTARDILAR

Öte yandan işçilerimiz de, bilinmeyen bir sebeple na tehlikesi geçiren fabrikayı, canla başla çalışarak naktan kurtarmışlardır. İşçilerimiz, fabrikanın kapı ât bölümünde çıkan yangını büyük fedakârlıkla başka ere sıçramadan ve itfaiye gelmeden söndürmüşlerdir.

Fabrika yöneticilerinden Deeker, işçilerimize bu kârane gayretlerinden dolayı teşekkür etmiş ve kendie çeşitli hediyeler dağıtmıştır. Türk işçilerinin yangıngösterdikleri gayretler Hollanda gazetelerinde de övüt anlatılmıştır.

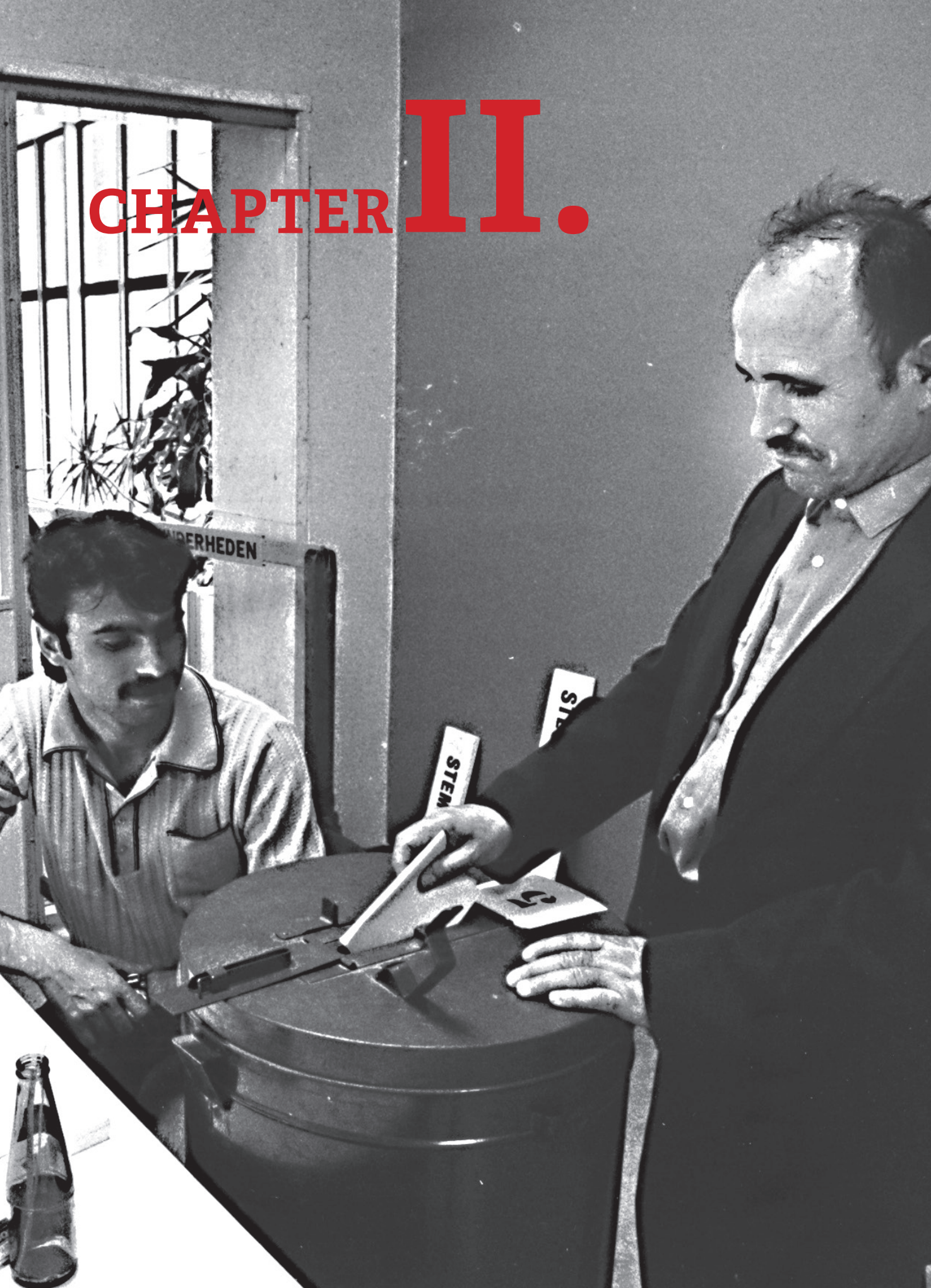
Zaandam Şehrindeki Bruynzek Fabaikasının bahçesindeki göndere şanlı Bayrağımız çekiliyor. Bayrağımız her sabah bu gönderde dalgalanmaktadır.

linmeyen bir sebepten, Fabrikanın kapı imalat bölümünde çıkan yangını itfaiye gelmeden büyük fedakarlıklar göstererek söndüren

Newspaper report on the large number of Turkish workers at the Bruynzek Factory in Zaandam and the raising of the Turkish flag to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Republic

Source: *İlhan Karaçay*

CHAPTER II.



POLITICAL PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION OF THE DIASPORA

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

Nermin Aydemir

IDENTITY, SECURITY, AND LEADERSHIP: AN INTERVIEW WITH HAMİT KARAKUŞ, THE FIRST TURKISH-ORIGIN POLICE CHIEF IN THE NETHERLANDS

Hamit Karakuş

THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

NERMİN AYDEMİR[1]

Introduction

Although relatively small in population and geographical size, the Netherlands occupies a central position in discussions surrounding the political participation of immigrants, as well as broader debates on immigration and integration. Compared to other liberal democracies, the Netherlands demonstrates a more successful record of political integration for individuals of immigrant backgrounds. For instance, Bloemraad (2013), in an index comparing liberal democracies, highlights that the proportion of immigrant-origin Members of Parliament in the Dutch national legislature exceeds the share of the immigrant population in society, arguing that the country surpasses "perfect representation." Furthermore, the nation's longstanding commitment to multiculturalism has facilitated the peaceful coexistence of diverse identities for centuries (Lijphart, 1975; Andeweg & Irwin, 2005). Such an understanding also shaped its policies toward immigrants. This multicultural structure provided favorable conditions for individuals of Turkish origin to address group-specific needs (Aydemir & Mügge, 2024).

Early Instances of Political Participation

From the initial years of labor migration, individuals of Turkish origin and subsequent generations have actively engaged in political processes in various capacities (Vermeulen & Penninx, 2000; Koopmans, 2013). Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands have leveraged the country's multicultural traditions, deeply embedded in its institutional practices, to participate robustly in public life. Initially, community-based associations were established to address practical concerns such as sourc-

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ing halal meat, performing Friday prayers (at workplaces), organizing off days around religious and cultural festivals, and handling funeral rites in accordance with religious and official requirements and in a timely manner. Over time, these associations evolved into more formal institutional structures, fostering comprehensive organizational networks that united the Turkish community and strengthened social capital within. (Tillie, 2004; Michon & Vermeulen, 2013). Studies focusing on Amsterdam emphasize the robust social connections among Turkish-origin immigrants and their positive impact on political participation. Additionally, Türkiye's relatively rich democratic tradition, compared to many other countries of origin, has served as another significant driver (Mügge et al., 2021).

Voting and Standing for Election

Following the enactment of the 1983 law granting the right to vote and stand for election in local politics for individuals without Dutch citizenship but holding a residence permit, immigrants of Turkish origin have utilized this right effectively (Aydemir & Mügge, 2024). Research on local politics indicates that Turkish-origin immigrants demonstrate participation rates comparable to those of ethnic Dutch citizens in both electoral voting and engagement in political representation within local councils (Van Heelsum et al., 2016; Fermin et al., 2021). Since the 1990s, individuals of Turkish origin have increasingly participated in decision-making processes. They exhibit a notably effective presence as political representatives. Research indicates that nearly half of local political representatives from minority backgrounds are of Turkish origin (Fermin et al., 2021). Their political influence is especially notable in Rotterdam, a city with a strong working-class identity. The DENK[2] Party, which represents the interests of Dutch citizens of Turkish and Moroccan origin, plays a crucial role in the city's governance. It has formed an effective coalition with the anti-immigrant populist party *Leefbaar Rotterdam* (Livable Rotterdam), as well as with the VVD *(Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie, or People's Party for Freedom and Democracy)* and D66 (Democrats 66) (Coalitieakkoord, 2022).

Despite the absence of data on ethnic-based voter participation rates in general elections,Turkish-origin Members of Parliament (MPs) have demonstrated significant influence in the Dutch National Parliament. Between 1998 and 2022, approximately one-fourth of minority-origin MPs in the parliament were of Turkish descent (Aydemir & Mügge, 2024). Nebahat Albayrak stands out as a pivotal figure in this regard, serving as one of the first Turkish-origin MPs to enter the Dutch parliament. Her achievements within the Labour Party (PvdA, *Partij van de Arbeid)* and her advocacy for immigrant communities throughout her political career have made her a role model. Albayrak is by no means the sole example of successful Turkish-origin politicians in the Netherlands. Female MPs of Turkish descent in particular have achieved considerable prominence and attained prestigious roles within left-wing and/or progressive parties. Coşkun Çörüz, an MP from the Christian Democratic Appeal (CDA), represents an exception as a Turkish-origin politician advocating for immigrant rights within a mainstream right-wing/conservative party.

2- The word "DENK" translates to "to think" in Dutch, while in Turkish, it conveys notions of equivalence and equality.

The appointment of Turkish-origin politicians to prominent executive roles marks another significant development in the political participation of this community. Nebahat Albayrak was appointed Deputy Minister of Justice in 2007, a position she held until 2010 (PDC, n.d. 1). Similarly, Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius briefly served as Deputy Minister of State for Economic Affairs and Climate Policy in the post-election interim government between 2021 and 2022, later assuming the role of Minister of Justice and Security in 2022 (PDC, n.d. 2). Günay Uslu also served as Deputy Minister of State for Culture and Media in the same cabinet (PDC, n.d. 3).

The Dynamics of Political Participation: Form or Substance

While the presence of Turkish-origin and other minority politicians in the political arena is an undeniable success, reducing political representation solely to the number of individuals with immigrant backgrounds is a limited perspective. The inclusion of minority-origin politicians in parliament and executive offices is eminently valuable in itself (Mansbridge, 1999). Their presence ensures that diverse segments of society are visibly represented within the composition of governing bodies. However, such representation does not necessarily guarantee that the perspectives and interests of minority groups are actively incorporated into decision-making processes.

"Compared to other liberal democracies, the Netherlands demonstrates a more successful record of political integration for individuals of immigrant backgrounds."

As highlighted by Pitkin (1967) - one of the leading scholars in the field of political representation - genuine political representation extends beyond symbolic presence; it requires political actors to effectively advocate for, speak on behalf of, and take meaningful action for the communities they represent. For political representation to genuinely benefit minorities, politicians must adopt supportive and proactive stances on issues pertinent to ethnic and/or religious minorities. In democracies that aspire to be inclusive, it is essential that the needs and demands of minority groups are addressed. While the number of Turkish-origin politicians in Dutch politics continues to grow, and their access to high-ranking positions becomes easier, these symbolic advancements do not always translate into substantive policy changes. In some cases, politicians of immigrant backgrounds remain silent or even adopt restrictive stances on issues affecting cultural and religious rights, immigration, and asylum. Such exclusionary approaches espoused by minority-origin politicians themselves cast a shadow over the broader narrative of success in political inclusion (Aydemir & Vliegenthart, 2016; Murray, 2016; Garret, 2017; Bajpai, 2019).

As previously noted, the tradition of multiculturalism in the Netherlands, which has facilitated the peaceful coexistence of diverse groups for centuries, has created a conducive environment for the political participation of Turkish immigrants. However, with the "clash of civilizations" thesis gaining traction in the 2000s, the multicultural model came under significant criticism (Scheffer, 2000). Over time, the Netherlands shifted away from multiculturalism and adopted an integration policy increasingly oriented toward assimilation (Entzinger, 2006; Vink, 2007). This shift has influenced party elites' preferences for parliamentary candidates of immigrant backgrounds, resulting in a system that formally accepts politicians who are deemed "acceptably" different (Durose et al., 2013; Celis & Erzeel, 2013). Within this context, the emergence of DENK as a minority party in 2014 marks a pivotal moment in both the political presence of immigrants and the continuation of the multicultural tradition. Particularly, DENK's members who entered the national parliament in 2024 have enriched the democratic pluralism of the Netherlands by aligning identity-based rights with social-democratic values (Overheid.nl, 2024).

Solidarity in Political Participation

A considerable body of research on the identity-based rights and freedoms of Turkish and other immigrant-origin minorities in the Netherlands focuses on politicians of minority origin. However, studies on this subject often emphasize solidarity with other political actors over identity itself. For instance, our recent project, supported by TÜBİTAK (Aydemir et al., 2024), reveals that identity does not play a significant role in supporting the rights and freedoms of minorities. Instead, political ideology and gender emerge as more influential factors. In the Netherlands, MPs from left-wing/liberal parties are found to offer a more supportive framework for minority rights than their right-wing/conservative counterparts. Additionally, female MPs tend to adopt a more supportive stance on these issues compared to male MPs. This finding highlights the importance of gender equality in Dutch Parliament, particularly in relation to the rights and freedoms of Turkish and other immigrant-origin minorities, and presents a promising area for further research.

Furthermore, while the representation of Turkish-origin and other immigrant-origin minorities in political offices does not always ensure the promotion of religious or cultural rights, it contributes significantly to the inclusiveness of democratic processes in the country. Traditional approaches to political representation often focus on whether representatives truly reflect the interests of their groups. However, immigrant-origin politicians, particularly those new to political representation due to their minority status, may develop empathy for other groups with similar experiences in democratic systems. Notably, immigrant-origin politicians have been found to adopt more effective policies regarding gender equality and social justice than their local counterparts (Aydemir et al., 2024). Women politicians from minority backgrounds in particular offer valuable perspectives on the representation of marginalized groups, challenging narratives dominated by upper-class white men. This contribution is critical for broadening the political discourse.

"The inclusion of minority-origin politicians in parliament and executive offices is valuable in itself. However, such representation does not necessarily guarantee that the perspectives and interests of minority groups are actively incorporated into decision-making processes."

Additionally, our research offers detailed insights into the content of discussions on minorities and immigrants within local councils. Similar to national parliament analyses, being from a minority background does not automatically lead to positive outcomes. Instead, the impact of minority identity is more pronounced when combined with membership in left/progressive parties. Notably, our study found more favorable data in local councils in Rotterdam and Deventer, compared to Amsterdam and Eindhoven. In this context, it is important to consider the impact of the socioeconomic levels of the cities. Amsterdam and Eindhoven, with their higher socioeconomic levels and more developed cultural and commercial sectors (Van Breugel, 2020), are expected to exhibit more favorable policies towards minorities and immigrants. In contrast, Rotterdam and Deventer, which are home to industrial enterprises and significant labor migration, present a more positive policy environment for minorities. The contrast between these cities underscores the role of large immigrant groups in shaping decision-making processes.

Conclusion

The Turkish population in the Netherlands has demonstrated active political engagement for over sixty years. From the early days of guest labor migration, ethnic and religious associations have evolved into more institutionalized structures. Turkish immigrants have been actively involved in elections since the 1980s, and over time, Turkish politicians have taken on the responsibility of political representation at both local and national levels. The rise of anti-immigrant and anti-Muslim sentiment in the 2000s has posed challenges not only for Turkish immigrants but also for other immigrant groups. Despite these difficulties, the unwavering commitment of Turkish immigrants to utilize legitimate political channels to amplify their voices stands as a significant response to conflict-driven narratives. The Netherlands has remained a focal point of a peaceful political tradition that demonstrates the potential for diverse groups to coexist harmoniously. The political success of Turkish immigrants represents one of the most vital affirmations of this peaceful coexistence.

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Interview

IDENTITY, SECURITY, AND LEADERSHIP:

AN INTERVIEW WITH HAMİT KARAKUŞ, THE FIRST TURKISH-ORIGIN POLICE CHIEF IN THE NETHERLANDS

HAMİT KARAKUŞ

First Turkish-Origin Police Chief in the Netherlands

✍ Can you briefly tell us about yourself?

I was born on February 22, 1965, in the Kulpak neighborhood of Sıdıklı Küçükoba village, located in Kırşehir, Türkiye. I am married and a father to three children: Hülya, Aleyna Feride, and İsmail. I also have a daughter-in-law, Şehide and a grandson named Hamit Asaf.

✍ Can you tell us about your family and their immigration journey?

My father's name is İsmail, and my mother's name is Fadime. We originate from Kırşehir. My father initially migrated to the Netherlands as a laborer. Following his relocation, our family joined him in Steenwijk, Netherlands, in 1972 through family reunification.

✍ Can you briefly describe your life in the Netherlands, including your education and career path?

I completed my primary education in Steenwijk at a time when immigrants faced challenges in education. My family envisioned my future in vocational or technical education, as they had planned to return to Türkiye eventually. However, I aspired to continue my studies and was acutely aware of my academic shortcomings. I dedicated my spare time to additional lessons to address these gaps. I was working alongside my father in a carpet factory. I had to navigate challenges independently, as there were limited resources or support available to me within my immediate environment or family. I prepared for entrance exams for the police

academy. After much effort, I was admitted to the academy in January 1987, leaving the factory to pursue my education. Following my graduation, I began working in Rotterdam. In 1988, we relocated to Rotterdam, where two of my children, İsmail and Aleyna Feride, were born. My eldest daughter, Hülya, was born in Steenwijk. My career progressed with my appointment as a chief inspector in Schiedam. I held various roles within the Police Department. My focus extended to addressing social issues and resolving challenges in neighborhoods.

✍ What roles did you hold prior to becoming a senator and Chief of Police?

In 1998, I transitioned from the Police Department to explore other avenues. Between 1998 and 2006, I managed several projects addressing urbanization and neighborhood challenges, achieving notable success. I then joined Atta Makelaars, a Rotterdam-based company specializing in real estate, consultancy, and project management for construction companies, institutional investors, housing associations, and private sector entities. We developed comprehensive neighborhood and housing initiatives, expanding our services beyond Rotterdam to other Dutch cities. In 2002, I entered politics and served as the deputy to the provincial head of the Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid, PvdA). After our electoral victory, I held the position of council member for the Rotterdam Metropolitan Municipality from 2006 to 2014, overseeing urban development, housing, urbanization, and economic initiatives. In 2014, I joined Platform31, an independent research institution conducting scientific studies on urbanization for ministries, municipalities, and other stakeholders. This institution provides strategic solutions to contemporary challenges while shaping the future of urban development. Additionally, I have served on the boards of various other organizations. From 2021 to 2024, I held a position as a senator in the Dutch Senate, the upper house of Parliament.

You became the second senator of Turkish origin in the Netherlands after Düzgün Yıldırım. Could you share when and how your interest in Dutch politics began?

My political engagement stemmed from observing growing economic disparities within society. I noticed a rising number of impoverished families and children, with unequal opportunities becoming increasingly evident. School dropout rates were also alarmingly high, particularly among those with immigrant backgrounds. These disparities motivated me to seek solutions, which ultimately led to my involvement in politics. In 2002, I joined the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA).

What inspired you to serve in the Dutch Senate, and what responsibilities did you hold during your tenure?

In the Senate, my portfolio encompassed responsibilities tied to three ministries: Public Health and Sports, Agriculture, Nature and Food, and Infrastructure and Water Management. My role was multifaceted, as I served as a spokesperson for my party on issues related to these areas. Senators are tasked with critically evaluating the content of legislative bills presented by ministers, casting votes in favor or opposition on behalf of their respective parties. The Senate holds a pivotal role as the highest political authority in the Netherlands. In the legislative process, even if a bill is approved by the House of Representatives, it requires majority support in the Senate to proceed. Without this support, the bill cannot advance. Legislation is initially reviewed and approved by the House of Representatives before being submitted to the Senate for final evaluation and decision-making.

During your tenure in the Senate, were you involved in initiatives that directly impacted immigrant communities, particularly the Turkish diaspora?

Several legislative proposals we assessed directly affected people of immigrant origin. We consistently opposed measures that sought to restrict societal rights and freedoms. In education, for example, we worked against increases in school fees that disproportionately impact low-income families. We also addressed the gradual reduction of rental assistance for low-income individuals residing in social housing, which significantly raised their rent burdens.

How would you assess the representation of Turkish-origin individuals in the Dutch Parliament?

It is vital for all societal segments to have representation in parliament. The representation of individuals of Turkish origin, alongside other immigrant communities, is essential in politics. This inclusion ensures that issues affecting immigrant populations are adequately addressed in parliamentary discussions and that decisions impacting their lives are made with their perspectives and interests in mind.

What is your perspective on the significance of representing the Turkish diaspora in the Senate?

Representation in parliament is essential for all groups. While members of parliament or the Senate represent society as a whole, they have unique backgrounds and ideas. My Turkish heritage and background have facilitated greater access to politics for the Turkish community. Representing diverse segments in the Senate facilitates the articulation of their needs and concerns, ensuring that these issues are more effectively represented and prioritized in the legislative agenda.

"Being an immigrant means confronting and overcoming prejudices, often as a pioneer in various fields."

✍ Have you taken steps to encourage political engagement among the Turkish community, particularly among young people?

In every role I have held, I have actively sought to involve young people in various fields, including politics. As a member of the Labor Party commission, I prioritized increasing the participation of Turks and other minorities in parliamentary and municipal councils. This commitment extended back to my tenure as a police officer.

✍ Recently, you were appointed as the first Police Chief of Turkish origin in the Netherlands. Could you elaborate on your responsibilities in this role?

As the Police Chief, I oversee operations within the North Holland province, which includes managing a team of 4,000 personnel. Together with the Police Chiefs of other provinces, we bear responsibility for the national Police Department.

✍ What are your main objectives as Police Chief?

My primary focus is enhancing public safety and ensuring that the Police Department reflects the society. Achieving this requires recruiting more people from immigrant backgrounds and fostering stronger connections with various societal groups.

✍ What is the proportion of immigrant and Turkish-origin police officers in the Police Force?

According to the Cultural Diversity Barometer by Statistics Netherlands (Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek - CBS), there has been an upswing in representation of immigrant-origin personnel within the Police Force. In the Randstad region, the percentage of immigrant candidates rose from 17 percent in 2020 to 23 percent in 2021. Nationally, the ratio of immigrant candidates increased from 16 percent in 2020 to 19 percent in 2021. However, this ratio remains insufficient. A significant number of immigrant recruits leave the Police Force after beginning their service. Special initiatives and campaigns have been introduced to foster a more diverse police force, reflecting the multicultural makeup of society.

"I aimed to develop myself and become a part of society and believed that I, like every individual, could reach a certain position in society."

✍ Reflecting on your life, have there been any significant turning points that influenced your decisions?

I never believed that my family would return to Türkiye, and I have always seen our stay in the Netherlands as permanent. This realization came to me at an early age, and I made plans for my future accordingly. I focused on improving myself and integrating into society, firmly believing that, like any individual, I could achieve a meaningful position in society.

✍ Have you experienced any important events in your career that stand out in your memory?

There have been numerous important events, as being an immigrant means confronting and overcoming prejudices, often as a pioneer in various fields. This was not an easy process, but I advanced confidently, focusing on my success without placing blame. Along the way, I was fortunate to receive support and encouragement from some people.

✍ Do you think your multicultural identity has contributed to your political and current positions?

Indeed, I believe it has. Having an immigrant background allows me to better understand the experiences of other immigrants. Familiarity with their culture and mindset enables me to communicate more effectively with them. This cultural understanding makes people feel more comfortable approaching me, as they consider me as one of their own.

✍ How would you assess the contributions of Turkish people to the Netherlands and Türkiye over the past 60 years?

Turkish-origin individuals in the Netherlands have made significant contributions to both countries across various sectors. They have served as a bridge between the two nations in terms of economic, cultural, and human capital.

✍ What changes have occurred in immigration policies over the past 60 years?

I would not describe the changes as dramatic. There remains an ongoing struggle. Immigrant communities, particularly those from non-Western countries, are not yet fully accepted. Integration continues to be a prominent topic, even though the third and fourth generations of Turkish people were born in the Netherlands. However, some in the Turkish community still perceive their stay in the Netherlands as temporary, which has an impact on immigration policies.

✍ What is your outlook on the future of Turkish-origin individuals in the Netherlands?

Turkish-Dutch communities have now reached their third and fourth generations, and unlike the first generation, they are increasingly visible across all areas of society. These newer generations are better qualified and more educated.

✍ What advice would you offer to young people of Turkish origin in the Netherlands?

I would encourage them to continue advancing their education and to assess their career opportunities critically. It is essential for them to engage actively with society and to contribute to society.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

Hollanda'da yerel seçime katılan bir Türk işçisi, Belediye Meclisi üyesi oldu

● Trabzon'un Of ilçesinden Musa Öztürk, "Vatandaşlarının ve yabancı uyrukluların dertlerini Meclise getirip onlara daha fazla yararlı olacağım" dedi...

KAMURAN SÜMERCAN — LAHEY

HOLLANDA'da yapılan belediye meclisi üyeliği seçimini ilk kez bir Türk kazanmıştır.

Hollanda'nın Rotterdam Belediyesi'ne bağlı 6 ayrı bölgede yapılan belediye meclisi üyeliğine bu defa yabancı uyruklular da katılmıştır. Rotterdam Belediyesi Charlois bölgesindeki seçime aday olarak 25 yaşındaki Musa Öztürk adlı bir Türk vatandaşı da katılmıştır.

Öztürk Türkiye'de CHP yanlısı olup bu nedenle Hollanda'daki seçime Sosyalist PUDA (İşçi Partisi) listesiyle girmiştir. Hollanda İşçi Partisi, Rotterdam Belediye Meclisi seçimlerinde başarı sağlayamayarak 9 sandalye kaybederken Öztürk, bölgesindeki seçimi kazanarak İşçi Partisi'ne bir sandalye kazandırmıştır. Rotterdam Belediye Meclisi'nde İşçi Partisi'nin son seçimlerden sonra sandalye sayısı 58'e düşmüş bulunmaktadır.

türk seçimi kazandıktan sonra yaptığı açıklamada, "Rotterdam Belediye Meclisi'ne seçilmekten dolayı çok memnunluk duyuyorum. Bu nedenle vatandaşlarını ve diğer yabancı uyrukluların dertlerini meclise getirip onlara daha fazla yararlı olmaya çalışacağım" demiştir.

Newspaper report on the election of the first person of Turkish origin to a municipal council in the Netherlands during the 1980 local elections

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 01-06-1980*

İşçi Talip, şimdi "Hıristiyan Demokrat Partisi"nde yönetici

ÊTE D'AFFICHE : TALIP DEMIRHAN

In Turc qui veut être en tête

Hollanda iktidarında bir Türk

Talip Demirhan 20 yıl önce işçi olarak geldiği Hollanda'da, Hıristiyan Demokrat Parti'nin 28 kişilik yönetimine kadar yükseldi. 44 yaşındaki Demirhan için Hollanda basını, "Parlamentoya girer, hatta bakanlığa kadar yükselebilir" diyor

AMSTERDAM, ÖZEL

YİRMİ yıl önce Hollanda'nın Rotterdam rıhtımına ilk kez adımını atan **Talip Demir**a adlı Türk, Hollanda'nın birinpartisi Hıristiyan Demokratlar' önemli yöneticilerinden biri ol-

Hollanda basını, **Demirhan'ın** cında parlamentoya da girebileini, hatta bakan olabileceğini ileri üyor.

Basın, **Talip Demirhan'ın** yirmi önce Rotterdam limanında doan ufak-tefek bir göçmen olmakı kurtulduğunu ve şimdi iktidar sıyla çalıştığını da belirtiyor.

1960'larda anavatandan ayrılan **mirhan**, açık-seçik şöyle konuşur:

"Hollanda başbakanı olacağım miyorum, ama neden bunun bir ındaki göreve gelmiyeyim?"

Hollanda basını da bu görüşü tekliyor ve **"Neden parlamentogirmesin?"** diye yazıyor. Yasada yapılacak birkaç değişiklikle yaşındaki bu girişken yabancı işin 1990'lı yıllara bir **fatih** gibi giileceğini öne sürüyor.

IRU BAŞARDI

Aslında **Talip Demirhan** geçen Kasım'da Hollanda politika hamın en büyük partisi **Hıristiyan mokratlar'**ın 28 kişilik ulusal yöim kuruluna seçilerek zor olanı armış durumda. Asıl şaşırtıcı n, bir Müslüman'ın Başbakan **ud Lubbers'**in Hıristiyan Dekratlar'ını temsil etmesi. Bir ga bu zıtlığa değinerek, **Demir'ın "Bir yastığa baş koyan iki din, ortalarında da şeytan"** sözü bildiğini, ama bunun kendisihiç de rahatsız etmediğini ekli-

Çİ HAKLARI KORUYUCUSU

Hollanda Demiryolları'nda işe dikten sonra sendikaya üye olan **mirhan**, bir süre makaşçılık yap, 1973'te sendika yöneticisi olış. Bunu sosyal danışmanlık gözi izlemiş. Hıristiyan bir sendikaüyesi olması her ne kadar bazı rttaşlarını tedirgin ediyorsa da, dışık 15 bin yabancı kökenli işin haklarını bu sendika koruyor.

Hollanda'da bugün yerel seçimler var

100 bin Türk sandık başında

• Kâmuran SÜMERCAN— AMSTERDAM

HOLLANDA'da yaşayan 100 bin dolayında yurttaşımız, bugün yerel seçimler nedeniyle sandık başına gidecek.

Başbakan **Ruud Lubbers'**in önderliğindeki merkez-sağ iktidarın, **'Yerel yönetimlerle yakın ilişkiler içinde oldukları"** gerekçesiyle, 1983

Önemli bir oy potansiyeline sahip olmaları nedeniyle, Türk seçmenlerine Hollandalı politikacılar büyük ilgi gösterdi

yılında Hollanda Anayasası'nda yapılan bir değişiklikle, 17 yaşını bitirmiş ve 5 yıldan daha fazla bir süre bu ülkede yaşamış olan tüm yabancılar, yerel seçimlerde oy kullanabildikleri gibi, aday da olabiliyorlar. Söz konusu yasa değişikliğinden, 100 bin dolayında Türk'ün yanı sıra, 90 bin dolayında Faslı ve değişik uluslardan işçiler yararlanabilecek.

Başbakan **Lubbers**, geçtiğimiz ay içinde, televizyonda gerçekleştirilen seçim kampanyası sırasında, başta Türkler olmak üzere, tüm yabancı işçilere seslenerek onlara çeşitli konularda haklar tanınacağını söylemişti. Ancak Türk seçmenlerin, Hollanda yerel seçimlerine sınırlı bir ilgi gösterdikleri, Türk adayların kazanma şansı olmayan yerlerde, seçimi hiç önemsemedikleri gözlemleniyor. Türkler arasında, **"yıllardır ihmal edildik. Şimdi de bizi birer oy makinesi gibi görüyorlar. Bu da canımızı sıkıyor"** kanısı yaygın.

Bu arada, Hollanda yerel seçimlerinde, yedi soydaşımız da aday olarak şansını deniyor. Hepsi de **"umutlu"** olduğunu belirten ancak, listelerde alt sıralarda yer alan Türk adaylar şunlar: **Zafer Akar** (bağımsız), **İsmail Balikoç** (İşçi Partisi), **Korkmaz Ağacık** (İşçi Partisi), **M.Coşkun Yeğenoğlu** (İşçi Partisi), **Tacettin Yılmaz** (İşçi Partisi), **Sevda Roz** (Serbest Demokratik Parti) ve **Halit Öztürkoğlu** (Serbest Demokratik Parti).

Seçimleri protesto

Bu arada, başkent Amsterdam, seçimlerin protesto edilmesini isteyen afişlerle doldu. **"Savaşan Komünist Hücreler"** adlı yeraltı örgütünün Hollanda kanadı imzalı duvar afişlerinde, seçim günü sandıklara saldırılar düzenleneceği bildirilirken, **"Sandık başlarından uzak durun, hayatınızı kurtarın"** biçiminde ifadeler yer alıyor.

Polis, afişlerle ilgili olarak iki Hollandalı kadının gözaltına alındığını bildirdi.

Newspaper report on the interest of Turks, with their significant voting power, in Dutch politics during the 1986 local elections.

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 19-03-1986*

Newspaper report on a person of Turkish origin being considered one of the key figures in the ruling Christian Democratic Party (CDA) in the Netherlands in 1987

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 01-06-1987*

Gurbette politika

Kâmuran SÜMERCAN
● LAHEY

HOLLANDA'da yapılan yerel seçimlerde İşçi Partisi'nden aday olan **Mesudiye Bağcı Zengin**, seçilme başarısını göstererek Rotterdam yakınlarındaki **Dordrecht** kenti Belediye Meclisi'ne girdi.

Sosyal Akademi mezunu olan ve 19 yıldır Hollanda'da yaşayan **Zengin**, **Milliyet**'e yaptığı açıklamada, Belediye Meclisi üyesi olarak yapacağı çalışmalar hakkında bilgi verdi. **Zengin**, ilk hedefinin belediyede yabancı uyrukluların çalışmasını sağlayarak Hollandalı işverenlere örnek vermek olduğunu söyledi.

Aynı zamanda "**Güney Hollanda Eyaleti Yabancı Gençlere Destek Kurumu**"nda koordinatörlük görevini yürüten **Zengin**, özellikle orta ve lise öğrenimini yarıda bırakan gençlerin sorunlarına çözüm bulmaya çalışacağını bildirdi.

Mesudiye Bağcı Zengin, Dordrecht belediye seçimlerinde 12 sandalye kazanan İşçi Partisi listesinden 9'uncu sırada meclise girmeyi başarırken, aynı listede 20'nci sırada yer alan **Mustafa Karaşahin** meclise giremedi.

Halen Sosyal Akademi'de Sosyal İşler Uzmanlığı dalında iki yıllık yükseköğrenimini sürdüren 29 yaşındaki **Zengin**'in eşi **Sabri Kenan Bağcı** da Hollanda hükümetinin kurduğu **Yabancı İşçilere Yardım Cemiyeti**'nde memur olarak çalışıyor, aynı zamanda **Hollanda-Türk Futbol Federasyonu**'nun başkanlığını yapıyor.

Newspaper report on the success of Turks in the 1990 Dordrecht municipal elections
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 27-03-1990*

Hollanda'nın gözü Fadime'de

Fadime Örgü Hollanda Meclisi'ne aday.

Orhan ALPDÜNDAR
ROTTERDAM

HOLLANDA'da mayıs ayında yapılacak genel seçimler için aday listelerini açıklayan siyasi partiler, Türk adayları da "seçilebilme olasılığı bulunan" bölgelerden aday gösterdi.

Liberal Parti, Mayıs 1998'te yapılacak parlamento seçimlerinde Türk vatandaşı Fadime Örgü'yü 35. sıraya yerleştirdi. Listedeki yeriyle bütün dikkatleri üzerine çeken Karaman doğumlu 29 yaşındaki Örgü, küçük yaşta Hollanda'da yaşayan ailesinin yanına yerleşti. Alman ve İngiliz dili eğitimi gören Örgü, lisans eğitimiyle yetinmeyerek İngiltere'de yüksek lisans yaptı.

Televizyonculukla uğraşan Fadime'nin politikaya ilgisi, küçük yaşlarda başladı. Örgü, bu ilgisini on yıldır Avrupa Konseyi'ne bağlı Avrupa Gençlik Komitesi'nde Genel Sekreterlik yaparak sürdürüyor.

Türk kızı Fadime, seçilmesi halinde Hollanda Meclisi'ne giren ilk Türk kadın parlamenter olacak. Politikaya atılmak istemesindeki en büyük gerekçesini, topluma karşı duyduğu sorumluluk olarak özetleyen Örgü, "Liberal Parti de böyle bir sorumluluk içerisinde çalışıyor. Seçilirsem yapacağım ilk iş, Avrupa Parlamentosu'na girmek için çaba harcamak olacak" dedi.

Yapılan son kamuoyu yoklamaları, Meclis'te 31 sandalyesi bulunan Liberal Parti'nin birinci parti konumunda olduğunu ve seçimlerde en az 40 sandalye çıkarabileceğini gösteriyor. Bu tahminler ışığında, Örgü'nün seçilmesine kesin gözüyle bakılıyor.

Newspaper report on Fadime Örgü, of Turkish origin, running as a candidate in the Dutch general elections of May 1998.

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 29-10-1997*

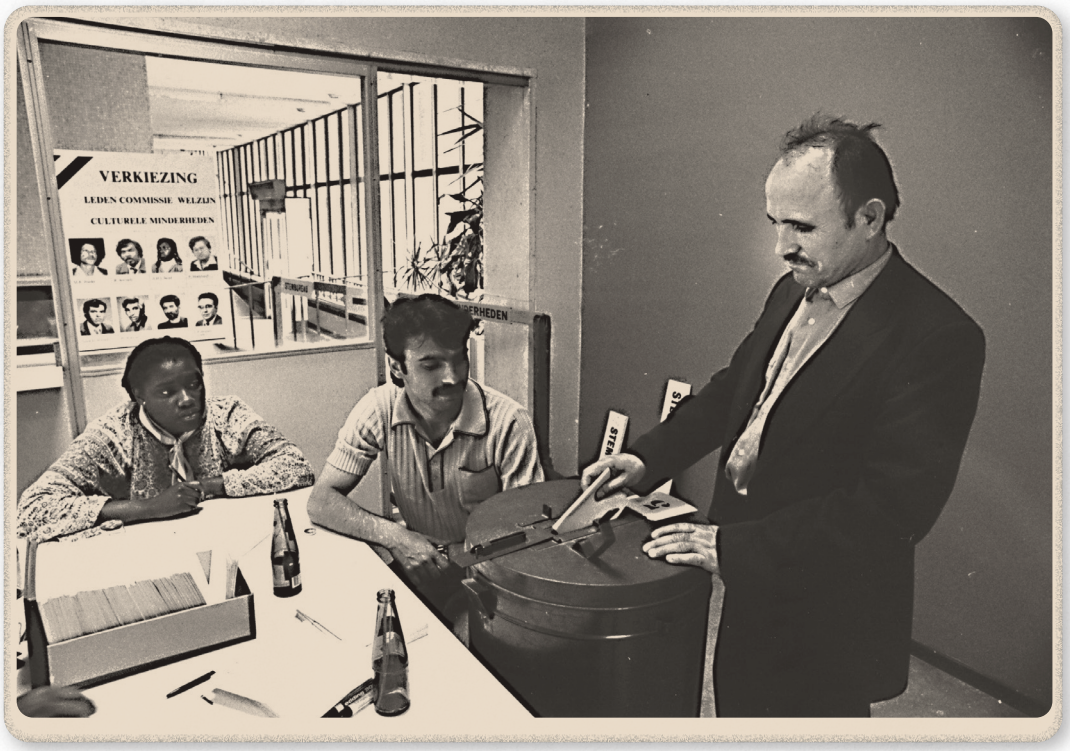


Image of a Turk from Dordrecht casting a ballot for the first time in 1986, after migrants in the Netherlands were granted the right to vote and stand for election
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_328463, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/0de9fd-324391547c01439ab682d70055/showbrowse*

Hollanda seçimlerinde Türk'ün başarısı

Orhan ALPDÜNDAR /Mehmet E. ALKANLAR - LAHEY

HOLLLANDA'da 2 Mart'ta yapılan yerel seçimlerde iktidar partileri büyük oranda oy kaybederken, yabancı düşmanı partiler de oylarını beklenildiği gibi arttırdılar. Seçimlerde Türk adaylarının elde ettiği büyük başarı ve Türklerin seçimlere katılım oranının yüksek olması, ülkedeki siyasi çevrelerde "büyük başarı" olarak yorumlandı.

Yerel seçimlerde 36 Türk aday çeşitli anakent belediyelerine seçilmeyi başarırken, Amsterdam ve Rotterdam Bölge Belediyelerine de 15'in üzerinde Türk aday Belediye Meclislerine seçildi. Hollanda Hükümetinin 1995 yılında yaptığı bir Anayasa değişikliği ile yabancılara yerel düzeyde seçme ve secilme hakkının verilmesiyle ilk kez 1986 yılında

Mahalli seçimlerde Belediye Meclisine girmeyi başaran 36 Türk yerel yönetimde söz sahibi oldu

sandık başına giden Türkler, 1990 seçimlerinden sonra üçüncü kez önceki gün sandık başına gittiler. Resmi olmayan ilk sonuçlara göre ülkede yaşayan Türklerin yüzde 40'ı seçimlerde oy kullandı. 1986 yılındaki seçimlerde 17, 1990 yılındaki seçimlerde de 21 Türk adayı Belediye Meclislerine girmeyi başarmıştı.

Yabancılar arasında en çok Türk adaylarının meclislere girmeyi başardığı yerel seçimlerde, Türklerin en çok İşçi Partisi (PvdA) ve Yeşil Sol Partilerinden meclislere girdiği öğrenildi.

Hollanda yerel seçimlerinin en büyük sürprizini başkent Amsterdam ve Rotterdam şehirleri yaparken, Türklerin oy kullanma oranı Amsterdam'da yüzde 25.5, Rotterdam'da ise yüzde 59.6 oranında gerçekleşti. Başkentte herkesin büyük oy kaybedeceğine kesin gözüyle baktığı İşçi Partisi, oy oranını bir miktar arttırarak birinci parti olma özelliğini korurken, liman şehri Rotterdam'da yabancı düşmanı ırkçı Merkez Demokrat ve Merkez parti 1986 oy oranlarını büyük ölçüde arttırarak mecliste İşçi Partisinin ardından ikinci güç oldular.

Newspaper report on the success of 36 Turks elected to municipal councils in the 1990 local elections, a milestone in political participation

Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 04-03-1994*

Photo of Sabri Bahçe, member of Dordrecht's municipal council from the Labour Party (PvdA), with the Turkish flag in 1981

Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_305096, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/77768C6A05B76F2AF0B770A5315D9314/showbrowse*

Turken willen stemrecht

Een groep van ongeveer twintig Turkse gastarbeiders heeft gisteren in Middelburg een petitie overhandigd aan de commissaris van de Koningin van Zeeland, Boertien. De Turken protesteerden tegen het feit dat zij niet aan de provinciale verkiezingen mochten meedoen.

FOTO ANP

Newspaper report on a protest by Turkish workers in Middelburg in 1987 demanding the right to vote in provincial elections

Source: *Turken willen stemrecht. "Trouw". Meppel, 19-03-1987. Accessed from Delpher on 22-01-2025 https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010827088:mpeg21:p009*

Helft Turken ging stemmen

Van onze correspondent

ENSCHEDE – Het percentage buitenlanders dat in maart van dit jaar in Enschede heeft deelgenomen aan de gemeenteraadsverkiezingen verschilt sterk per nationaliteit. Met een opkomstpercentage van ruim 51 deden Turkse Enschedeers nauwelijks onder voor autochtone stadsgenoten van wie 54,7 procent naar de stembus ging. De Marokkaanse stemgerechtigden bleven met een opkomst van 36 procent ver achter. Buitenlanders stemden bovendien veel vaker bij volmacht dan Nederlanders.

Die conclusies trekt onderzoekster Carien Boosten van de afdeling Informatie en Onderzoek van de gemeente Enschede uit een onderzoek naar de opkomst van migranten bij de raadsverkiezingen. Uit het onderzoek, dat zowel door Nederlandse als Turkse en Marokkaanse enqueteurs is uitgevoerd bij vijf geselecteerde stembureaus, blijkt verder dat buitenlanders met een hele andere motivatie gaan stemmen dan Nederlanders.

De ondervraagde Turken en Marokkanen gaven vooral te kennen van het stemrecht gebruik te maken, omdat het hier om een nieuw verworven recht ging. Het vertrouwen dat zij in de gemeentepolitiek hebben is niet bijster groot. Driekwart zei te vermoeden dat gemeenteraadsleden zich maar heel weinig zullen aantrekken van de opvattingen die bij buitenlanders leven.

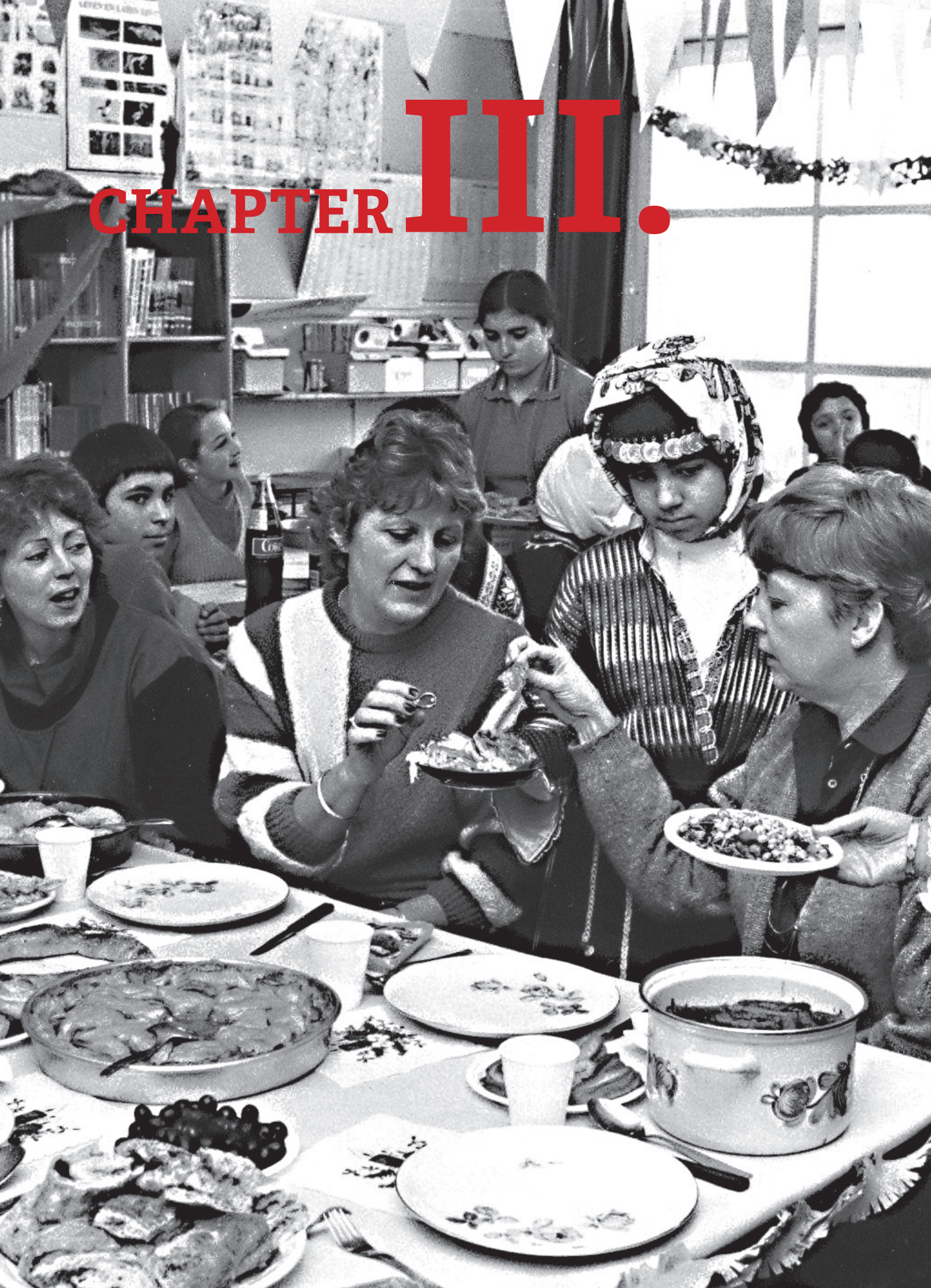
Volgens onderzoekster Boosten mag het geringe vertrouwen in de gemeentelijke poliek niet worden geprojecteerd op de rest van Nederland. „Ik heb sterk de indruk dat hierbij gebeurtenissen in de lokale politiek een belangrijke rol hebben gespeeld. Enschede heeft in Cecil Arda vier jaar een Turks raadslid gehad, maar die had zich na een reeks van conflicten met de PvdA teruggetrokken van de lijst. Dat is bij sommige Tuken niet goed gevallen".

De opkomst van de Marokkanen bleef in Enschede met 36 procent laag, al was dat toch nog tweemaal zo hoog als in 1986 in Rotterdam. Dat slechts weinig Enschedese Marokkanen de gang naar de stembus maakten, kan naar de mening van Boosten nog steeds niet worden losgezien van de oproep die de Marokkaanse koning Hassan vier jaar geleden deed aan het adres van in Nederland wonende onderdanen om niet te gaan stemmen. Boosten: „De schrik zit er nog steeds in bij de Marokkanen. Ze waren destijds bang dat hun identiteit bekend zou worden als ze gingen stemmen en hun namen zouden worden doorgespeeld naar Marokko, waarna hun paspoort zou worden ingetrokken. Die angst leeft bij een bepaalde groep Marokkanen nog steeds."

Newspaper report noting that 51% of Turks in Enschede participated in the 1990 municipal elections, a comparatively high rate among immigrant groups

Source: *Helft Turken ging stemmen. "Trouw". Meppel, 23-08-1990. Accessed from Delpher on 22-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010825116:mpeg21:p003*

CHAPTER III.



DIASPORA CUISINE

INTEGRATION AND IDENTITY: THE RISE OF TURKISH DIASPORA CUISINE IN THE DUTCH CULINARY SCENE

Esma Özen

MULTICULTURAL DIASPORA, MULTICULTURAL CUISINE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ALİ TOPAL ON THE DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA CUISINE

Ali Topal

THE JOURNEY OF TURKISH YOGURT IN THE NETHERLANDS: THE STORY OF JAN HOOGENBOOM

Jan Hoogenboom

INTEGRATION AND IDENTITY:

THE RISE OF TURKISH DIASPORA CUISINE IN THE DUTCH CULINARY SCENE

ESMA ÖZEN [1]

Introduction

In 2022, a culinary surprise swept through the Netherlands as the Turkish *kapsalon* doner[2] claimed the title of the top-ordered dish online (Habertürk, 2023). More than just a statistic, this accolade encapsulates the deep-rooted connection and cultural significance of Turkish cuisine within the Turkish diaspora and across Europe. The prominence of Turkish culinary traditions in the Netherlands is not an isolated phenomenon but a reflection of the extensive Turkish community that has grown steadily in the country. With over 430,000 people of Turkish origin, a community that began to form in the 1960s with the arrival of Turkish immigrants, the influence of Turkish culture and food has become increasingly pronounced.

This article delves into the cultural integration and popularity of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands, underpinned by preliminary desk research and insights from four investigative interviews with Turkish migrants, two of whom have close ties to the food and restaurant sector. Through this preliminary exploration, we aim to understand not only the reasons behind the popularity of dishes like *kapsalon* doner but also the broader implications of such culinary milestones in reflecting and shaping the identity of the Turkish diaspora in Dutch society.

The Development and Current Overview of Turkish Diaspora Cuisine

The introduction of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands is deeply rooted in the first

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2- *Kapsalon* doner is a popular fast-food dish that originated in Rotterdam, Netherlands. According to online sources, it was created in 2003 by Nataniël "Tati" Gomes (1976-2023), the owner of a hair salon on Rotterdam's Schiedamseweg. Gomes requested a unique lunch dish from the nearby shawarma store "El Aviva," owned by Derviş Bengü. He asked for a combination of fries, shoarma, melted cheese, and various sauces, which he repeatedly ordered. The dish quickly gained popularity and was named "Kapsalon," meaning "hair salon" in Dutch, in reference to Gomes' profession. Over twenty years, this seemingly simple creation grew to become a cultural phenomenon and an integral part of Rotterdam's culinary heritage, even spreading to various countries worldwide (Rijnmond, 2023).

generation of Turkish immigrants' strong connection to their homeland's culinary traditions. This chapter explores the development and integration of Turkish cuisine into Dutch society, highlighting its cultural significance and entrepreneurial impact.

The initial phase of Turkish cuisine's presence in the Netherlands was driven by the first generation of immigrants, who were keen on maintaining their culinary heritage. This desire led to the establishment of small shops that sold Turkish products, facilitating access to essential ingredients and familiar food items for the Turkish diaspora. These shops not only served the needs of the Turkish community but also introduced Dutch locals to Turkish culinary culture. As the demand for Turkish products grew, the number of Turkish grocery stores and supermarkets increased significantly. This expansion helped stabilize the availability of Turkish foods and possibly reduced the need for direct imports from Türkiye.

Over time, Turkish cuisine's appeal, noted for its rich flavors and diversity, transformed from a cultural preservation effort into a robust entrepreneurial venture. Many Turkish migrants and their families began opening restaurants, initially targeting fellow migrants but gradually attracting the local Dutch population and tourists. These establishments became crucial in marketing Turkish cuisine on a broader scale.

Turkish restaurants in the Netherlands offer a wide array of dishes that showcase the breadth of Turkish cuisine, from kebabs and soups to an assortment of Turkish desserts. These restaurants are not just food-serving venues but cultural enclaves that preserve and celebrate Turkish cultural style. Traditional Turkish plates and cups are commonly used, enhancing the authenticity of the dining experience and providing a cultural immersion for guests.

"The introduction of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands is deeply rooted in the first generation of Turkish immigrants' strong connection to their homeland's culinary traditions."

One of the critical factors behind the success of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands is its appeal to other Muslim communities in the country (Kurth,2017). Many Turkish restaurants cater to the dietary restrictions of Muslims by offering halal food options, which broadens their customer base beyond just those seeking Turkish cuisine to include Muslims looking for halal food options. This inclusivity has helped Turkish cuisine gain a foothold in the diverse culinary landscape of the Netherlands.

Kapsalon Doner: Turkish Diaspora Cuisine in the Netherlands as a reflection of cultural cohesion, interaction, and integration

The story of Turkish diaspora cuisine in the Netherlands is a vivid illustration of cultural cohesion, interaction, and integration, serving as a bridge between the

Turkish community and Dutch society. Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands has played a significant role in cultural interactions, becoming a symbol of integration while maintaining its unique identity.

Turkish restaurants and food outlets are more than just places to eat; they act as cultural emissaries. As one participant noted:

"Even if you do not know anything about the country, and you are here for the first time, you need only to take a tour around to understand that Turkish people are a part of this society... the Turkish shops and restaurants here in the streets of Amsterdam, for example, are like Turkish flags, speaking about our presence in this country not only as a rich culture and a rich group, but also as part of this country's society and culture."

This statement highlights how Turkish eateries not only offer a taste of Turkish culture but also visibly mark the Turkish presence and contribution to the Dutch cultural landscape. The participant uses the metaphor of Turkish shops and restaurants as "Turkish flags" to illustrate how these establishments act as visible markers of the Turkish community's presence in Dutch society (Şenses. 2014). Much like a flag, these businesses are not merely commercial ventures; they represent the Turkish community's identity and proclaim its existence to the broader society. This visibility is crucial for the recognition and acknowledgement of the Turkish community within the multicultural tapestry of Amsterdam.

Additionally, Turkish food is highly favored in the Netherlands, which is evident from the success of Turkish restaurants. This preference stems from the cuisine's rich flavors and the variety it offers to the culinary scene. Turkish restaurants are popular not just among Turks but also among the local Dutch population and other immigrant communities, demonstrating a broad acceptance and appreciation that transcends ethnic boundaries. A prime example of the fusion between Turkish and Dutch culinary traditions is the creation of kapsalon doner, a dish that epitomizes cultural hybridity. It was invented in the Netherlands by combining fries, doner meat, cheese, and salad into one dish, which quickly became a culinary phenomenon. This dish not only showcases the blending of ingredients from both cultures but also reflects the deep integration and mutual influence of Turkish and Dutch foodways. The success of kapsalon doner highlights how food can play a crucial role in bringing different cultures together, creating new traditions that become part of the local mainstream.

The influence of Turkish diaspora cuisine in the Netherlands extends beyond mere food consumption. It facilitates cultural exchange, promotes diversity, and fosters a sense of community and belonging among different cultural groups. The thriving Turkish food scene in the Netherlands is a testament to the successful integration of the Turkish community into Dutch society, where food acts not only as a sustainer of life but as a vibrant expression of cultural identity and unity. Through dishes like kapsalon doner and the ubiquitous presence of Turkish eateries, Turkish cuisine continues to enhance the multicultural fabric of the Netherlands, proving that food is indeed a powerful medium for cultural dialogue and integration.

Turkish Diaspora Cuisine as Ethnicity and Belonging Performance

While the Turkish Diaspora food in the Netherlands has emerged as a strong reflection and a result of decades of social and cultural integration, becoming one of the potentially successful entrepreneurial and business endeavours, it still holds a specific meaning for the Turkish diaspora.

Turkish cuisine and the preparation of Turkish food, while quite famous and present as street food in the Netherlands becoming part of the country's food culture, is performed as an ethnic trait for Turkish families. During the research, one of the participants mentioned that:

"The Turkish food my children eat outside with their friends is not the real Turkish food; the real one is the food I prepare at home for them using the recipe of my grandmother and the tarhana I bring with me every summer from our village."

The quote from the participant who emphasizes the distinction between the Turkish food eaten outside and the food prepared at home using traditional recipes and ingredients from their village, underscores the importance of authenticity and connection to heritage. This notion of "real Turkish food" is pivotal, highlighting that the cuisine prepared in the diaspora is not just about sustenance but is deeply tied to the preservation of cultural and familial traditions. By traditionally preparing food, the diaspora maintains a tangible link to their heritage and homeland, reinforcing their ethnic identity within a multicultural context.

Preserving the cultural foodways:

Turkish families in the diaspora continue to engage with the Turkish foodways particularly by preserving and keeping specific cooking utensils. It was mentioned during the interviews that even though the majority of the young Turkish generation in the Netherlands consumes coffee much more than tea, they do for sure have a "çaydanlık" (traditional stacked teapots) in their households:

"We drink coffee more than tea, but I still have this very beautiful, colourful çaydanlık that was a wedding gift from my aunt; it is there in the kitchen, standing in all its majesty, even if we don't use it, that 'çaydanlık" is very respected and will always be more precious than any other thing I have in my kitchen."

The mention of the çaydanlık further illustrates how objects associated with food preparation hold symbolic meanings and contribute to a sense of identity and continuity. Although the younger generation may prefer coffee, the presence of the çaydanlık in households serves as a physical reminder of their cultural roots. It embodies the respect and reverence for traditions that are cherished even when they are not in daily use. This illustrates that food-related practices and utensils in the Turkish diaspora are not merely functional, but are cherished as heirlooms and symbols of cultural pride.

Turkish food in celebrations:

Desk research and interviews demonstrated that while consuming Turkish food in daily life and routine is not a must or something specifically important for the diaspora, it gains a different meaning during major life events. For the celebration of religious festivals or important life events (such as school graduation, engagement,

"The Turkish diaspora cuisine facilitates cultural exchange, promotes diversity, and fosters a sense of community and belonging among different cultural groups."

marriage etc.), preparing traditional Turkish dishes and consuming Turkish food is a must. Turkish food for the diaspora is a strong connection with celebratory events.

"If we are to have a celebration and there is no real Turkish food, it is not a real celebration. Just one dish or only baklava will not do, there has to be at least 6-7 dishes and Turkish tea, and coffee and of course Turkish music... this is how it becomes a real celebration, a real bayram (festivity)!"

The significance of Turkish food is magnified during celebrations, as noted in the latest quote. The need for multiple traditional dishes paired with Turkish tea, coffee, and music during major life events and celebrations such as religious festivals, graduations, engagement parties, and weddings demonstrates the role of food as a core element of ceremonial life. It is not merely about eating; it is about performing and reaffirming Turkish cultural and communal identity through shared culinary experiences. These events allow the diaspora to experience a collective sense of belonging and an affirmation of their cultural identity, which might be diluted in everyday diasporic life (Ogan,2001).

Hence, food and foodways are not only about nourishment but are central to the performance of ethnicity and belonging for the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands. They are instrumental in maintaining connections with their cultural heritage, asserting their ethnic identity, and fostering communal bonds within the diaspora. This culinary legacy, preserved through both everyday practices and special occasions, highlights how food serves as a profound medium for expressing and sustaining cultural identity among migrants.

Conclusion

The culinary journey of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands, from its roots in the traditions of the first generation of Turkish immigrants to its contemporary role as an integral part of Dutch society, encapsulates more than just the adaptation of a community. It illustrates a profound narrative of cultural identity, integration, and entrepreneurial ingenuity. This evolution highlights the dynamic interplay between maintaining cultural heritage and engaging with a new cultural environment.

Initially, the establishment of Turkish shops and supermarkets facilitated the preservation of culinary traditions among the Turkish diaspora, providing a taste of home while also introducing these flavours to the Dutch populace. These establishments did not merely serve the diaspora; they became cultural bridges, enriching the Dutch culinary scene and fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of Turkish culture.

Ultimately, the story of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands is a testament to the power of food as a cultural expression that transcends borders and generations. Food not only nourishes the body but the soul as well, bridging gaps between different cultures and enriching the social fabric of the host nation. Through its evolution, Turkish diaspora cuisine has shown that food is not merely about sustenance but also about the celebration of identity, the fostering of community, and the embracing of diversity. Thus, as much as Turkish cuisine is a feature of Dutch streets, it is also a vibrant emblem of cultural resilience and communal harmony.

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Interview

MULTICULTURAL DIASPORA, MULTICULTURAL CUISINE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ALİ TOPAL ON DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA CUISINE

ALİ TOPAL

Owner of Laila Restaurant, Vice President of MÜSİAD Netherlands

Could you please introduce yourself and share your family's migration story? Do they have any particular migration-related experiences that have influenced you?

My name is Ali Topal, and I was born in Amsterdam in 1987. My grandfather was the first to migrate to the Netherlands, arriving in 1966. He worked in a fishing net factory in Apeldoorn, where my uncle and aunt still reside, along with much of our extended family. My father came to the Netherlands in 1974 after graduating from Hacettepe University in Türkiye. Upon arriving, he pursued a master's degree at the University of Amsterdam and became the first Turkish social worker in the Netherlands, which led him to settle permanently in Amsterdam. My mother joined him in 1980.

I have three siblings: one is a pilot, another graduated from law school, and my sister is an English teacher. I am married with two children. While most of my family received part of their education in Türkiye, my father remained in the Netherlands due to his professional commitments. From 1994 to 2003, we lived in Türkiye for about ten years, as my father, having witnessed the social challenges in the Netherlands during the 1980s and 1990s as a social worker, decided to send my mother and us to Konya to ensure we grew up with Turkish cultural values. During this period, my father remained in the Netherlands, and we would visit him in the summers, while he would travel to Türkiye during the holidays.

Ali Topal, the owner of Laila Restaurant

I completed my primary and secondary education in Konya. Back then, primary education lasted eight years. Returning to the Netherlands in 2003, I realized that I had forgotten much of the Dutch language and enrolled in a language course. Subsequently, I completed my HAVO degree and pursued vocational studies in three different fields: Information Systems Engineering, Engineering, and Business Economics, though I did not complete any of these programs. I often find myself reflecting on what might have happened if we had not migrated, or if we had not lived in Türkiye for a while. I wonder how my life choices might have differed. In Türkiye, I was an outstanding student, regularly placed in specialized classes, and I ranked first in national exams. Had I remained in Türkiye, I believe I would have continued my education there. The Turkish education system, being highly strict, compels everyone to pursue a degree program. In contrast, the academic system in the Netherlands was more relaxed, with no mandatory attendance in the programs I pursued here, allowing me to pass courses without much effort. However, I soon grew accustomed to this ease, which led me to lose focus on my studies. I have often wondered how my educational and professional path would have unfolded had I continued my studies.

✍ Can you tell us about your current career? Did you have a childhood aspiration, and how did your career evolve?

When I was younger, I aspired to become an astronaut due to my strong interest in science. In Türkiye, I was already pursuing a path in the sciences, which dovetailed the expectations of my family and peers. However, my career unfolded quite differently. I moved to the Netherlands in 2003, and in 2004, while still a student, I began working part-time as a dishwasher in a restaurant. The establishment had a branch and could seat about 70 people, and it was there that I discovered my growing interest in the business side of the industry. My migration between Türkiye and the Netherlands presented various challenges, and I found that I felt more secure in business. Over the years, I gradually developed my skills, working in different roles such as dishwasher, kitchen staff, waiter, and grill cook, until 2008. At that point, I co-founded a food distribution company with a partner. I was 18 or 19 years old, and we began supplying food to prestigious venues across the Netherlands, building an extensive network. As the business expanded, we sought a kitchen space in 2010 and established a joint venture with my employer and investors, ultimately reaching 10 branches. This was my first experience setting up a business. Unfortunately, in 2017, my partner and I parted ways, and I had to rebuild my business from the ground up. Today, I own Laila Restaurant, which has three branches in the Netherlands, and we also run a steakhouse called Kasap. Additionally, we are in the process of constructing a hotel. My father also ran an Italian restaurant between 1994 and 1998 as a side job. I never imagined that I would work in this sector, but now I genuinely love my job. I believe my success stems from my passion for what I do.

✍ Have you encountered any challenges in restaurant management?

Certainly, there have been numerous challenges along the way. As I mentioned, our business grew rapidly at first, but following the separation from my partner, we essentially started from scratch. We faced particularly difficult times during the COVID-19 pandemic when we were forced to close the restaurant or provide semi-open services for about 15 months. During this period, the financial burden largely fell on us. Government support was limited. On top of that, a fire at one of our restaurants added another layer of hardship. The key, however, was resilience. We persevered and continued moving forward, driven by our love for the business. We are still full of energy, expanding our operations and exploring new projects. Currently, I am transitioning from restaurant management to hotel management, which is a key goal for my future career.

✍ What has been your primary motivation and source of inspiration for your career achievements?

I am not a complainer. I prefer to consider the glass half full, rather than fixating on the upsetting empty side. In other words, I avoid becoming consumed by past setbacks or external obstacles. Instead, I focus on a positive mindset and taking proactive steps forward.

✍ You also hold an active position within the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association in the Netherlands (MÜSİAD Netherlands). Could you elaborate on your role and activities within the organization?

MÜSİAD, founded in Istanbul in 1990, is a prominent business association. With approximately 15,000 members across 84 countries, including around 200 members

"A cuisine has developed in the Netherlands that is independent of Türkiye. The most significant marker of this is the 'kapsalon' doner, a dish unique to the Netherlands."

in the Netherlands, its mission is to promote trade and economic cooperation between nations. I became a member following an invitation from our current president, Ali Köklü. I currently serve as the Vice President of MÜSİAD Netherlands, a position I assumed in 2022. I contribute to MÜSİAD by leveraging the extensive network we have developed through our professional activities. Additionally, I aim to enhance the organizational quality of MÜSİAD by incorporating best practices from the successful ventures we have undertaken thus far. One of the key events we organize annually is the New Year's reception, which is held at the Grand Hotel Amrâth Kurhaus, a prestigious venue in Scheveningen, Netherlands. We also host exclusive events with prominent individuals in distinguished settings, thereby contributing to the quality and prestige of MÜSİAD's activities.

✍ What contributions do you hope to make to the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands and beyond, specifically in entrepreneurship, through your work at MÜSİAD?

My primary objective is to elevate the quality of entrepreneurship, with an eye to fostering a distinct "Turkish quality" and a "Muslim quality." Historically, entrepreneurial initiatives in the Netherlands by Turkish associations have been perceived as somewhat amateurish. We are working to reshape this perception, presenting a more visionary, innovative, and contemporary image of Turkish entrepreneurship. In view of the evolving conditions in the Netherlands, we focus on aligning our practices with Dutch business norms and fostering collaboration with other immigrant groups in the country. While Turks are highly organized within their own communities, there has been a notable lack of promotion to the broader society. In Europe, where individual development is emphasized, there is often a focus on personal achievement over collective progress. This has sometimes resulted in a disconnect between the diaspora and broader societal structures. At MÜSİAD, we aim to address this gap by encouraging greater interaction and integration with the wider society. While some individuals within the community have achieved notable success, it is essential for the Turkish community to collectively strive for progress and establish a more influential position. Through our efforts, we seek to benefit not only the Turkish community in the Netherlands but also the broader European Turkish and Muslim societies.

✍ How would you evaluate the entrepreneurial landscape of the Turkish community in the Netherlands, particularly in the service sector, over the past 60 years?

The Netherlands stands as the country where Turkish entrepreneurs have made the most significant advancements in the restaurant sector. Turkish businesses in the Netherlands exhibit a high propensity for brand investment. Many of the restaurants and concepts that most closely mirror those in Türkiye are located in the Netherlands, and it is here that some of the most successful restaurant models have emerged. Seve-

"We make a conscious effort to collaborate with Turkish architects and artisans. This reinforces our commitment to supporting Türkiye."

ral factors contribute to this success. One crucial element is the active participation of entrepreneurs who continuously invest in and develop the sector. In the hospitality industry, the progress made by one entrepreneur often catalyzes improvements across the sector. As one individual advances and revamps their business, they inspire others in the industry to follow suit, thus stimulating innovation and competition. This dynamic is a characteristic strength of a free market system, where competition drives continual improvement. While Germany has a larger Turkish population and consequently a higher number of Turkish restaurants, the Netherlands surpasses Germany in terms of service quality, product excellence, restaurant design, and conceptual innovation. The Benelux countries, along with the westernmost region of Germany, are among the most densely populated areas in Europe and even the world. Additionally, they rank highly in terms of income distribution, creating a wealthier consumer base with a greater capacity for discretionary spending. These factors make the region particularly attractive for Turkish businesses entering the European market. Notable Turkish brands such as Simit Sarayı, Mado, Köşebaşı, and Güllüoğlu have all expanded from the Netherlands to other parts of Europe. While their arrival has heightened competition, which has led to greater innovation among local entrepreneurs, it has also had drawbacks. Many of these companies entered the market without adequate research into local conditions, which led to several setbacks and underperformance.

How would you describe the culinary culture of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands, and has a distinct culinary culture developed in the past 60 years?

Turkish culinary culture is both rich and diverse. In Europe, particularly in the Netherlands, the culinary scene mirrors the cosmopolitan nature of Istanbul, which historically has served as a melting pot for various cultures from across Türkiye. Similarly, Europe has become a hub where diverse culinary influences intersect. Although Turkish cuisine is widely represented across Europe, the approach to Turkish culinary offerings is often shaped more by consumer demand. For entrepreneurs, meeting customer expectations is often the primary goal. Therefore, I do not believe that Turkish cuisine is fully represented. To appeal to a broader audience, it is often necessary to modify certain dishes to cater to the palates of foreign consumers, sometimes transforming them into fast-food concepts. Needless to say, there is also the issue of expertise. Without working with the right experts, we may fail to create the desired flavors. Additionally, the lack of high-quality ingredients available in Europe, such as tail fat used in traditional döner preparation, poses a challenge to replicating the authentic taste. Efforts are being made to find alternative solutions. Despite these challenges, the Netherlands stands in a strong position relative to other European countries in terms of the development of Turkish cuisine. Over time, menus have become more diverse, with new dishes, venues, and concepts emerging. A cuisine has developed in the

Netherlands that is independent of Türkiye. The most significant marker of this is the "kapsalon" doner, a dish unique to the Netherlands. The story behind its creation is fascinating. The dish originated when a doner shop owner began preparing a custom order for a barber, consisting of French fries topped with doner, cheese, sauces, and salad. The name "kapsalon," meaning "barber's shop" in Dutch, became synonymous with the dish as its popularity spread rapidly. Another notable example is the widespread popularity of doner. It has become a ubiquitous dish, sometimes surpassing hamburgers in terms of sales. However, the Dutch version of doner differs from its Turkish counterpart, as it is often prepared with lower-quality meat and flavored with sauces. This fast-food version has also gained traction in Türkiye, where it is now marketed as "German doner" or "Berlin doner." In addition to these, çılbır, a traditional Ottoman dish, was recently featured on the menu of a Michelin-starred Dutch chef. Our kebabs, as well as dairy products like cheese, ayran, and yogurt, have also become widely accepted in European markets. In the Netherlands, baklava stands out as one of the most popular and recognizable Turkish desserts.

✍ How has the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands contributed to Turkish and global cuisine?

The Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands has made significant contributions to both Turkish and global culinary traditions. Food and the dining table have the power to bring people together, even those who do not greet each other on the street, allowing them to share a meal in restaurants. Cooking and serving food is an excellent means of hosting guests and presenting oneself. When an international customer arrives, the deal is often made around the table. Cuisine fosters empathy towards a country and has the power to help one forget many things. It enables a country to create a positive image abroad, as the experience of enjoying Turkish cuisine can inspire curiosity about the culture and even motivate people to visit Türkiye. For instance, in our restaurant, we actively use visual media to showcase Türkiye's tourist destinations. Despite our efforts, we have not always received sufficient support for such initiatives, although we continue to promote Turkish products like tea and baklava through various media outlets. I am confident that these promotional efforts have inspired many people to visit Türkiye. Furthermore, we make a conscious effort to collaborate with Turkish architects and artisans. This reinforces our commitment to supporting Türkiye. The intersection of food and music holds universal appeal, and I believe that amplifying these aspects in globally popular Turkish TV series could further enhance international sympathy toward Türkiye, thus benefiting both our work and national image.

✍ Is the Dutch community interested in Turkish cuisine? What are your observations regarding their reactions to Turkish food?

There is a clear and growing interest in Turkish cuisine among the Dutch population. However, it is important to note that the Netherlands does not have a particularly developed culinary tradition. Turkish cuisine appeals to a wide range of palates, including those of the Dutch. We have observed a positive reception to our offerings, and to date, there have been no notable objections or dislikes expressed by our Dutch clientele.

✍ From a sociological perspective, does food serve as a facilitator between communities? What are the sociological effects of diaspora cuisine?

As I previously mentioned, the act of sha-

Breakfast event with Turkish students at a school in Haarlem in 1983

Source: *Velserstraat; Turkse maaltijd op de Noorderschool. Turkse leerlingen bieden hun Nederlandse leerkrachten Turkse hapjes aan, Boer, C. de 1918-1985, Noord-Hollands Archief / 1478 - foto's en negatieven van Fotopersbureau De Boer te Haarlem, Collectie van, 3737, https://hdl.handle.net/21.12102/3F76D4EB58DE93AF65713174B3DFA5B5*

ring a meal is inherently unifying. We make a concerted effort to bring people together, especially on special occasions including the month of Ramadan. While it can be challenging to bring people together in other contexts, food has the unique ability to bridge gaps, soften tensions, and facilitate connection. A shared meal has the power to break down barriers, ease discomfort, and open doors.

✍ What are the Turkish dishes that have gained popularity at your restaurant recently?

Classic dishes such as kebab have now gained international recognition and are widely consumed across the globe. At our restaurant, we strive to introduce less familiar dishes from Turkish and Ottoman cuisine to our customers. Some of these have been successful, while others have not gained the same level of popularity. One dish that has been particularly well-received recently is hünkârbeğendi (lamb with aubergine mash), a dish with a rich historical narrative that appeals to a wide range of tastes. Its relatively low allergenic content makes it an attractive option for many.

✍ What are your future goals for the promotion of Turkish cuisine in the Netherlands and for entrepreneurs contributing to its promotion?

"Food and the dining table have the power to bring people together, even those who do not greet each other on the street, allowing them to share a meal in restaurants."

There is a clear need to create a structured framework to benefit both Türkiye and the international community. I believe institutions such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities could play a pivotal role in establishing this framework. The restaurants of the Turkish diaspora represent a valuable promotional channel, attracting thousands of visitors. Significant amounts of money are invested in attracting viewers to advertisements on platforms like YouTube; however, in our venues, we have the opportunity to engage audiences and present content of our choosing for extended periods. Türkiye can also leverage its popular TV series to promote Turkish cuisine and cultural values globally. In doing so, Turkish entrepreneurs abroad can play an important role in amplifying this message.

✍ What recommendations do you have for young Turkish people in the diaspora who wish to enter restaurant management and entrepreneurship?

I would first advise them to learn from their failures. It is essential to conduct thorough research and preparation in advance. Developing a clear and distinctive concept, along with hardwork and perseverance, is key to success. Additionally, staying attuned to market innovations and identifying a specific target audience are crucial. Profitability is another vital aspect, so a thorough cost-benefit analysis should be done before launching any venture. Market research is therefore an essential step in entrepreneurship. Furthermore, it is important to recognize that the restaurant industry is highly dynamic and demanding, requiring full-time dedication. It is difficult to succeed in this sector while balancing other professional commitments. To thrive, one must fully commit to the demands and challenges of the restaurant business, which require continuous attention and management day and night.

Interview

THE JOURNEY OF TURKISH YOGURT IN THE NETHERLANDS: THE STORY OF JAN HOOGENBOOM

JAN HOOGENBOOM

The First Turkish Yogurt Producer in the Netherlands

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself?

I was born in 1957 and am currently 68 years old, residing in Oudewater, a town in the province of Utrecht. I grew up on a farm, where I began working at the age of 16, managing a herd of about 20 cows. After meeting my wife, Miranda, we decided to expand the farm together, and today we manage approximately 300 cows. Our dairy farm produces a variety of dairy products, with a particular focus on Turkish yogurt and ayran. Our farm has been in operation for ten generations, and now my six children have taken over the business. I also have 10 grandchildren.

✍ How did you first become acquainted with the Turkish community in the Netherlands, and what led to the idea of producing Turkish yogurt? What challenges did you encounter during this process?

In 1986, we began transforming our milk into various dairy products, including traditional thick, strained yogurt. Historically, this type of yogurt was made in the Netherlands, fermented in a pot or pan, and it produced a thicker consistency than the runny yogurt typically found today. This yogurt caught the attention of two Turkish entrepreneurs, Murat and İsmail, from the company "Serhat Türk Toptan Satış," who remarked, "Jan, your yogurt is as good as the yogurt we eat in Türkiye. Can we sell it

in Turkish stores?" Thus, we began selling the yogurt under the name "Boerenyoghurt." Initial sales in Turkish stores were slow, but after Murat's wife suggested depicting Nasreddin Hodja on the packaging, with his famous yogurt-related story, sales increased significantly.

✍ The Netherlands is renowned for its dairy products. Is there a distinction between Dutch yogurt and Turkish yogurt? If so, how would you characterize the difference?

While there is no fundamental difference between Dutch and Turkish yogurt, the primary distinction lies in the production process. Dutch yogurt today is typically produced in large-scale factories, whereas Turkish yogurt is more artisanal and traditional. Our method of production is smaller-scale and more hands-on, resulting in a product that closely resembles the classic Turkish yogurt.

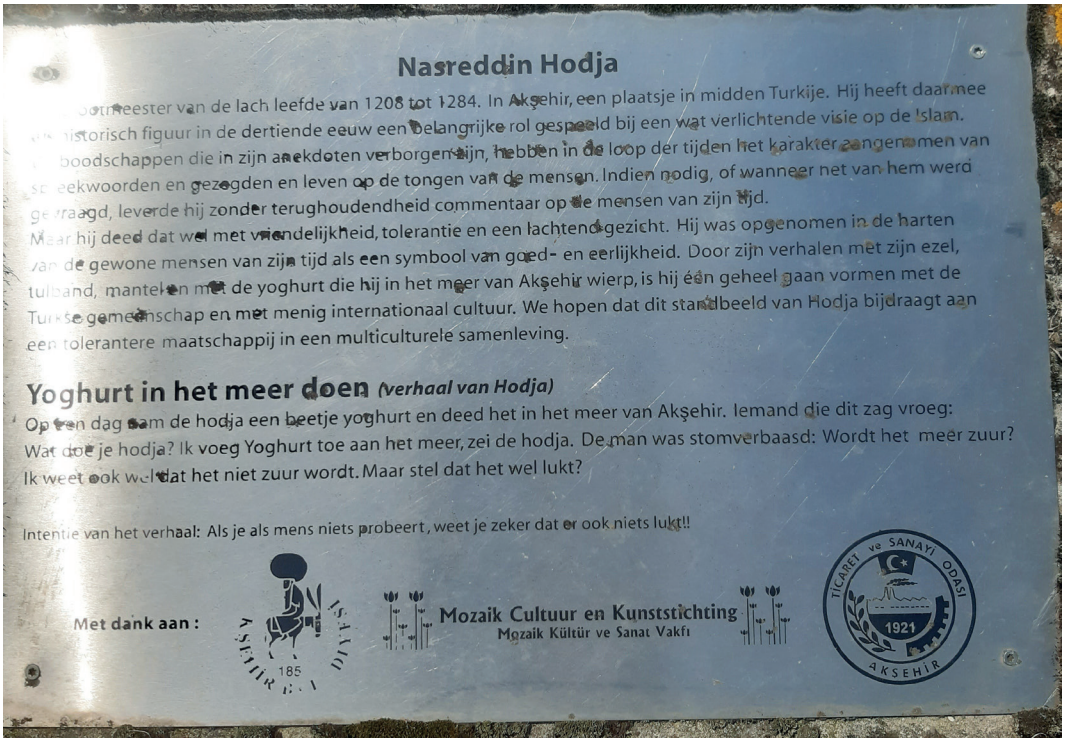
✍ How has the demand for Turkish yogurt evolved in the Dutch market over time?

The demand for Turkish and Greek yogurt has significantly increased over the past 25 years. This shift can be attributed to globalization and the growing multiculturalism within the Netherlands and Belgium. A small survey conducted in Dutch shops and supermarkets revealed that native Dutch consumers were increasingly interested in Turkish yogurt. One reason for this is that the younger generation is moving away from traditional consumption patterns and becoming more open to foreign culinary influences.

✍ Do the Dutch also enjoy Turkish yogurt?

Indeed, over time, the Dutch have started consuming more Turkish yogurt. I believe many Dutch people have developed a taste for the yogurt they enjoyed during vacations in Türkiye. Additionally, the Dutch are increasingly drawn to food products from other cultures.

✍ What differences have you observed in the consumption habits of the Turkish and Dutch communities?



"Jan, your yogurt is as good as the yogurt we eat in Türkiye."

The Turkish community tends to eat yogurt as a side dish during meals, while the Dutch prefer it for breakfast or as a dessert after the meal. As a result, Turkish yogurt products typically do not contain ingredients like fruit or muesli.

✍ Do you think yogurt as a product has contributed to trade relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands?

Certainly. I sell a significant amount of yogurt to Turkish wholesalers, and I have rarely encountered issues with payments. In the Turkish community, agreements are sacred, and promises are always kept. Additionally, we regularly purchase packaging materials from Türkiye and have sourced two filling machines from Ankara.

✍ How do you tailor your marketing strategies to Turkish and Dutch consumers? Do you adjust your approach to accommodate cultural differences?

While I do not implement entirely separate marketing strategies for Turkish and Dutch consumers, I do consider their distinct consumption preferences. For example, Turkish consumers typically do not purchase yogurt products that contain fruit or muesli.

✍ How do you ensure that Turkish yogurt maintains its market position without compromising its unique flavor?

We avoid large-scale factory production in order to preserve the traditional and

"Over time, the Dutch have started consuming more Turkish yogurt."

distinctive taste of Turkish yogurt. During productive weeks, we produce approximately 100,000 liters of ayran and yogurt, which equates to 5,000,000 liters per year.

✍ What was your greatest achievement and the biggest challenge during the growth phase of your business?

Our greatest achievement was the decision to add extra cream to our standardized yogurt, which resulted in a product that closely resembled authentic Turkish strained yogurt. This modification made the yogurt thicker and creamier. The primary challenge we faced was the increasing competition from large supermarkets that began producing their own Turkish-style yogurt in recent years.

✍ Do you employ any Turkish workers at your company? If so, have you observed any distinct work habits or traditions among your Turkish employees?

Unfortunately, we do not currently employ any Turkish workers. However, we would welcome the opportunity to do so, as it would help us address potential language and cultural barriers more effectively. For example, when we traveled to Türkiye to purchase filling machines, we encountered some communication challenges due to language differences.

✍ Do you have any interesting, touching, or amusing experiences related to the Turkish community that you would like to share with us?

There is a statue of Nasreddin Hodja at the entrance of our company, which we received as a gift from the municipality of Akşehir in Türkiye. They presented it to us as a token of appreciation for how we had promoted Nasreddin Hodja in the Netherlands through our yogurt products.

✍ What is your view on the contribution of the Turkish community to the Dutch economy?

The Turkish community has made a highly positive contribution to the Dutch economy. It is a community characterized by strong entrepreneurial spirit, a robust work ethic, and a drive to progress and build.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

Mutfağımıza büyük ilgi

AĞIZ TADI Hilversum kentinde Anadolu Kültür Derneği'nin açmış olduğu Türk mutfağı kursunu ilgiyle takip eden Hollandalılar, her fırsatta mutfağımızdan övgüyle söz ediyorlar.

■ Hilversum Anadolu Kültür Derneği'nin düzenlediği Türk yemekleri kursuna katılan Hollandalılar, "Leziz Türk yemeklerine hayranız" dediler.

Sedat TAPAN / *HİLVERSUM, (Hürriyet)*

HİLVERSUM kentinde sosyal ve kültürel alanlarda faaliyet gösteren Anadolu Kültür Derneği'nin düzenlediği Türk yemekleri kursuna Hollandalılar büyük ilgi gösterdiler.

Yıl boyunca toplam altı kez düzenlenen kurslarda Türk mutfağından çeşitli yemeklerin öğretildiğini ve Hollandalı bayanların ilgisinin her geçen gün arttığını belirten kurs öğretmeni **Nuray Akkaya**, kurs sayısının arttırılması yolunda yoğun talep alındığını ifade ederek şunları söyledi:

"Dokuz yıldır kentteki Hollandalı bayanlar için Türk mutfağı kursları düzenlemekteyiz. Mutfağımızın tanıtıldığı etkinliklerle tatil amacıyla ülkemize giden Hollandalı sayısının artması, kurslara gösterilen ilgide etken oldu. Yıl içinde düzenlenen kurs sayısının artırılması için yoğun talep almaktayız. Bu yıl içinde düzenleyeceğimiz kurslar şimdiden doldu. Önümüzdeki dönemler için kurs sayısını artırmayı planlıyoruz."

Newspaper report on the interest and participation of the Dutch in a Turkish cuisine course organized by the Anatolian Cultural Association in Hilversum in the 1990s

Source: *Sedat Tapan, Hürriyet Newspaper*

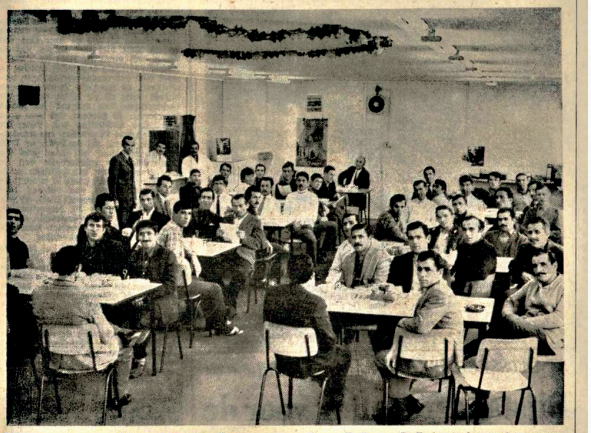
Image of a signboard of an Islamic butcher shop opened by a Turk in the Netherlands to provide halal meat for Muslims
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Collectie Turkse Dordtenaren, 669_1505, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/BE77A70EAC8711E489FB00163E535DC5/showbrowse*

A Turkish grocery store on Noordendijk Street in Dordrecht in 1998
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_302322, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/F8113D1BE6924A97ADC640F8CF520A84/showbrowse*

TURKS ETEN IS LEKKER

TURKSE THEE IS TE ZWART

Turken bij Halbertsma hebben moeite met cao



Woonoord Atatürk: voorbeeld voor veel andere bedrijven

(Van een redactrice)

De Turkse gastarbeiders van Halbertsma's Fabriek voor Houtbewerking NV te Grouw wonen in een barak. De heer J. Haveman, hoofd van de huisvestingsdienst van het ministerie van sociale zaken en volksgezondheid, speciaal belast met de huisvesting van buitenlandse gastarbeiders zegt daarvan: „Een zeer keurig woonoord. Het is een voorbeeld voor veel bedrijven in Nederland. Ik heb maar één bezwaar, het staat een beetje dicht op het bedrijf, maar zo erg is dat nu ook weer niet".

Woonoord Atatürk, een prefab-produkt van Meinesz NV te Harlingen, staat naast de voormalige zuivelfabriek te Grouw. De eetzaal bleek een onbelemmerd uitzicht op de Grou. De gastarbeiders hebben er veel ruimte en veel mogelijkheden. Halbertsma heeft ruim 200.000 gulden in barak en inrichting gestoken om het de 48 Turken in hun woonoord zo aangenaam mogelijk te maken. „Halbertsma spaart kosten noch moeite," zegt beheerder J. Bergsma. „Ze wilden een biljart, er kwam een biljart. De frisdrankautomaat is onderweg."

Heimwee naar Grouw

De Turken zelf maken ook geen ongelukkige indruk. Één van hen had last van heimwee. Hij keerde terug naar Konya in centraal Turkije. Volgens de laatste berichten zit hij daar nu heimwee te hebben naar Grouw en Halbertsma.

Twee Turken staan op de stoep voor hun woonoord. „Waar komt u vandaan," vraagt de ene langzaam en duidelijk verstaanbaar. Leeuwarden blijkt het wachtwoord te zijn. We worden onder een stroom heel- en halfverstaanbare woorden binnengehaald. Ze schudden handen, lachen en zeggen vele malen welkom.

Beheerder Bergsma spreekt een mondje Turks. Hij was een keer in Istanboel en enkele jaren geleden was hij beheerder van het Turken-kamp in Joure. Geen Turk houdt hem voor de gek. De gastarbeiders dragen hem op handen. Ze rennen voor hem. Jan Bergsma is voorlopig zijn verlangen naar de zee vergeten. „Dit is heel mooi werk," zegt hij.

Türlü en rijst

We eten türlü, een Turks maal samengesteld uit Nederlandse grondstoffen: rijst met vermicelli in het ene bord, in het andere bord een zeer smakelijke hussel van rundergehakt, doperwten, snijbonen, tuinbonen, spruiten, geschrapte aardappelen, paprika, uien, tomatenpuree en boter. Tot behalt zijn er manderijntjes uit blik. „Als ze yochurt krijgen gieten ze het meestal bij de türlü," zegt de heer Bergsma. Hij ziet er niet raar uit dat hij ook deze gewoonte heeft overgenomen. De stapels brood op de borden worden steeds kleiner. De Turken eten met smaak en dat doen ook de gasten en daar is de Nederlandse verloofde van de lolk bij.

De slaapzalen in de barak zijn ruim. In de ziekenboeg schalt Turkse muziek van radio-Ankara uit een oud toestel. De Turken vonden het oude toestel beter dan het nieuwe. Radio-Ankara komt, zij het enigszins in golven, redelijk door. De keuken is groot, menig hotel zou er jaloers op zijn. Er is een Turkse kok in vaste dienst. Sinds kort is er een tweede kok voor halve dagen. De Turken zijn ingenomen met het eten. Eén slager in Grouw zorgt geregeld voor schapevlees.

Honing op brood

Ze ontbijten met brood, melk of yochurt. Ze kunnen wel tien soorten broodbeleg krijgen, maar ze eten allemaal zonder uitzondering honing. Dat slaat fantastisch aan. 's Middags krijgen de heren brood met soep. Er is een „soepstaking" geweest. Dat kwam voornamelijk omdat er een gebrek aan communicatie was. Toen de Turken eenmaal begrepen dat ze hun klachten mochten uitspreken, was de zaak gauw geregeld. Ze kunnen nu kiezen uit vier soorten soep. 's Avonds is er het warme maal, zo veel mogelijk op Turkse manier klaargemaakt. Er zijn wel acht verschillende menu's en de koks zijn handig. Klachten zijn er dan ook niet.

Aan de muur in de eetzaal hangt de Turkse vlag, daarboven een portret van de grondlegger van het huidige Turkije, Kemel Atatürk (grote vader der Turken).

Jaarcontract

De 48 gastarbeiders komen allemaal uit Konya, een stad met zo'n 157.000 inwoners. Ze kwamen in november en werden tijdelijk ondergebracht in de Grouwster jeugdherberg. Op 13 december was woonoord Atatürk klaar. De Turken hebben een jaarcontract getekend. Twee van hen zijn vrijgezel, alle anderen zijn getrouwd, de jongste is 22, de oudste een jaar of 35. Iedere dag, ook zondags, komt er een Turkse krant, soms twee. Dat is dankbare leestof. De meeste Turken spreken al heel wat woorden Nederlands, sommigen spreken al hele zinnen. Om de communicatie te vergemakkelijken werkt ook Ilhan Karaçay bij Halbertsma. Hij is van huis uit journalist, maar via de Nederlands-Turkse Vereniging is hij in Grouw terecht gekomen als tolk en contactman. Hij is al twee jaar in Nederland, spreekt onze taal zeer redelijk, heeft een Nederlandse verloofde en laat zich ook geregeld zien in het woonoord.

De Turken houden niet van onze koffie. Ze houden blijkbaar ook niet van Turkse koffie, want ze kunnen het niet maken. Ze drinken thee, op z'n Turks, voor een Nederlander niet zo leuk trouwens, want de thee staat minstens een uur te pruttelen en is dan zo zwart als koffie.

157 gulden bruto

Nu ze één keer weten dat de

De Turken in de eetzaal van woonoord Atatürk aan de türlü met rijst, Turkse pot met Nederlandse ingrediënten.

journalisten belangstelling hebben komen ze aandragen met contracten en loonstrookjes. Het probleem komt op tafel, alle Turken scharen zich rond de tafel en juffrouw journalist moet nu maar eens vertellen wat ze ervan denkt. De Turken zijn aangenomen op jaarcontract. In dat contract staat dat ze per week 157 gulden bruto verdienen (dat is f 3,57 per uur). In datzelfde contract staat ook dat ze dertig gulden per week kostgeld moeten betalen. Dat loon is vastgesteld volgens de vorig jaar gesloten Halbertsma-CAO.

Per 1 januari kregen de Nederlandse werknemers bij Halbertsma 5.9 procent loonsverhoging. Halbertsma besloot ook de gastarbeiders deze procentuele verhoging te geven. Halbertsma week dus, in goede zin voor de Turken, van het contract af. Maar ook in verkeerde zin, vanuit het Turkse standpunt, want per 1 januari ging het kostgeld van dertig naar 35 gulden per week en dat is ruim zestien procent. De Turken hielden netto zo'n twee gulden per week meer over na deze „contractherziening."

Dat is niet de enige klacht. De Turkse gastarbeiders zeggen niet zo veel te snappen van de tariefsbetaling waar ze sinds 12 januari ook onder vallen. Het bedrijf heeft getracht de heren uit te leggen dat er vijf procent tariefsvergoeding in hun basissalaris zit en dat deze vijf procent als minimum wordt beschouwd. Nu de Turken ook volgens de tariefschaal werken en soms wel zeven tot acht procent meer kunnen verdienen, willen ze die vijf basisprocenten daar nog eens bovenop hebben. Ze snappen niet helemaal dat dit dubbelop is.

Bovendien maken ze zich een beetje kwaad over een speciale aftrek van vijf procent wegens instructie- en taalmoeilijkheden. „Veel bedrijven die met buitenlanders werken maken van deze regeling gebruik," zegt de personeelschef van Halbertsma. „Heus, de heren worden op precies dezelfde wijze betaald als de Nederlandse werknemers."

De moeilijkheid is dat de Turken het niet zo goed begrijpen. Zij hebben in feite alleen gezien op hun loonstrookje dat ze in plaats van dertig nu ineens 35 gulden kostgeld moeten betalen. „Iedereen bij ons heeft 5.9 procent meer gekregen per 1 januari. Volgens het contract hadden we de Turken dat niet hoeven geven. We hebben het toch gedaan. We mogen dus ook het kostgeld verhogen," aldus de personeelschef. Het uurloon is volgens de strookjes van de Turken na deze verhogingen van f 3,57 op f 3,90 gekomen, afgezien van de extra's die ze via tariefsbetaling kunnen maken. De problemen zijn inmiddels voorgelegd aan de Nederlands-Turkse Vereniging, in de hoop dat de communicatiestoornis na deze interventie opgeheven kan worden.

Tolk Karacay zegt: „Het contact met de Grouwster bevolking is goed. Nergens in Nederland is zo'n vriendelijk dorp." Er zijn wel eens problemen, mohammedanen bijvoorbeeld mogen officieel geen alcohol drinken; de Grouwsters wennen er al aan.

Nog een speciale opmerking voor de heer H. Bosma, boerenpartijkandidaat voor de staten, uit Wolvega. De heer Bosma verklaarde maandagavond in Drachten tijdens het politiek café dat

Newspaper report from 12 March 1970 on the conditions of workers at Atatürk Dormitory and their dining customs

Source: *Turks Eten Is Lekker Turkse Thee Is Te Zwart Turken bij Halbertsma hebben moeite met cao Woonoord Atatürk: voorbeeld voor veel andere bedrijven. "Leeuwarder courant : hoofdblad van Friesland". Leeuwarden, 12-03-1970, p. 4. Delpher'den 22-01-2025 tarihinde alınmıştır.*

Image of the opening preparations of a Turkish shop in Deventer in 1978
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

Image of the opening of a Turkish shop in Deventer in 1978
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

CHAPTER IV.

Source: *Turks Archief, turkarchief.nl*

DIASPORA
AND MULTILINGUALISM

IDENTITY, LANGUAGE AND BELONGING IN THE TURKISH COMMUNITY

İrem Bezcioğlu-Göktolga

TURKISH "BLOOMS" AGAIN IN THE NETHERLANDS: THE JOURNEY OF THE TURKISH LANGUAGE IN THE NETHERLANDS FROM TULIP PRESIDENT MELEK YÜCEL'S PERSPECTIVE

Melek Yücel

IDENTITY, LANGUAGE AND BELONGING IN THE TURKISH COMMUNITY

İREM BEZCİOĞLU-GÖKTOLGA [1]

Introduction

Migration to the Netherlands, which began six decades ago with the intention of temporary employment, became permanent due to family reunifications, children pursuing education and professions, and the subsequent generations born in the Netherlands. Over time, the Turkish community has grown to become the largest immigrant group in the country.

The Turkish community in the Netherlands stands out from other immigrant groups in various ways. For instance, while the native language skills and preferences of first-generation immigrants typically diminish starting with the third generation (Fishman, 2013), this trend does not hold true for the Turkish community. Now in its fourth generation, the Turkish language remains prominent both within households and in public spaces, as evidenced by its presence in shop names, institutions such as banks and libraries, and community interactions. Academic research further underscores the preservation of the Turkish language across generations (Backus, 2013; Eversteijn, 2011; Extra & Yağmur, 2010). This phenomenon can be attributed to several factors: Turkish immigrants predominantly reside in large cities and concentrated neighborhoods, where the language is a key medium of social interaction. Families often live in close proximity to relatives, enabling frequent socialization in Turkish. Children are typically exposed to Turkish at home until school age, through activities such as watching Turkish television channels, listening to Turkish music, and spending vacations in Türkiye. Furthermore, marriages predominantly occur within the Turkish community in the Netherlands or with spouses from Türkiye. Institutions such as mosques, foundations, and associations - many supported by Turkish organizations from Türkiye - also play a vital role

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in maintaining the Turkish language and identity.

The continued use of Turkish enables the preservation of cultural identity and a sense of belonging within the Netherlands. However, the country's language policies, particularly the lack of comprehensive support for immigrant languages including Turkish, pose significant challenges to sustaining the language. This article explores the historical and contemporary efforts in the Netherlands to teach Turkish, as well as the community's own initiatives to preserve its language and culture. Additionally, it highlights the impact of mother tongue acquisition on multilingualism, multiculturalism, and academic success, emphasizing the importance of preserving Turkish as a key element in maintaining the language, identity, and cultural heritage of future generations.

Turkish Language Education Initiatives

The history of Turkish language education in the Netherlands reflects a series of evolving language policies. In the early years of migration, educational initiatives were introduced in Dutch schools to address the needs of children from Turkish guest worker families. However, these measures were later discontinued, leaving the responsibility for Turkish language instruction to civil society organizations, including Turkish associations and foundations.

In 1974, on the 10th anniversary of migration to the Netherlands, Turkish was introduced as a minority language in primary and secondary schools. This initiative aimed to support the acquisition of Dutch language skills while simultaneously fostering the development of minority students' native language, given the expectation that they would eventually return to their home countries. These courses initially operated under the framework of Education in One's Own Language and Culture (Onderwijs in Eigen Taal en Cultuur), later renamed Education in One's Own Language (Onderwijs in Eigen Taal), and by 1998 became known as Education in Non-Indigenous Living Languages (Onderwijs in Allochtone Levende Talen). However, in 2004, these courses were abolished at the primary school level on the grounds that they conflicted with immigrant integration policies (Extra & Yağmur, 2006). As a result, Turkish language instruction was relegated to an elective course in secondary schools.

This negative shift in policy reflects a contradiction in the Netherlands' approach to multilingualism and multiculturalism, as the removal of these language courses disregards the country's diverse linguistic reality. Nevertheless, perhaps precisely owing to this fact, the Turkish community has actively taken steps to address these challenges, developing initiatives to sustain Turkish language education. For example, the Dutch Turkish Education Foundation was established with the slogan "Hand in Hand for Turkish" (Türkçe için El Ele) (Extra & Yağmur, 2006). Additionally, the Yunus Emre Institute, founded in 2007, organizes a variety of activities for all age groups to promote the Turkish language and culture at its Amsterdam branch (Yunus Emre Institute, 2024). More recently, the Tulip Institute, active since 2021, has collaborated with school administrations, non-governmental organizations, and various foundations to support Turkish language education by recruiting teaching staff and providing inst-

ructional materials (Tulip Institute, 2024). Moreover, various community organizations, foundations, and mosque associations conduct language and cultural activities for primary school children outside regular school hours. International schools in certain cities also offer Turkish language instruction for children with Turkish as their native language. For instance, the International School Eindhoven in the North Brabant region offers weekly Turkish lessons with a curriculum tailored for different age groups. Similarly, language, culture, and art programs aimed at children and adults across various cities provide opportunities to enhance language skills while fostering a sense of cultural identity and belonging.

In recent years, the growing number of highly educated Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands has contributed to an increase in Turkish-language activities outside of formal educational settings. These efforts have fostered collaboration with Dutch institutions. For instance, libraries in Eindhoven and Utrecht have introduced sections dedicated to Turkish children's books, and the city of Veldhoven has initiated regular Turkish book-reading events (De Bibliotheek Utrecht, 2022; De Bibliotheek Veldhoven, 2024). Additionally, the 2024 Dutch Picture Book of the Year, Help! A Surprise! (Help! Een verrassing!) has been translated into 39 languages, including Turkish, for digital platforms (Prentenboeken in alle talen, 2024). These initiatives not only improve children's Turkish language skills but also enhance their self-confidence and cultural connection by demonstrating the acceptance of their native language in Dutch institutions.

"Children who possess literacy and academic language skills in their first language are better equipped to learn a second language and more effectively master academic language used in educational settings."

Multilingualism and Turkish

The language acquisition of Turkish children, who comprise the largest immigrant group in the Netherlands, has been the subject of extensive academic research. These studies address various aspects, including Turkish and Dutch language skills (Aarts & Verhoeven, 1999; Driessen & Merry, 2011; Scheele et al., 2010), mother tongue policy and language practices in home settings across generations (Bezcioğlu-Göktolga & Yağmur, 2017; 2022), and preservation of Turkish, increased use of Dutch across generations, and code-switching between Turkish and Dutch (Backus, 2013; Eversteijn, 2011; Yağmur, 2009).

Research reveals that Turkish families in the Netherlands are particularly proactive in preserving their mother tongue, especially during the preschool years, compared to Turkish communities in other countries. Children predominantly communicate in Turkish at home during this period, and they encounter Dutch in a systematic way upon entering school (Scheele et al., 2010; Statistics Netherlands, 2017). However, the

dominance of Dutch increases as children progress through school, particularly if families do not actively support their children's academic and linguistic development in Turkish. By the end of primary school, Dutch often becomes the dominant language (Yağmur, 2010). Although children educated in Dutch are initially expected to demonstrate stronger academic skills in Dutch compared to Turkish, this anticipated level of success is not always achieved due to the failure to recognize the need for a tailored approach to the educational development of multilingual learners. A strong foundation in the mother tongue is crucial for healthy multilingualism and academic success. Addressing gaps in Turkish language skills and supporting their development requires active involvement from families, researchers, and institutions engaged in mother tongue education.

At home, Turkish families engage in a variety of activities to strengthen their children's Turkish language skills. These include speaking exclusively in Turkish, teaching children to read and write in Turkish, correcting their use of Dutch words while speaking Turkish, reading Turkish books, making children watch Turkish television programs, and enrolling children in after-school Turkish lessons (Bezcioğlu-Göktolga & Yağmur, 2017). Furthermore, studies on the academic performance of Turkish children in the Netherlands, which take into account socioeconomic factors, indicate that children with an immigrant background from higher socioeconomic backgrounds achieve academic success levels comparable to their Dutch peers (Akoğlu & Yağmur, 2018). To sustain these efforts over the long term and further enhance the multilingual capabilities of the Turkish community, it is essential to provide robust socioeconomic support to families.

Individuals who have a strong command of their mother tongue also experience the advantages of multilingualism. A 2014 study demonstrated that bilingual Turkish-Dutch children exhibit superior cognitive functions compared to their monolingual peers (Blom et al., 2014). Moreover, numerous studies have highlighted that proficiency in a mother tongue facilitates the acquisition of a second language and enhances academic achievement (Creese & Blackledge, 2015; Cummins, 1979; Verhoeven, 2007). Cummins (1979), a prominent figure in the field of multilingualism and language education, has extensively illustrated the connection between a child's mother tongue and their second language proficiency. Children who possess literacy and academic language skills in their first language are better equipped to learn a second language and more effectively master academic language used in educational settings. Additionally, the cognitive abilities developed through mother tongue acquisition play a crucial role in easing the process of second language learning. The presence of third- and fourth-generation Turkish families in the Netherlands underscores the growing significance of initiatives focused on the teaching of Turkish to enhance children's second language acquisition and academic success. For these families, transmitting Turkish identity and culture to their children - especially those born in the Netherlands - is of paramount importance. In light of this, enhancing Turkish language activities, including reading Turkish books, engaging in cognitive development games, and discussing school-related topics in Turkish at home will maximize the potential benefits of bilingualism.

Contemporary approaches to multilingualism reflect these developments. Children born and raised in the Netherlands often grow up exposed to multiple langua-

"Children born and raised in the Netherlands often grow up exposed to multiple languages, including Turkish, Dutch, and English (which is widely spoken in the Netherlands), as well as other languages they encounter through daily interactions."

ges, including Turkish, Dutch, and English (which is widely spoken in the Netherlands), as well as other languages they encounter through daily interactions. This exposure fosters a holistic perception of language, enabling children to view their linguistic repertoire as a unified system rather than discrete units. Consequently, they develop innovative, communication-focused language practices. From the perspective of mother tongue preservation, language mixing - such as incorporating Dutch words into Turkish - may initially be viewed negatively. However, this phenomenon is a natural outcome of social realities. Certain words may not have direct equivalents in other languages, or may carry different connotations across languages. For instance, children educated in Dutch will naturally gravitate toward Dutch when Turkish equivalents of concepts are not introduced at home. Therefore, the linguistic repertoire within Turkish-speaking communities, which have maintained a strong connection to their Turkish identity and culture for generations, should not be criticized. Instead, this phenomenon should be understood as an opportunity that ensures the survival and continued practice of the Turkish language. It is essential that parents, educators, and institutions involved in Turkish language education recognize and support this bilingual reality, fostering the development of academic language skills in Turkish.

Conclusion and Recommendations

The continuation of native language practices is critical for the Turkish community in the Netherlands, which has preserved its language, identity, and culture for over six decades. It is essential to recognize that children who acquire proficiency in their mother tongue are more likely to excel in second language learning and academic performance. Both families and educators must be informed of these benefits. The responsibility for mother tongue education should not fall solely on families; rather, public institutions such as the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, along with associations, civil society organizations, and academic experts in the Netherlands, must work together to identify and address gaps in Turkish language teaching and acquisition.

Furthermore, it must be acknowledged that investing in Turkish language initiatives is inherently an investment in identity and belonging. By supporting the Turkish language of children in the Netherlands, we not only contribute to their multilingualism but also foster a stronger sense of culture and belonging. Generations raised with this awareness will hold significant value for both Türkiye and the Netherlands.

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Interview

TURKISH "BLOOMS" AGAIN IN THE NETHERLANDS:
THE JOURNEY OF THE TURKISH LANGUAGE IN THE NETHERLANDS FROM TULIP PRESIDENT MELEK YÜCEL'S PERSPECTIVE

MELEK YÜCEL

President of Tulip Turkish Language and Culture Institute

✍ Can you briefly tell us about yourself and the Tulip Institute?

My name is Melek Yücel. I was born and raised in the Netherlands, and I completed my higher education in the Department of French Language and Literature at Hacettepe University. Upon graduation, I worked for five years at the Netherlands Institute for Higher Education (NIHA), which was established by the Dutch government in Türkiye. In 2021, together with Sevda Kool, we founded the Tulip Institute. I currently serve as the president of the institute as well as the administrative coordinator for the Turkish language project that we are conducting across the Netherlands.

✍ What was the main purpose of establishing this institute? What were the reasons for the need at the time it was founded?

In 2004, the Dutch government removed Turkish language lessons from the curriculum in schools, citing economic reasons and concerns about the potential risks to the integration of Turkish-origin individuals in the Netherlands. Subsequently, several Turkish civil society organizations proceeded to offer Turkish lessons. Over the past decade, however, our community in the Netherlands has lacked an organized structure for providing Turkish language education for children. Addressing this gap was the primary motivator for establishing the Tulip Institute. Our goal is to standardize and professionalize Turkish language education throughout the country and to develop solutions by collaborating with stakeholder

Melek Yücel, President of Tulip Institute

institutions, thereby better addressing the language and identity development needs of our multilingual children.

Did you encounter any difficulties during the establishment process?

Indeed, challenges have existed and will continue to accompany us as we pursue our vision of 100% Turkish language education. Initially, we worked diligently to promote the institute to our target audience. A significant challenge in the first year was the lack of recognition from civil society organizations in the Netherlands, as they were unfamiliar with us and the system we had developed. However, trust in our work grew as our efforts began to yield tangible results - such as the positive progress in the language development of our students and increased media coverage. Today, the Tulip Institute enjoys the support of volunteers across many sectors. Moreover, our financing challenges have been addressed thanks to the significant backing from the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities. On the ground, we continue to navigate these difficulties with the invaluable support of civil society organizations and the dedicated efforts of our expanding teaching staff.

What changes has the Institute undergone since its establishment?

When we first established the Institute, we focused solely on providing Turkish lan-

Turkish children's book section opened by the Tulip Institute at the OBA Banne Library in Amsterdam in 2024

guage lessons. However, today, we also support academic endeavors related to Turkish language and culture, facilitate the opening of Turkish book sections in Dutch public libraries, and help organize enthusiastic celebrations of our national days and holidays across the Netherlands. We have evolved with more institutional professionalism and confidence. In the near future, we will inaugurate our fourth book section in collaboration with official municipal libraries in the Netherlands. For a long time, Turkish children's books were scarce in Dutch libraries, and those available did not meet the growing demand. We now provide children with high-quality Turkish and bilingual reading materials. These books, donated by our community through book donation campaigns, are new, well-maintained, and of high quality. Through this initiative, we aim to instill in children the understanding that Turkish, as an integral part of their identity, is both valuable and significant. The opening ceremonies for our book sections in libraries were graced by key figures such as the Municipal Council, Library Directors, and Turkish Consuls General. This official support for the Turkish language carries immense symbolic importance for the Turkish community in the Netherlands.

✍ What does the Institute do today, and why are these initiatives important?

The Tulip Institute offers Turkish language education to children aged 4–6 and 7–12 living in the Netherlands, whose mother tongue is Turkish. Additionally, the Institute addresses the Turkish community's nee-

"When we first established the Institute, we focused solely on providing Turkish language lessons. However, today, we also support academic endeavors related to Turkish language and culture, facilitate the opening of Turkish book sections in Dutch public libraries, and help organize enthusiastic celebrations of our national days and holidays across the Netherlands."

ds regarding mother tongue education. Our focus lies in fostering the development of children, as early childhood mother tongue education plays a crucial role in supporting both personal and linguistic growth. Language, as a carrier of cultural heritage, serves as an essential tool shaping an individual's cognitive and cultural identity. Therefore, the Tulip Institute fulfills a vital function in enhancing children's language skills and strengthening their cultural ties.

What are the statistics on students, teachers, and success rates at the Tulip Institute?

Research underscores the benefits of starting language learning at an early age, significantly influencing language development. Consequently, our first cohort encompasses children aged 4–6, during which language acquisition abilities are at their peak. For this group, Turkish lessons are structured around a game-based learning model. Our second cohort includes children aged 7–12, providing a more advanced approach to native language education.

Currently, the Tulip Institute operates in 64 locations across 40 cities in the Netherlands, offering Turkish lessons in 110 classes. Each term, we provide instruction to over 1,000 students, with an average language development improvement rate of 20% per term. Our team comprises 38 highly qualified teachers delivering 60 hours of instruction per student per term. The satisfaction rates highlight the success of our program: we have achieved 93% parent satisfaction, 97% teacher satisfaction, and 96% satisfaction at the institute.

Does the Institute engage in cultural preservation beyond language education? If so, what initiatives does it undertake?

While structured language education delivered by trained teachers is vital, creating environments where children encounter Turkish organically is equally critical for holistic language development. To achieve this, the Tulip Institute collaborates with various stakeholders to promote Turkish culture effectively. One noteworthy initiative is the establishment of Turkish book collections in libraries across the Netherlands. In partnership with Utrecht municipal libraries, we created the "Tulip Turkish Children's Book Collection," now available at the Overvecht, Kanaleneiland, and Leidsche Rijn branches. This initiative allows bilingual children to access high-quality Turkish and bilingual books, fostering a sense of cultural and linguistic belonging. Similar efforts are ongo-

"This official support for the Turkish language carries immense symbolic importance for the Turkish community in the Netherlands."

ing with libraries in other cities. To encourage library engagement, we regularly organize Turkish reading days. For instance, during the "National Book Reading Days" (January 24 – February 3, 2024), we hosted events in 17 libraries across 10 cities, where Turkish children's books were read aloud.

Recognizing the importance of academic research in language education for multilingual Turkish children, the Tulip Institute collaborates with academics from the Netherlands and Türkiye. In 2023, we hosted the "International Congress of European Turks and Bilingualism," bringing together scholars, educators, institutional representatives, and parents. Additionally, we organized a virtual meeting between children in our program and Professor Johan Vandewalle of Ghent University, a linguist fluent in over 30 languages. Academics also play a key role in our in-service teacher training programs, providing consultations and sharing expertise to enhance lesson quality. Lastly, in recognition of the 60th anniversary of labor migration to the Netherlands, we initiated a documentary project capturing the migration journey from the perspective of children in our program. The documentary is scheduled for release this year.

Are there other immigrant communities that provide mother tongue education? Where do you see your institute among these organizations?

In 2019, the Dutch Central Statistics Agency (CBS) conducted a survey involving 7,652 participants, revealing that 149 languages and dialects are spoken in the Netherlands. Considering that over 25% of the Dutch population today has an immigrant background, approximately five million individuals speak a language other than Dutch in their households. Many immigrant communities, such as Surinamese, Moroccan, Arab, Chinese, Italian, Serbian, Russian, and Syrian populations, have initiatives aimed at teaching their children their native languages. These programs are typically organized by civil society organizations and are often referred to as "weekend schools" in the Netherlands. It is known that there are Serbian, Russian and Syrian weekend schools providing language education. Among these organizations, the Tulip Institute stands out as one of the most extensive initiatives, given the size and influence of the Turkish community, which is the largest immigrant group in the Netherlands. Research indicates that the Turkish community places a higher value on maintaining the Turkish language and transmitting cultural heritage to future generations compared to other immigrant groups. This strong demand bolsters the Institute's effectiveness in the field of mother tongue education. For example, the Utrecht Library cited the Tulip Institute as a model during a recent presentation, and the Amsterdam Library expressed interest in collaborating with us based on our achievements in Utrecht. These examples highlight how our efforts in mother tongue education have set a standard for immigrant communities. I hope that the Tulip Institute inspires other organizations supporting multilingualism and mother tongue education among immigrant groups. Many of these groups share similar needs and challenges, and by collaborating, we can develop more effective and comprehensive solutions.

✍ If you reflect on your experiences since the establishment of the Institute, why and for whom is mother tongue education important?

Mother tongue education is fundamental for developing language skills and reinforcing cultural connections. It plays a critical role in shaping children's cognitive frameworks, enhancing their communication abilities, and deepening their social relationships. Learning one's mother tongue at an early age, when cognitive receptivity is at its peak, nurtures a child's sense of identity and belonging. For these reasons, the Tulip Institute prioritizes teaching Turkish as a mother tongue.

✍ What is the importance of children growing up bilingual? Does growing up bilingual in the diaspora foster different perspectives?

Research consistently shows that children growing up with proficiency in two or more languages experience multifaceted development. Bilingualism enhances cognitive development by promoting robust neural connections, which in turn improve problem-solving and analytical skills. Moreover, exposure to multiple languages broadens children's understanding of diverse cultures and thought systems, enriching their cultural awareness and adaptability. Bilingual children also tend to develop advanced communication skills. Additionally, bilingual proficiency significantly enhances global employment opportunities, offering individuals the chance to work in diverse fields and countries. In summary, bilingualism fosters the growth of well-rounded, socially integrated, and globally capable individuals who can thrive in an interconnected world.

✍ Since the institute's inception, how have different generations demonstrated

interest in Turkish? What is the relationship of new generations with the Turkish language?

The generational relationship with the Turkish language among the Dutch Turkish community has evolved significantly since the initial labor migration following the Dutch-Turkish Labor Agreement of 1964. First-generation immigrants predominantly spoke Turkish at home, establishing the language as the primary medium of familial communication. With the second generation, Dutch began to blend into everyday conversation, resulting in bilingual expressions where Turkish was still predominant. However, the 2004 discontinuation of Turkish mother tongue lessons in primary schools in the Netherlands marked a turning point. This policy change led to two distinct parental approaches: some families maintained Turkish as the primary language at home, while others adopted Dutch to facilitate their children's integration into the educational system. External factors, such as schoolteachers' and social workers' recommendations to prioritize Dutch at home, further influenced this shift. Today, with the emergence of the fourth generation, a noticeable decline in Turkish language proficiency is evident. The linguistic delays observed in the third generation have contributed to a gradual detachment from the Turkish language and cultural identity in the fourth generation. This is particularly observable among children who travel to Türkiye during summer vacations. Many of these children, having adopted Dutch as their dominant or primary language, express themselves more fluently in Dutch than in Turkish. Their language preferences are shaped by their usage in familial, educational, and social contexts, leading to a growing inclination toward Dutch.

✍ What is the role of parents in the process of learning Turkish?

Parents play a pivotal role in the process of learning Turkish and in fostering their children's connection to their mother tongue. Their active engagement helps instill an appreciation for the Turkish language and reinforces the understanding that cultural ties are intrinsically linked to linguistic proficiency. To achieve this, parents should prioritize speaking Turkish at home, engaging in regular, meaningful conversations with

their children. Research highlights the importance of parents using their own mother tongue - the language in which they are most proficient - as a critical factor in their children's first language acquisition. Complementing spoken language with reading activities, such as introducing Turkish books, is equally important. Exposure to Turkish media, including cartoons, children's programs, and music, further strengthens linguistic development. To facilitate a structured approach to language acquisition, professional instruction in Turkish, where feasible, is highly recommended. Parents should provide the necessary support to ensure their children can systematically participate in mother tongue education. At the Tulip Institute, we recognize the importance of parental involvement and regularly organize "parent information sessions" at our partner institutions to promote awareness and collaboration.

✍ Children in the Netherlands grow up experiencing two languages and two cultures. What is the effect of these two languages and cultures on children's identity formation? Can you evaluate them in terms of difficulties and conveniences?

Bilingual children often face grammatical complexities, particularly when transferring linguistic structures between Turkish and Dutch. It is common to hear children translate phrases directly from Dutch into Turkish, resulting in grammatically incorrect sentences. Although incorporating translations or mixing words from another language within sentences may seem like an easy strategy for children, it is not conducive to their language development. Similarly, code-switching can occur when a child's vocabulary in one language is insufficient. For instance, they may start a sentence in Turkish and complete it in Dutch, or vice versa, reflecting incomplete language development. The structural differences between Turkish and Dutch alphabets, writing systems, and pronunciations can create additional difficulties, particularly in reading and speaking. Children may also struggle to transfer concepts learned in one language to the other. This imbalance between two languages may result in children favoring the language in which they are more fluent while neglecting the other, further exacerbating their lack of confidence in their weaker language. Such challenges are particularly pronounced during visits to Türkiye, where children may feel shy or lack the self-assurance to communicate effectively in Turkish.

Despite these difficulties, bilingualism fosters significant cognitive and social advantages. Exposure to multiple languages enhances brain development, promotes flexible thinking, and strengthens problem-solving abilities. Additionally, bicultural

experiences enrich children's perspectives, fostering open-mindedness and an appreciation for diversity. Bicultural individuals also benefit from cultural richness. Exposure to multiple traditions, cuisines, music, and histories contributes to the development of a well-rounded identity. These experiences equip children with the adaptability and skills necessary to thrive in multicultural settings.

✍ Is it possible to have Turkish lessons in schools in the Netherlands? Are there policies on multilingualism in the Netherlands?

Until 2004, Turkish language lessons were integrated into the primary school curriculum in the Netherlands. However, this provision was removed based on the perception that mother tongue education hindered the integration of immigrant communities. At the Tulip Institute, we have observed that even two hours of weekly instruction in Turkish significantly benefits children's mother tongue development. Recent research corroborates this, demonstrating that strong proficiency in one's mother tongue facilitates the acquisition of a second language in a more effective and sustainable manner. In recent years, the Turkish community in the Netherlands has increasingly recognized the value of mother tongue education. Therefore, we advocate for the reintegration of Turkish language lessons into school curricula based on supply and demand. A strong foundation in the mother tongue enables children to learn Dutch more easily, achieve higher academic performance, and secure better career opportunities. Consequently, providing mother tongue education is essential for fostering individuals who thrive both socially and academically in bilingual societies.

At the secondary school level, Turkish is offered as an elective foreign language, and students may include it as part of their High School Graduation Exam (eindexamen). The grade earned is reflected on their diplomas. However, the availability of Turkish as a course depends on the school administration, and currently, only a limited number of schools provide this option, with other foreign languages being more commonly offered.

In recent years, there has been growing support for including the mother tongues of immigrant children in educational processes. Guidelines have been developed for educators to facilitate this integration, which is a positive development. However, Turkish still lacks sufficient institutional recognition. For instance, in early childhood care facilities (kinderopvang), while English, German, and French are permitted for up to 50% of daycare time, immigrant languages such as Turkish are not available.

✍ What kind of collaborations do you have with other institutions in the Netherlands that work on Turkish language education?

We collaborate extensively with institutions that facilitate Turkish language education. These partnerships include primary schools, community centers, municipal libraries across the Netherlands, and the Amsterdam Yunus Emre Institute.

✍ What are the studies carried out by the Turkish state in the Netherlands regarding Turkish language and culture?

Turkish language and culture initiatives in the Netherlands receive substantial support from several Turkish governmental institutions. These include the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB), the Embassy of the Republic of Türkiye in The Hague, various Turkish Consulates General, the Ministry of National Education, and the Yunus Emre Institute.

✍ Do you find the work carried out in the Netherlands regarding Turkish language and culture sufficient?

While many Turkish civil society organizations conduct activities related to Turkish language and culture, their collective impact remains limited. One significant issue is the lack of a unified approach; each organization tends to implement its own methods and programs. Greater collaboration among these entities could enhance the effectiveness and reach of their efforts.

✍ How can you inspire other bilingual Turkish children by sharing your personal story of preserving identity and belonging?

I received Turkish mother tongue lessons during my primary school years in the Netherlands. These weekly lessons, though brief, were instrumental. As a child, it was not easy for me to fully grasp the significance of these lessons. However, I now realize that they taught me Turkish children's songs, Turkish syntax, and the correct way to express the language. Over time, I developed a deep appreciation for these lessons, which played a crucial role in helping me articulate myself effectively. Celebrations of children's holidays, such as April 23rd National Sovereignty and Children's Day, were occasions of immense joy. My proficiency in my mother tongue became a source of confidence and pride. Reflecting on my experiences, I recognize the profound benefits of growing up bilingual.

✍ How do you plan to pass on Turkish culture and language to future generations?

Our primary objective is to ensure the sustainable preservation of the Turkish language to future generations. Promoting the use of Turkish within family communication stands as one of our most significant priorities. Equally important is fostering the continuity of cultural heritage by sharing traditional values, stories, and customs. Celebrating meaningful national holidays - such as April 23rd, March 18th, and May 19th - and religious holidays, and imparting their significance to younger generations are essential steps in strengthening their cultural identity. The richness of Turkish children's literature today is noteworthy, offering visually captivating and linguistically impressive works. Even adults express enthusiasm for reading these books. Providing access to these valuable resources for children serves as a bridge for preserving the language as a vibrant and evolving phenomenon across generations. It is imperative to ensure that children have access to a variety of Turkish-language resources, including written, visual, and auditory materials. Acquiring knowledge in their mother tongue from an early age will not only aid in their bilingual development but also empower them to navigate their lives confidently.

📷 An image from an event organized by the Tulip Institute at the Utrecht Overvecht Library

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

Table 1: Students Receiving Mother-Tongue Instruction (OETC) in Primary Schools Across the Netherlands, October 1997

Students' country of origin	Number of students	Students Receiving Mother-Tongue Instruction (OETC)	
		Number	Percentage
Aruba	1,529	0	0%
Maluku Islands	3,286	1,494	45%
Netherlands Antilles	8,983	0	0%
Greece	1,043	247	24%
Italy	2,343	201	8%
Yugoslavia	6,994	314	4%
Cape Verde	2,518	603	24%
Morocco	44,681	29,595	66%
Portugal	1,771	810	46%
Spain	2,498	662	26%
Surinam	37,146	0	0%
Tunisia	952	187	20%
Türkiye	50,723	36,269	71%
Other countries	29,889	0	0%
Refugees	210,835	0	0%
Total		70,382	33%

Source: Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Table 2: Turkish Teachers Provided by the Turkish Government and by Local Authorities, by Academic Year [1-2]

1984 / 1985	350
1986 / 1987	485
1988 / 1989	630
1990 / 1991	670
1992 / 1993	710
1994 / 1995	725
1996 / 1997	715

1. This includes both teachers appointed by the relevant municipalities in the Netherlands and those sent from Türkiye.
2. All data in the tables were compiled between May 2024 and June 2024 by M. Mustafa İyi through archival research conducted at the Directorate General for Foreign Relations and the European Union of the Ministry of Labor and Social Security of the Republic of Türkiye, within the framework of the necessary legal permissions. The data are entirely based on the annual reports published by the Directorate General for Foreign Relations and the European Union between 1980 and 2006.

Ayla Ekiz, aynı zamanda hükümete Türkler'le ilgili çıkarılacak yasalarda tavsiyeler de bulunuyor.En büyük arzusu ise"Türkiye'de çalışmak".

Avrupa'da ilk yargıcımız

Orhan ALPDÜNDAR
ROTTERDAM

BATI Avrupa'da yaşayan ikinci kuşak Türkler gurur kaynağımız olmaya devam ediyor. Yaklaşık 35 yıl önce Avrupa'nın çeşitli ülkelere giderek her türlü çalışma koşullarına zorlanan Türklerin çocukları da en gözde meslekleri seçiyor. **İşte,** Hollanda'nın Rotterdam kentinde yaşayan 28 yaşındaki Kırşehirli **Ayla Ekiz** de bu gençlerden biri. 1973 yılında 5 yaşındayken aile birleşimi çerçevesinde Hollanda'ya gelen **Ekiz,** ilk ve orta öğretimini tamamladıktan sonra, Erasmus Üniversitesi Hukuk Fakültesi'nden avukat olarak çıkıyor. Ama **Ayla** avukatlıkla yetinmiyor. Aynı okulda yüksek lisans da yapıyor. Hollanda Adalet Bakanlığı'nın açtığı ve 680 kişinin katıldığı zorlu sınavdan geçerek "Avrupa'da yargıç olan ilk Türk kızı" unvanını kazanıyor.

Newspaper report on Ayla Ekiz, who moved to the Netherlands through family reunification, becoming the first Turkish judge in Europe.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 09-08-1995*

Nederland wil tien leerkrachten uit Turkije toelaten

Van onze onderwijsredactie

DEN HAAG — De Nederlandse regering heeft er geen bezwaar tegen wanneer Turkije tien leerkrachten naar Nederland stuurt voor het onderwijs in de Turkse taal en cultuur aan kinderen van gastarbeiders. Dit antwoordt minister Kemenade op vragen van Kamerleden van uit de drie grote confessionele fracties.

Er is een gesprek geweest tussen ambtenaren van het ministerie van onderwijs en de Turkse ambassade in Den Haag. Daarbij is van Nederlandse zijde duidelijk gemaakt dat de Turkse regering zich verder het beste rechtstreeks kan wenden tot de gemeentebesturen in die plaatsen waar veel Turkse gastarbeiders wonen. Het onderwijs aan kinderen van gastarbeiders valt namelijk (althans op de openbare scholen) onder het bevoegd gezag van de gemeenten.

A 1974 newspaper report on the Dutch government's decision to permit Türkiye to send teachers for the education of Turkish language and culture to children of Turkish workers in the Netherlands

Source: *Nederland wil tien leerkrachten uit Turkije toelaten. "Trouw". Meppel, 05-07-1974. Retrieved from Delpher on 17-01-2025 https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDD:010823247:mpeg21:p002*

Turken willen meer lesuren voor eigen cultuur

Van onze onderwijsredactie

ROTTERDAM – Het aantal lesuren 'eigen taal en cultuur' voor Turkse en Marokkaanse kinderen moet worden uitgebreid. In de huidige tweeënhalf uur per week kan alleen taalles gegeven worden, terwijl migrantenkinderen ook andere vakken, die met hun eigen land te maken hebben, zouden moeten krijgen in de basisschool.

De Turks-islamitische culturele federatie en de Democratische sociale verenigingen federatie leggen deze mening vandaag in Rotterdam voor aan de leerkrachten, die nu de lessen in 'eigen taal en cultuur' verzorgen.

Onder Turkse en Marokkaanse leerkrachten heerst al enige tijd discussie over de invulling van de speciale lessen voor buitenlandse kinderen en over het benodigde aantal uren. Wettelijk is er nu een maximum van tweeënhalf uur voor deze lessen, die basisschoolleerlingen onder schooltijd krijgen. Buiten schooltijd mag ook een dergelijk aantal uren gegeven worden, maar dat komt er niet overal van. Onder andere door een gebrek aan Marokkaanse leerkrachten.

Ook de Algemene bond van onderwijs personeel, waarbij veel van deze leerkrachten zijn aangesloten, vindt tweeënhalf uur te weinig.

Deze FNV-vakbond wil dat er geen maximum in de wet genoemd wordt, zodat meer scholen zelf kunnen bepalen hoeveel lesuren zij hieraan besteden. De organisatoren van het congres in Rotterdam willen zeker drie uur voor de jongste kinderen en vijf uur voor de leerlingen van de bovenbouw. En zij willen dat de lessen ook in het voortgezet onderwijs op het rooster komen te staan.

De speciale lessen gaan nu voor een groot deel op aan les in het Arabisch, zeggen de migrantenorganisaties. Een moeilijke taal, zeker voor Marokkaanse kinderen, omdat die van huisuit veelal een Berbertaal spreken. Mooi zou natuurlijk zijn om al deze kinderen daarin les te geven, maar dat stuit op praktische bezwaren. En de kinderen moeten toch Arabisch leren, want dat gebeurt in het Marokkaanse onderwijs ook en is volstrekt onmisbaar om voeling te kunnen houden met de eigen cultuur.

De organisatoren van de Rotterdamse onderwijsdag vinden ook, dat godsdienst voor Turken en Marokkanen zo onlosmakelijk verbonden is met de cultuur dat er ook tijd moet zijn voor de islam.

Onomstreden zijn de lessen niet. De Turkse politicoloog Saim Sinsek bijvoorbeeld vindt, dat buitenlandse kinderen meer gediend zijn bij een goede beheersing van het Nederlands. In de tijd die Turkse en Marokkaanse leerlingen 'eigen taal en cultuur' hebben missen zij de lessen die Nederlandse kinderen dan volgen. Op die manier wordt de achterstand van de buitenlandertjes nog groter, meent Sinsek.

De organisatoren: „Wij zijn er op tegen dat de achterstand van buitenlandse kinderen wordt toegeschreven aan het onderwijs in eigen taal en cultuur. De oorzaken daarvan moeten elders gezocht worden."

A newspaper report on the demand of Turks in the Netherlands for more lesson hours devoted to education in their own culture.
Source: *Turken willen meer lesuren voor eigen cultuur. "Trouw". Meppel, 11-04-1987. Retrieved from Delpher on 17-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010827108:mpeg21:p009*

A mother-tongue education class at Marnix Primary School in Leiden, 1985–86.
Source: *Turks Archief, turkarchief.nl*

HOLLANDA'DA TÜRK ÇOCUKLAR İÇİN OKUL AÇILDI

LAHEY, KÂMURAN SÜMERCAN bildiriyor

Hollanda'nın Amsterdam şehrinde ilkokula devam eden Türk çocuklarına, haftada bir gün Türk öğretmenler tarafından Türkiye hakkında bilgiler ve din dersleri verilecektir.

Yabancı İşçilere Yardım Cemiyeti'nin Türk görevlilerinden Belma Togo ile Erkan Tapan'ın gayretleri sonunda uygulanacak olan Türkçe derslerine, ilk olarak Zacherias Janssen İlkokulunda başlanacaktır.

Bu konuda bayan Belma Togo özetle şunları söylemiştir:

«Amsterdam'ın bir semtinde tekerlekli kampta oturan ve bir Hollanda ilkokulunda okuyan 30 kadar Türk çocuğu için aynı okulda bir sınıf kurulacaktır. Bu görevi, Türkiye'de yıllarca öğretmenlik yapan Cemile Koç ücretsiz olarak yapmayı kabul etmiştir.»

A 1971 newspaper report on the introduction of weekly classes about Türkiye and religion for Turkish children in Amsterdam, the Netherlands.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 30-10-1971*

Hollanda'da Türk çocukları için ilkokul açıldı

LAHEY, KÂMURAN SÜMERCAN bildiriyor

Hollanda yetkilileri Türk işçilerinin çocuklarının Türkçe eğitim görebilmeleri için Utrecht şehrinde bir ilkokul açmışlardır. Haftada iki gün (Çarşamba ve Cumartesi) Türkçe derslerin yanı sıra, Türk çocuklarına bir din görevlisi tarafından din dersleri de verilmektedir. Modern eğitim imkânlarına sahip olan okulda, Türk öğrencilerine dersler teyp ile verilmekte ve Hollanda lisanı böylece daha kolay öğretilmektedir.

A 1971 newspaper report on the opening of a primary school in Utrecht, the Netherlands, to provide Turkish language education for Turkish children.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 25-12-1971*

Çözüm bekleyen sorunlar gündemde

Olumlu adım

Huizen kentindeki yurttaşlarımız çözümsüz bırakılan sorun karşısında tek vücut, tek ses olarak biraraya geldiler.

Huizen'de Türk Okul Aile Birliği kuruldu

● Kentte bir yıldır çekilen öğretmen sıkıntısını çözümlemek için biraraya gelen yurttaşlarımız belediye yetkilileriyle görüştüler.

Sedat **TAPAN**/*HUİZEN, (Hürriyet)*

HİLVERSUM yakınlarında bulunan **Huizen** kentindeki yurttaşlarımız yetkililerin ilgisiz kaldığı ortak sorunu çözümlemek için biraraya geldiler.

Kentteki ilk okullarda 65 Türk çocuğunun eğitim görmesine rağmen bir yıldır boş olan Türk öğretmen kadrosunun doldurulmaması üzerine harekete geçerek Türk Okul Aile Birliği'ni kuran yurttaşlarımız, seçtikleri temsilciler kanalıyla çözüm bekleyen sorunu gündeme getirdiler. Kentte kurulan Türk Okul Ailebirliği'nin Başkanlığına yapılan toplantıda **Mehmet Elgün** getirilirken, **Ali Rıza Yavuz, Adem Uğur, İsmail Ünal** ve **Recep Okur** adlı yurttaşlarımız da yönetim kurulunda görev üstlendiler.

Belediye yetkilileriyle yapılan toplantıda sorunun gündeme getirildiğini belirten **Huizen** Türk Okul Aile Birliği yöneticileri, **"Kentimizdeki çocuklarımızın kendi anadil ve kültürlerinde almış oldukları dersler, öğretmen kadrosunun doldurulmaması nedeniyle bir yıldır boş geçiyordu. Yetkililerin bu sorunu çözümlemek için girişimde bulunmamaları üzerine toplum olarak harekete geçip Türk Okul Aile Birliği'ni kurarak ilk adımı attık. Belediye yetkilileriyle yaptığımız ilk görüşme olumlu geçti. Bundan sonra çocuklarımızın yarınlara sorunsuz bir şekilde hazırlanmaları için yoğun çaba sarfedeceğiz"** dediler.

A newspaper report from the 1990s on the establishment of a Turkish school–parent association in Huizen in response to the problem of unfilled teaching posts in Turkish mother-tongue and culture classes.

Source: *Sedat Tapan, Hürriyet Newspaper*

CHAPTER V.

DIASPORIC IDENTITY

THE HYBRID IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION PROCESS OF THE TURKISH COMMUNITY IN THE NETHERLANDS: AN EVALUATION OF ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES

Halil İbrahim Karaaslan

FROM ASPIRATION TO REALITY IMMORTALIZED IN A STATUE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ALİHAN UZUN ON IDENTITY IN THE DIASPORA

Alihan Uzun

THE HYBRID IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION PROCESS OF THE TURKISH COMMUNITY IN THE NETHERLANDS: AN EVALUATION OF ITS OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

HALİL İBRAHİM KARAASLAN[1]

Introduction

Identity formation among Turkish youth in the Netherlands is shaped by the interplay of sociocultural dynamics stemming from migration and the multicultural fabric of Dutch society. As children of immigrant families, these individuals strive to preserve the Turkish cultural heritage upheld by their families, while engaging in processes of integration into Dutch society. The effort to reconcile these two spheres of belonging is central to their identity development.

Extending beyond an individual quest, identity formation is a phenomenon influenced by broader social and political contexts. The rise of anti-immigration rhetoric and policies in the Netherlands significantly impacts how Turkish youth perceive their place within society. These external factors influence their self-definition and aspirations for the future. This article explores the current state of identity construction among Turkish youth in the Netherlands, and considers the potential opportunities that hybrid identities can create.

Balancing Hybrid Identity Born out of Permanence

The official migration of Turkish laborers to the Netherlands began in 1964 following a bilateral agreement between the Dutch government and Türkiye, designed to address the growing demand of unskilled labor in the Netherlands. This agreement facilitated the migration of Turkish workers, predominantly male. In the Netherlands they were considered "guest workers" and the migration was perceived as temporary. In Türkiye, these individuals were referred to as *"gurbetçi"*[2]. Both terms underscored temporariness. The Dutch government anticipated the eventual repatriation of Turkish laborers upon the completion

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2 A term referring to expatriates expected to return home, -trans.

of their work contracts. Türkiye expected these emigrants would return after a while. However, contrary to these expectations, many Turkish workers settled permanently across the Netherlands and Europe (Dagevos et al., 2022).

The 1960s marked a pivotal period for many Turks, both in economic terms and also in terms of collective identity transformation. "Turks in the Netherlands" as an identity marker gradually evolved into "Dutch Turks." This new perception of identity posed complex dilemmas for Turkish migrants straddling two countries. This era also marked a new chapter between Dutch and Turkish governments (Dagevos et al., 2022). While the Netherlands focused on the integration of Turkish migrants into Dutch society (SCP, 2020), Türkiye sought to maintain its citizens' cultural, linguistic, and religious ties to their homeland (Akgündüz, 2008).

Through the process of family reunification in the 1970s and 1980s, Turkish immigrants began establishing close-knit communities in various cities, incorporating their cultural, linguistic, religious practices into local social life. However, settling permanently in a foreign country meant striking a delicate balance between preserving cultural and religious traditions from Türkiye and adapting to the norms and values of Dutch society. The process of family reunification has introduced complex questions regarding child-rearing and identity formation. Over time, Dutch Turks have cultivated a hybrid identity that integrates elements from both cultures. Research by Day et al. (2020) highlights that young people with immigrant backgrounds, including those of Turkish origin, commonly experience hybrid identity. For many Turkish youth, this required striking a balance between their Turkish cultural heritage, religious beliefs, and their engagement with Dutch society.

When the youth express their connection to Turkish roots and Dutch society, language stands out as a critical component in shaping this hybrid identity. The majority of Turkish youth navigate both languages in their daily interactions, reinforcing their connection to both cultural spheres. Religion also plays a significant role in the development of hybrid identity. Many young individuals with strong religious beliefs perceive their faith as a fundamental part of their identity. However, they sometimes encounter challenges in fully practicing their faith within the Netherlands. While many young people with immigrant backgrounds manage to reconcile their hybrid identities, approximately 30% report experiencing difficulties in maintaining a balance between their identities (Day et al., 2020). This struggle often results in a sense of misplacement, wherein individuals feel more Dutch when in Türkiye and more Turkish when in the Netherlands (SCP, 2020). Given the ongoing shift in Dutch immigration policies toward assimilation, it is likely that tensions surrounding identity balance will persist in the future.

Factors Influencing Hybrid Identity Formation

The construction of hybrid identities among Turkish-Dutch individuals is a dynamic process that varies across generations. While the first generation of Turkish migrants generally maintains a stronger identification with Türkiye, younger generations exhibit a more complex identity. According

to a study conducted by the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau (SCP, 2020), younger generations tend to establish meaningful connections with both Türkiye and the Netherlands. For younger generations, this entails a dual identification with both their Turkish roots and Dutch society, resulting in the formation of a multifaceted identity.

Several factors contribute to the development of hybrid identity. One of the most influential elements is education, which facilitates fluency in Dutch and encourages its predominant use in social interactions. This linguistic integration fosters a stronger sense of belonging to Dutch society. Conversely, experiences of discrimination and negative societal perceptions also shape identity formation. Encounters with prejudice can lead young people to seek greater acceptance and security within Turkish cultural spaces (Kunuroğlu et al., 2017).

Additionally, the contrast between the Turkish culture and the host country's culture complicates the youth's sense of belonging. Turkish-Dutch individuals often find themselves perceived as "Dutch" or "foreign" when visiting Türkiye, reinforcing their sense of otherness. This distinction arises from differences in behavior, language proficiency (as many speak Turkish with an accent or less fluently than native speakers), clothing styles, and lifestyle choices shaped by years of exposure to Dutch and Western cultural influences. As a result, they may struggle to be fully accepted as "authentic" Turks, contributing to a feeling of non-adaptation to Turkish society (SCP, 2020).

"The hybrid identity of Turkish youth enables them to fulfill the expectations of both societies, to act as bridges between two cultures, and to optimally combine Turkish and Dutch spheres."

Individuals of Turkish origin in the Netherlands can face discrimination and exclusion based on their ethnicity, religious beliefs, or language. Although many young people feel a strong connection to Dutch society, experiences of racism, Islamophobia, and social exclusion - particularly the barriers encountered in the labor market - may weaken their sense of belonging and suppress the expression of their hybrid identities (Day et al., 2020). As a result, Turkish-origin youth are often compelled to constantly straddle two cultures, a process that both shapes their hybrid identity and, at times, creates a sense of detachment from both their Turkish and Dutch affiliations.

Participation of Turkish Dutch Individuals in Dutch Society

The evolving structure of the Turkish community has had a profound impact on identity formation. An increasing number of children now have parents born in the Netherlands, leading to new cultural and social expectations, particularly in education and career aspirations. Research by Crul and Schneider (2008) indicates that

this shift has contributed to a more positive attitude toward education and improved academic performance among both men and women. Additionally, the 2024 report from the Social and Cultural Planning Bureau highlights that individuals of Turkish and Moroccan origin are increasingly integrating into Dutch society and attaining higher professional positions (Vermeij & Thijssen, 2024).

However, the participation of individuals of Turkish origin in Dutch society remains more constrained compared to other immigrant groups. While individuals of Surinamese and Caribbean descent tend to occupy more diverse social roles, Turkish-origin individuals often maintain strong communal ties and a deep identification with Turkish cultural heritage. This sociocultural separation influences their perception of a hybrid identity, making it more challenging to balance their Turkish and Dutch affiliations. Although younger generations are raised bilingually, they predominantly speak Turkish or a mixture of Turkish and Dutch at home, which reinforces their connection to Turkish culture. However, there is also a perspective that while this practice supports identity preservation, it may hinder full integration into Dutch society (Day et al., 2020).

The younger generations' search for a balance between their Turkish and Dutch identities produces a generational gap. This divide is particularly evident in the differing views between parents and children, with parents often struggling to fully comprehend their children's world. Such disparities may lead to conflicts and challenges in identity formation for Turkish-origin youth (Crul & Vermeulen, 2003). At the same time, second- and third-generation Dutch citizens of Turkish origin generally occupy a higher socioeconomic position than the first generation, which also influences their identity development. The first generation, predominantly of lower socioeconomic status, was often compelled to settle in neighborhoods with limited resources and opportunities, impacting both their economic integration into Dutch society and their identity formation within the Turkish community (Crul & Schneider, 2008).

Since the 1960s, the dynamics of Dutch cities where Turkish immigrants settled have undergone significant transformations. While early Turkish immigrants were required to adapt as a minority within Dutch cities, the contemporary situation is markedly different. In recent years, demographic shifts have resulted in minority communities becoming the majority in several large Dutch cities. In urban centers such as Rotterdam and Amsterdam, individuals without an immigrant background are now a numerical minority. This has played a crucial role in shaping the hybrid identities of the Turkish-origin Dutch individuals in terms of connection to the cities. However, this urban reality is not acknowledged politically, particularly among right-wing groups. Nevertheless, young individuals of Turkish descent increasingly define their identities in relation to their cities, fostering a strong sense of local belonging (KIS, 2022).

For Turkish-origin youth in the Netherlands this signifies the integration of their hybrid identity - formed through a fusion of Turkish and Dutch backgrounds - within the "super-diverse" urban context, carving out a space for themselves. Cities serve as dynamic spaces where these individuals may have a sense of belonging to both their own communities and the broader urban environment. This dual belonging fosters a sense of inclusion but also presents challen-

A photograph of a primary school class sitting in a green area in Dordrecht, including children of Turkish origin

ges, particularly in navigating the tensions between cultural authenticity and integration into the wider society (Crul & Lelie, 2023).

The Future of Dutch Turkish Youth

Several factors are expected to shape the identity development of Dutch Turkish youth in the future, with institutional racism being among the most pressing external factors. Covert investigations conducted by Dutch authorities into Muslim organizations, often under the assumption that they contribute to radicalization, have intensified feelings of insecurity and exclusion within the Muslim community (Felten & Vlug, 2023; Abaaziz, 2019). Such stigmatization fosters a pervasive sense of being constantly scrutinized, which, in turn, contributes to alienation from Dutch society. The sense of exclusion is not solely a result of discriminative state policies but is also reinforced by societal attitudes toward immigrants. The rise of the far-right discourse and racist rhetoric pose significant challenges, heightening the sense of exclusion among minority groups, particularly those of Muslim origin (European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, 2024). Discrimination, both overt and systemic (e.g., propaganda and political movements), impinges on the ways in which Dutch Turkish youth construct their identities and engage with society. The normalization of far-right rhetoric in public debates has led to an increase in racist discourse and discriminatory behavior, both in digital spaces and everyday interactions. A research titled Open and

Source: Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Collectie Turkse Dordtenaren, 669_1355, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/BE773FD7A-C8711E489FB00163E535DC5/showbrowse

Blatant Racism (Openlijk en onomwonden racisme) highlights the detrimental effects of racial discrimination on the well-being and sense of belonging of affected individuals (Felten et al., 2021). These negative experiences also influence access to internship and employment opportunities. According to Kros et al. (2024), young people with immigrant backgrounds, including those of Turkish origin, face significant barriers in the job market. Applicants with non-Dutch names are less likely to be invited for job interviews or internships, requiring them to submit, on average, four times as many applications as their native Dutch counterparts to secure similar positions.

Another key challenge facing Dutch Turkish youth is the preservation of the Turkish language. For the new generation of Turkish-origin Dutch individuals, preserving the Turkish language is becoming an increasingly greater challenge. While younger generations tend to have stronger Dutch language proficiency than their predecessors, their fluency in Turkish is gradually declining. This is largely attributed to the dominant role of Dutch in educational, professional, and social spheres (Crul & Schneider, 2008). Although Turkish continues to be spoken at home, it is often used in conjunction with Dutch, leading to decreased fluency in Turkish over time. The weakening of Turkish language skills has broader implications for cultural identity, since language serves as a crucial medium for transmitting traditions and values across generations. The literature warns of the long-term risk of diminishing Turkish language proficiency among future generations. To address

this issue, policies promoting bilingualism - such as parental guidance programs that support bilingual child-rearing - could play a crucial role in strengthening Turkish language skills (Day et al., 2020).

Similar patterns can be observed in other immigrant communities, such as Italian Americans in the United States, where, over successive generations, the use of Italian at home has diminished while English has become increasingly dominant (Kopf, 2022). While the mother language is often lost over time, cultural elements such as culinary practices, familial bonds, religious traditions, and even certain values and norms are preserved. These elements play a significant role in shaping community formation and identity development. As seen in the case of Turkish-origin Dutch individuals, the interplay between integration into the dominant society and the preservation of cultural heritage can be a complex yet ultimately enriching process.

Conclusion

While discrimination and exclusion faced by Turkish youth in their quest for identity present significant challenges, there are also notable opportunities and positive developments. The hybrid identity of Turkish youth in the Netherlands enables them to navigate and draw from the strengths of both their Turkish and Dutch backgrounds. Their bilingualism, for instance, equips them with intercultural competencies that are increasingly valued in the globalized job market. Proficiency in both Turkish and Dutch, coupled with an understanding of both cultures, positions them as valuable assets to companies engaged in international trade or serving diverse clientele. Furthermore, the role of the Turkish youth as cultural intermediaries can foster mutual understanding, collaboration, and innovation within organizations. A compelling example of this is Ahmed Emin Batman's work, House of All (Stichting Barmhartigheid, 2024), which integrates elements from mosques, churches, and synagogues to offer Turkish youth a platform to explore their identity within the Dutch cultural context. Batman's work underscores the significance of cultural diversity and creates a space for dialogue and self-expression across different cultures. Artists like Batman serve as sources of inspiration and hope for Turkish youth navigating their identity formation.

Examining the identity development of Turkish-origin Dutch individuals reveals an interplay of challenges and multiple opportunities. The hybrid identity of Turkish youth enables them to fulfill the expectations of both societies, to act as bridges between two cultures, and to optimally combine Turkish and Dutch spheres. Their resilience, intercultural competence, and ability to navigate diverse cultural landscapes provide a unique foundation for their future in the Netherlands. The ongoing process of preserving cultural traditions while integrating into Dutch society, and finding equilibrium between these elements, renders their identity development a compelling and evolving journey, which warrants close attention in the years to come.

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Interview

FROM ASPIRATION TO REALITY IMMORTALIZED IN A STATUE: AN INTERVIEW WITH ALİHAN UZUN ON IDENTITY IN THE DIASPORA

ALİHAN UZUN

Spokesperson for Moslimstudenten Associatie Nederland (MSA), the umbrella organization for student and Muslim student associations in the Netherlands

Can you tell us about yourself? You are the first young Turk to have a statue erected in the Netherlands. Could you share the story behind your award-winning project?

I am 24 years old, a Dutch Turk born, raised, and currently living in Hendrik-Ido-Ambacht. As a Dutch Turkish Muslim, my upbringing in a neighborhood with few immigrants presented its own challenges. Preserving my identity, reflecting on it, and expressing myself have always been significant to me because I am inherently a social individual. Since childhood, my goal has been to harmonize my Dutch and Turkish identities while contributing positively to society through this perspective. My approach in this country is not one of demanding acceptance but rather asking, "How can I contribute to this country?" Such an attitude naturally fosters mutual respect and belonging between me and the Netherlands.

My journey began when I joined the Youth Council established by the Ministry of National Education to promote equal opportunities. In the Netherlands, secondary education is stratified, and children from lower socioeconomic backgrounds are often placed in lower-tier schools. For instance, children whose parents are cleaners are more likely to be tracked into lower-level schools, whereas a misbehaving child may still be placed in higher-level schools if the-

ir parent is a lawyer. This prompted me to consider strategies for addressing these inequities. I imagined where I wanted to be in 10 or 20 years. Out of this reflection, I conceived the "Dream CV" project, which I later presented as a workshop. The project encouraged young people to envision their desired career paths and provided them with tailored advice on how to achieve their aspirations. The initiative received widespread acclaim and was implemented. As a result, I was nominated for an award by ABN AMRO Bank, which supports projects promoting equal opportunities. As part of the recognition, statues of the nominees were erected. When I learned that my statue would be included, I felt profoundly honored - not only personally but also on behalf of the Turkish community in the Netherlands. My statue serves as an example.

✍ As a university student in the Netherlands, you engage in various activities to support the educational experiences of Muslim students. For instance, you are an active member and spokesperson for the Moslimstudenten Associatie Nederland (MSA). What motivated you to join the MSA?

My journey into MSA unfolded quite organically. As a student at Delft University of Technology, I encountered a significant challenge during my early years: lack of accessible facilities for Muslim students to pray. While the campus includes a meditation room, it's a 30-minute walk from many parts of the university on the far

side of the sports field, a huge challenge for many Muslim students. Additionally, the room lacks an ablution area, and leaving prayer mats is prohibited. I began raising these concerns with the Muslim Student Association at Delft University. When the issue proved too complex for resolution at the university level, I reached out to MSA, the national umbrella organization established in 2017. My active engagement and commitment to addressing these issues led to an invitation to join MSA. Through this platform, I became more deeply involved in advocating for Muslim students, not only at Delft University but also at other universities facing similar challenges.

Before we delve into MSA, can you provide an overview of the history of Muslim and immigrant student associations in the Netherlands? When was the first Muslim student association founded, and what were the primary motivations for its establishment?

The first organized umbrella organization for Muslim student associations in the Netherlands, the Muslim Students Association (MSA), was founded in 2017. Before its creation, only local associations operated independently at various universities. For instance, the İkra Muslim Student Association was founded in 1996 at Erasmus University in Rotterdam. Associations specifically catering to Turkish-origin students, such as the Mozaik Student Association at Erasmus University and the Anatolia Student Association at the University of

"Preserving my identity, reflecting on it, and expressing myself have always been significant to me."

Amsterdam (VU), also played significant roles. The formation of these associations stemmed from a fundamental need for students with shared cultural and religious values to unite. In the 1990s, the immigrant student population in Dutch universities was relatively small, which amplified the necessity of fostering a sense of community. Over time, these associations began to expand their roles, with lobbying efforts to improve the rights and interests of Muslim students becoming increasingly central to their missions.

Arriving in the Netherlands with limited resources, no knowledge of the local language, and without social networks, our grandparents nonetheless succeeded in founding mosques, associations, and cultural organizations. Their resilience and dedication inspire immense respect. Our generation, who now enjoys significantly greater access to opportunities, have a responsibility to build upon these early efforts and to contribute both to the Netherlands and the Muslim community. The path to social equality for any community begins with education. While the first generation often held only primary school qualifications, their grandchildren are now university graduates. This upward trajectory in educational attainment represents a source of hope for the future of the Turkish community in the Netherlands.

While examining the development of Muslim student associations in the Netherlands, insights were drawn from the experiences of Muslim organizations in other countries. In the United States, Muslims tend to be highly educated, as many, including students, migrated to the country as early as the 1940s. Hence their communities are better institutionalized. Today, U.S. Muslim organizations, including the Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), demonstrate highly advanced levels of professional organization and effectiveness. In contrast, the Muslim student community in the Netherlands is at a relatively early stage of institutionalization. As of 2023, MSA is in its seventh year and is gradually expanding its reach. Recently, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science inquired whether MSA would include vocational school students (MBO) in its initiatives. We informed the Ministry that MSA is a newly founded organization and initially focuses on university-level students. MSA is now beginning to extend its efforts to higher vocational schools and aspires to eventually engage students in vocational education institutions as well.

✍ What are the current needs of Muslim students in schools?

As part of a comprehensive survey conducted by MSA, we gathered responses from 1,400 students, identifying several key challenges faced by Muslim students. One of the most significant issues reported is the absence of mosques on university campuses or the difficulties students

"We are residents of this country, having been born and raised here, and we are advocates for our rights."

face in accessing existing mosques. Additionally, the lack of appropriate ablution facilities exacerbates the challenge of practicing religious rituals. In instances where mosques are available, students often have to perform ablution in bathrooms, which is impractical. Another issue highlighted by the survey is the restriction that universities impose on some student associations' foreign guest speakers. Universities often justify these restrictions by claiming that the invited speakers do not align with the university's values. Muslim student associations, however, have expressed concerns over the lack of transparency regarding what these values entail, how they are determined, and by whom. They have also called for greater impartiality in the decision-making process.

Additionally, the state's shift in scholarship policy since 2015 has posed challenges. Previously, scholarships were offered without interest, but now they are provided as interest-bearing loans. The increased interest rates, compounded by the broader economic context in Europe, have created significant concerns, particularly for Muslim students who may avoid loans due to religious prohibitions on interest. This is particularly problematic for students from low-income backgrounds, who may be forced to work additional jobs, reducing the time they can devote to their studies. As a result, these students often face unequal opportunities, which may have long-term effects on their ability to integrate into society as they deserve.

Can you provide an overview of MSA? When and why was it established, and what types of student associations are included?

Initially, Muslim student associations in the Netherlands were independent and localized at universities. To better coordi-

nate and elevate the services provided to Muslim students, a national association was established. During its inception, it was crucial to ensure that each local student association had representation within MSA.

MSA has three primary objectives: to unite Muslim students nationwide, to represent their interests, and to strengthen their communities. While local associations focus on these goals at a regional level, MSA endeavors to achieve these aims on a national scale. Through MSA, students are encouraged to build a network across the country, fostering social capital and promoting a shared sense of belonging, while also providing a platform for exchanging ideas on relevant issues. MSA represents Muslim students across a variety of sectors, including ministries, politics, businesses, and universities.

In addition, MSA offers programs aimed at developing students' skills and capacities, such as media and career training, in collaboration with major companies, institutions, and ministries. These collaborations provide students with valuable opportunities to engage with these organizations.

Currently, MSA comprises 16 associations, all of which self-identify as Muslim student organizations. Recently, several Turkish student associations have also joined MSA.

✍ What differences do you observe between the associations you represent, based on the city and university where they are located?

These differences vary significantly depending on the identity of the university. For instance, in Amsterdam, there are two

public universities with differing stances. The Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam (VU), a Protestant university founded with Christian values, is notably open to religious freedoms. This openness facilitates the smooth operation of the Muslim student association affiliated with VU, which experiences minimal resistance in carrying out its activities. The university organizes extensive religious discussions, and the mosque on campus is recognized as one of the best in the country.

Conversely, the Universiteit van Amsterdam (UvA), also located in Amsterdam, has a more secular identity. The Muslim student association at UvA faces considerable challenges in engaging with the university administration. Efforts to improve the mosque facilities have been met with resistance for years, as the administration emphaasizes the separation of religion and state, reflecting its secular stance. The university has indirectly indicated that it does not wish to allocate dedicated prayer spaces for Muslim students. However, the practice of decorating Christmas trees on campus during the holiday season contradicts the university's secular policy and fosters

perceptions of discrimination between religious groups.

At Erasmus University, more progressive steps have been taken for a dedicated prayer room. Several Muslim students are involved in the university's student council, where they have raised concerns about Palestinian students. Specifically, students who returned to the Netherlands after serving in the Israeli military were believed to create an unsafe environment for Palestinian students on campus. While the university expressed support for Ukraine in the context of the ongoing war, it remained silent regarding the Palestinian genocide. In response to student advocacy, the university agreed to review its relationship with Israel, signaling a positive shift in response to the students' concerns.

Leiden University also presents challenges for Muslim students. Recently, during a protest against the Israeli genocidal actions in Gaza, the university administration removed the demonstrators from campus.

In general, university responses to the demands of Muslim student associations can differ widely. At Delft Technical University, a more pragmatic approach is taken, given the institution's technical focus. When Muslim students request a prayer room, the university makes efforts to accommodate them. Similarly, Radboud University, a Catholic institution in the east of the Netherlands, provides a student church on its campus that includes a prayer room and ablution facilities for Muslim students. The Muslim student association has maintained strong relations with the church administration, and the communal areas within the church are made available for various student activities.

✍ What kind of events does MSA organize, and what opportunities does it offer to students? What are its priority areas?

The MSA's core mission is representation. For instance, the organization recently delivered a presentation to the National Coordinator Against Discrimination and Racism *(National Coördinator tegen Discriminatie en Racisme)*, affiliated with the Ministry of the Interior. This interaction facilitated frequent engagement with public institutions and allowed these entities to better understand the MSA. As a result, the MSA successfully integrated into the state's communication network, ensuring its voice was heard. These efforts have led to invitations to numerous events.

One of the MSA's flagship programs is the National Iftar Program, held annually during Ramadan. This event gathers public officials, ministry representatives, business leaders, politicians, and other stakeholders to interact with MSA's student members. The program serves as a platform for students to expand their professional and personal networks while directly communicating their expectations and concerns to influential figures.

Additionally, the MSA hosts an annual Unity Day event that brings together all Muslim student associations nationwide. This event includes guest speakers, award ceremonies, and training sessions on topics such as media skills and lobbying. It also features focus group meetings with students, where participating organizations such as KPN (Koninklijke KPN N.V.), a major telecommunications company, and ministries conduct short training sessions. These institutions, which often act as event sponsors, introduce themselves to students, share employment opportunities, and encourage applications.

The MSA also addresses pressing issues

"MSA's primary objectives include supporting the religious freedoms, intellectual growth, and career advancement of Muslim university students."

relevant to its members, such as the Palestinian question. The organization sought appointments with government officials to discuss how the Palestine-Israel issue impacts university campuses. During a meeting with the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science, the MSA presented its perspective, emphasizing that the issue is geopolitical and legal rather than strictly religious. The MSA urged the state to consider its viewpoint in its policies and discourse.

Further, the MSA engaged in dialogue with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment to address concerns surrounding religious freedoms, allegations of espionage against mosques, and the resulting erosion of trust between the Muslim community and the Dutch government. The MSA highlighted the need for a more inclusive approach, advocating for Muslims to be engaged beyond the typical focus on security and integration issues. The organization also emphasized the importance of inviting Muslim representatives to participate in discussions on positive developments as well, not merely negative or contentious situations.

✍ Does MSA exclusively organize activities for Muslim students?

Yes, the Muslim Students Association (MSA) focuses its efforts exclusively on

Muslim students. This decision stems from the understanding that, while the Netherlands hosts over 600 student associations, Muslim students remain underrepresented within this sphere. MSA's primary objectives include supporting the religious freedoms, intellectual growth, and career advancement of Muslim university students.

To address these objectives effectively, MSA conducted a survey to explore the challenges faced by Muslim students in the Netherlands. The results were disseminated widely through various media channels. For instance, following the recent general election - won by the far-right Party for Freedom (PVV) - I wrote a column on MSA's behalf in the national newspaper *Trouw*. This article articulated the perspective that genuine Dutch nationalism is rooted in upholding the constitutional principle of religious freedom, rather than propagating anti-Islamic sentiments.

✍ What are MSA's notable achievements?

MSA has made significant strides in recent years, achieving several milestones that underscore its growing influence and impact. The President of MSA was invited to a New Year's reception hosted by the Dutch King, following a meeting with a government Minister. We consider it a significant achievement to have reached a level where we receive a direct invitation by the head of state. Furthermore, the MSA has garnered considerable attention in the Dutch media. We also regard it as a significant accomplishment that the Ministry has taken our survey seriously and demonstrated genuine interest in our findings. MSA collaborated with the largest non-Muslim student associations in the Netherlands to draft a manifesto advocating for the establishment of prayer rooms on university campuses. This manifesto was subsequently presented to members of the Dutch House of Representatives. MSA has garnered sponsorships from prominent companies, and the association is now nationally recognized by the Ministry of Education, which entails financial support for our initiatives.

✍ Are there student associations of other religions in the Netherlands? If so, do you collaborate with them or organize joint events?

Yes, there are student associations representing other religious groups, particularly Christian organizations. Many local religious associations often collaborate on advocating for religious freedoms. For instance, MSA organizes an annual panel discussion with the youth division of a Christian political party. Two years ago, MSA co-authored a manifesto with this group, which included their support for lifting the headscarf ban for police officers and judges. While collaborations with local associations have been productive, the central leadership of the same political party has been less sincere and engaged.

✍ What is the nature of MSA's engagements with the business community, state institutions, and politicians?

Our primary objective is to continue expanding our network and collaborations, with a focus on enhancing professionalism. However, the most significant challenge we face at present is the increasing attention that comes with the growth of MSA. This heightened visibility often results in a faster identification by those who may oppose our objectives, leading to negative responses. For instance, our expansion comes with a heightened risk of facing political attacks, particularly from politicians with racist or anti-Islamic views. Consequently,

it is crucial for us to draw the support of corporations and state institutions. Our logo is displayed in juxtaposition to ministry and corporate logos,a clear indication that these entities formally acknowledge our organization and affirm our reliability.

In the Netherlands, Muslim students represent a diverse range of ethnic backgrounds, with students of Turkish origin comprising one of the largest groups. What role do student associations, which include students of Turkish origin, play within the Turkish diaspora?

Student associations play a significant role in advocating for the rights and interests of Turkish students. Moreover, organizations such as MSA seek to improve the communication between students and society at large, while also fostering academic success. MSA, in particular, offers students from various ethnic backgrounds a unifying identity as Dutch Muslims. Thus, we can argue that these associations play a crucial role in facilitating the integration of the Turkish diaspora into broader societal frameworks.

In the Netherlands, are there state or university incentives to help student associations institutionalize and develop? Is there specific support for Muslim or Turkish student associations? How do universities view these associations within the context of their diversity policies?

When local student associations are recognized by universities, they often become eligible for funding or scholarships. Since MSA is recognized as a national student association, it too has access to financial support. However, there are no specific national-level incentives for Muslim students to form associations. The university's stance on student associations may vary, though nearly all institutions have diversity policies in place. Recently, many universities have established Diversity Departments. While we generally have positive relations with these departments, this dynamic can shift depending on administrative changes. Furthermore, universities' approaches to associations can be influenced by the particular demands and requests of their students.

✍ How does Islamophobia impact the lives of students?

Our survey indicates that Muslim students who encounter Islamophobic behavior experience a diminished sense of belonging, which is often articulated as not feeling "at home" on campus. This lack of belonging is a significant obstacle to their integration into university life. Graduates from higher education institutions tend to be less affected by Islamophobia in their professional careers compared to alumni of vocational programs. This discrepancy is largely due to the diversity policies implemented by corporations. Consequently, Islamophobia may present a more significant challenge for vocational students. Research conducted in Spain and the Netherlands also suggests that wearing a headscarf can impact career prospects.

✍ What steps have been taken in collaboration with state institutions to address students' needs? What initiatives have been pursued in terms of media presence and visibility?

We maintain close cooperation with three state institutions:

1. A youth-focused representative group has been established within the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. This group consults with the Ministry on various issues pertinent to young people.
2. Additionally, we will hold regular meetings with the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science - the most crucial ministry for our work. During a recent meeting, we requested engagement during both challenging and positive times, which was warmly received by the Minister. Our request resulted in new invitations and a possible establishment of a regular consultation channel within the Ministry.
3. Moreover, we collaborate with the National Coordinator Against Discrimination and Racism, which is part of the Ministry of the Interior. In June, this office hosted the National Congress for the Fight Against Discrimination and Racism, where we were invited to coordinate a focus group on discrimination. As part of this collaboration, MSA led the panel discussions, presentations, and moderation.

✍ What are the future goals and projects of MSA? How do you plan to better represent the student community in the Netherlands?

Our primary goal is to assemble Muslim students and strengthen their representation at universities. We also aim to disseminate the findings of the large-scale survey we conducted, which will serve as the basis for developing an 'Islam Sympathy Score' or 'Islam Tolerance Score' for each university. By ranking universities according to these scores, we hope to provide prospective students with valuable insights when making their university choices, particularly those who are transitioning from high school.

✍ Lastly, do you have any additional remarks?

As Muslim students, we share experiences and challenges of other students. We aspire to secure housing, pass exams, and navigate student life in much the same way as our peers. The only distinction lies in the fact that we bring our religious identity with us to campus. Religious freedom means that we do not need to leave our religious identity at home in favor of a secular one when we step outside. This is the essence of religious freedom.

We are residents of this country, having been born and raised here, and we are advocates for our rights. While some on the far-right claim to defend Dutch identity against immigrants and Muslims, as I articulated in my column, "Embracing Dutch identity does not mean being anti-Islam." To embrace Dutch identity is to believe in the Dutch Constitution, which guarantees freedom of religion in Article 6. Thus, we do not need to "integrate" in the traditional sense - we are already part of Dutch society. As the third generation in the Netherlands, we advocate solely for the protection of our religious freedom as outlined in Article 6, as well as for the non-discrimination provisions of Article 1. We also respect individuals who identify as secular or do not adhere to any religion. Our commitment is rooted in the belief that a community progresses when it is afforded freedom and equal opportunities. This begins with access to quality education. When education is inclusive and diversity is embraced within educational institutions, those who are given the opportunity to flourish will be better positioned to contribute to society.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

Ontsporingen nemen hand over hand toe

(Van een medewerker)

UTRECHT - Tussen de wal en het schip. Dat is de beste omschrijving voor de positie waarin de kinderen van buitenlandse werknemers zich hier in Nederland bevinden. Thuis zijn ze Turks of Marokkaans met hun ouders; op school en in de straat, samen met hun speelkameraadjes, zijn het eigenlijk Nederlandertjes die de taal niet spreken. De kinderen zitten in een niemandsland, ze zijn eigenlijk nergens thuis.

In feite worden ze in twee werelden grootgebracht: in het gezin worden de tradities van het thuisland gehandhaafd, op school gaat de opvoeding volgens de Nederlandse normen. En de kinderen zijn er de dupe van; al heel snel weten ze niet meer waar ze aan toe zijn. Nederlander-zijn met hun vriendjes is gemakkelijk en aanlokkelijk. De vrijheid is hier veel groter, het zakgeld is ruimer en welvaart is gemakkelijk. Ook „nee" zeggen, of een grote mond opzetten tegen je ouders is leuk, en welk kind heeft daar niet af en toe behoefte aan?

In het eigen gezin ligt het allemaal wat anders; vader is de baas en „nee" zeggen wordt met harde hand bestraft. Welvaart is er niet, want vader en moeder hebben de grootste moeite het hoofd boven water te houden, dus zakgeld is er niet of nauwelijks bij. In een Turks of Marokkaans gezin hebben de kinderen ook veel meer verantwoordelijkheden. Oudere kinderen passen op hun jongere broertjes en zusjes, meisjes van een jaar of twaalf hebben zware taken in het huishouden.

Maar hoewel thuis alle mogelijke moeite wordt gedaan de eigen tradities in stand te houden en volgens die tradities te leven, vernederlanden de kinderen meer en meer: ze raken in een vacuüm. Niemand weet er eigenlijk raad mee: de kinderen niet, hun ouders niet en ook de deskundigen niet, die wel urenlange vergaderingen besteden aan de problemen van de „tweede generatie", maar niet veel verder komen dan de constatering dat er een probleem is.

De Utrechtse kinderpolitie wordt inmiddels geconfronteerd met het groeiende probleem van de tweede generatie. Daar steeg het aantal gevallen waarin men met kinderen van buitenlanders te maken had binnen twee jaar van drie (1976) naar bijna twintig procent (1978).

De problemen met de tweede generatie bestaan nog niet zo lang. In het begin van de jaren '60 had de westerse economie behoefte aan arbeidskrachten. Mensen uit landen waar door het lagere ontwikkelingspeil grote werkloosheid heerste, waren dus van harte welkom. En met tienduizenden kwamen ze binnen, de Turken, Marokkanen, Joegoslaven, Spanjaarden en Italianen. Ze knapten hier het „vuile" werk op en werden ondergebracht in pensions. Ondergebracht is eigenlijk het woord niet; opgeborgen kun je het beter noemen: met zijn zessen in een klein kamertje van drie bij drie. Slapen om beurtbeurt was geen uitzondering. Het kon, zo meenden vele pensionhouders, want het waren toch maar mannen, nietwaar?

Barrières

Het waren inderdaad alleen de mannen die in de jaren '60 hier naartoe kwamen. De vrouw bleef met de kinderen achter in het thuisland. De bedoeling van de mannen was, hier snel rijk te worden en dan met het gespaarde geld terug te gaan naar hun geboorteland om daar een bedrijfje op te zetten.

Het viel bitter tegen: hoewel er verhoudingsgewijs goed werd verdiend, bleef er toch maar weinig geld over en de terugkeer werd steeds uitgesteld. En hoe langer de buitenlanders hier bleven, hoe meer zij behoefte kregen aan een normaal gezinsleven.

Aanvankelijk wierpen de Westerse landen huizenhoge barrières op tegen het verlangen van al die Turken, Marokkanen, Spanjaarden, enz. om hun gezin te laten overkomen. In het begin van de jaren '70 veranderde die houding echter: ook buitenlanders zijn mensen, al knappen ze dan het vuile werk op. Dus de gezinnen kwamen hier naar toe. En daarmee begonnen de problemen.

„De landen waar de buitenlanders te „gast" waren, zijn er altijd van uitgegaan dat het verblijf hier tijdelijk was. Structurele maatregelen om de opvang hier te regelen en te zorgen dat de buitenlanders hier raken ingeburgerd, bleven uit of kwamen achterwege. Huisvesting was er niet of nauwelijks, de enorme taalbarrière plaatste de buitenlanders in een sterk geïsoleerde positie. Hulpverlening bestond alleen maar mondjesmaat: er werden door het hele land stichtingen in het leven geroepen die zich gingen bezighouden met de problematiek van de buitenlandse werknemers.

Aanvankelijk runde het particulier initiatief die stichtingen, later nam de overheid het over. Maar al die stichtingen, hoe goedwillend ook, konden de noden niet lenigen. Ze konden niet veel meer dan oplossingen bieden voor materiële problemen; psychische en sociale moeilijkheden bleven bestaan. Er waren geen mogelijkheden die op te lossen: het Nederlandse maatschappelijk werk was er niet op ingericht, de taal- en de cultuurbarrière was te groot en er is een schrijnend gebrek aan maatschappelijk werkers van dezelfde nationaliteit als de hulpvragende buitenlanders. Het geld is er niet voor, wordt er vaak gezegd. Maar ook staat vast dat de overheid de problemen niet tijdig heeft onderkend.

De minister van CRM, Gardeniers, zei in een interview met het weekblad Haagse Post, dat je met aanpakken eigenlijk altijd te laat bent. „Daar begin je pas mee op het moment dat het probleem zich aandient. Maar dan is het probleem er veelal al een tijdje".

Ze is het ook met de problemen waarmee kinderen van gastarbeiders worden geconfronteerd. Die bestaan eigenlijk al vanaf het moment, in het begin van de jaren '70, dat de eerste kinderen naar Nederland kwamen. Maar pas het laatste halfjaar is het „actueel". Nu worden verschillende instanties in toenemende mate geconfronteerd met steeds groter wordende aantallen kinderen van buitenlandse werknemers die in ontsporen.

Eén van die instanties is de Utrechtse kinderpolitie. Samen met een aantal andere organisaties, zoals het algemeen maatschappelijk werk, de Raad voor de Kinderbescherming en de Stichting voor Buitenlandse werknemers trok zij eind vorig jaar aan de bel. Het zit goed fout met de hulpverlening aan buitenlanders, en met name hun kinderen dreigen daar de dupe van te worden.

Vacuüm

Louis Jaspers (34) is brigadier bij de Utrechtse kinderpolitie. Hij houdt zich voornamelijk bezig met buitenlandse kinderen. De problemen met buitenlandertjes nemen toe en voor Jaspers is de reden daarvan duidelijk. Voor hem is het glashelder dat de oorzaak van deze enorme toename ligt in het vacuüm waarin de kinderen van buitenlandse werknemers verkeren. De geïnstitueerde en het onderwijs zijn aangepast onderwijs zijn volgens Jaspers de voornaamste probleemveroorzakers.

De gezinnen zijn hier naar toe gekomen en kwamen terecht in een enorm beroerde huisvestingssituatie. Zelfs in vergelijking met Nederlandse gezinnen op dezelfde trap van de maatschappelijke ladder is de huisvesting van buitenlanders uitzonderlijk slecht te noemen. De buitenlander zelf probeert dat te ondervangen door een huis te kopen, maar dan beginnen de problemen pas goed. Want financieel is dat nauwelijks haalbaar. Je hebt gezinnen met vier, vijf kinderen, waarvan de oudste twaalf is, waar zowel vader als moeder twee banen hebben. Die werken allebei van negen tot vijf, komen dan thuis om snel een hapje te eten en verdwijnen dan weer voor een avondklaus bij een of ander schoonmaakbedrijf. Wat komt er in zo'n geval van de kinderen terecht?"

„Je kunt dat natuurlijk veroordelen maar het is vaak pure noodzaak. En waar moeten de kinderen dan heen als ze problemen hebben? In het thuisland, Turkije of Marokko, maakten ze deel uit van een groep en werden de problemen door de groep opgepakt, maar hier zijn het individuen, die zo jong als ze zijn, het maar zelf moeten zien te klaren".

Dat kinderen in een dergelijke situatie gemakkelijk hun heil op straat zoeken, is duidelijk. Een andere oorzaak van de problemen is het onderwijs. Louis Jaspers: „Kijk, een kind dat in een slechte huiselijke situatie zit, krijgt natuurlijk ook moeilijkheden op school. En zelfs al zit het kind in de meest ideale situatie, dan nog is het moeilijk om zich op school aan te passen. En dan al die kinderen die niet naar school gaan".

„Hier in Utrecht staat een tachtigtal leerplichtige kinderen op de wachtlijst en nog een veertigtal partieel leerplichtigen. Die kunnen nergens terecht. Het is so wie so al moeilijk buitenlandse kinderen op scholen onder te brengen. Dat hoor ik vaak van ouders. Zij willen hun kinderen wel ergens plaatsen, maar bijna overal stuit je dan op moeilijkheden. De concentratiescholen zitten vol en de andere scholen gooien hun poorten niet zo gemakkelijk voor buitenlanders open. Ik heb de indruk dat ze bang zijn dat er dan vandaag twee buitenlandse kinderen op hun school zitten en morgen twintig. En het is nu eenmaal zo dat de scholen pas extra leerkrachten krijgen als de problemen hen echt boven het hoofd groeien".

Behalve de moeilijkheden die er zijn om leerplichtige kinderen op de scholen te plaatsen, zijn er door de gezinsherenigning ook grote aantallen kinderen naar ons land gekomen die te oud zijn voor het basisonderwijs en te jong om te werken.

Jaspers: „Het is volstrekt onmogelijk deze kinderen in het vervolgonderwijs te plaatsen, waar ze eigenlijk thuis horen. Alleen de taalbarrière al. En dan heb je ook nog de iets oudere jeugd, die er eigenlijk aan toe is om te gaan werken. Maar de jeugdwerkloosheid is enorm en Turkse en Marokkaanse jongeren vallen dan nog verder uit de boot dan hun Nederlandse leeftijdgenoten. En die hebben het al moeilijk om aan werk te komen".

Nee, roosklearig is de situatie van de buitenlandse kinderen zeker niet. En is het de gezinssituatie niet die de kinderen op straat drijft, of de school, dan is het wel de frontale botsing van de Nederlandse cultuur met die van het thuisland.

De buitenlandse ouders willen, vanuit de gedachte dat het gezin in de toekomst teruggaat naar het moederland, die eigen cultuur, met name op het gebied van de opvoeding, stevig vasthouden, en dat lukt vaak niet meer. De kinderen krijgen Nederlandse contacten, op de school, openen de volwassenen hun de ogen, zij gaan dan individueel denken en dat is volstrekt in strijd met de cultuur van het thuisland. Jaspers: „Ik heb het natuurlijk vooral over Turkse en Marokkaanse kinderen, die hebben ook de meeste problemen. De Spaanse, Italiaanse en Joegoslavische kinderen hebben toch meer van huis uit onze westerse cultuur".

Macht

De ouders proberen de eigen cultuur krampachtig vast te houden en die ook de kinderen op te leggen. Louis Jaspers: „Het opvoedingspatroon in de mediterrane streken is volgens onze normen vrij streng. Ik heb gemerkt dat Turkse en Marokkaanse vaders over het algemeen erg weinig gezag hebben, maar daarentegen zeer veel macht. Als die vaders dan merken dat hun kinderen individueel gaan denken, dan gaan ze extra streng optreden. Zo maakt hij zijn kinderen echter aan het zwerven. Ze gaan hun heil niet meer thuis zoeken, maar op straat, bij vriendjes die in dezelfde situatie verkeren. Ja, en als die kinderen thuis ook uit de boot vallen dan is de stap naar de drugsmisdaad, bijvoorbeeld en kleine vernielingen uiterst klein. Die kinderen zoeken heel snel aansluiting bij hun landgenootjes en dan ontstaan er groepjes met een heel speciaal cultuurtje".

Jaspers wijst er nadrukkelijk op dat het beslist niet zo is dat kinderen van buitenlanders crimineler zijn dan hun Nederlandse leeftijdgenootjes. „Als een buitenlands kind aan het stelen slaat, is dat meestal een noodkreet van „help mij". Kijk, wij bij de kinderpolitie werken wat anders dan de andere politiedelingen. Bij ons wordt er toch erg veel gezocht naar de oorzaak van het gedrag van een kind. We proberen dan ook voortdurend er wat aan te doen. Maar hoe vaak je niet met je kop tegen de muur loopt? Je zit toch wel met een enorm scala van onmogelijkheden. In alle sectoren van de hulpverlening merk je dat men niet is ingesteld op de behandeling van de problemen van buitenlanders, en dat leidt vaak tot schrijnende situaties".

Jaspers wordt in zijn werk regelmatig geconfronteerd met buitenlandse gezinnen waar de relatie tussen ouders en kinderen zo totaal vastgelopen is dat er vrijwel geen redden meer aan is. Het zijn vooral de kinderen die daar de dupe van worden; de kinderen komen totaal alleen te staan. Als politieman kun je dan alleen maar proberen er het beste van te maken en dat is vanwege de enorme culturele verschillen een bijna onmogelijke opgave.

Jaspers: „Als je merkt dat een gezinssituatie volkomen vast zit, dan moet je er eigenlijk deskundige hulp bij halen. Maar waar vind je die? Het algemeen maatschappelijk werk heeft geen mogelijkheden. Ten eerste kunnen zij vanwege de taalbarrière niet praten met de ouders. Bovendien gaat het maatschappelijk werk bij hulpverlening uit van de motivatie van de hulpvrager. Maar die motivatie kan niet eens worden gepeild".

„En wat voor oplossingen moet je bieden? Een kind uit het huis plaatsen, al is het maar tijdelijk, is voor veel buitenlanders een vrijwel onoverkomelijke zaak. Ik heb eens van een Marokkaanse onderwijzer gehoord dat als een kind van huis wordt weggehaald, dat dat dan ook definitief is. De ouders schamen zich, zij hebben het gevoel dat zij hebben gefaald en verbreken dan de relatie met hun kind".

Soms gaat een uit-huis-plaatsing met goedvinden van zowel de vader als de kinderen. Zoals dat dertien-jarige Turkse jongetje, dat laatst slapend in een pakhuis werd aangetroffen. Hij bleek al vijf weken aan het zwerven te zijn. Thuis was het ook niet alles. Zijn moeder was met twee dochters en een oudere broer teruggegaan naar Turkije. De jongen woonde met zijn twaalf-jarige broertje thuis bij zijn vader, die met de kinderen ook geen raad wist. De jongen kwam zelf met het idee naar een tehuis te gaan: hij had van een vriendje gehoord dat het daar zo leuk was. De vader was het er helemaal mee eens en beide kinderen zitten nu in een tehuis. Maar dit soort gevallen zijn uitzondering.

Jaspers: „Als je met ouders gaat praten als politieman, moet je ook veel onbegrip opgenomen. De ouders verwachten dat de politie hun kinderen eens flink aanpakt. Eerst moeten ze maar een flinke tijd worden vastgehouden en dan moeten ze ook niet al te vriendelijk worden behandeld. Als het met volgens dat verwachtingspatroon gaat, moet je de ouders onizettend goed duidelijk maken dat je hen, met je vriendelijkheid, niet bedondert".

„Ook proberen we met ouders weleens te praten over het slaan van hun kinderen. Kijk, je moet toch proberen accepteren dat dat in hun opvoedingspatroon vrij normaal is. Als je dan zegt dat met slaan de kinderen alleen angst wordt ingeboezemd en zo'n vader zegt dan „O, dan sla ik ze nooit meer", dan ben je natuurlijk niet helemaal goed bezig. Dat is tensloste niet de bedoeling, daar neem je de basis van het zelfvertrouwen van die man mee weg. Is probeer de ouders altijd duidelijk te maken dat ze de knoet op een redelijk aanvaardbare manier moeten hanteren en dat ze, als ze slaan, dat niet zo hard moeten doen dat hun kinderen er blijvend letsel van ondervinden".

Haatgevoelens

Jaspers is van mening dat als er niets verandert, er in de naaste toekomst erge dingen te gebeuren staan. De tijd dat de meisjes massaal in opstand gaan komen, moet nog komen, maar de kleine criminaliteit onder jongens stijgt, terwijl de leeftijd waarop die wordt gepleegd, daalt.

Jaspers: „Er zullen snel maatregelen moeten worden genomen. Je beleid zal er toch op gericht moeten zijn de buitenlander in onze samenleving te integreren. Je moet oplossingen vinden voor de vakantieproblemen, de aanpassingsproblemen, de abominabele huisvesting, de onderwijssituatie. En dat geldt zowel voor de kinderen als voor de ouders".

Louis Jaspers wordt in zijn werk vaak geconfronteerd met de enorme haatgevoelens van de kinderen ten opzichte van hun ouders. Kinderen die hem letterlijk smeken geen contact op te nemen met hun ouders. Jaspers probeert in dergelijke gevallen vaak andere wegen te vinden, door bijvoorbeeld contact met de school op te nemen en zo een oplossing te vinden.

Maar: „Nu zijn het nog haatgevoelens van de kinderen ten opzichte van hun ouders. Als er niet snel maatregelen worden genomen, zal ook de kleinere criminaliteit van de jeugd toenemen. En als het aantal te groot wordt, dan is het voor de politie niet meer mogelijk oplossingen te zoeken. Dan moeten de kinderen worden doorgestuurd naar de justitie, iets wat we nu zoveel mogelijk willen vermijden. En als de kinderen met de justitie in aanraking komen, dan groeit natuurlijk hun haat tegen de Nederlandse maatschappij. Want al de kruimelmisdrijven zijn tenslotte georganiseerd door de ouders, die samenleving toe kan leiden, laat zich raden".

Tweede generatie gastarbeiders valt tussen de wal en het schip

Ayhan is een Turkse jongen van dertien jaar. Zijn dagen slijt hij voor een gunstig deel op het Utrechtse Hoog Catharijne en rond het station. Hij verveelt zich. Om toch wat te beleven wordt hij samen met wat Nederlandse en Turkse vriendjes baldadig. Een onverwachte sneeuwbal in de nek van, bij voorkeur een oudere, voorbijganger, doet hem gieren van de pret. Een illegaal bij V en D „verkregen" pak koeken laat hij zich goed smaken. Drop en een gejat blikje sinas zijn de dagelijkse hoogtepunten. Naar school gaat hij niet. „Ik ga niet met al die kleinere kinderen in de klas zitten, ik ben niet gek".

Ayhan's Nederlands is duidelijk, met een charmant Turks-Utrechts accent. In werkelijkheid heet hij geen Ayhan, maar zelfs zijn echte voornaam mag niet in de krant. Hij is nog voor herkenning. Want als zijn vader er achter komt... „Oh ja, ik krijg wel eens een pak slaag. Dat is eigenlijk wel normaal hoor, maar mijn vriendje Tom (een Nederlander) krijgt nooit slaag. Die zegt dat ik gewoon moet terugslaan. Dat doe ik misschien ook wel eens". Of Ayhan dat ooit zal doen, is de vraag. Als Turks jongetje leer je eerbied voor je ouders te hebben. Dat is er bij Ayhan al wel af. Zijn vader is „een ouwe zak". Ayhan lacht toch wat nerveus als hij dat zegt, hij vindt zichzelf erg groot door dat te durven zegen. En er zijn te midden van Nederlanders tensloste geen repressailes te verwachten.

Ayhan zegt het „wel leuk" te vinden, dat gehang in de stad. Toch klinkt er onzekerheid door in zijn stem, eigenlijk is het niet zo leuk, maar je wilt je als dertienjarige groot houden, niet waar? Hij is nu vijf jaar in Nederland en vindt het alweer „wel leuk". Het is allemaal erg mat, de woorden moeten eruit worden getrokken, want het is allemaal zo vervelend. En in de toekomst? Hij is nog niet met de politie in aanraking geweest. Een paar keer was het een ontsnapping op het nippertje, maar Ayhan zag kans te ontkomen. Over een paar jaar wil hij gaan werken, zelf geld verdienen. Hij wil gaan werken in een fabriek, dat lijkt hem „wel leuk". En een Nederlands vriendinnetje krijgen, ook dat is „wel leuk".

A 1979 newspaper report addressing the identity struggles of the children of Turkish guest workers in the Netherlands.

Source: *Ontsporingen nemen hand over hand toe Tweede generatie gastarbeiders valt tussen de wal en het schip. "Leeuwarder courant : hoofdblad van Friesland". Leeuwarden, 21-03-1979, s. 29. Delpher'den 22-01-2025 tarihinde alınmıştır, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010621054:mpeg21:p027*

REPORTAGE

D dinsdag 4 april 1978 - pagina 9

'Ik blijf hier tot ik oud ben'

Gesprek met tweede generatie Turken

door HIEKE JIPPES

ROTTERDAM — „Wat een brutale kerel!" zegt Celal Karaulu, luid genoeg om gehoord te worden. Het zelfverzekerde vertegenwoordigerstype aan het belendende tafeltje wordt op slag wat minder zeker, kijkt aarzelend of hij het wel goed gehoord heeft naar „die gastarbeider" naast zich, wil wat zeggen, maar acht het dan toch raadzaam zijn mond te houden. Vanaf dat moment staakt hij zijn avances.

Turkse bezoekers zijn een zeldzaamheid in de wat prolerige Rotterdamse bodega waar dit incident zich afspeelt, eenvoudigweg omdat ze meestal niet worden toegelaten. „Tja, als je die buitenlanders hier binnenlaat, heb je de zaak zo vol zitten," legt de ober desgevraagd uit. En onze reactie bespeurend voegt hij er geroutineerd aan toe: „De baas wil het zo, dat kan het personeel natuurlijk niet helpen." Maar wakker ligt hij er duidelijk niet van.

Celal Karaulu (17) en Resat Urban (18) kennen elkaar nog van vroeger, toen ze in de Turkse stad Konya in dezelfde straat woonden. Hun vaders gingen al in het buitenland werken toen zij nog klein waren en kwamen maar zelden voor een week of wat naar huis. Drie jaar geleden was 't zo ver; de vaders hadden genoeg verdiend om ook hun gezin naar Nederland te laten komen. Eerst ging Celal, met zijn moeder en zijn drie grote broers, een half jaar later Resat. Met hun vriend Erol Oytan (18), die later aan het gesprek zal deelnemen, zijn ze door de Stichting Buitenlandse Werknemers (SBW) in Rotterdam naar voren geschoven als vertegenwoordigers van wat heet „de tweede generatie". De kinderen van de gastarbeiders die bij langdurig verblijf in het gastland vervreemden van het land van herkomst, van de eigen cultuur en van de ouders. Die niet meer terugwillen, maar — zo heeft recent onderzoek naar Marokkaanse gezinnen nog eens bevestigd — die ook geen aansluiting vinden bij de Nederlandse werkelijkheid. De tussen-wal-en-schipluinelaars, de ontheemden en — wie durft het hardop te zeggen — de desperado's van de toekomst.

Veel desperaats is er bij deze ontmoeting aan deze twee niet te zien. Resat, heel jong nog, verlegen, spreekt aanvankelijk minder Nederlands dan de levendige Celal, die van tijd tot tijd als tolk bijspringt. Beide jongens zaten in Turkije op de technische school, allebei wilden ze dolgraag „naar het buitenland" toen de gelegenheid zich voordeed. Eenmaal in Nederland vond Resat na drie maanden werk: een jaar lang knipte hij stoffen in een fabriek, tot er ontslagen vielen wegens een teveel aan personeel.

Bij een drukkerij hield hij het zes maanden uit: hij nam zelf ontslag. Waarom? „Allemaal Turkse vrouwen, spreken geen Nederlands." Resat moest voortdurend vertalen. Via lopende band-werk bij een plastic fabriek is hij tenslotte schoonmaker van machines bij een petro-chemische industrie in het Botlekgebied geworden. Zijn ouders zijn inmiddels teruggekeerd naar Turkije, de vader voor 80% invalide.

Resat woont bij een oudere broer, die in Nederland met een Turks meisje getrouwd is, en geniet — grote uitzondering voor een Turkse jongen — normale vrijheid.

Hij is dan ook niet ontevreden, wil een jaar of vijf nog blijven, geld sparen, in Turkije zijn dienstplicht vervullen en dan trouwen. Met het gespaarde geld wil hij dan in Turkije een of andere handel beginnen.

Oud

Celal heeft andere plannen, is ondernemend, wil wat zien en is voorlopig niet van plan naar Turkije terug te gaan. „Ik moet in dienst, zestien maanden, dat doe ik wel. Maar ik blijf hier tot ik oud ben."

Hij is inmiddels administrateur geworden bij een transportbedrijf, werk dat hem goed bevalt, beter dan het schoolgaan in Nederland. „Ik ben nog zes maanden op de technische school geweest in Nederland, dat vond ik helemaal niet leuk. Het was te lang: drie internationale klassen voor gastarbeiders, een beetje moeilijk om Nederlands te leren, want het waren allemaal Turkse jongens. Ik wilde werken."

Hij weet dat hij eigenlijk nog leerplichtig is: „Ik krijg briefjes van zo'n gebouw, maar ik scheur ze maar weg en nu komen er geen briefjes meer. Als ik naar school ga word ik niet betaald, dan zit ik in moeilijkheden."

„. . . werken en een klein stukje leven"

Vader

Celal herinnert zich nog goed dat zijn vader wegging, voor de eerste keer, om illegaal in Frankrijk te werken. Hij was toen negen jaar. Na twee jaar kwam zijn vader voor het eerst met vakantie naar Turkije. „Dan was het gezellig." Nu werkt hij al weer jaren, met vergunning in Nederland. In zijn afwezigheid, zegt Celal, was zijn moeder de baas thuis.

„Mijn oudste broer, hij zorgde voor het huis en zo. Maar in Turkije, als je moeder op jou scheldt, dat geeft je niets. Een klap ook niet. Je leeft als een vrijgezel: je komt laat thuis, wel om twaalf uur. Maar als je hierheen komt, naar je vader, dan geeft dat moeilijkheden. Dan moet je op tijd thuiskomen. Dan moet je met je vader ergens heen gaan en je wilt niet. Dan ben je tegen je vader, dan kan je er niet meer tegen. Ik denk dat iedere jongen dat krijgt. Ik heb ook moeilijkheden gehad met mijn vader, Resat niet omdat zijn vader al is teruggegaan. Ik wil niet zeggen wat die moeilijkheden zijn, ik wil dat niet in de krant, ik wil verstandig zijn tegenover mijn vader."

De terughoudendheid van Celal was te verwachten. Hij heeft een drastische stap gedaan die in de Turkse familie hard aangekomen moet zijn: bij is het in Turkije onaantastbaar geachte vaderlijk gezag ontvlucht en heeft — met hulp van de Rotterdamse SBW — een eigen onderkomen gezocht, waar hij kan leven zoals hij wil.

Welzijnswerker Ugur van de stichting wordt zegt hij, steeds meer met dit soort conflicten geconfronteerd. En hij vindt dat hij de kinderen moet helpen in hun verlangen naar zelfstandigheid, al probeert hij ook aan de achtergebleven familie uit te leggen waarom hij ze niet terugdwingt. Celal woont nu met Erol samen op een zolderkamertje, in afwachting van een ruimere behuizing.

Bij de deur van het horecabedrijf speelt zich inmiddels een kleine schermutseling af. Celal springt op en spreekt een forse neger met een kapitelnaspet, die de gemengde functie portier-uitsmijter vervult, toe. Dan komt Erol binnen: zeven jaar in Nederland, nog steeds niet gewend aan de specifieke bejegening die hem als Turk zo vaak ten deel valt en derhalve bleek weggetrokken mond onder kwetsbare ogen. De portier heeft hem met de mededeling „members only" trachten buiten te houden.

Hij maakt een buiginkje, geeft een hand, doet moeite zich te beheersen, „Ja," zegt hij als ik vraag of hij erg boos is. „Dit gebeurt overal. Dus moet ik of een grote mull weggeven of weggaan. Ik kan daar niet tegen."

Erol is driftig van aard, zegt hij. Hij heeft ook rustie met zijn vader gehad, een tijd geleden. Daarbij is het op een vechtpartij uitgelopen, waarna hij via de kinderpolitie eerst in een kosthuis is terechtgekomen en daarna in het pension waar hij nu met Celal woont. Zijn vader zegt hij, heeft veel geld en veel huizen in Turkje bij elkaar gespaard. Dat hij nu verstoten is, kan hem niet schelen. „Geld maakt niet geluk." Zijn vader was veel te

Conflicten met ouders vaak groot probleem

streng. Hij mocht geen hoge hakken onder zijn schoenen, „mijn haar moest ongeveer kaal" en al het geld dat hij verdiende, moest hij thuis afdragen.

Erol zegt: „Ik woon in Holland, ik moet leven als Hollandse jongens. Maar naar de film mocht ik niet, naar buiten mocht ik niet. Toen heb ik ruzie gehad."

Nu gaat hij wel naar de film of — in het weekend — naar de discobar. Ze zijn alle drie blits gekleed: Erol in een nauw gesneden jasje over een t-shirt en op schoenen met hoge hakken, Celal en Resat in coltruien met kortje jekjes.

Erol is de eerste die straks in dienst moet in Turkije. Hij ziet daar ook niet tegenop, maar wil wel terugkomen naar Nederland.

„Maar dan moet of mijn baas daarvoor zorgen of ik moet trouwen met een Hollands meisje." De eerste moeilijkheid heeft hij nog niet goed onderzocht — hij werkt bijna een jaar als elektromonteur — de tweede komt niet meer in aanmerking. „Dat doe ik niet meer." Hij blijkt verloofd geweest te zijn met een Hollands meisje, „maar de ouders wilden niet." Volgens Celal waren de ouders vooral bang dat hun dochter opeens naar Turkije zou verdwijnen, „maar ze hebben niet eens gevraagd of hij terug wou naar Turkije."

Erol klaagt: „Als je een meisje om verkering wil vragen, zeggen zij tegen mij: donder op. Of: ga weg. Ik vind dat geen leuke woorden. Dat kunnen ze toch ook beleefd zeggen."

Zouden ze, als ze toch van plan zijn hier hun hele werkende leven en misschien daarna ook hier te blijven, Nederlander willen worden?

Celal stelt een tegenvraag, heel beleefd: „Mag ik u iets vragen? Als u naar Turkije ging, zou u uw nationaliteit veranderen?" En Erol: „Als u over ons schrijft, wilt u dan zeggen dat wij Rotterdamse Turken zijn. Want wij zijn Turken, maar wij wonen in Rotterdam. Dus wij zijn ook een beetje Rotterdams."

Desondanks beperkt hun contact zich veelal tot dat met landgenoten. Celal — „ik kwam zondagavond, om twaalf uur in Rotterdam aan en maandagmorgen stond ik al naar buiten naar de jongens op straat te kijken" — heeft nog de meeste omgang met Nederlandse jongens. Over het woord „discriminatie" danst hij wat luchtig heen, maar hij zegt wel: „Er zijn wel eens rare mensen hoor. Als zij mij uitschelden zeg ik: schreeuw tegen mij niet. Ik blijf rustig.

En je merkt wel eens bij Nederlandse mensen: wij zijn niet belangrijk voor hen. Bijvoorbeeld: ik praat met een jongen en er komt iemand bij zitten die die jongen kent, dan zal hij mij niet voorstellen. Hij vindt het niet belangrijk dat je hem kent."

Het gesprek verloopt wat. Bij de suggestie dat ze misschien wel eens een Turks meisje mee zouden kunnen nemen naar de discotheek, krijgen Celal en Resat vrijwel de slappe lacht: of ik niet weet dat Turkse meisjes heimáál nooit alleen uit mogen. „Gelukkig heb ik geen zusje, anders ga ik nog voor haar ruzie maken met mijn vader," zegt Celal. „Turkse meisjes mogen alleen naar buiten met anderen erbij. Of ze moeten scheiden en meisjikheden maken, hè." Waarop hij een meisje „ook een gewoon mens" verklaart, maar eraan toevoegt dat hij waarschijnlijk vrijgezel blijft.

De toekomstplannen zijn ambitieus, vooral die van Celal. Andere landen zien, met z'n drieën, liever dan een vakantie in Turkije opnemen, dat willen ze allemaal wel. En op de lange duur? „Eigenlijk ben ik van m'n vak klusmaker," vertrouwt Celal me toe. „Ik kan zelf een broek knippen en ik kan hem ook naaien. Maar ik wil zanger worden. Of naar de toneelschool. Als dat kan hoor. Mag ik u vragen: kent u niet iemand bij de televisie? Dat wij een filmpje kunnen maken over buitenlandse werknemers in Nederland of zo?"

En Erol, wat wil die?

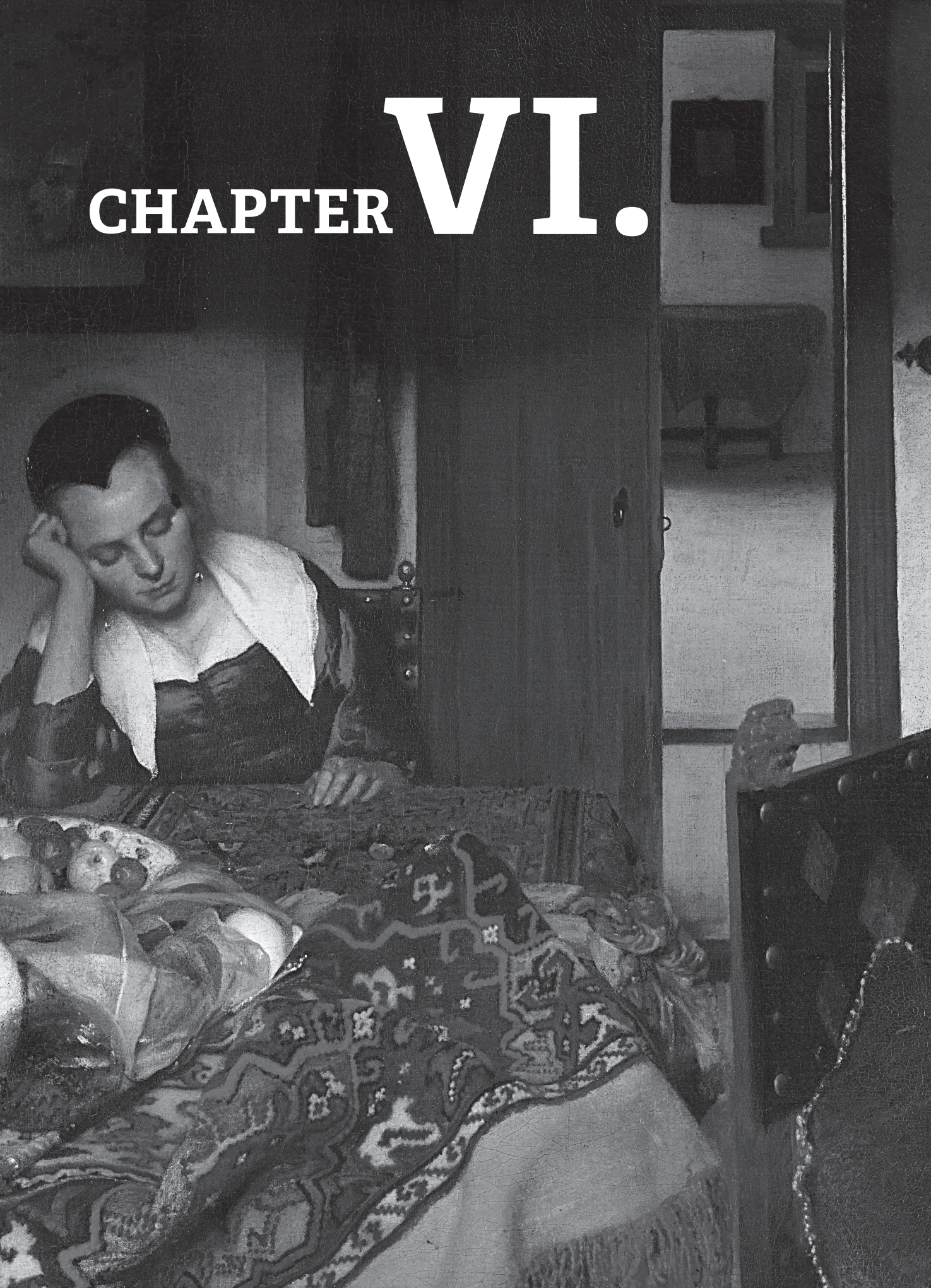
„Ik ook. Ik wil ook acteur worden. In een griezelfilm bijvoorbeeld." En als de anderen beginnen te lachten, driftig: „Ja, in James Bondfilms bijvoorbeeld hoor, dat wil ik!"

Dat is zelfs Celal te gortig. „Dat denk je maar! Dat komt nooit!" Maar nu wordt Erol echt kwaad. Hij draait zich om naar zijn vriend en zegt woedend: „Dat komt wel, hoor! dat komt wel! Als je maar geld hebt. Geld doet alles!" En beantwoordt en passant nog even de vraag naar het waarom van het blijven in Nederland, die door de anderen met een gegeneerd schouderophalen is afgedaan: „Ik wil werken en een klein stukje leven. Daarom!"

A 1978 newspaper report on the identity struggles and future aspirations of second-generation Turkish youth in the Netherlands.

Source: *"Het Parool". Amsterdam, 04-04-1978. Retrieved from Delpher on 22-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010839424:mpeg21:p009*

CHAPTER VI.



ART IN THE DIASPORA

MEETING IN MOTIFS: TURKISH-DUTCH ARTISTIC INTERACTION FROM THE 17TH TO THE 20TH CENTURIES

Gülgün Yılmaz

DIASPORA STORIES TOLD THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS: AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST EBRU AYDIN

Ebru Aydın

ON DIASPORA LITERATURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH SADIK YEMNİ

Sadık Yemni

MEETING IN MOTIFS:

TURKISH-DUTCH ARTISTIC INTERACTION FROM THE 17TH TO THE 20TH CENTURIES[1]

GÜLGÜN YILMAZ[2]

Introduction

The contemporary relations between Türkiye and the Netherlands, formalized through the Turkish-Dutch Labor Agreement of August 19, 1964, are built on a rich historical foundation. A significant milestone in this relationship was the establishment of diplomatic ties between the Ottoman Empire and the Netherlands in 1612, marking a pivotal moment that shaped the historical trajectory between the two nations. However, these relations extended beyond trade and diplomacy, encompassing significant cultural and artistic exchanges as well. During the 19th century, the Netherlands played a role in the Ottoman Empire's modernization efforts inspired by Europe, fostering mutual interest in particularly architecture and the fine arts. From the mid-20th century onward, the dynamics of this relationship evolved with the migration of Turkish laborers to the Netherlands. The migration not only reinforced economic and social ties but also enriched cultural and artistic interactions between the two countries. This article explores how the relations between the Ottoman Empire and the Netherlands, initially commercial and diplomatic in scope, were further deepened through artistic and cultural exchanges over the centuries.

The Deepening of Ottoman-Dutch Relations Through Art

The earliest recorded envoy sent to Istanbul from the Dutch territories, prior to the establishment of the Dutch Republic and during the rule of the Habsburg Dynasty, was Gerrit van Veldwijk from Ravesteijn, appointed by Charles V in 1544 (Çelikkol et al., 2000; Umunç, 2009). Additionally, in 1555, the Flemish-born Austrian ambassador Ogier Ghislain de Busbecq, who had an audience with Sultan Sule-

1-A version of this article was originally presented as a paper at the XXI International Symposium on Medieval and Turkish Period Excavations and Art History Research and was subsequently published in the symposium proceedings. For the original version of the paper included here, see Gülgün Yılmaz, "Doğu'dan Batı'ya bir Öykünme Örneği: Smyrna Halıları", Uluslararası XXI. Ortaçağ ve Türk Dönemi Kazıları ve Sanat Tarihi Araştırmaları Sempozyumu (25-27 October 2017), Akdeniz University, Antalya 2019, pp. 425-434.

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iman the Magnificent at the Amasya Palace, played a pivotal role in fostering early cultural exchanges. Busbecq presented tulip bulbs, which he had obtained in the Ottoman Empire, to his friend Carolus Clusius, a professor of botany at Leiden University. This act ignited the initial phase of interactions between the Dutch and the Ottomans (İrepoğlu, 2012).

By the mid-16th century, diplomatic relations between the two countries had matured. In 1557, Charles V (1500-1558) abdicated the imperial throne in favor of his brother Ferdinand while bestowing the Dutch and Spanish territories upon his son, Philip II (Öztuna, 1996; Uzunçarşılı, 1999). The Protestant Dutch faced severe persecution at the hands of the Catholic Spaniards, which ultimately led to a rebellion under the leadership of Willem, Duke of Orange. In 1566, Willem dispatched envoys to Sultan Selim II, seeking Ottoman support against the Spanish forces. Battles of Preveza, Tunis, and Lepanto were waged against Spain, a mutual adversary of the Dutch and the Ottomans. This shared opposition to Spain was encapsulated in the political slogan inscribed on the crescent-shaped medallions worn by Dutch sailors: *Liver Turcx dan Paus / En Despit de la Mes* ("Rather Turkish than the Pope / In spite of the masses") (Van Den Bent, 2011) (Image 1).

Following the Eighty Years' War, the Netherlands secured its independence from Spain in 1648 with the Treaty of Münster (Öztuna, 1996). After achieving independence, the Netherlands experienced rapid economic growth, largely driven by trade and colonial expansion. However, this prosperity was underpinned by darker realities, including the transatlantic slave trade, one of the most significant human tragedies of the period. The Dutch economy was significantly bolstered by the establishment of the Dutch East In-

Image 1: Dutch minted silver crescent-shaped medallion.

Source: Amsterdam Rijksmuseum

"The friendship between these two nations, which began with tulips, was cemented with crescents and further enriched by shared motifs in carpets and tiles. Today, this enduring connection resonates with legacies that have left a lasting imprint."

dia Company (*Verenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie*, VOC) in 1602, which organized maritime trade with Southeast Asia. The influx of spices, porcelain, fine textiles, and other exotic goods from Asia to Europe led to the widespread incorporation of Eastern aesthetics into Dutch local production. The establishment of ceramic workshops in Delft, which produced blue-and-white porcelain inspired by Chinese designs, serves as a significant example of domestic manufacturing influenced by Eastern trade networks and colonial expansion.

The establishment of VOC and the growing dominance of Dutch maritime trade, surpassing that of Spain and Portugal, entailed the negotiation of commercial agreements with the Ottoman Empire. Beginning in 1612, the Dutch commercial presence in the Mediterranean, which was under Ottoman jurisdiction, expanded through capitulations. While trade between the Ottoman Empire and the Netherlands was initially mediated by France and England, direct free trade agreements were established between the two nations in 1601 and 1612.

In 1612, following the intermittent dispatch of ambassadors since 1544 for the renewal of commercial treaties, the Netherlands appointed its first permanent ambassador to Istanbul (Uzunçarşılı, 1999). Cornelis Haga, who held the ambassador position from 1612 to 1639, played a crucial role not only in strengthening his country's economic influence but also in fostering cultural exchanges. The Dutch Palace on Istanbul's İstiklal Street, currently serving as the consulate building, was constructed in 1858 on the site of Haga's residence from 1612 (Hoenkamp-Mazgon, 2002). During the 17th century, as Dutch relations with Eastern countries intensified, Oriental studies departments were established at Dutch universities to support trade relations and facilitate research in Eastern medicine and mathematical sciences. These departments offered courses in Arabic and Turkish, taught by scholars such as Thomas Erpenius (1584-1624) and Jacobus Golius (1596-1667) at Leiden University, both of whom had traveled extensively in Western Asia and acquired proficiency in the region's languages. Golius, hosted by the Dutch consuls Cornelis Pauw in Aleppo and Cornelis Haga in Istanbul, collected numerous manuscripts during his travels. Upon his return to the Netherlands, he donated these manuscripts to Leiden University, laying the foundation for its collection of Oriental texts. Another scholar, Levinus Warner (1619-1665), a student of Golius, was appointed as an envoy to Istanbul in 1654. Warner later bequeathed his extensive collection of Turkish, Arabic, and Persian books to Leiden University. Today, Leiden University remains one of the foremost centers for Oriental studies, and the collection donated by Warner, known as *Legatum Warnerianum*, is considered one of the world's most significant manuscript archives (Kampman, 1959).

Numerous treaties were signed between the Dutch Republic and the Ottoman Empire, particularly between 1620 and 1625, when

Fazlı Pasha and Haydar Pasha governed Yemen. On June 25, 1625, a formal institution was established to regulate Dutch trade in the Mediterranean. Throughout the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire maintained strong commercial ties with Venice, England, and the Netherlands, exporting primarily textile raw materials such as wool, angora wool, cotton, and silk (Uzunçarşılı, 1999). Among the most valuable Ottoman exports to the Netherlands were processed textile goods, particularly carpets. From the 1650s onward, due to increasing pressure from Venice, France, and England on other key trading ports, Dutch merchants redirected their operations to İzmir, where they concentrated their trade networks. To safeguard Dutch commercial interests, a consul was appointed to İzmir in the 1660s, and official regulations were introduced for Dutch settlers in the city.

In addition to legally sanctioned trade, Dutch sailors and merchants were also involved in illicit commerce at Mediterranean ports. Dutch shipowners generated revenue by leasing their vessels to participants in the Ottoman-Venetian naval conflicts. By the 18th century, Dutch merchants had established a presence in Ankara, and after 1807, Dutch trade expanded into the Black Sea ports (Çelikkol et al., 2000).

Meeting in Carpet Motifs I: Artists

Between 1660 and 1670, Western Anatolian carpets were frequently depicted in Dutch paintings, reflecting the flourishing trade around the port of İzmir. The expansion of commercial networks led to significant wealth accumulation among Dutch merchants, particularly in Leiden, a key hub for textile imports. The pediment of the house constructed in 1673 by Bartholomeus van Panhuysen, a prominent Leiden merchant engaged in trade with Istanbul, features a bust of a turbaned Turk created by sculptor Pieter Xavery (1647–1674). The inscription *IN DEN VERGULDEN TURK* ("The Gilded Turk") on the pediment likely served as a symbolic expression of gratitude. Flanking the Turkish bust are figures of Poseidon, the god of the sea, and Hermes, the patron deity of commerce, symbolizing maritime trade, while an angora goat beneath Hermes' feet represents the angora wool trade, a significant textile commodity (Image 2).

From the mid-17th century onward, exotic goods from Iran, Türkiye, and India fueled the imagination of artists and inspired their creative expressions. The incorporation of Eastern-style decorative elements and costumes to depict biblical scenes in paintings was a direct consequence of the extensive trade. Another consequence of this extensive trade was the economic prosperity that characterized the Dutch Golden Age (1609-1713). This period, fueled by the influx of raw materials through foreign trade and colonial enterprises, witnessed the emergence of an affluent merchant class, particularly following the official recognition of the Dutch Republic in 1648.

By the mid-17th century, merchants and members of the bourgeoisie - who had accumulated enormous wealth and were eager to emulate the nobility - commissioned paintings to adorn their homes. In this economically favorable climate, the demand for paintings surged, leading to a flourishing art market and the training of numerous painters. During the 17th century, Dutch painting reached its zenith, with artistic patronage shifting from the traditional dominance of the monarchy and the church to the bourgeoisie. Protestantism, which fostered intellectual freedom, contributed to the development of new artistic genres. Seascapes, pastoral landscapes, and forest scenes were in high demand, alongside opulent still-life compositions featuring floral arrangements, lavish feasts, and valuable tableware.

The widespread appeal of genre painting that depicted scenes of everyday life of the middle class reflected the aesthetic sensibilities of the audience. Calm scenes of family life, in particular, became highly sought. During this era of expanding maritime trade and long sea voyages, domestic scenes featuring women and children became increasingly prevalent in paintings. Subjects such as medical visits, letter writing or reading, brothel scenes, music lessons, and gatherings for family meals and celebrations were particularly sought after. Scenes depicting soldiers' lives, including representations of soldiers playing cards or backgammon, were also prominent themes in genre painting. The integration of Persian, Indian, and Anatolian carpets into Dutch households during this period is particularly evident in genre paintings, where these textiles frequently appear as table coverings. The most notable masters of genre painting, renowned for their detailed and documentary-style depictions of daily life, include Adriaen Brouwer (1605-1685), Adriaen van Ostade (1610-1685), David Teniers (1610-1690), and Jan Steen (1626-1679). Other distinguished painters, such as Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675), Pieter de Hooch (1629-1683), Gerard ter Borch (1617-1681), and Gabriël Metsu (1629-1667), gained prominence for their more tranquil compositions. Like many of their contemporaries from the Baroque period, these artists frequently incorporated Western Anatolian carpets, imported through the port of İzmir (Yılmaz, 2009a) (Image 3).

During the economic and artistic peak of the Dutch Golden Age, portraiture emerged as a significant specialization alongside genre painting. The proliferation of both individual and group portraits reflects the bourgeois class's aspiration to immortalize their likenesses, akin to the nobility. Among these, guilds frequently commissioned collective portraits. Frans Hals (1580-1666) was among the foremost portrait painters of this period. In both individual and group portraits featuring members of the merchant or bourgeois class, as well as members of guilds, carpets are often depicted draped over tables. While valuable Oriental carpets were portrayed as table coverings in bourgeois households, they were depicted as floor coverings in royal palaces. Notably, these carpets were considered so valuable that they were customarily placed only beneath the feet of monarchs or religious figures.

In Dutch painting, religious, mythological, and allegorical depictions occupied a relatively minor place compared to genre scenes, landscapes, portraits, and still lifes. This trend can be attributed to the relatively liberal atmosphere fostered by Protestantism, which, in conjunction with the newfound affluence of Dutch society, led to a greater artistic focus on worldly themes (Özgenç-Erdoğdu, 2018). In painting, historical allegories with religious connotations, biblical scenes, and mythological illustrations frequently included carpets as integral decorative elements, particularly as table coverings. Self-portraits depicting artists' studios further illustrate this phenomenon, as painters often kept carpets alongside statuettes and musical instruments to incorporate them into their compositions (Image 4 and Image 5).

Meeting in Carpet Motifs II: "İzmir Carpets"

From the 17th to the 20th century, the production of Anatolian carpet imitations became a long-standing tradition in the Netherlands, particularly in the city of Deventer. The first carpet factories were established in Amersfoort and Deventer in 1797 under royal patronage. The enduring association of İzmir Port with the carpet trade, dating back to the 17th century, is reflected in the continued use of its name in carpet production (Bennett, 2000).

Image 2: Turk figure on the pediment of the Van Panhuysen house in Leiden

The Koninklijke Vereenigde Tapijtfabriek (KVT) was founded on "Smyrnastraat" (İzmir Street) in Deventer, where carpets woven on handlooms and adorned with Anatolian motifs became known as "Smyrna tapijten" or "İzmir carpets." The patterns used in these carpets clearly demonstrate the influence of the geometric and stylized motifs characteristic of Anatolian designs, while the symmetrical knotting technique, distinctive to Turkish carpets, was also employed (Scholten, 1997).

Since Anatolian carpets had become ubiquitous in Dutch households as table coverings by the 17th century, they were perceived as an integral part of traditional Dutch interior decoration. Consequently, Dutch-manufactured Smyrna carpets, much like Delft tiles, became a defining element of 19th-century neoclassical interior aesthetics. Today, Turkish carpet patterns remain prevalent in popular souvenirs.

The prominence of Smyrna/İzmir carpets extended to the royal court, with numerous examples adorning the palace of King Willem III (1817-1890), who was particularly fond of Oriental carpets (Kiers & Schoemaker, 1995). Despite enduring the disruptions of two world wars, the İzmir Carpet Factory on İzmir Street in Deventer remained operational from its founding in 1797 until its closure in 1978 (Image 6).

Meeting in Tile Motifs I: Turks on the Dutch Tiles

Wall tiles served as a prominent decorative element in the Netherlands and Northern Europe from the 17th century until the late 18th century. These tiles were produced in several major centers, with Delft being the most renowned, alongside other cities such as Amsterdam, Dordrecht, Gouda, Haarlem, Harlingen, Hoorn, Leeuwarden, Leiden, Mak-

Image 3: Johannes Vermeer (1632-1675). A Maid Asleep. 1656 (87.6-76.5 cm), oil on canvas.
Source: Metropolitan Museum of Art / New York.

kum, Middelburg, Rotterdam, and Utrecht. The design repertoire of Dutch wall tiles was remarkably diverse, encompassing botanical, geometric, and composite motifs, as well as depictions of animals including insects, landscapes, maritime scenes, and figurative compositions. From the 17th century onward - coinciding with the intensification of trade during the reign of Sultan Ahmed I - Ottoman figures also became a recurring theme in Dutch tile production (Yılmaz, 2007).

Among the most favored subjects were representations of the Sultan and Ottoman horsemen, which remained prevalent from the early 1600s through the 1900s (Image 7 and Image 8). Between 1880 and 1900, the Ravesteijn tile factory in Utrecht produced tiles featuring Ottoman male and female figures, which were subsequently exported to England. The iconography of these tiles was derived from Nicolas de Nicolay's Les quatre premiers livres des navigations et pérégrinations orientales, first published in Lyon in 1568. This work was translated into Dutch in Antwerp in 1576 by Willem Silvius under the title De Schipvaert ende Reysen gedaen int Landt van Turckyen deur N. de Nicolay. The figures were directly transposed from the book onto the tiles, enclosed within medallions and set against a simple landscape backdrop (Yılmaz, 2007).

Nicolay's depictions, which feature woodcut engravings depicting various ethnic groups within the Ottoman Empire during the 16th century, were later incorporated into Dutch tile production in the 19th century, ultimately embellishing the interiors of Dutch homes.

Meeting in Tile Motifs II: İznik Patterns on Dutch Tiles and Ceramics

The late 19th and early 20th centuries marked a new phase in which İznik tile patterns were reproduced. The extensive work of Dutch tile artisans catering to commercial demand demonstrates the enduring popularity of Ottoman motifs and figures in Europe. During this period, the British market exhibited significant interest in Dutch ceramics adorned with Eastern-inspired designs. The order catalogues of ceramic importer Thomas Elsley, for instance, feature a drawing of a Delft wall tile incorporating hatayi and carnation motifs (Myers, 1988; Van Lemmen, 1997).

Leonardus Johannes Senf, the design manager of the De Porceleyne Fles Factory, along with his team, produced direct copies of İznik plates. The Delft Royal Porcelain Factory (De Porceleyne Fles), under Senf's leadership, created a series in the 1910s that incorporated Turkish and Iranian tile patterns, known as Nieuw Delft (New Delft) (Image 9 and Image 10). Around the same time, Jurrien Adrianus Burghoorn, whose signature appears on De Porceleyne Fles products between 1892 and 1940, also incorporated İznik ceramic patterns into his designs (Yılmaz, 2010).

In addition to Delft, imitations of İznik ceramics were produced at the Haagsche

Image 4: Michiel van Musscher (1645-1705). Painting showing Turkish carpets in the painter's studio. 1679 (57 x 46.5 cm), oil on canvas

Source: Historisch Museum het Schielandshuis / Rotterdam.

Image 5: Frans van Mieris (1635-1681). Painting showing Turkish carpets in the painter's studio. circa 1659 (59.5 x 47 cm), oil on canvas.

Source: Gemäldegalerie alte Meister / Dresden.

Image 6: An example of the "Smyrna Tapijt" (İzmir Carpet), a reproduction of a 16th-century Ottoman "Medallion Ushak" carpet, from the Van Brienen House Museum in Amsterdam.

Plateelbakkerij Rozenburg factory in The Hague. Founded in 1885 by the painter Hendrik Willem Mesdag, this factory created works inspired by Eastern artistic traditions under the direction of Theodoor Christiaan Adriaan Colenbrander (1841-1930) (Leighton, 1999). Colenbrander, an architect, ceramicist, and carpet designer, first gained recognition for his contribution to the Dutch pavilion at the 1867 Paris Exposition.

Meeting in Tile Motifs III: Dutch Tiles in Topkapı Palace

From the 1750s onward, the Ottoman Empire emerged as a purchaser of Dutch tiles. During the 18th century, the Harem of Topkapı Palace underwent significant modifications in line with evolving aesthetic preferences, leading to the repair and redecoration of older rooms in accordance with Baroque stylistic principles. Although the ceramic workshops in Kütahya remained active during this period, their production was insufficient to meet demand. Consequently, the Ottoman Empire imported wall tiles from various sources, including Tunisia, Italy, Spain, the Netherlands, and China. Dutch tiles were incorporated into the Topkapı Palace Harem during the reigns of Osman III (1754-1757), Mustafa III (1757-1774), Abdulhamid I (1774-1789), and Selim III (1789-1807). Several factors contributed to the preference for Dutch tileware, including the depletion or decline in quality of locally produced ceramics, the availability of intermediaries facilitating imports, and the practical advantages of Dutch tiles. These tiles were particularly favored for their ease of application, standardized dimensions, thin and lightweight composition, and designs that appealed to an evolving taste (Image 11). In cases where Dutch tiles proved insufficient for surface coverage, similar designs were commissioned from the Kütahya workshops as substitutes (Yılmaz, 2009b).

Image 7: Engraved portrait of Sultan Ahmed I, 1610.
Source: Rijksmuseum / Amsterdam.

Image 8: Dutch tile depicting a sultan, 17th century

Meeting in Tile Motifs IV: Dutch Patterns on Kütahya Tiles

In the 18th century, tile masters in Kütahya pursued new artistic directions, incorporating patterns that bore striking similarities to those found in the catalogs of Dutch ceramic workshops and factories. These designs, which diverged significantly from local compositions, exhibit clear European influences. A comparison of various 18th-century Dutch tiles used in Topkapı Palace and Kütahya tiles reveals compelling similarities, indicating a significant level of artistic exchange (Images 12 and Image 13).

These imitation tiles are found in the renovated sections of Topkapı Palace, as well as in the Galata Surp Krikor Lusavoriç Church restored in 1733 (Theunissen & Tişkaya, 2005), the Çelik Mehmed Pasha Mosque in Konya (1763), and the Müsellim Mosque in Antalya (1796). Additionally, similar patterns appear in the Surp Hagop Cathedral in Jerusalem, where tiles were supplied by Armenian craftsmen from Kütahya in 1719.

The historical presence of Dutch merchant families in İzmir is well documented, particularly through baptism, marriage, and funeral records preserved in the archives of the İzmir Protestant Church, dating back to the 19th century. In fact, by the late 19th century, efforts were made to re-establish ties with the Netherlands, as evidenced by Dutch language lessons offered to members of prominent families such as Slaars, De Hochepied, Van der Zee, De Jongh, Keun, Dutilh, and Van Lennep (Çelikkol et al., 2000). To facilitate commercial relations, Dutch consuls were appointed not only in Istanbul but also in İzmir. The Dutch community in İzmir established distinct neighborhoods, churches, schools, and even hospitals.

Conclusion

Unlike the present day, a Dutch diaspora was notably present in Ottoman Türkiye. The friendship between these two nations, which began with tulips, was cemented with crescents and further enriched by shared motifs in carpets and tiles. Today, this enduring connection resonates with lega-

Image 9-10: Examples of plates from the "Nieuw Delft" series, inspired by Iznik ceramics.

Image 11: Dutch tiles in the Imperial Sofa of the Harem of Topkapı Palace

cies that have left a lasting imprint. Dutch households continue to incorporate small tablecloth-sized hand-woven carpets inspired by Turkish designs as part of their heritage, regardless of their origin. İznik motifs left a lasting imprint on the Royal Porcelain Factory's production, Turkish figures adorned tiles, depictions of Turkish carpets became commonplace in paintings, and held a place in museum collections. The legacy of Turkish art endures, with the name İzmir still present on the street where the famed carpet factory once stood as well as on the Anatolian-patterned carpets it produced.

Image 12: Sketch of a Dutch tile design, 18th century

Image 13: Dutch imitation Kütahya tile, 18th century

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At the playground in Jozef Israëlsplein, Turkish-origin mothers are spending time with their children.
Source: Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_331022, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/FA7908E49B97E54DF18EF2278693CF0A/showbrowse

Interview

DIASPORA STORIES TOLD THROUGH PHOTOGRAPHS: AN INTERVIEW WITH ARTIST EBRU AYDIN

EBRU AYDIN
Photographer

✍ Could you briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Ebru Aydın. I am 34 years old, born and raised in Utrecht, where I still reside. I hold a degree in sociology and social sciences education. Currently, I work as a project leader at *Hogeschool van Amsterdam* and run my own photography business. My photography primarily focuses on social issues. Additionally, I collaborate on various projects with civil society organizations.

✍ How did you discover your interest in photography? When did you start taking photos professionally?

I was often referred to as the "family photographer." I constantly carried a small camera and captured countless moments. At one point, my camera broke, and while replacing it, I decided to invest in a professional camera. During this time, I was studying sociology, and the economic crisis had made opportunities scarce. Friends and acquaintances started requesting me to photograph birthdays, engagement parties, and other events, acknowledging my skills. Despite never taking formal photography lessons, I began to refine my craft independently. My younger sister, who is six years my junior, shares an interest in photography, and we embarked on this journey together. While my sister chose to focus on personal photography, particularly in the wedding industry, I gravitated toward collaborations with municipalities, ministries, and NGOs after 2015. By 2020, I began curating my own exhibitions. For me, photography serves as an enjoyable medium to narrate our own stories.

✍ What initially motivated you to pursue photography?

My primary motivation lies in creativity. A single photograph can convey what might otherwise take a thousand words. Photography allows me to express my creative side. However, I never considered photography as a full-time profession. Instead, I aspire to use it as a tool for social impact. Simply taking photos does not suffice for me; I aim to integrate my awareness of social responsibility with my photographic work.

✍ What do you primarily focus on in your photography? What drives you in this pursuit?

My photography centers around people. Through my lens, I strive to bring out the beauty and strength within individuals - qualities they may not recognize in themselves. It brings me immense satisfaction when people see my photographs and appreciate the positive reflections of themselves.

✍ What does art mean to you?

To me, art is the ability to connect with and impact people on a profound level.

✍ Can you briefly discuss the projects you have undertaken? What themes have emerged in your work thus far?

My first photography exhibition focused on the Black Lives Matter protests in Utrecht. The discussions on institutional racism, which began in the United States, also resonated within Dutch society. As a spectator at these protests, I documented the events with my camera. Initially, I shared these pho-

tographs online. When the images garnered attention, several institutions expressed interest in exhibiting them, marking the beginning of my photography career.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, I initiated my first project, Headscarf Stories, where I interviewed and photographed 21 Muslim women in the Netherlands. The objective was to shed light on the stories of women who wear headscarves, a group often portrayed negatively in Dutch public discourse. I aimed to showcase their lesser-known narratives and to emphasize that their variously-styled headscarves carry personal stories, memories, and meanings. To ensure diversity, I featured participants of varying nationalities and age groups. The women responded to questions such as, "Which of your headscarves is most meaningful to you?" or "Do you own a headscarf with a particular story?" Their answers were deeply personal, including anecdotes like, "My husband bought this during our honeymoon," "My daughter and I wore this for a wedding," or "This headscarf gives me a sense of safety." I also explored how they integrate their headscarves into their daily lives and homes. I shared these photographs on Instagram. After receiving positive feedback on social media, I collaborated with an organization to host an exhibition and an online program featuring project participants. The exhibition later traveled to Amsterdam and Utrecht and was subsequently published as a book. This project attracted significant media attention and laid the foundation for my subsequent endeavors.

My next project explored migration narratives. I worked with nine families, conducting interviews with both grandparents and grandchildren to understand intergenerational perspectives on Utrecht and the Netherlands. Collaborating with a non-governmental organization support-

"I observe a growing interest in the arts among the third generation, which brings fresh perspectives to the artistic landscape."

ing elderly migrants, I photographed elderly participants while the NGO conducted interviews. The project focused on families from countries with a significant migration history to the Netherlands, such as Türkiye, Morocco, Italy, Spain, Greece, Indonesia, and Suriname. This project was exhibited in community centers and Utrecht's city hall, accompanied by programs that delved into the individuals' migration stories and the cultural significance of their names.

After completing these projects, I applied for funding to further develop my photography skills. With the support I received, I realized my most recent project, Gewoon Zijn (Just Be). This project addressed themes of diversity and social inclusion, focusing specifically on the sense of belonging among 12 Muslim women aged 20-30 in the Netherlands. Through interviews, I explored how these women experience belonging in a society where they often encounter feelings of otherness and I broadcasted these interviews as a podcast. The participants expressed a desire to blend in rather than attract attention. Many revealed that experiences of marginalization diminished their sense of belonging in the Netherlands. For this project, I paired portraits of the women with personal objects that held significance for them. A friend added illuminated borders to the photographs. The project culminated in an event, where participants expressed gratitude for being represented in such a thoughtful way. The portraits were exhibited outdoors in Rotterdam and Utrecht, receiving a positive response from the public. I deliberately choose to exhibit my work in public and social spaces, as I believe these environments enable broader accessibility and foster greater social impact.

✍ Which demographic groups, in terms of ethnicity or gender, show the most interest in your exhibitions? Who constitutes your target audience?

The majority of participants in my exhibitions are women, often those with a migration background. Women tend to bring along individuals from their social circles, creating a broader audience. However, people from diverse backgrounds and interests also engage with my exhibitions.

✍ What motivated you to undertake these projects, and do you believe you succeeded in raising social awareness?

As Muslims, we are frequently misrepresented in the media, often portrayed in a negative light. This contributes to societal prejudice against Muslims and leads to experiences of discrimination. Within my own community, there are many individuals who serve as excellent role models. My motivation stems from a desire to narrate our stories through photography, presenting these narratives from an insider's perspective rather than an external lens. Based on the positive feedback I have received, I believe these projects have indeed raised awareness. For example, some members of the Dutch public previously dismissed the challenges faced by Muslims as exaggerated or believed we were playing the victim. However, the re-

HIJABVERHALEN
EBRU AYDIN
MARIAN ENGEL
BEER
NU OP HET
NACHTKASTJE
VAN
MAARTJE WORTEL
MEER OP
INSTAGRAM
ATHENAEUMBOEKH
HIJABVERHALEN
EBRU AYDIN
HIJABVERHALEN
EBRU AYDIN
HIJABVERHALEN
EBRU AYDIN
RIGHTS
ESTHERS
DESN'T MEAN
ESN'T

"My motivation stems from a desire to narrate our stories through photography, presenting these narratives from an insider's perspective rather than an external lens."

actions at my exhibitions suggest a shift in perception, as these prejudices are being dismantled through the stories I tell.

✍ What have been the outcomes of your work?

The results of my work include physical exhibitions, books, magazine features, and podcasts. Among my projects, *Headscarf Stories* holds special significance because it began as a self-funded initiative, without external support. I never anticipated the widespread attention it would garner. This experience reinforced my belief in the importance of starting somewhere and trusting my vision.

✍ How does your photography explore specific themes in your projects?

To convey the themes of my projects,I employ words and podcasts alongside my photographs. I believe that storytelling through a single photograph is a skill that very few photographers possess, and I am still striving to reach that level. To enhance my storytelling, I incorporate complementary mediums such as words and podcasts. Since I also moderate discussions, I enjoy asking people questions and facilitating conversations.

✍ Have there been any particularly memorable moments during your work?

Meeting new individuals and delving into their stories is an aspect of my work that I greatly enjoy. During one project, I worked with a consultant to aid my personal development. This consultant, who had a background in politics, remarked on how the project broadened his/her perspective, particularly through questions such as how Muslim women allocate space for their headscarves at home. It was rewarding to realize that the project added new dimensions to my consultant's understanding. Another memorable moment involved a young woman I knew through my most recent project. She had been contemplating wearing a headscarf but was hesitant. After attending the exhibition opening, she later messaged me, sharing that she was so moved by the experience that she decided to start wearing a headscarf.

✍ How would you describe yourself?

In an ideal context, I would describe myself as Ebru - a person whose identity is shaped by diverse influences. A significant part of my identity stems from my religion; I am a Muslim. I am also ethnically Turkish, but having been born and raised in the Netherlands, I possess a Dutch identity as well. Professionally, my identity is rooted in sociology and photography. I believe that every individual's identity is unique.

✍ What are the advantages and challenges of being a photographer with an immigrant background?

One challenge I experience is a sense of disconnection, largely because I did not formally study photography. As a result, I often feel as though I do not fully belong in the art

world. Additionally, the scarcity of Muslim artists in this field can lead to a sense of isolation. This trend likely reflects the career choices of earlier immigrant generations, who prioritized economic stability. However, I observe a growing interest in the arts among the third generation, which brings fresh perspectives to the artistic landscape.

How has being an artist in the diaspora influenced your worldview?

Growing up as an artist in the Netherlands has significantly broadened my perspective. My projects often include individuals from diverse ethnic backgrounds, a reflection of my upbringing in the diaspora. An especially transformative experience was my journey to Umrah, where I worshiped alongside Muslims from various countries and ethnicities, reinforcing my appreciation for unity. I strive to extend this sense of unity beyond Kaaba and value inclusivity beyond ethnic identities. Moreover, I feel a strong responsibility to contribute to the society I live in, guided by this ethos of unity.

What challenges or opportunities have you encountered in the field?

As a self-taught photographer, I have had to navigate the field independently, adhering to my own rules and perspectives. This independence allows me to approach projects from a unique social angle, which is an advantage. However, it also presents challenges, such as the need to establish collaborative networks with individuals and institutions for each new project. This requires consistent effort in devising roadmaps and strategies for my initiatives.

✍ How do you perceive the contributions of immigrants to the Netherlands in the domains of cinema, art, and music? How much attention is given to diaspora-related issues in these fields?

The first generation of immigrants predominantly focused on economic stability, but subsequent generations have shown increasing interest in art. For instance, Ahmet Polat, a photographer of Turkish origin, held an exhibition at the Foam Museum in collaboration with Türkiye. Similarly, Ara Güler's exhibition in Amsterdam provided a unique perspective on Türkiye through his lens. Another impactful exhibition was Çiğdem Yüksel's Bir Bilsen/Je moest eens weten, which documented the migration stories of first-generation Turkish women through old and new photographs.

✍ Do you know other professional Dutch Turkish photographers, and do you have any plans for collaborative projects with them?

Yes, I am familiar with Çiğdem Yüksel, who has explored themes such as the representation of veiled women in Dutch media and the stories of first-generation Turkish women. She has published a book and organized an exhibition on this topic. Another is Sebiha Öztaş, who exhibited her work on women at the Dutch Photography Museum. Ahmet Polat is also noteworthy for his projects bridging Türkiye and the Netherlands. I tend to follow female photographers more closely because I feel they represent me as a woman. Although I do not currently have plans for collaborative projects with these artists, I remain open to the possibility in the future.

✍ What advice would you give to immigrant women or young individuals who are new to or aspiring to enter this field?

My primary advice is to start somewhere without hesitation. Waiting for the perfect moment can lead to missed opportunities. If you have an idea, take the initiative, as the process of doing is the best teacher. Each experience builds upon the last. Doubts and fears are natural, but growth only occurs through action.

✍ What are your future projects and goals? Where do you envision yourself?

I am someone who focuses on the present and does not make extensive long-term plans. Currently, I have no specific project in development. My overarching aim is to shed light on the untold stories of the diaspora and Muslims through photography, using it as a medium to amplify these narratives. I do not have plans for an exhibition in Türkiye. However, if an opportunity arises to collaborate or exhibit in Türkiye, I would be delighted to pursue it.

Interview

ON DIASPORA LITERATURE: AN INTERVIEW WITH SADIK YEMNİ

SADIK YEMNİ
Writer

Could you provide a brief overview of your background, including your migration history and life experiences?

I was born in Istanbul in 1951 and spent my early years in Izmir. Between 1975 and 2013, I resided continuously in Amsterdam. My career encompasses roles as a novelist, short story writer, essayist, and translator. My work spans genres such as science fiction, detective fiction, fantasy, and mystery. I am also recognized as the first Sufi science fiction writer in Turkish literature. In the Netherlands, I have published eight books, and in Türkiye, my publications include 31 books, 22 of which are novels. Beyond novel writing, storytelling is a significant passion of mine. Alongside my printed story collections, I published approximately 70 stories in *Gölge e-Dergi* between 2009 and 2016, bringing the total number of my stories to over 100. I am deeply interested in language and have been compiling the *Sadık Yemni Dictionary* for over two decades, annually updating this collection of new words I coin. My writings also extend to various magazines and, more recently, I started broadcasting via Instagram. I often refer to "Metaversal Cage" when I discuss the near future in articles and essays.

I began my European migration journey on November 5, 1975, arriving in Amsterdam as a 24-year-old senior university student. My initial job was in my uncle's apparel workshop, situated in an old building in the city center. At that time, Amsterdam's Turkish Cultural Center was a hub of political discussions. Turkish coffee houses, casinos, pastry shops, football teams, mosques, restaurants, political associations, and even mafia formations were already prominent. Throughout my early years in Amsterdam, I worked in a variety of roles, including cleaner, furniture

transporter, street vendor, pastry maker, switchman, station janitor, and bridge operator. This last job, particularly outside the summer months, afforded me ample time for reading. In addition to these roles, I gained experience in fields such as magazine publishing, television broadcasting, and think-tank moderation, which broadened my perspective on immigrant life. Since 2013, I have been living in Izmir but visit Amsterdam regularly. My current activities include writing novels, short stories, essays, and articles, as well as hosting live broadcasts on Instagram, where I analyze films and explore the near future through the lens of historical events.

✍ How did your literary career begin, and what sparked your initial interest in literature?

My literary journey began with an enduring passion for reading. As a child, I was well-known in my neighborhood as a storyteller, a talent nurtured by the influence of female storytellers. My imagination was vivid and boundless - I would often narrate films of my own invention. This was an era without television, and my fabricated stories gained popularity, with listeners eagerly asking for new "films," even though they knew they were made up. In high school, my interests extended to chemistry, and I became known for my homemade rockets. My experiments often led to small-scale explosions in my home laboratory. Later, during my work as a bridge operator, I returned to intensive reading, and this reignited my passion for literature. It was during this period that the seed of writing grew within me. In 1987, my first collection of stories was published. While labeled as "immigrant literature," this marked my formal recognition as a writer.

✍ What role does your cultural identity and heritage play in your literary work? How do you engage with your readers on this topic?

My maternal lineage originates from Cretan immigrants, and my paternal side includes Tunisian immigrants, with Albanian and Bosnian ancestry through my grandparents. This familial background represents the intricate tapestry of a six-century imperial legacy. The Westernized upbringing I received through education and societal influences has also significantly shaped my cultural identity, forming the foundation of my "cultural imprint." Apart from a few exceptions, writing in Turkish has been instrumental in maintaining a direct connection with readers who share my linguistic heritage. However, for audiences who speak other languages, my works have only reached them through translations.

✍ What initiatives and activities have you undertaken in the field of diaspora literature in the Netherlands?

My involvement in diaspora literature began in 1984 with contributions to Haber, a Turkish-language newspaper in the Netherlands. Subsequently, I worked in various capacities for Turkish magazines and served as a newsreader on Turkish immigrant television. For a quarter of a century, I participated as a jury member or chair in short story competitions organized for Turkish immigrants. In 2005, I was elected President of the Dutch Turkish Writers' Union under the umbrella of the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD). My work with the Türkevi Research Center, which published its 60th book in honor of the 60th year of Turkish migration to the Netherlands, represents a meaningful contribution to the celebration of our literary heritage. In addition, I launched a digital magazine where I united Turkish writers for the first time. I delivered workshops and lectures in libraries to encourage young immigrants to pursue writing, providing constructive feedback on their work and publishing their pieces in the magazine. These efforts aimed to inspire novice writers and cultivate enthusiasm for literary expression.

✍ Could you provide an overview of the literary and cultural heritage of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands?

The literary development of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands has progressed steadily since the 1980s. Each decade has witnessed the emergence of new works, some of which have achieved enduring significance. Language choice has played a pivotal role in shaping the trajectory of diaspora literature, especially over the past two decades. Writers who chose Turkish often targeted readers in Türkiye, with some attaining a notable degree of success. Meanwhile, writers producing works in Dutch have pursued a different adventure. Over the last 40 years, the Dutch Turkish literary presence has extended to newspapers, magazines, television programs, and library activities across the Netherlands. Books and writings by diaspora authors occupy a place in many households, influencing at least two generations of readers. The literary and cultural heritage of the Turkish diaspora is not confined to libraries or social media archives - it also exists as a living impression in the collective consciousness of the community. This dynamic legacy will undoubtedly persist and evolve.

✍ When did Dutch Turks begin producing literary works, and what characterizes the early stages of their contributions?

The emergence of Turkish writers in the Netherlands began in the early 1980s,

"Türkiye's engagement with diaspora literature should be elevated to a higher level."

coinciding with the realization that guest workers were transitioning into permanent immigrant communities. During this period, there was significant curiosity about how immigrants perceived their host society and how they expressed themselves. This prompted publishing houses to release works by foreign writers, including those of Turkish origin. Halil Gür's Deli Mustafa and Other Stories *(Gekke Mustafa en andere verhalen)*, published in 1984, marked the entry of Dutch Turkish writers into the literary scene. Gür became a prominent figure during the 1980s, inspiring other writers to contribute to the burgeoning field of migrant literature. While these early works were often critiqued for their limited literary quality, they captured the immigrant experience, particularly themes of victimization and resilience. In 1987, my own contribution to this literary movement materialized with the publication of *De Ijzeren Snavel* (The Iron Beak), translated by Evert van den Broek and published by De Balie. The stories, drawn from my experiences as a railway bridge operator, garnered attention for their authentic portrayal of migrant life. Other writers, such as Fehmi Özgök, Hürrem Efe, Fehmi Eruçar and İsmail Polat, joined this movement, contributing to its evolution. While migrant literature thrived as a niche genre during the 1980s, its impact diminished after the 1990s. Factors such as limited translation efforts and subpar cover designs, often resembling children's books, hindered its broader appeal.

What types of literary works have been the focus of Turkish writers in the Netherlands?

The initial literary endeavors of Turkish writers in the Netherlands centered on familiar themes such as the struggles of undocumented workers, the pain of exile, loneliness, and the humiliation experienced at the hands of locals. These narratives predominantly took the form of short stories. The Dutch, when featured in these works, were often portrayed through stereotypes, characterized by a lack of psychological depth or nuanced representation. For many Turkish immigrants, the external Dutch world existed as an opaque reality viewed from behind a metaphorical thick glass. By the 1990s, the label of "immigrant literature" persisted, yet a shift began with the emergence of writers who had a deeper understanding of Dutch society and established direct communication with locals. During this period, novels emerged alongside short stories. The 1980s and 1990s also saw a vibrant Turkish theater and cabaret scene in the Netherlands. I contributed two Turkish-language plays, directed by Nahit Güvendi and Şaban Ol, one of which toured the Netherlands. Over time, some performers transitioned to the Dutch language, finding larger audiences and opportunities. The arrival of cabaret artist Nilgün Yerli enriched the landscape further.

Poetry, alongside short stories, remained a cornerstone of this literary era. Poets such as Yavuz Nufel, Mehmet Çetin, Fehmi Özgök, Nerkiz Şahin, Kerim Ece, İbrahim Eroğlu, Haydar Eroğlu, Kazım Cumert, Tuncay Çinibulak and others presented their works to Turkish-speaking audiences through poetry nights organized by platforms, associations, and foundations.

The positive reception and encouragement my first book received played a pivotal role in shaping my literary journey. This initial support, despite the relatively modest quality of the stories, granted me the recognition of authorship. It inspired me to embrace this title with greater seriousness, compelling me to refine my craft and immerse myself fully in the profound and intricate realms of literary creation.

✍ How has Turkish literature in the Netherlands evolved over time?

The prominence of immigrant literature peaked in the 1980s but began to wane by the 1990s. Many of the initial contributors faded from the literary scene, while a select few remained confined to lower-tier literary spaces. However, the 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the emergence of a new generation of writers adept at capturing the intricacies of life in the Netherlands. During this period, Turkish media outlets, magazines, and digital platforms played a significant role in sustaining and promoting this literature. During this period, there was a notable surge in the translation of works by prominent Turkish authors into Dutch, as well as the translation of Dutch authors' works into Turkish, followed by their publication in Türkiye. Concurrently, the initial Turkish-Dutch dictionary projects began to emerge.

The 1980s and 1990s saw the works of renowned Turkish authors such as Orhan Pamuk, Nazım Hikmet, Yaşar Kemal, Nedim Gürsel, Aziz Nesin and Elif Şafak translated into Dutch. I have had the privilege of knowing all of the leading translators in the field since the early stages of my career. Some of these translators have also contributed to the Dutch translations of my works. Notably, the 2008 Translation Award from the Dutch Literature Fund was granted to Margreet Dorleijn and Hanneke van der Heijden for their translations of the works of Orhan Pamuk, Ahmet Altan, Elif Şafak, Sadık Yemni, Ahmet Hamdi Tanpınar, and Oğuz Atay into Dutch. Simultaneously, numerous works by well-known Dutch authors were translated into Turkish, with the current number likely exceeding one hundred.

Regarding the translation of Turkish poetry, one of the foremost figures in this domain was the late Mehmet Emin Yıldırım from the Department of Turkology at Leiden University. Thanks to his efforts, along with those of his academic collaborators, such as Sytske Sötemann, the compilation of the *Twentieth Century Turkish Poetry Canon* was completed in 2010. This was complemented by the translation of works by renowned Dutch poets into Turkish. Additionally, Yıldırım, alongside Gerjan van Schaalk, published a Dutch Turkish dictionary by Leiden University in 2012. Prior to this, Mehmet Kiriş's Dutch Turkish dictionary, first published in the late 1990s and subsequently refined, remains one of the most popular resources of its kind.

Competitions played an essential role in fostering diaspora literature. In 1987, *İlke Magazine,* edited by Mehmet Emin Alkanlar, organized a short story competition that saw a high level of participation. This event marked the beginning of a series of competitions, particularly in the field of short stories and poetry. The most significant developments occurred during the early 2000s, when various associations and foundations supporting Turkish communities in the Netherlands organized poetry and short story competitions from 2002 to 2004. I had the honor of serving as a jury member for these competitions, and I also represented the *Meddah* literary foundation. These competitions introduced a new generation of young

writers, including figures such as Mesut Balık, Nazan Bilen, Ezgi Gürçay, and Cengiz Darıdere. The Dutch Literature Foundation produced promotional booklets for the first prize winners, which were subsequently presented to Dutch publishers.

In 2005, I was elected President of the Dutch Turkish Writers' Union, established for the first time under the auspices of the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD). On May 3, 2009, with the support of *Platform Magazine*, I organized a gathering of Turkish-language writers in the Netherlands in Amsterdam. More than thirty writers attended, and we honored those who had published their first works, offering them our sincere appreciation. This gathering was significant, not only for its scale but also because it was a unique occasion that could not be replicated. *Platform Magazine* remains in publication to this day and holds the distinction of being the longest-running Turkish magazine in Dutch history.

✍ What are the predominant themes explored in the literary works of Dutch Turks, and how can these themes be situated within the broader context of the Turkish diaspora?

The literary works produced by Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands often depicted the lives of undocumented immigrants, the experience of alienation, and the discrimination faced by foreigners, particularly in the early stages of diaspora literature in the 1980s. In my own stories, for instance, I portrayed the lives of railway workers, reflecting these themes. In addition to categorizing this literature as a genre centered on complaint or the anguish of exile, it is important to note that, when assessed in terms of narrative quality and stylistic execution, the literary output of this period often lacked depth. The themes explored could have been approached with greater nuance, offering an opportunity to unveil the complexities of closed worlds while providing both intellectual richness and aesthetic pleasure. Similar to the blues, a musical genre rooted in expressions of sorrow yet enjoys widespread popularity, many renowned novels also depict transformative moments in human life - moments when change challenges, threatens, and irreversibly alters the course of existence. Yet, it is essential to recognize that these early works serve as significant historical and emotional records of the immigrant experience in the Netherlands.

By the 1990s, the scope of themes in Turkish-Dutch literature expanded significantly. E.M. Nap-Kolhoff's 2002 publication Turkish Authors in the Netherlands: Exploration of Unknown Territory *(Turkse auteurs in Nederland - Verkenning van een onontgonnen gebied)* critically examined the evolving literary landscape. In this work, Nap-Kolhoff highlighted books by authors such as Halil Gür *(The Sky Appears Grey - Hemel blijkt grauw)*, Sevtap Baycılı *(The Nightmare of the Foreigner - Nachtmerrie van de allochtoon)*, and me *(The Fourth Star - De vierde ster)*. He suggested that the label "immigrant literature" no longer sufficed to fully describe the emerging narratives. By the 1990s, certain diaspora writers had transcended the confines of this genre.

Yet, others continued to rely on clichéd themes to attract attention. These authors are typically young women well-adapted to society, writing in Dutch, portraying their struggle for autonomy in opposition to conservative family values, religious customs, and societal taboos. This theme, which has persisted through decades since the 1980s, reflects the search for individual freedom, with women frequently finding refuge in

the arms of benevolent Dutch men or fleeing to women's shelters during the 1980s and 1990s. After the turn of the century, the motif expanded to include escapes to Türkiye and Istanbul, remaining a popular narrative for nearly forty years. Despite their limited literary merit, these themes continue to attract interest. Another prominent subject for some writers concerns political issues in Türkiye, which remains a focus of attention for various reasons.

Many writers who compose their works in Turkish, such as myself, expanded their reach beyond the Dutch context in the 1990s, engaging with readers in Türkiye. Over the course of my career, I have published 31 books, including 22 novels, and I continue to explore themes connected to the diaspora. For example, in my 2013 memoir *Alsancak Börekçisi,* I captured the essence of the immigrant experience in Amsterdam by recounting the stories of individuals who frequented a pastry shop in the city's heart during the 1970s. Additionally, I am currently working on a novel set in Amsterdam, affirming my ongoing connection to the diaspora.

Şeyda Koç Asyalı, who has published numerous books in Türkiye, including *Mahpeyker Kösem Sultan,* released the novel *Kunduz Şinasi & Sık Dişini Helası Cinayeti* in 2018. In 2015, Hamdi Erişici, a former gambler, recounted his memories of the Turkish underworld in his book *Amsterdam Bıçkınları*, set in the 1970s and 1980s. In 2019, Veyis Güngör's autobiographical work *Anız Yolunda* was published in Turkish with my support. In addition to Veyis Güngör's role as President of the UETD in the Netherlands, numerous initiatives directly associated with the Turkish language have been documented in this book. These include the publication of Turkish-language books by the Türkevi Research Center, the activities of intellectual clubs, and various short story competitions. Güngör continues to contribute significantly as a chronicler of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands. Furthermore, Baro Cengiz, whom I encouraged to write in the early 2000s, published his novel *Sonsuz Tefrika* in Türkiye in 2020, a crime story set in the back streets of Istanbul. In 2024, Şaban Ol, a theater director and poet, published his novel *Son Oyun (De laatste voorstelling)*, a work exploring the pursuit of an actor evading discovery, inspired by his experiences in the Netherlands. Additionally, a memoir by İbrahim Görmez, a leading figure in the Dutch diaspora and founder of the Dutch Religious Foundation and Dutch Islamic Radio and Television, is expected to be released in the fall of 2024. His memoir will provide invaluable insights into the sixty-year history of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands, offering a rich archive of the immigrant experience.

In light of the aforementioned examples, it can be observed that nearly half of the diaspora writers have oriented their works towards Turkish readers, addressing a wide range of topics. However, one area that appears to be underexplored is the profound crisis facing Western civilization in contemporary times, along with the potentially severe consequences this decline may precipitate in the near future. It is my hope that diaspora writers will address these critical issues more thoroughly in their forthcoming works.

✍ What challenges does the Turkish diaspora encounter in the realm of literature and culture within the Netherlands? How do these challenges impact literary production?

An article published in *Trouw* on January 21, 2005, titled "Where Are the Turkish Writ-

"The Netherlands stands out as a particularly active country in Europe in producing Turkish literature and publications, particularly between 1985 and 2010, despite Germany's significantly larger Turkish population."

ers?" highlighted the remarkable success of Moroccan writers in the Netherlands, in stark contrast to the relative underachievement of Turkish writers. The sociological, geopolitical, and cultural dynamics contributing to this disparity merit further investigation.

My own novel, *Dördüncü Yıldız (The Fourth Star),* was published in 1999, yet it quickly found its way to second-hand stores before it could be widely distributed. The work, which offered a lighthearted portrayal of an immigrant's adaptation to modernity and the underlying systemic issues, was sidelined at a time when the literary landscape had no space for such works. This situation was not exclusive to Turkish writers; even local writers struggled to find a place for their works. The events surrounding the September 11 attacks exacerbated this trend, catalyzing a shift in literary and cultural perspectives that would resonate across the European Union. Despite enjoying positive critical reception, my 2005 novel *Muhabbet Evi* was not published in the Netherlands. It was published in 2006 in Türkiye and became the first book to address the immigrant experience in the context of rising Islamophobia and the disillusionment with multiculturalism in the Netherlands, while also incorporating fantastical elements into its narrative.

I have discussed my point of view extensively in my articles and interviews. Particularly since the early 2000s, it has seemed that there was little room for immigrant writers - especially those who employed a softer tone or critiqued the system, even within the realm of fiction. Moreover, it appeared that the host society was unwilling to fully grasp the deeper reasons behind the difficulties immigrants faced in assimilating. The decline of Western civilization's claim to universal human values, as evidenced by political stances on the Palestinian issue, underscores this disconnect.

It seemed as though diaspora writers were expected to highlight the virtues of modern life and its misfits. In the second decade of the 2000s, this expectation was reinforced, as younger, predominantly female writers who wrote in Dutch and critiqued Türkiye's political climate garnered greater attention. As our world becomes increasingly interconnected, in what could be described as an "electronic village," the Turkish diaspora, alongside the broader European public, is attempting to adapt to a rapidly changing rhythm. The literary works that emerge in this context are inevitably shaped by this ongoing transformation.

✍ How can Türkiye's interest in diaspora literature be enhanced, and what measures can be taken to foster greater engagement?

Türkiye's engagement with diaspora literature should be elevated to a higher level. Institutions such as the Yunus Emre Foundation, which operates outside of Türkiye, can

play a pivotal role in this area. The Türkevi Research Center, which published its 60th book this year, holds significant potential and warrants greater support. One possible avenue is the organization of reading days in various cities to provide direct interaction between diaspora writers and readers. Additionally, regular virtual conversations with diaspora writers through platforms like Zoom could facilitate further engagement. A digital magazine dedicated to diaspora literature could also prove an effective means of promoting this field. Highlighting works that explore labor migration to Europe and the personal stories surrounding it could further pique Türkiye's interest in diaspora literature. Notable figures in this genre include Bekir Yıldız, Fakir Baykurt, Füruzan, Adalet Ağaoğlu, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, and Yüksel Pazarkaya, among others.

✍ What is the status of the Turkish diaspora's interest in and access to literary works from Türkiye?

In the mid-1980s and the early 2000s, many writers and poets from Türkiye visited the Netherlands to engage with their readers. Many individuals had the opportunity to meet prominent figures such as Aziz Nesin, Orhan Pamuk, Pınar Kür, Füruzan, Fakir Baykurt, and others in Amsterdam. However, as the world has changed and social media has expanded its influence, such events have become increasingly rare in subsequent years.

I have spent my whole life personally bringing over a thousand books from Türkiye to Amsterdam, in addition to those sent by mail. Today, books are more frequently converted to Portable Document Format (PDF), facilitating access. The ease of purchasing books through online platforms has also contributed to the increased availability of literary works.

✍ What is the role of Turkish literature in the diaspora in preserving the vitality of the Turkish language?

When elective Turkish lessons were removed from school curricula in 2005, the "Hand in Hand for Turkish" campaign was launched in response. Several Turkish academics in the Netherlands made concerted efforts to reinstate Turkish lessons in schools, but this endeavor ultimately did not succeed. I personally contributed to this effort while teaching Turkish as part of a middle school curriculum in a local community center. By combining language instruction with mathematics homework, I aimed to make the lessons more engaging for students. During this time, I gained popularity as a teacher. Many other individuals in the diaspora, particularly those who published Turkish magazines in the more remote regions of the Netherlands, contributed to maintaining the language's vitality. With the proliferation of digital media, these initiatives expanded significantly, and through magazines, we continued to foster the literary creativity of young people, encouraging and publishing the stories of those who wrote for the first time.

✍ How do the literary works of the Turkish diaspora engage with Dutch society, and what have been your personal experiences in this process?

I distinctly recall seeing a passenger reading my novel *Muska* (The Amulet) on the subway in the autumn of 1995. During that period, Dutch libraries and book clubs made a concerted effort to engage diaspora writers and introduce their works to Dutch readers. I personally participated in at least forty of these invitations. The questions posed by Dutch book enthusiasts were often deeply thought-provoking. It was also an occasion to meet notable Dutch writers. I was a member of the Dutch Writers' Club for a period, and the interviews on television, along with the

book reviews published in newspapers and magazines, played a significant role in promoting books.

✍ What institutions or initiatives exist in the Netherlands to promote and support Turkish literature, and how can cooperation in these areas be developed?

The Netherlands stands out as a particularly active country in Europe in producing Turkish literature and publications, particularly between 1985 and 2010, despite Germany's significantly larger Turkish population. The prevalence of the Turkish language in the Netherlands during this period, given its relatively small population, is a noteworthy subject for further research.

Between 2005 and 2013, when I served as president of the Dutch Turkish Writers' Union, we collaborated with various foundations and associations to organize short story competitions, poetry festivals, and cultural talks. The addition of digital and print magazines further enriched the literary environment, creating a vibrant and productive cultural scene. This model could be revitalized through the strategic use of social media, adapting to the contemporary digital age.

✍ How do you envision the future of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands in literature and culture, and what kind of progress do you foresee?

September 11 attacks marked a turning point in many areas, including literature. A global wave of Islamophobia emerged and in response, Muslim writers, particularly those in Europe, began addressing these issues through literature. This subject will undoubtedly continue to be a prominent theme in the works of Turkish diaspora writers in Europe. Post-COVID-19, Europe is grappling with the effects of an economic crisis, the erosion of freedoms, the rise of authoritarian discourses, and the increasing unrest caused by shrinking social welfare. While it may be challenging for writers to address these critical issues in mainstream media, I predict that they will find a voice in the digital sphere, growing and flourishing in this new environment. Moreover, there is also an emerging fourth generation of Turkish diaspora writers in the Netherlands who write in Dutch. These writers, along with others from immigrant communities, will play a key role in documenting the social and political developments of the Western world from an insider's perspective. It is their time to shine.

✍ What strategies would you recommend to inspire and encourage Turkish diaspora youth in the Netherlands to engage in literature and culture?

It is essential for the diaspora youth to recognize the unique opportunity they have to observe the world from the heart of Europe and the value of accessing the wealth of resources available in local libraries. Being part of a diverse culture also offers significant potential for inspiration, opening doors to creative possibilities. Additionally, Türkiye's evolving role on the global stage should not be overlooked as a source of further enrichment for the diaspora youth. When properly communicated to the younger generation, these three factors would accelerate their intellectual and creative development. My advice, irrespective of geographical boundaries, is as follows: First, let go of any ideology. An ideological stance limits your creative potential and narrows your horizon. When writing, it is essential to read and analyze the seminal works within the genre you wish to pursue. The quality of reading is far more important than the quantity of books read. Becoming a quality reader is the first step toward becoming a quality writer. In other words, "The more you read, the more you write."

CHAPTER VII.

CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS IN DIASPORA

THE ROLE OF TURKISH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY TURKISH YOUTH IN THE NETHERLANDS

Buse Işıkhan

INTERVIEW ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS WITH İBRAHIM GÖRMEZ, A PIONEER OF FIRST-GENERATION CIVIL SOCIETY

İbrahim Görmez

INTERVIEW WITH NAZIM EŞKİLİ, PRESIDENT OF THE NETHERLANDS-TÜRKİYE MEDITERRANEAN ALEVIS ASSOCIATION, ON THE DIASPORA'S ASSOCIATION FORMATION PROCESSES

Nazım Eşkili

INTERVIEW WITH FİGEN ARSLAN ON TURKISH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Figen Arslan

THE ROLE OF TURKISH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN ADDRESSING THE CHALLENGES FACED BY TURKISH YOUTH IN THE NETHERLANDS[1]

BUSE IŞIKHAN[2]

Introduction

The temporary labor migration that began in the 1960s as an economic necessity has gradually evolved into a permanent settlement for the Turkish population, as many migrants choose to build their lives in the host country. In particular, the children and grandchildren of the first-generation Turkish migrants, who were born and raised in the Netherlands, have played a crucial role in shaping the social structure of the Turkish community in Europe. Unlike their ancestors, these younger generations did not undergo migration themselves but instead inherited a migration history. However, in contrast to the first-generation migrants, they did not have to acquire the language and social norms of the host country later in life. Consequently, the challenges faced by Turkish youth today differ significantly from those encountered by earlier generations. This study aims to examine the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in addressing the difficulties experienced by Turkish youth within Dutch society. The establishment of social networks, the formation of associations, participation in NGO activities, and initiatives to create new organizations are critical in providing Turkish youth with a structured and institutionalized presence in Dutch society. These organizations play a fundamental role in preserving, institutionalizing, and transmitting Turkish cultural heritage to future generations.

1-This study derived from the doctoral dissertation titled "The Role of Turkish Non-Governmental Organizations in the Cultural Transfer and Integration Processes of Turkish Youth in the Netherlands (The Case of Türkevi, Dutch Turkish Federation, and North Holland National Opinion Organization)."

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Research Method

The present study focuses on three key NGOs: the Turkish House Association, the Dutch Turkish Federation, and the North Dutch National Opinion Federation. These organizations were selected based on their active engagement in social media, the public sphere, and Dutch political life, as well as their continuous and sustained presence since their establishment between 1990 and 2000. The findings and generalizations presented in this study are based on research conducted within these three NGOs. Since their headquarters are located in Amsterdam, the field research was carried out in Amsterdam. In 2018, a research visit was undertaken to collect on-site information, conduct a literature review, and engage in fieldwork. The primary objective was to obtain an extensive and in-depth dataset relevant to the research focus. Yıldırım and Şimşek (2005) suggest that sample size is inversely proportional to the quantity and density of data sought. In line with Glaser and Strauss's (1967) concept of the "saturation point," the study considered data saturation as the threshold at which concepts and patterns in responses begin to recur.

The study observed that young individuals who engage with NGOs tend to converge around shared perspectives and common objectives, which facilitated the collection of rich and repetitive data. Consequently, the sample size was deemed adequate when responses from different interviews within each NGO reached saturation, reflecting recurring themes. Rather than maximizing the number of participants, the study prioritized obtaining in-depth and substantive information. The age criterion for participants were purposefully designed to include individuals who had completed their education up to the university level within the Dutch education system and had subsequently entered the Dutch workforce. This criterion ensured that participants possessed firsthand experience of the challenges encountered in education and professional life, allowing for more precise identification of the difficulties. Field research included interviews with 30 participants aged 25 to 30 (10 from each NGO) as well as interviews with NGO presidents. The data collection, evaluation, analysis, and reporting process was completed by 2021.

A qualitative research methodology was employed, with data obtained from field interviews analyzed using the MAXQDA 12 qualitative data analysis software. The participants were identified as a generation with an immigration background, distinguishing them from the first-generation migrants who had initially arrived in the Netherlands. Unlike their predecessors, this generation was born and raised in the Netherlands, acquired proficiency in the Dutch language through socialization, built their lives and made memories as members of Dutch society. However, of Dutch-born Turkish youth's connection to their homeland, the preservation of their cultural heritage, and their interactions with Dutch society continue to influence their identity and sense of belonging. Additionally, the challenges faced by Turkish youth with an immigration background within Dutch society play a critical role in shaping their integration process, cultural affiliations, and sense of belonging.

The Development of Turkish Civil Society in the Netherlands: The Case of Türkevi, Dutch Turkish Federation,

"The establishment of social networks, the formation of associations, participation in NGO activities, and initiatives to create new organizations are critical in providing Turkish youth with a structured and institutionalized presence in Dutch society."

and North Holland National Opinion Organization

The development of civil society in the Netherlands has been significantly influenced by various institutions, including labor unions, foundations, associations, churches, media outlets, and sports organizations (De Hart, 1999, cited in Canatan et al., 2015). Küçükcan and Güngör (2006) highlight that since 1985, there has been a notable increase in civil awareness among Turks residing in Europe, particularly among the younger generation. Akbaş (2016) emphasizes the role of solidarity as a unifying factor in the formation of civil society. He asserts that as social service responsibilities for immigrants were increasingly delegated to civil society organizations in the host country, immigrant communities developed their own social assistance networks.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), encompassing social institutions, educational organizations, and nonprofit entities (Werker & Ahmed, 2008), are voluntary private institutions established to serve a specific purpose by informing and guiding the public (Arslan, 2001). In the context of migration, NGOs function as crucial components of social capital and effective social networks. A key finding in the literature is that NGOs established in the host country play an essential role in fostering civic engagement among immigrants and individuals of immigrant origin. Güngör (1992) notes that the first wave of Turkish migrants to the Netherlands in the 1960s did not initially engage in civil society initiatives or establish NGOs. This lack of organizational activity was largely due to the prevailing belief among migrants that their stay was temporary and that they would eventually return to Türkiye.

The Türkevi Association categorizes the development of Turkish NGOs in the Netherlands into three distinct periods: 1970-1980, 1980-1990, and post-1990. During the first decade (1970-1980), NGOs primarily emerged from labor movements. However, in the second period (1980-1990), these labor-oriented organizations began to decline, giving way to institutions with broader objectives, including cultural, youth, sports, and immigrant rights organizations (Hatunoğlu, 2003; Güngör, 1992). While the first two periods reflect distinct characteristics, they both mirrored the social structure of Türkiye at the time.

During the second period (1980-1990) Turkish NGOs increasingly focused on addressing the difficulties faced by the Turkish community in the Netherlands. After 1990, Turkish civil society organizations in

the Netherlands underwent a structural transformation, shifting their focus toward the living conditions of the Turkish community in the host country. During this period, efforts were directed toward addressing the specific needs of Turks residing in the Netherlands. Moreover, as the perception of permanent settlement became more prevalent among Turkish migrants, they increasingly sought to secure and exercise their rights in social, political, and legal spheres (Hatunoğlu, 2003; Güngör, 1992).

The Türkevi Association

The Türkevi Association was established in 1992 in Amsterdam-Westerpark under the leadership of Veyis Güngör (Türkevi, 2023a). However, the association's foundations and Güngör's engagement in this field date back to earlier years. Its first NGO event, the 1st Netherlands Mevlana Symposium, was organized in 1987 (Güngör, 2015) as part of civil society initiatives. The Türkevi Association has since been actively engaged in a wide range of cultural, social, and political activities within the Netherlands. These include organizing oil wrestling championships, symposiums on Turkish periodicals in Europe, Turkish language courses, Ramadan programs, and events related to Sufism, migration, political participation, and international development cooperation. Additionally, the association hosts international symposiums, conferences, and makes publications on the Turkish diaspora in Europe, Türkiye-EU relations, and Turkish culture, and more (Türkevi, 2023b).

As part of its research initiatives, the Türkevi Association established the Türkevi Research Center in 2004. The center aims to conduct scientific research and develop long-term solutions to the challenges faced by the Turkish community in Europe (Türkevi, 2023c). Furthermore, the research center has contributed significantly to academic literature through various publications (Güngör, 2015).

Dutch Turkish Federation

The central headquarters for all organizations affiliated with the Turkish Federation in the Netherlands, known as the Dutch Turkish Federation *(Hollanda Türk Federasyonu),* is located in Amsterdam. Officially registered as Federation of Dutch Democratic Idealistic Turkish Associations, the federation does not designate its affiliated organizations as branches or sub-units, such as the "Nijmegen Branch of the Turkish Federation." Instead, these organizations officially operate under distinct names. Examples include the Nijmegen Turkish Cultural Center, the Turkish Islamic Cultural Foundation, the Gök Sancak Association, the Hoca Ahmet Yesevi Association, and the Alsancak Association (Gedik, 2018). Participant observations suggest that this naming convention reflects the importance and respect accorded to each affiliated organization. *The Platform Magazine* (2014) highlights the Dutch Turkish Federation's role as a bridge in fostering social, cultural, and economic relations between Dutch policymakers, the wider public, and the Turkish community residing in the Netherlands.

The North Holland National Opinion Organization

The North Holland National Opinion Organization (Kuzey Hollanda Millî Görüş Federasyonu) is a religious organization with NGO status and is structured hierarchically into a central administration, regional divisions, and local branches. The National Opinion Organization, headquartered in Germany, initially functioned as a single regional entity in the Netherlands

during the 1980s, then underwent structural changes in 1997, leading to its division into two regions: the northern region, centered in Amsterdam, and the southern region, centered in Rotterdam. Within this hierarchical framework, local branches operate under the auspices of their respective regional divisions, which, in turn, remain affiliated with the central headquarters. As a result, the North Holland National Opinion Organization functions as an intermediary between its affiliated branches and the overarching headquarters (Dalmaz, 2018). Additionally, it operates as a subsidiary of the Islamic Community Milli Görüş (İslam Toplumu Milli Görüş, IGMG), an organization that actively engages with public institutions and conducts extensive programs aimed at youth development (İslam Toplumu Millî Görüş Tanıtım Kataloğu, 2014).

Research Findings

As illustrated in Table 3, the analysis of field data led to the identification of the overarching theme: "The role of NGOs in addressing the challenges faced by young people in the Netherlands." To elucidate this theme, four fundamental sub-themes were established based on participant responses. The first sub-theme, "The Dutch have become accustomed to living with our cultural differences," emerged from the perspectives of 10 participants. The second sub-theme, "Being a member of an NGO does not hinder employment; the real issue lies elsewhere," was derived from the responses of 19 participants. The third sub-theme, "I have not personally experienced any issues, but I know that if I did, the NGO would provide support," was based on the opinions of 9 participants. Finally, the fourth sub-theme, "NGOs are effective in resolving the challenges faced by young people in the Netherlands," was shaped by the views of 28 participants.

"After 1990, Turkish civil society organizations in the Netherlands underwent a structural transformation, shifting their focus toward the living conditions of the Turkish community in the host country."

To clearly identify the issues faced by young people in the Netherlands, questions were formulated under two main categories. The findings were then analyzed within the framework of two key dimensions: the difficulties encountered by Turkish youth in their daily lives due to cultural differences in the host country and the challenges they face in corporate environments. It was observed that the participants predominantly perceived cultural differences in terms of religious beliefs. For instance, participants mentioned the ability to pray at work, noting that the Dutch have become accustomed to such practices and generally approach them with tolerance. Field observations indicate that differences in dietary habits, such as alcohol consumption and preference for pork, are often associated with vegan or vegetarian diets rather than religious factors, a point that was support-

ed by the participants' data. One participant, for example, shared that halal meat was provided for their lunch at work, a practice considered normal by their colleagues. These findings suggest that the challenges arising from cultural differences are generally addressed through compromise. In contrast, the study also identified significant challenges faced by young individuals in corporate settings, particularly during internship and job application processes. Participants noted that the difficulties faced by Turkish, Muslim, or non-Dutch origin in being selected for higher positions were among the clearest indicators of the institutional discrimination they experienced.

Another notable theme that emerged in the context of corporate life was the perceived relationship between involvement in NGOs and employment prospects. Participants were asked whether they believed that NGO membership or participation in related activities could hinder their employment opportunities. During field data collection, participants independently drew connections between NGO involvement and employability without external prompting, which was the primary factor in the formulation and prominence of this question. This connection appears to have been influenced by occasional negative media portrayals of immigrants and their civil society organizations. In their evaluation of the role of NGOs, 19 participants asserted that such organizations did not negatively impact their job-seeking processes in the Netherlands. On the contrary, they identified other factors as more significant barriers to employment. However, a pertinent question arises: Does seeking assistance from a Turkish NGO represent a social challenge for the Turkish community in the Netherlands, or does it serve as a bridge for societal integration? Participants emphasized that in the Netherlands, it is common for individuals to engage with NGOs focused on activities such as sports or cultural events during their leisure time, and such involvement is widely regarded as normal. This perspective was reinforced by recurring participant statements, which indicated that NGO membership did not lead to stigmatization or exclusion.

Within the broader theme of "Being a member of an NGO does not hinder employment; the real issue lies elsewhere," five sub-themes were identified based on participant responses. These included: (1) initial Dutch prejudices evolve through increased familiarity (5 participants); (2) many people visit NGOs, but they are not a decisive factor in securing employment (7 participants); (3) Turkish name, being Turkish and being Muslim are reasons for discrimination (6 participants); (4) people of non-Dutch origin are not promoted to senior positions in business (5 participants); and (5) the problem in the Netherlands is not being Turkish, but being Muslim (5 participants). The positive relationships established by NGOs with Dutch society and institutions, coupled with their efforts to promote Turkish culture and community through public events and media engagement, were identified as influential factors in mitigating the prejudices and negative perceptions encapsulated in these sub-themes.

It is particularly noteworthy that in the Netherlands, the issues faced are not primarily related to being Turkish, but rather to being Muslim. The findings indicate that religious practices or food customs associated with religious beliefs do not pose significant challenges in daily life in terms of cultural differences. However, being Muslim emerges as a form of institutional dis-

crimination, particularly in professional life and the recruitment process. Participants reported challenges in securing internships or obtaining jobs that align with their qualifications. In this context, Turkish NGOs were identified as a critical source of social capital for the participants. The relationships and networks that these NGOs have cultivated with Dutch society, institutions, and organizations appear to play a pivotal role in creating robust social networks and capital for young individuals. Participants emphasized that they leveraged these networks to access internship opportunities and employment, and that their personal social circles have expanded through joint activities organized by NGOs that involve Dutch society, constituting another recurring theme in the data.

Turkish youth in the Netherlands perceive Turkish NGOs as essential support

Table 3: The role of NGOs in resolving challenges faced by young people

The role of NGOs in addressing the challenges faced by young people in the Netherlands (30)			
The Dutch have become accustomed to living with our cultural differences (10)	Being a member of an NGO does not hinder employment; the real issue lies elsewhere (19)	I have not personally experienced any issues, but I know that if I did, the NGO would provide support (9)	NGOs are effective in resolving the challenges faced by young people in the Netherlands (28)
• Initial Dutch prejudies evolve through increased familiarity (5)			• NGOs have the best understanding of the challenges faced by young people (3)
• Many people visit NGOs, but they are not a decisive factor in securing employment (7)			• Participation in projects offers professional exposure and enhance one's CV (3)
• Turkish name, being Turkish and being Muslim are reasons for discrimination (6)			• Involvement in an NGO facilitatess collaboration with Dutch institutions and associations (3)
• People of non-Dutch origin are not promoted to high positions in business life (5)			• It ensures that cultural differences are not perceived personally (6)
• The problem in the Netherlands is not being Turkish, but being Muslim(5)			• It contributes to job placement opportunities (6)
			• It fosters self-confidence in the face of discrimination within Dutch society (9)
			• It creates a space for discussing general topics and receiving guidance from adults (10)

"NGOs serve as communal spaces where young people feel comfortable, fostering engagement among the Turkish community in the Netherlands and facilitating positive interpersonal relationships."

centers when encountering challenges related to their immigration background within the host society. Of the 30 participants interviewed, 28 highlighted the positive impact of NGOs in addressing various difficulties they have faced. Based on this, the theme "NGOs are effective in resolving the challenges faced by young people in the Netherlands" was identified. Under this overarching theme, seven sub-themes were developed based on the answers received to the following question: "What kind of impact do NGOs have?" These sub-themes include: "NGOs have the best understanding of the challenges faced by young people" (3 participants), "participation in projects offers professional exposure and enhances one's CV" (3 participants), "involvement in an NGO facilitates collaboration with Dutch institutions and associations" (3 participants), "it ensures that cultural differences are not perceived personally" (6 participants), "it contributes to job placement opportunities" (6 participants), "it fosters self-confidence in the face of discrimination within Dutch society" (9 participants), and "it creates a space for discussing general topics and receiving guidance from adults" (10 participants). The theme "NGOs are effective in resolving the challenges faced by young people in the Netherlands" illustrates the dual role of NGOs. Firstly, as organizations that represent and strive to preserve cultural heritage, NGOs contribute positively by fostering an environment conducive to navigating interactions with Dutch society. Secondly, NGOs serve as communal spaces where young people feel comfortable, fostering engagement among the Turkish community in the Netherlands and facilitating positive interpersonal relationships. These spaces provide opportunities for young individuals to share experiences, discuss challenges, and collaboratively develop solutions. Consequently, NGOs function as critical social support systems, ensuring that young people do not feel isolated. This support structure plays a significant role in enhancing the self-confidence of young people when confronting challenges in the Netherlands. Additionally, the study aimed to understand how participants define problems in the Netherlands and what they associate these issues with. The findings indicate a strong link between self-confidence and experiences of discrimination. Participants consistently emphasized that NGOs serve as a key resource for fostering self-confidence when facing exclusionary behaviors. They specifically noted the role of NGO leadership and experienced community members in providing guidance on how to navigate and depersonalize discriminatory experiences. Moreover,

participants acknowledged the strategic efforts of NGOs in countering prejudices through initiatives aimed at addressing negative portrayals in the media. These findings suggest that, at least to a certain extent, NGO efforts in combating discrimination and prejudice have achieved their intended impact within Dutch society, particularly benefiting young people.

Conclusion

Enhancing participation in the host society is intrinsically linked to addressing the challenges faced by young people. Facilitating their social and professional integration within the Netherlands contributes to broader integration. Resolving barriers related to employment, job-seeking, and social participation fosters more meaningful inclusion within Dutch society. One of the key findings of this research is that the relationships NGOs establish with Dutch institutions and organizations, as well as the social networks they cultivate, play a crucial role in supporting the integration of young people. Additionally, NGOs assist young individuals in securing internships and employment through their established social networks in the Netherlands. In this regard, NGOs function as pivotal actors in social capital development. Analyzing the various roles and contributions of NGOs suggests that they serve as instrumental entities in mitigating the challenges faced by Turkish youth in the Netherlands, both directly and indirectly.

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Interview

INTERVIEW ON CIVIL AND POLITICAL RIGHTS WITH İBRAHİM GÖRMEZ, A PIONEER OF FIRST-GENERATION CIVIL SOCIETY

İBRAHİM GÖRMEZ
A pioneer of first-generation civil society

✍ Could you provide a brief introduction to yourself and share your migration story?

As I have recounted in previous interviews, I was born in İzmir in 1939 as the third of seven children to a visually impaired father. My late mother, an unlettered yet deeply dedicated woman, devoted her life to nurturing her children with the limited resources available to her. She instilled in us values of honesty, compassion for others and animals, adherence to truth, and observance of religious principles such as prayer, fasting, and fulfilling divine commands. She imparted these values with a balance of kindness and discipline. May her soul rest in peace, and may God bless her eternally. My education concluded after primary school due to financial constraints. While one of my elder brothers pursued education at the Non-Commissioned Officer School in Ankara and the other studied in a mosque at İzmir's chestnut market to memorize the Quran, my father arranged for me to apprentice at a friend's shop to acquire an artisanship. I worked diligently in the shop until 1964 when I decided to migrate to the Netherlands. My journey to the Netherlands, undertaken with the consent and support of my family, was initially intended to last three years. However, as the Dutch proverb aptly states, *"De mens wikt, maar God beschikt"* - man proposes, God disposes. With divine providence, my three-year plan transformed into a 61-year stay. Today, I have even secured a resting place for myself at the Muslim cemetery in Amsterdam. I pray for a life and death filled with blessings, as decreed by Allah. I did not arrive in the Netherlands as a tourist. The political upheaval in Türkiye, marked by the overthrow of the elected government and the establishment of a military regime, created widespread

unemployment. This economic instability prompted many citizens, including myself, to seek opportunities abroad. It was under these circumstances that I left Türkiye on March 15, 1964, in pursuit of a better future, albeit with the intention of making this migration temporary.

✍ Can you recount the historic moment when the labor agreement between Türkiye and the Netherlands was signed in 1964? What circumstances brought you to that event, and what were your thoughts and expectations regarding the agreement?

My presence at this historic occasion was a natural extension of my deep curiosity and passion for learning, traits that had defined me since childhood. As a child, I would collect and read discarded newspaper fragments, driven by an insatiable desire for knowledge. My inquisitive nature often exasperated the adults around me, who would eventually plead, "Enough!" An anecdote from my life illustrates this enduring curiosity. During my early years in the Netherlands, I met my late wife, Antona Reyhan Görmez. When she was pregnant with our son, she jokingly said, "I will name our unborn child 'Wat is dat?' " because of my constant questioning to learn Dutch. This anecdote captures the essence of my lifelong commitment to acquiring knowledge.

The labor agreement was signed at Woonoord Tussenhaven, a dormitory in IJdijk, situated between the east and north of Amsterdam, where Turkish workers employed at the Ford car factory resided. This location held special significance as it was the only communal space where Turkish workers lived together. My involvement stemmed from my role as an informal source of knowledge and support for my fellow workers, both at the factory and within the dormitory. When the late Minister of Labor of the Republic

of Türkiye, Bülent Ecevit, arrived in the Netherlands to finalize the agreement, his Dutch counterparts decided to surprise him and hold the signing ceremony at the dormitory. This decision provided an opportunity for Minister Ecevit to observe firsthand the living conditions of Turkish workers. The dormitory manager, familiar with my involvement in the community, entrusted me with hosting responsibilities for the event. Alongside a few colleagues, I assisted in organizing the ceremony, which was attended by approximately 80 workers from the Ford factory. The day was marked by speeches, shared meals, the ceremonial signing of the agreement, and a festive atmosphere, including the popping of champagne. In addition to the formalities, we entertained our Dutch guests with folk songs and lighthearted performances.

I personally performed the traditional song Katibim, humorously donning a scarf and holding an umbrella. During the event, Minister Bülent Ecevit explained the significance of the agreement. He highlighted that many Turkish citizens had been working in Europe under precarious and often illegal conditions, particularly in mines, where they were subjected to low wages and unsafe environments. He emphasized that this agreement would provide legal protections and improve working conditions for Turkish laborers. The day was a memorable and joyous occasion.

✍ How do you describe the experience as a pioneer in advocating for civil rights for the Dutch Turkish community in a new country?

The values instilled in me by my family emphasized the virtue of serving others. By Allah's grace, I acquired the Dutch language swiftly, and used it to assist my community. It is both a material and spiritual contribution to my fellow citizens, which I believe they fully deserve. The sense of fulfillment and purpose I derive from these efforts is indescribable. If I were given the

"Although 60 years may appear substantial within a human lifespan, it is a relatively short period in historical terms. During this time, we have achieved remarkable progress."

chance to live my life again, I would unhesitatingly choose to follow the same path.

Which civil rights did you advocate for initially, and what approach did you take to secure these rights during those years? How did Dutch society and official institutions respond to your demands and endeavors?

After an unsuccessful attempt to return to Türkiye, I resolved to address how we could maintain our religion, language, and culture in the Netherlands, recognizing that this was no longer a temporary stay but a permanent settlement. Initially, many of my peers resisted my views, asserting that their ability to adapt culturally and religiously to Dutch society negated the need for such initiatives. However, I emphasized the necessity of taking steps to address vital needs, such as congregating for Friday prayers and fulfilling religious obligations during Ramadan. With the trust and support of my community, I took initiatives to fulfill these needs. My wife's Dutch heritage, combined with my own determination to learn the language to a level sufficient for translation, became invaluable assets. Leveraging these skills, I engaged with municipal authorities and the Dutch Church Union to articulate the religious and cultural needs of the Muslim community. The primary obstacle we encountered was the secular nature of the Dutch constitution, which prohibited the state from financially supporting religious organizations. Officials explained that while religious practice was permitted, no funding would be provided. In response, I presented the argument that we hold deep respect for the secular system of the Netherlands, emphasizing that Türkiye, too, is a secular nation. I highlighted that in Türkiye, Jewish communities have had access to comprehensive infrastructure for over 400 years, while Catholics and Protestants have enjoyed similar provisions for an even longer period. These religious groups do not require financial support from the state, and their ability to practice their faith is safeguarded under the constitution. We conveyed to all party officials, both through written correspondence and face-to-face meetings, that the lack of adequate facilities for Muslims - who had been residing in the Netherlands for 15 years and lacked financial means due to their status as laborers - constituted a significant shortcoming, particularly from the perspective of fundamental human rights. Our persistent advocacy, supported by the Dutch Church Union, led the government to establish a commission to investigate the matter. This commission, chaired by Professor Hirsch Ballin, who would later serve as Minister of Justice, concluded that the Muslim community required temporary financial assistance to fulfill its

"Our primary motivation was the desire for recognition of our presence in the Netherlands and the ability to access the rights granted by the Dutch constitution."

religious obligations. Subsequently, the Church Union facilitated the use of a vacant Protestant church, Nieuwezijds Kapel, located in the Rokin district of Amsterdam, 800 meters to Dam Square and Royal Palace. The annual rent of 70,000 guilders was shared equally between the Dutch Ministry of Culture and the Amsterdam Municipality. There is a well-known saying among Protestants: "Rather Turkish than Popish." The church imposed one condition: Muslims were asked to use a secondary entrance on Wijde Kapelsteeg rather than the main door facing Rokin, to avoid public visibility of Islamic worship in a Protestant church. Respecting this request, the community complied.

As someone who has observed the process from its inception, have you noticed any significant changes in societal or institutional attitudes toward civil and political rights in the Netherlands over time?

Initially, there were no negative reactions, and many sectors and organizations provided support to the extent of their capacities. However, over time, the actions of individuals who claimed to represent Islam but acted contrary to its principles were unfortunately generalized to the entire Muslim community, and led to the emergence of Islamophobic sentiments.

You were actively involved in the establishment of the first associations within the Turkish community in the Netherlands. What motivated the formation of these associations, and what was the atmosphere like during their early years?

Our primary motivation was the desire for recognition of our presence in the Netherlands and the ability to access the rights granted by the Dutch constitution. We believed that unity was the only way to achieve these goals. Consequently, we crea-

A 1964 photograph taken during the symbolic signing of the Labour Agreement between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, held at the premises of the Woonoord Tussenhaven dormitory allocated for Turkish workers

"While future generations may not remember us, I hope and pray that they will retain a strong connection to their religion, language, culture, and the origins of their ancestors."

ted associations to foster cohesion and later brought them together under federations. This process affirmed our existence as a community. As the constitutional rights we sought for our society gradually expanded, our motivation and determination reached their peak.

As a member of the first generation to experience migration to the Netherlands, how would you evaluate the last 60 years of the Dutch Turkish community's development?

Although 60 years may appear substantial within a human lifespan, it is a relatively short period in historical terms. During this time, we have achieved remarkable progress. Initially, we were a group unfamiliar with the language, culture, religion, and even climate of this country. However, over six decades, we have transformed into a vibrant society with thousands of entrepreneurs, politicians, political parties, and academics. We have established places of worship, cemeteries, workplaces, and factories. Where once we had no interaction with the state, we now benefit from the support and presence of ambassadors, consuls, advisors, and attachés. This transformation is beyond our wildest dreams and we express profound gratitude to God.

What would you like future generations to remember most about you and the other first-generation pioneers?

While future generations may not remember us, I hope and pray that they will retain a strong connection to their religion, language, culture, and the origins of their ancestors.

Interview

INTERVIEW WITH NAZIM EŞKİLİ, PRESIDENT OF THE NETHERLANDS-TÜRKİYE MEDITERRANEAN ALEVIS ASSOCIATION, ON THE DIASPORA'S ASSOCIATION FORMATION PROCESSES

NAZIM EŞKİLİ

President of the Türkiye Mediterranean Alevis Association

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself? Where are you from in Türkiye, and when did your family decide to immigrate to the Netherlands?

My name is Nazım Eşkili, and I was born in İskenderun in 1959. My father was a retired employee of the State Railways, and my mother was a housewife. I come from a family of eight children - four boys and four girls - and we had a warm and close-knit family environment, which also included my grandparents. My father worked hard to provide for the family, and we had a small garden where we grew figs that we sold in the local market. I graduated from İskenderun Industrial Vocational High School in 1976, where I studied mechanical drafting. From 1976 to 1980, I worked as a technical draftsman at the Karabük Construction Site of the İskenderun Iron and Steel Factories. However, due to my union activities, I was detained on September 13, 1980, and subsequently exiled for two months. After being released in December, I was detained again on January 5, 1981, and spent time in a military prison until May 1983. Following my release, I served in the military in Samandıra, Istanbul, for twenty months. Upon completing my military service, I returned to my family and opened a grocery store in early 1985. Later, I worked in a bread distribution business until the end of 1989. In 1987, I married Meryem Akkaya, whom I had met in 1985 at a wedding and fell in love with. We moved to the Netherlands in January 1990, applied for asylum, and received our residence permit within a few months. We immediately began integrating into Dutch society by taking language courses and seeking educational opportunities. Regrettably, we

did not have the opportunity to pursue education beyond vocational schools. Between 1990 and 1992, I earned diplomas in Dutch as a Second Language (NT2), as well as in Collective Small Independent Entrepreneurship (Middenstandsdiploma) - known to the general public as shop-opening certificate - and fruit and vegetable cultivation. During this time, my wife Meryem also pursued language, sewing, needlework, and cooking courses, and contributed to our family's finances by working in various factories. She is currently volunteering in various foundations and associations. At the time, we also participated in the Karavan Saray project, a collaborative initiative between the municipalities of Enschede and Hengelo and MBO College, a vocational school. This two-year educational program included a small number of Dutch students, with the majority being international students. The program included both scholarly studies and internships. As part of this initiative, I aspired to open a fruit and vegetable shop; however, I was unable to do so due to the prohibitively high rental costs. In 1996, I started my own business selling and installing wall-to-wall carpets and linoleum in a marketplace. During this period, I completed a two-year educational program and internship in this line of business, obtained a diploma and further professionalized my career. I was simultaneously engaged in multiple responsibilities: selling products at the bi-weekly open market, attending school, completing my internship, and installing the carpets and linoleums I sold. In addition, I worked in the accounting and canteen departments of the Turkish Cultural Association Hengelo (Turkse Democratische Vereniging Hengelo-TDVH). My work schedule was intense. Over this time, we had three sons, born in 1996, 1998, and 2000. Currently, two of our sons are married, and we have three grandchildren.

Can you briefly describe your association? When and why was it established?

In 1994, I was invited to help establish the Turkish Mediterranean Alevis Union Social, Culture, and Solidarity Association (TAAB). After seven months of collaborative effort with twelve colleagues, we finalized the name, emblem, and statute of the organization. We held our first general assembly in January 1995, where we elected our management, audit, and advisory boards. The association was founded in the Overijssel region to promote social and cultural solidarity among the Arab Alevi community, who primarily hail from the Mediterranean region of Türkiye (including Hatay, Adana, and Mersin) and speak Arabic. Our headquarters are located in Hengelo, Netherlands. The association's building is situated on a 4,200 m2 plot, owned by our TAAB foundation, which remains free of debt. The space is adequate to meet the association's needs and supports our ongoing work.

What kind of activities does your association engage in?

As stipulated by our statute, we focus solely on social and cultural activities and information sessions, refraining from engaging in any political activity. While our association itself does not participate in politics, we do have some members who are ind

Are your association activities aimed at Alevis from all regions living in the Netherlands or do you prefer to do activities aimed at your own region?

The association was originally established with a particular emphasis on Mediterranean Alevis; however, its activities are open to everyone. While the association was founded with the intention of serving the needs of Mediterranean Alevis, it welcomes participation from individuals of all backgrounds, irrespective of their region or religious affiliation.

"Civil society organizations need to include young people in their work."

✍ How would you explain the importance of your association in terms of both our diaspora and the Netherlands and Türkiye?

Sixty years ago, many Turkish emigrants believed they would stay abroad for a few months or years, return home with a better life, and invest in property or land. However, this initial expectation did not materialize. Instead, many stayed in the Netherlands. Today, it has become common for people to be sent back to Türkiye only in the form of their remains. Interestingly, there has been a significant shift in burial preferences - many individuals now wish to be buried in the Netherlands, where their grandchildren and families reside, instead of returning to Türkiye. As people age, their connections to Türkiye may diminish as relatives pass away, which contributes to the decision to be buried in the Netherlands. In this context, there has been a growing need for a social environment where people can fulfil their cultural and social needs, maintain connections with both the Netherlands and Türkiye, and where children can come together. This is why our association was founded. Since its inception in 1995, we have worked to represent our community effectively and amplify their voices. I believe that organizations like ours play a vital role in ensuring the voices of our citizens are heard.

✍ Various public initiatives have evolved into associations within the Dutch Turkish community. When did the first civil society organizations for the Alevi Turkish community begin, and what needs were they created to address?

In the early 1990s, several Alevi Bektashi associations were established in the Netherlands. By 1997-1998, the Hak-Der Federation included 27 member associations, one of which was our own. However, we are no longer part of this federation. At present, we are unsure of the exact number of member associations. The primary aim of these associations is to prevent the assimilation of our community, particularly the younger generation. Our founding goals also included fostering cultural exchange with Dutch and other communities, carrying out social work and solidarity initiatives, providing sewing, embroidery, and cooking courses for women, caring for the elderly, engaging young people in our union's activities, and building relationships with official institutions to help combat the longstanding prejudices that our community has faced.

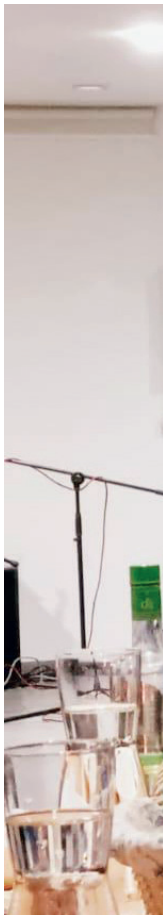
✍ How many Alevi civil society organizations are there in the Netherlands in total?

In addition to our association, there are several others in the Netherlands, including those in The Hague and nearby regions in Germany, such as in areas 20-30 kilometers away. We collaborate closely with these associations on various projects. In the city of Hengelo, where we are based, we also work together under the umbrella of the "Turks Platform Hengelo." This platform includes ten Turkish associations: the Atatürkist Thought Association Hengelo, Hagia Sophia Mosque, Auni Toernooi, Barbaros Sports Club, Aegean Foundation, Turkish Mediterranean Alevis Association, TAAB Foundation, Elderly Foundation, and Yozgatlılar

Foundation, along with volunteers from other organizations. Our collaborative efforts focus on initiatives such as the April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day, May 19 Youth and Sports Day, iftar programs, art and photo exhibitions, concerts, donation campaigns, and earthquake relief efforts.

What kind of experience do the Turkish diaspora living in the Netherlands have in defending their civil rights through organizations and associations? What is the role of these associations and how can they be strengthened?

Our people have not yet reached an advanced level in community organizing. In our association, our elders came together before us, tried to establish an association, collected money; tried to open a grocery store but their disparate attempts were unsuccessful and they disbanded after two years. We are not very experienced in this particular aspect. Civil society organizations need to include young people in their work. An organization without young people cannot progress. Young people need to take on responsibility. I am almost 65 years old, and I am thinking of holding a general assembly towards the end of this year and quitting. I hope new friends who can carry out our work will come forward. We have young people we work with, but their participation is low. Young people are busy with their own work. They do not want to spend much time on such activities. In order to attract young people, we need to follow their lead. We need to identify what they like and work accordingly. That's why we want to take young friends to our board of directors and train them in terms of organizing and running the association. Maybe they are actually training us. We first had such an attempt a few years ago. It was a good experience. However, later on, some friends focused more on their own work. We think that maybe they will take up civil society work again after they have settled down in their own lives.



What is the role of our diaspora in the social and cultural life in the Netherlands? What do you think about their place and influence in society?

As TAAB, we carry out activities together with other associations in the city we live in, Hengelo. It is not very common to cooperate with different associations. For example, all Turkish associations from the far right to the far left, such as our mosque in Hengelo, the Atatürkist Thought Association and the Yozgatlılar Association, carry out joint activities together at least 2-3 times a year. For example, we work together on programs such as April 23 National Sovereignty and Children's Day, May 19 Youth and Sports

Day, iftar programs, painting exhibitions, and photography exhibitions. We definitely think that we have made an impact on Dutch society with our events,because we invite the Dutch to the iftar programs hosting 500-600 people. Our events attract a lot of interest. Of course, we gain new experiences and draw lessons with every event we organize. We try not to make the same mistakes next time. Regular participants in our events include people we are in contact with, namely our neighbors, friends, municipal officials and council members.

✍ What is the status of our diaspora's political participation in the Netherlands? Do they show enough inclination towards political representation at all levels and what kind of difficulties do they face in terms of political representation? How can these difficulties be overcome?

For example, if we did not have the right to vote and be elected, we would have to fight for it. However, in the Netherlands, we see that many people do not participate in the elections despite having such a right. Many people do not go to the ballot boxes, which is a shortcoming. Of course, especially as chairpeople of associations, we try to explain to our members and the public that they should vote. We try to remind them that voting is a civic duty. We try to make the process easier by providing information about the election dates and the locations where the ballot boxes are located.

✍ What can be done to strengthen our diaspora and the representation of civil so-

ciety organizations like your association in the Netherlands? What role could associations play in this process? What can Türkiye do?

This is directly proportional to strengthening relations with neighbors, municipalities and state institutions. In addition, associations need to raise awareness among their own members and society to serve this purpose. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Hakan Fidan came to the Netherlands a few days ago. We had the opportunity to voice a problem and made a request from him. Our imams are assigned to our mosques from Türkiye for a 5-year term. We, as Mediterranean Alevis, also want to benefit from these rights. If possible, we want dedes who can lead our prayers. We made a request to address this specific issue. We have written our petition and are waiting for a response.

What is the perception of the Turkish diaspora regarding the civil and political rights provided by the Netherlands to immigrants? To what extent are these rights secured in the Netherlands and what kind of difficulties are encountered? What kind of strategy should be followed for awareness-raising and empowerment activities regarding civil rights?

There has been a significant shift in the perception of civil and political rights for immigrants, particularly within the last 15-20 years. The formation of coalition governments in the Netherlands often resulted in the review of immigration policies, and there was a widespread expectation that many of these policies would be disadvantageous to immigrants. It is important to note that, similar to other parts of the world, there are segments of the Dutch population who harbor unfavorable views towards immigrants, particularly those who are not of Dutch descent. Members of the Turkish diaspora may occasionally encounter such discriminatory attitudes, particularly in their places of employment. However, these issues are generally addressed through rational discourse and engagement.

What are your views on the situation of our diaspora in professional life and their rights to work, especially considering the people you have contact with in the Netherlands? Do they encounter discrimination or inequality in their workplaces?

Immigrants, including members of the Turkish diaspora, generally strive for stability and success in their work and professional endeavors. One key concern in this regard pertains to the Dutch employment agency (uitzendbureaus). This agency often charges the employer, yet they neglect to report employment to the relevant authorities for a period of six months, resulting in workers not having their pension premiums paid during that

time. Furthermore, employment agencies may dismiss workers after a certain period to avoid recruiting them permanently, thus continuing a cycle where workers are re-employed without their retirement contributions being properly recorded. This practice, which undermines workers' rights, is concerning, especially within a social welfare state like the Netherlands. The association does not find such practices acceptable and has actively reported these issues to the relevant organizations.

It is critical that individuals within the diaspora become unionized to address these issues effectively. Some members of the community do face discrimination or unequal treatment in their workplaces, particularly with the recent shift toward a more right-wing coalition government. As a result, the challenges faced by immigrants, particularly Turkish nationals, and the support extended to associations have changed considerably compared to 15-20 years ago. For instance, a neighbor of mine might say, "Nazım, I apologize, you are not like that, but others are." While they may know me, they are not familiar with others in the community. The issue lies in these generalizations. Once people have the opportunity to get to know us, they realize that these assumptions are unfounded.

✍ What are the needs of our diaspora in the Netherlands in terms of education, employment, and preserving their cultural identity, and what kind of work does your association do to meet these needs?

In terms of education, there was a time when Turkish language classes were offered in schools throughout the Netherlands. Our association is actively working to reintroduce these classes, particularly through collaboration with the Turks Platform Hengelo foundation. This initiative is crucial for preserving cultural heritage and ensuring that this heritage is passed down to younger generations.

✍ What are the priorities or goals of your association?

The primary goal of the association is to ensure that the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands lives in harmony with other communities, fostering an environment of peace, mutual respect, and brotherhood. We also launch a variety of social and cultural initiatives to sustain our own specific culture.

✍ Are there any messages you would like to give to young people?

One of the challenges faced by the association is the relatively low level of engagement among younger generations. Of course, young people should focus on their professional and academic pursuits. However, the association pleads with young individuals to contribute at least a few hours each week to social and cultural activities.

Interview

INTERVIEW WITH FİGEN ARSLAN ON TURKISH CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN THE NETHERLANDS

FİGEN ARSLAN

President of R&D and Education, Union of International Democrats (UID) Netherlands

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself and provide an overview of your academic journey? Additionally, what inspired your involvement in civil society organizations alongside your professional career?

My name is Figen Arslan. I graduated from Atatürk University's Faculty of Science, majoring in Biology. Concurrently, I completed a four-year pedagogical formation program at the Faculty of Education at Atatürk University. Later, I pursued a master's degree in Chemistry at Eskişehir Technical University. Subsequently, I advanced my studies in Biochemistry at Leiden University in the Netherlands. Since 2013, I have been working as a research assistant in the R&D department of the Biochemistry Laboratory at Leiden University Medical Faculty Hospital (LUMC). My work involves developing diagnostic tests for the early detection of diseases, utilizing advanced chromatography techniques and mass spectrometers. Over the years, I have contributed to numerous projects, and my current focus is on developing a diagnostic panel for acute renal failure. My connection with LUMC began during my biochemistry studies in the Netherlands, where an internship was a program requirement. During my internship at LUMC, I was assigned a thesis project that achieved significant success. Following this, the department head offered me a position, which I gladly accepted.

Currently, I also serve in the Union of International Democrats (UID) during my time outside of work. I view my contribution to civil society as a form of "knowledge zakat," a way of giving back to the community through my expertise. My primary motivation lies in developing projects, alon-

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gside my team, that aim to improve the welfare of the Turkish community residing in the Netherlands. I consider myself both an idealist and an activist. While many people criticize societal systems, they often fail to take meaningful action. As Cicero aptly stated, " Better to light a candle than curse the darkness." I strive to embody this philosophy by taking proactive steps to address systemic issues and deficiencies, working towards resolution and improvement. Some might question the effectiveness of my efforts, asking, "How can you possibly reform an entire system?" While success is not guaranteed, I am committed to making a difference, much like the ant that carried water to extinguish the fire in which Prophet Ibrahim was cast. I firmly believe that even small, collective efforts can lead to meaningful progress.

✍ What are your responsibilities as the Head of R&D and Education at UID Netherlands?

My responsibilities encompass a wide range of activities. I oversee institutional studies, reporting, the organization of educational programs, resource development, research and development projects, and fostering academic collaborations. At UID Netherlands, my role involves working across various domains within the organization. The board of directors at UID Netherlands comprises 15 units, and I collaborate closely with all unit heads to enhance organizational performance. Through our R&D initiatives, we assess the needs of the Turkish community in the Netherlands and develop projects to address them. My overarching goal is to contribute to the continuous improvement of our organization and to implement solutions that enhance the well-being of the community we serve.

✍ Could you provide insights into the establishment process of UID Netherlands?

UID Netherlands has its origins in the establishment of the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD) in Cologne, Germany, in 2004. Over time, the organization expanded its scope of activities to address the needs of Turkish communities globally. In response to these evolving demands, it rebranded as the Union of International Democrats (UID) at its sixth congress on May 20, 2018, transitioning into a volunteer-based, non-governmental organization. UID Netherlands operates as a regional branch under the umbrella of UID Headquarters, which was established in Amsterdam in 2006. As a non-governmental organization, it focuses on serving Turkish and related communities residing in the Netherlands. By 2023, UID has grown into a global organization operating in 32 countries. The organization upholds the principle that diverse cultures and civilizations can coexist harmoniously in shared spaces. This belief is reflected in its activities, which promote multiculturalism and inclusion. Furthermore, UID aims to unite Turkish diaspora communities through lobbying and advocacy efforts in the countries where they reside.

✍ What is the demographic profile of UID Netherlands members in terms of age and gender?

Women constitute 55% of the membership, while men account for 45%. In terms of age distribution, 20% of our members are young individuals aged between 18 and 30. The majority, approximately 70%, fall within the 31 to 60 age group, and 10% of our members are aged 61 and above.

"If we unite, there is nothing we cannot achieve."

What are the characteristics and challenges faced by young members of UID Netherlands?

The younger segment of the Turkish diaspora demonstrates significant interest in our organization but harbors concerns. One prominent worry among them is the fear of being profiled by Dutch authorities for actively advocating for their rights. Notably, the participation of young women in UID is slightly higher than that of young men. Our discussions with young members reveal a strong ability to identify and articulate issues affecting their peers. And while they also propose thoughtful solutions; many face challenges in implementing these ideas. Civil society work requires substantial time and effort, yet many young members are students with rigorous academic schedules. Additionally, a considerable number work part-time jobs to support themselves financially. Consequently, they struggle to allocate time for activities within associations, with those who do participate often making significant sacrifices in other areas of their lives.

A major issue confronting young people in the Netherlands is discrimination, particularly in education and employment. Research corroborates these observations. For example, some young individuals struggle to secure adequate mentoring in schools, fail to find internships, or are unable to complete their studies due to challenges in meeting internship requirements. Others who do find employment often encounter disparities in salaries compared to their Dutch counterparts, limited opportunities for career progression, and prolonged stagnation in the same positions.

Another pressing challenge for the younger generation is the cultural limbo that they find themselves in. Many feel caught between Turkish and Dutch cultural expectations. If they fully embrace their Turkish identity, they may face exclusion from Dutch society, and conversely, leaning into Dutch identity can sometimes alienate them from the Turkish community. For instance, events like Christmas celebrations in

schools can create dilemmas for children, as different families adopt varying stances on allowing participation. To address such issues, we use our social media platforms and bulletins to promote mutual respect and understanding, emphasizing the importance of celebrating the traditions of the society in which we live.

Finally, a significant concern is the decline in proficiency in the Turkish language among the younger generation. Many young individuals struggle with their Turkish, and there is a growing fear that their children may lose the ability to speak the language entirely. Language is a cornerstone of identity, and its loss can lead to a weakened connection with cultural heritage. As adults, we bear a significant responsibility to ensure the preservation of language and identity for future generations.

Has UID Netherlands engaged with the Dutch government regarding the rights and demands of the Turkish community in the Netherlands? Does it serve as an intermediary between the Dutch state and the Turkish community?

At present, UID Netherlands does not serve as an official intermediary between the Dutch state and the Turkish community. However, plans are underway to initiate activities to strengthen this role in the future. Currently, UID Netherlands strives to amplify the voice of the Turkish community and address their concerns with the Dutch authorities. One notable example is the response to the Dutch government's decision to revoke rights granted under the Ankara Agreement through the enactment of the "New Harmonization Law," which came into effect on October 1, 2022. This decision, which disregarded the Ankara Agreement, caused significant distress within the Turkish community. UID Netherlands collaborated with other Turkish civil society organizations to contest this ruling. In this effort, UID supported a signature campaign initiated by Immigration Law Specialist Lawyer İsmet Özkara and actively informed the community about the implications of the Ankara Agreement and the New Harmonization Law. Lawyer Bahattin Aydın also pursued legal action against this decision, filing a lawsuit. A petition addressing this matter and regarding acts of Quran desecration was submitted to the OSCE. Additionally, UID Netherlands took a proactive stance regarding these acts, which occurred in the Netherlands and other European countries, participating in parliamentary discussions, engaging with politicians, issuing press releases, and supporting signature campaigns to condemn these actions.

In the political sphere, UID Netherlands has observed that Turkish-origin candidates were underrepresented in Dutch elections. This issue arises partly from the limited political engagement among Turkish-origin youth. To address this, UID Netherlands has proposed the "Politics School" project, which aims to provide both theoretical and practical training to young individuals interested in politics. The goal is to encourage well-prepared Turkish-origin candidates to participate in future elections, thereby ensuring better representation of the Turkish community's rights and interests within Dutch democracy.

The organization's efforts were temporarily diverted in the wake of the devastating earthquake in Türkiye. During this period, UID Netherlands focused on aid campaigns, including the provision of logistical support, setting up tents, and assisting with container city placements in affected areas. Additionally, the organization encouraged

Turkish citizens in the Netherlands to participate in Turkish elections by facilitating logistical support. Similarly, UID continues to motivate participation in Dutch elections. In summary, UID Netherlands has undertaken various initiatives to foster communication between the Turkish community and the Dutch state.

✍ Does UID Netherlands collaborate with other active civil society organizations? If so, what are the nature and scope of these collaborations?

One significant area of collaboration focuses on promoting Turkish language education among children of Turkish origin. Recognizing the importance of preserving the mother tongue for healthy identity development, UID Netherlands partnered with the Tulip Institute to request Turkish language teachers for its branches.

In the realm of youth empowerment, UID Netherlands works alongside the Independent Industrialists and Businessmen's Association (MÜSİAD) to organize seminars on trade and entrepreneurship. These events provide young participants with valuable insights and guidance from the Trade Attaché and experienced business professionals within MÜSİAD. Another notable initiative is the ongoing Internship Bank project, which seeks to connect students facing challenges in securing internships with Turkish businesspeople through a digital platform. This project not only addresses the gap in internship opportunities for students but also encourages Turkish business leaders in the Netherlands to engage in social responsibility efforts.

Humanitarian initiatives constitute another critical area of collaboration. Following the recent earthquake disaster in Türkiye, UID Netherlands worked with Turkish Airlines (THY) to transport essential supplies collected from citizens and businesses to the affected regions via Turkish Cargo. Similarly, in response to the floods in Libya, the earthquake in Morocco, and the ongoing struggles of Palestinians, UID Netherlands coordinated relief programs in partnership with various associations. Aroundeids, the organization collaborated with the Kutup Yıldızı Association to distribute eid packages to families in need, and additional aid campaigns continue to support citizens in need in Türkiye.

Cultural activities also feature prominently in UID Netherlands' collaborative efforts. For instance, during the 60th anniversary celebrations of Turkish migration to the Netherlands, the organization supported the planting of tulip seeds in Cumhuriyet Square in Dalaman.

✍ Has UID Netherlands conducted studies in collaboration with the Turkish state to address the demands and expectations of individuals of Turkish origin regarding their homeland, Türkiye?

Recognizing that many members of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands hold dual citizenship and maintain strong ties with Türkiye, the organization strives to address issues related to citizenship procedures and facilitate dialogue between the community and Turkish authorities. One of the primary methods UID Netherlands employs is organizing public programs where representatives of the Republic of Türkiye - such as ministers, parliamentarians, and mayors visiting the Netherlands - interact directly with members of the Turkish community. These meetings provide a platform for citizens to pose questions and voice concerns to officials in person. Addi-

tionally, UID Netherlands prepares detailed reports on the problems and needs of the diaspora, which are submitted to relevant Turkish authorities. The organization conducts consultations with Turkish-origin citizens in various cities across the Netherlands. These reports emphasize that while policies often consider the conditions of the larger Turkish diaspora in Germany, the experiences and challenges faced by Turkish citizens in the Netherlands may differ significantly. As such, UID Netherlands advocates for country-specific solutions tailored to the unique needs of the Dutch Turkish community. Some of the key issues raised include extending the permitted duration for using foreign-registered mobile phones and vehicles in Türkiye, fixing the military service exemption fee at €2,000 and granting first-degree relatives the right to use vehicles left in Türkiye by diaspora members.

✍ What contributions has UID Netherlands made to address the needs of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands, and what are your future plans in this regard?

One notable contribution was the demand for the establishment of a mobile consular services in the Groningen region, located in the north of the Netherlands. Previously, citizens in this area were required to travel a considerable distance to the Deventer Consulate General, leading many to delay or neglect important administrative procedures. For instance, there were cases of individuals as old as 20 still using identification cards without photo due to the difficulty in accessing consular services. This demand was met.

Additionally, UID Netherlands successfully advocated for Eindhoven to become an electoral district during the Turkish general elections. This change allowed citizens in southern regions, who previously faced challenges traveling to The Hague, to participate in the electoral process conveniently through a ballot box set up in Eindhoven.

To foster preservation of cultural heritage and historical awareness among younger generations, UID Netherlands initiated the Turkish Islamic History Education program. Moreover, the organization actively facilitates participation in events such as the International Defense Industry Fair (IDEF) and Teknofest, where young people are introduced to Türkiye's technological advancements and industrial capabilities. These events not only inspire but also enable them to network with peers and professionals in Türkiye, fostering collaborations that contribute to their development and projects in the Netherlands. In partnership with the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, UID Netherlands also organizes programs like the Evliya Çelebi Cultural Tours. These tours allow young participants to visit historically significant sites where pivotal moments in Turkish history unfolded and to strengthen the youth's ties to their homeland. One must know the past for confidently navigating the future.

✍ Do you engage in efforts to raise awareness within the Turkish community in the Netherlands regarding their rights?

In the context of political rights, our Political Affairs Director at UID Netherlands organized informational sessions across multiple cities prior to the Dutch elections. These sessions emphasized the importance of voter participation, particularly for individuals of immigrant origin. We invited parliamentary candidates to engage with the community. Candidates introduced themselves, underscored the significance

of voting, and reiterated the message that the political influence of immigrant communities can only grow through increased electoral participation. We also distributed posters to promote this initiative.

Beyond politics, we aim to inform citizens about their rights in all areas of life. For instance, we organize seminars to explain the Dutch healthcare system and provide information on municipal support and services. Furthermore, we offer legal consulting services on issues such as divorce, inheritance, and custody to help individuals navigate these legal matters.

✍ As the Director of R&D and Education, are there specific projects you would particularly like to implement?

Securing sufficient funding is crucial to bringing initiatives to fruition. UID is a vast organization operating in 32 countries. At UID Netherlands, we have submitted four proposals for funding from the European Union, including applications for Erasmus+ and ESC funds. If successful, UID Netherlands would become the first region within the UID organization to receive EU funding, setting an important precedent for the Turkish community and paving the way for future endeavors. Another exciting development is that UID Netherlands has been chosen as the subject of a thesis by a law student - a milestone for us, as it represents the first time our organization is being examined as part of an academic project. Additionally, we are working on organizing a seminar series in collaboration with lawyers from Türkiye and other UID regions. This series would take place at the International Court of Justice in the Netherlands. We are also exploring collaborations with Associate Professor Floris Vermeulen from the University of Amsterdam, who specializes in research on the Turkish community in the Netherlands. Joint projects are planned for the second quarter of 2024. Furthermore, we aim to work with Associate Professor Nermin Aydemir from Antalya Bilim University to investigate the reasons behind the increasing negative attitudes toward Turks living abroad within Türkiye itself.

✍ Are there sufficient opportunities for youth involvement in civil society organizations? What strategies could be employed to create more opportunities for young people?

While some non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have youth branches, I believe that the space provided for young people remains insufficient. Furthermore, there seems to be limited demand from young people themselves to participate actively in such organizations. NGOs should develop innovative and engaging projects designed specifically to capture the interest of younger generations. Additionally, I am critical of the tendency for some individuals to occupy leadership positions in associations for extended periods. It is essential to create opportunities for young people to take on meaningful roles within these organizations. That said, I do not advocate for experienced members to leave entirely; rather, a collaborative approach combining the energy of youth with the wisdom of experienced members could result in a highly effective synergy. To encourage young people to play an active role in civil society, we have initiated plans such as the Innovation Academy of the Netherlands (INAN). Through this academy, we aim to train the future leaders of society.

Do young people of Turkish origin participate in organizations beyond Turkish civil society initiatives?

Unfortunately, the participation of young people of Turkish origin in volunteer projects is generally low, with several factors at play. One primary reason is that these young individuals tend to interact predominantly with peers from the Turkish community, limiting their involvement in broader initiatives that include Dutch organizations. Cultural differences also play a significant role; for instance, many Turkish-origin youth avoid environments where alcohol consumption is prevalent. Another factor is the demanding schedules of young people, leaving little time for volunteer work. Additionally, the culture of volunteering among people of Turkish origin is not as deeply ingrained as it is among the Dutch population.

How would you evaluate the political and civil rights available to individuals of immigrant origin in the Netherlands? How does the Netherlands compare to other European countries with significant Turkish-origin populations?

The Netherlands generally provides a broad range of political and civil rights to individuals of immigrant origin, though the adequacy of these rights remains contested. Immigrants benefit from rights in areas such as education, healthcare, work permits, freedom of travel, residency, access to language courses, property ownership, and organizational freedoms. Additionally, the Dutch government offers social assistance and integration programs comparable to those provided to native citizens, reflecting the country's multicultural ethos. In comparison to other European nations with substantial Turkish-origin populations, the Netherlands is distinguished by its relatively progressive integration policies and multicultural approach. However, the recent rise of far-right political movements in the Netherlands presents a growing challenge for immigrant communities.

To address these challenges and enhance equity, policies targeting discrimination should be implemented across various sectors. These could include educational initiatives to foster societal sensitivity toward diversity and programs to combat workplace discrimination, ensuring equal employment opportunities for all. Strengthened social assistance programs for economically vulnerable immigrants and expanded measures to facilitate labor market integration are essential steps to reduce disparities. The lack of adequate support and equal opportunities for immigrants adversely impacts the education and career prospects of young people and may contribute to higher crime rates. A notable concern is the exclusion of long-term residents with indefinite residence permits from voting in parliamentary elections, despite their significant contributions as taxpayers and members of the workforce. Additional issues include the Civic Integration Act effective as of 2022, which complicates family reunification and the appointment of religious officials. The repeal of the Return Law in 2025 will terminate support for immigrants wishing to return to their countries of origin after the age of 55, and additional restrictions on dual citizenship are also planned.

How has the Dutch state's attitude toward NGOs founded by immigrants and Muslims changed in terms of civil rights?

The recent rise of far-right ideologies in the Netherlands has contributed to a growingly restrictive stance toward NGOs

established by immigrant and Muslim communities. For instance, Muslim-founded organizations have faced increased financial scrutiny, with secret audits disproportionately targeting mosques. Such practices not only impede religious freedoms but also raise concerns about double standards, as similar inspections are not conducted for other places of worship, such as churches or synagogues.

Additionally, reports critical of the Union of International Democrats (UID) have been published, often without direct consultation or engagement with our part. These reports selectively focus on certain activities, particularly in the realm of political participation, while disregarding contributions to education, culture, and community building. This selective approach fosters perceptions of bias and prejudice.

✍ What are the future projects and objectives of UID Netherlands?

UID Netherlands aims to establish stronger communication channels with the Dutch government, ensuring that the organization is consulted on matters affecting Muslims and people of immigrant origin. Given its in-depth understanding of both Dutch society and the Turkish community, UID Netherlands aspires to contribute to the development of well-informed and effective policies. A key priority is to train young individuals through various educational programs to prepare them for active roles in political parties, parliaments, and legislative bodies. Another objective is to advocate for the appointment of officials in Turkish institutions within the Netherlands from among Turkish-origin residents in the country. Officials appointed from Türkiye typically serve in the Netherlands for a period of 2-3 years, with the initial year often dedicated to familiarizing themselves with the local environment and systems. However, their limited proficiency in Dutch hampers effective communication with Dutch counterparts. It is therefore essential to appoint young individuals who have grown up in the Netherlands to these positions. Such appointments would enhance the functionality of the system, enabling more efficient and timely problem-solving. UID Netherlands also plans to address issues related to foster care. Specifically, it seeks to ensure that Muslim children placed in foster care are raised with consideration for their religious and cultural backgrounds. UID Netherlands aims to increase the number of Turkish-origin foster families, which currently stand at ten in a community of 500,000 Turkish-origin residents. Additionally, the establishment of nursing homes catering to the needs of Muslim individuals is another focal point.

The organization also envisions creating a robust Turkish lobby in the Netherlands. By uniting the 500,000-strong Turkish-origin population, UID Netherlands believes it can play a more influential role in governmental decision-making. Unified objections to unfavorable decisions can prompt the state to reconsider or seek compromise. Collaboration enhances problem-solving efficacy, demonstrating that if we unite, there is nothing we cannot achieve.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

Gastarbeiders gaan landelijk samenwerken

Zeventig organisaties van buitenlandse werknemers in Nederland hebben zondag na een driedaags congres in Helvoirt de Landelijke Samenwerking van Organisaties van Buitenlandse Arbeiders (LSOBA) opgericht.

Tot deze krachtenbundeling werd besloten om een eind te maken aan de zwakke juridische, economische en maatschappelijke positie van de verschillende organisaties van buitenlandse werknemers.

Doel van de landelijke samenwerking is belangenbehartiging op alle gebieden die voor buitenlandse arbeiders en hun gezinnen belangrijk zijn zoals huisvesting, onderwijs, sociaal-culturele voorzieningen, gezondheidszorg, vorming en scholing en rechtspositie.

Op het driedaagse congres waren zeven nationaliteiten vertegenwoordigd. Turkse, Marokkaanse, Griekse, Spaanse, Joegoslavische, Italiaanse en Kaap-Verdiaanse organisaties gaven de landelijke samenwerkingsorganisatie direct na de oprichting opdracht om er naar te streven dat organisaties van buitenlandse arbeiders voortaan rechtstreeks gesubsidieerd zullen worden door het ministerie van CRM. Die subsidiëring loopt nu nog via de achttien regionale stichtingen buitenlandse werknemers.

A 1980 newspaper report on the National Cooperation of Foreign Workers' Organizations (LSOBA), an initiative supported by state subsidies and formed with representatives from seven different nationalities to advocate for the legal, economic, and social rights of foreign workers and to implement improvements in settlement and education.

Source: *Gastarbeiders gaan landelijk samenwerken. "Het Parool". Amsterdam, 09-06-1980. Retrieved from Delpher on 22-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010846774:mpeg21:p007*

A 1992 photograph capturing a protest against the planned demolition of a building on Zeeburgerdijk Street in Amsterdam, used by the Turkish community as a mosque.

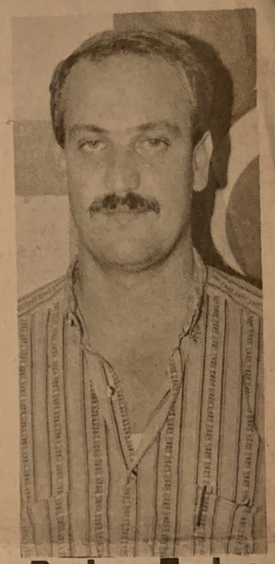
Source: *Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Collectie Amsterdams Stadsblad: foto's, Busselman, Frans (1927-1993), B00000004411, https://archief.amsterdam/beeldbank/detail/2af09e81-baa4-3169-1aea-a9ce28b3204b*

Türk İşçileri Vakfı, ortak mücadele için çağrıda bulundu

Irkçılığa dikkat!

Türk İşçileri Vakfı yöneticileri

Kentte artan ırkçılıktan huzursuzluk duyulduğunu belirten Almere Türk İşçileri Vakfı yöneticileri, "İki toplum arasındaki dostluk bağları pekiştirilmeli" dediler.



Başkan Taşkın

Almere Türk İşçileri Vakfı Başkanı Ersan Taşkın, "Tehlikeli yaygınlaşma tedirginlik yaratıyor" şeklinde konuştu.

Sedat TAPAN
ALMERE, (hha)

HOLLANDA'nın Almere Kenti'nde faaliyet gösteren Türk İşçileri Vakfı'nın yöneticileri, "İki toplum arasındaki dostluk bağlarını daha da güçlendirerek, ırkçıların çabalarını boşa çıkaracağız" dediler.

● İki toplum arasındaki dostluk bağlarının düzenlenecek etkinliklerle güçlendirileceğini belirten vakıf yöneticileri, "Hollandalı dostlarımıza kültürümüzü en iyi şekilde tanıtacağız" dediler.

HERKESE BÜYÜK GÖREV DÜŞÜYOR"

Hollanda'da yabancı düşmanlığının yoğun bir şekilde hissedildiği Almere'de tüm kurum ve kuruluslara ırkçılıkla mücadele konusunda büyük görevler düştüğünü belirterek, tehlikeli tırmanışa ancak dostluk bağlarının pekiştirilerek "Dur" denebileceğini ifade eden Almere Türk İşçileri Vakfı'nın Yönetim Kurulu Üyeleri **Ersan Taşkın, Yusuf Selvi, Ahmet Gül, Fuat Öner, Hüseyin Uçar** ve **Celal Karaman**, "Vakıf olarak ırkçılıkla kentimizde etkin bir mücadele sürdürülmesini istiyoruz. Hollanda'da yabancı düşmanlığının en yoğun bir şekilde hissedildiği kentimizde topluma hizmet veren tüm kurum ve kuruluşlara da bu konuda büyük görev düşüyor. Ortak bir mücadele yürütülmeli ve ırkçıların iki toplum arasındaki dostluk bağlarını zedelemeyi hedefleyen çabaları boşa çıkarılmalı.

Türk İşçileri Vakfı, her iki toplumun dostluk ve kaynaşma bağlarını daha da güçlendirilmesini sağlamak amacıyla çeşitli etkinlikler düzenleyecek. Bu etkinlikler sırasında Hollandalı dostlarımıza hem kültürümüzü, hem de ülkemizi ve insanımızı en iyi şekilde tanıtmaya çalışacağız" şeklinde konuştular.

A newspaper report from the 1990s on the Turkish Workers' Foundation in Almere expressing concern over experiences of racism.

Source: *Sedat Tapan, Hürriyet Newspaper*

ELİMİZ KOLUMUZ BAĞLI

Weesp Belediyesi'nden daha fazla maddi destek yapılmasını bekleyen Türk Komitesi yöneticileri, "Elimiz, kolumuz bağlı. Hiç bir dalda faaliyet gösteremiyor ve her gün bunun üzüntüsünü yaşıyoruz" dediler.

Belediyeden yardım bekliyorlar

■ Weesp Türk Komitesi yöneticileri, "Belediye bir yıl için 5 bin gulden maddi yardım yapıyor. Lokalimizin bir yıllık kirası ise 3900 gulden. Geri kalan para ile yurttaşlarımıza hangi dalda faaliyet göstereceğiz" dediler.

Sedat TAPAN / *WEESP, (Hürriyet)*

HOLLANDA'nın Weesp kentindeki Türk Komitesi, belediyenin sosyal ve kültürel alanlardaki faaliyetlere yeterli oranda maddi yardım yapmamasından yakınıyor.

Weesp Belediyesi'nin Türk Komitesi'ne yıllık harcamaları için 5 bin gulden verdiğini, ancak lokal kirasının 3900 gulden olduğunu ve geri kalan 1100 guldenin sosyal ve kültürel alanlardaki faaliyetlere yetmediğini belirten Weesp Türk Komitesi yöneticileri **Mursel Soner, Şükrü Ayar, Ahmet Sönmez, Timoçin Elmas, Cenzi Elmas ve İlyas Dardoğan,** şunları söylediler:

"Maddi sıkıntı nedeniyle kentteki yurttaşlarımıza sosyal ve kültürel alanlarda faaliyet gösteremiyoruz. Bu sorunumuzu defalarca yerel yöneticilere iletmemize rağmen yine de durum değişmedi. Bir yıllık harcamalarımız için 5 bin gulden belediyeden yardım veriliyor. Oysa lokalimizin yıllık kirası 3900 guldeni buluyor. Geri kalan 1100 gulden ile hangi dalda kurs düzenleyebiliriz, Hangi etkinliği organize edebiliriz. Komite olarak diğer kentlerdeki dernekler gibi yurttaşlarımıza hizmette bulunmak, kurslar düzenlemek istiyoruz. Yerel yöneticilerden daha fazla maddi destek bekliyoruz."

A newspaper report from the 1990s on the Turkish Committee in Weesp highlighting its need for municipal financial support for social and cultural activities

Source: *Sedat Tapan, Hürriyet Newspaper*

A 2002 photograph capturing a discussion on integration during a meeting with the Turkish community at a neighborhood center in Dordrecht.
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_330890, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/B22B139B9CFA8AEB2DFABE9E78CD105D/showbrowse*

A 1978 photograph of Turkish workers on strike at the NDSM shipyard in Amsterdam.
Source: *Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Bert Verhoeff / Anefo*

A 1965 photograph of Turkish workers on strike at the N.V. Indeco Coignet construction company in Zaanstad, demanding a wage increase
Source: *Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Elsevier Binnenland, Eric Koch / Anefo*

A 1990s photograph of a meeting in Dordrecht bringing together Turkish women and men.
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_-331021, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/FA77C020E9833C9740ED4C069C377DFB/showbrowse*

TAKDİR EDİLİYORLAR Huizen Türk Kadınlar Komitesi'nin düzenlediği sosyal ve kültürel alandaki faaliyetlere büyük ilgi gösteren kentteki kadınlarımız, "Bizlere yönelik faaliyetlerini takdirle karşıladığımız Türk Kadınlar Komitesi'ne daha geniş olanakların yaratılmasını istiyoruz" dediler.

Kadınlar komitesi 13 yaşında

■ Hollanda'nın Huizen kentinde sosyal ve kültürel alanlarda başarıyla faaliyet gösteren Türk Kadınlar Komitesi, 13'üncü kuruluş yıldönümünü kutlayacak.

Sedat TAPAN / *HUİZEN, (Hürriyet)*

HOLLANDA'nın Huizen kentinde sosyal ve kültürel alanlardaki başarılı faaliyetleriyle haklı takdir toplayan Türk Kadınlar Komitesi, kuruluşunun 13'üncü yıldönümünü coşkulu bir şekilde kutlamaya hazırlanıyor.

Kentteki Türk kadınlarının hos ze-

bilmelerinde destek olduk, hem de iki toplum arasındaki bağların daha da güçlenmesi için çaba sarfettik. Kısıtlı olanaklar içinde olmamıza rağmen, geriye baktığımızda kadınlarımız için birçok şeyi gerçekleştirebildiğimizi görüyoruz. 13 yılın birikimiyle yarınlara daha da azimli bakıyoruz. Türk kadınlarının sorunlarının çözüme kavuşturulması yolunda vermiş olduğumuz mücadeleyi daha da hızlandırma en başta gelen hedeflerimizdendir. Tek amacımız, faaliyetlerimizle yararlı olmak ve kadın-

A 1993 newspaper report on the 13th anniversary of the Turkish Women's Committee in Huizen, which organized social and cultural activities in the Netherlands

Source: *Sedat Tapan, Hürriyet Newspaper*

CHAPTER VIII.

Turkse televisiezender nu officieel in gebruik

HUIZEN — Wethouder drs. J.H. Frijlink heeft maandagavond het officiële startsein gegeven voor uitzendingen van de Turkse zender TRT via de Huizer kabel. De plechtigheid, die voor de Turkse gemeenschap in Huizen als een belangrijke mijlpaal wordt gezien, vond plaats ten huize van de familie Topan op de Haardstedelaan. Na een korte inleiding stelde de wethouder het televisietoestel van de Turkse familie op het juiste kanaal in om vervolgens de eerste beelden van TRT via het Huizer kabelnet te aanschouwen. De televisiezender komt op het kabelnet in de plaats voor het Franstalige RBTF en is te vinden op kanaal 28 of frequentie 52900. In de toekomst zal de Italiaanse zender Rai Uno plaats moeten maken voor TRT.

DIASPORA
AND THE MEDIA

THE EVOLUTION OF TURKISH MEDIA IN THE NETHERLANDS

Ersoy Soydan

INTERVIEW WITH FILMMAKER FATOŞ ÇERGEL ON MEDIA AND DIVERSITY

Fatoş Çergel

THE EVOLUTION OF TURKISH MEDIA IN THE NETHERLANDS

ERSOY SOYDAN[1]

Introduction

The year 2024 marks a significant milestone, as it signifies sixty years since the signing of the labor agreement between Türkiye and the Netherlands. In the imnitial years following this agreement, Turkish workers were not expected to settle permanently and were referred to by the Dutch as *"Gastarbeider,"* meaning guest workers (Bakırcı, 2005: 75). However, over time, the majority of Turks have acquired Dutch citizenship, the descendants of these guest workers have become employers, and the Turkish community has grown into the second-largest ethnic group in the Netherlands after the Dutch (CBS, 2024).

The labor migration to Western Europe, which commenced after World War II, significantly impacted Türkiye in the early 1960s. The initial formal labor migration occurred with the signing of the labor agreement between Türkiye and the Federal Republic of Germany on October 31, 1961. This was subsequently followed by similar agreements with the Netherlands, Belgium, Austria, France, and Sweden. By the end of 1979, approximately one million Turkish workers had entered the European labor market (Gitmez, 2019: 11-15). With the departure of Turkish workers to Europe, efforts were made to maintain connections with the Turkish abroad through broadcasts from Türkiye. The earliest broadcasts directed at Turkish workers in Europe included the "Voice of the Homeland" (*"Yurdun Sesi"*) program on Shortwave Ankara Radio (Kısa Dalga Ankara Radyosu). From January 1963 onward, these broadcasts came to be known as "Voice of Türkiye Radio" (*"Türkiye'nin Sesi Radyosu"*) (Akarcalı, 2003: 79-97). They attracted considerable attention as the primary medium of communication between Turkish workers in Europe and their homeland.

The Netherlands was the first European country to initiate radio broadcasts targeting Turkish workers. In 1963, the Dutch public broadcaster VARA launched a music program titled "Madrid, Casablanca, Ankara Line" (*"Madrid, Kazablanka, Ankara Hattı"*) (Cankaya et al., 2008: 90). Following this, the Federal Republic of Germany introduced Turkish radio programming through WDR (Westdeutscher Rundfunk - West German Radio and Television Corporation), which began airing 45-minute Turkish-language broadcasts on November 1, 1964. The broadcasts of the WDR, headquartered in Cologne, became widely known among Turkish communities as "Cologne Radio" (Kök-

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sal, 2016). The WDR initiative was subsequently followed by Turkish-language broadcasts from other public broadcasters across Europe.

The establishment of TRT in 1964 further expanded Türkiye's international broadcasting capacity, increasing outreach to the Turkish abroad through daily broadcasts of up to 11.5 hours via Voice of Türkiye Radio, and contributing to Cologne Radio's Turkish programs (Tuna et al., 1966: 55). TRT also produced and distributed music programs for public broadcasters across Europe, including NOS in the Netherlands, WDR and HR in Germany, BRT in Belgium, SSR in Switzerland, and ORTF in France (Akarcalı, 2003: 113). The first Turkish television broadcast in Germany was initiated by WDR in 1965 to cater to Turkish workers. Subsequently, television programming targeting Turkish workers was introduced by public broadcasters in other European countries, notably in the Netherlands (Soydan, 2019: 12).

Until Turkish national newspapers began printing in Germany in 1967, Turkish workers in the Netherlands primarily relied on Turkish-language radio broadcasts. From 1967 onward, Turks residing in the Netherlands gained access to Turkish newspapers. Until the mid-1980s, the Dutch government regarded Turks as temporary guest workers and sponsored Turkish-language media to fulfill the right of foreign residents to access information. However, as the Turkish community's permanence in the Netherlands became evident, the Dutch government gradually withdrew financial support for Turkish-language broadcasts. Haber Gazetesi, a weekly newspaper and the first independent Turkish-language publication in the Netherlands emerged in 1983 (Bakırcı, 2005: 78-81). The advent of satellite and cable television broadcasting in the 1990s facilitated direct access to Turkish national television for the Turks abroad. This development led to a decline in interest in Turkish newspapers printed in Germany. However, it simultaneously stimulated the growth of Turkish-language printed media in the Netherlands, resulting in the publication of numerous Turkish newspapers and magazines within the country.

In the Netherlands, Turkish radio and television broadcasts were initially produced by the national public broadcaster NOS and various municipalities. However, the emergence of pirate broadcasting in the late 1970s significantly disrupted the state monopolies on radio and television broadcasting in Europe. The Netherlands is the first country to host pirate Turkish radio broadcasts, and is also home to Radio Deniz, the first Turkish internet radio station in the world (Soydan, 2018a: 97-100).

Language functions as a fundamental vehicle for cultural transmission. It plays a crucial role in creating, preserving, developing and transmitting culture to future generations. Therefore, Turkish-language education and media serve as essential mechanisms for maintaining Turkish culture beyond national borders. The establishment of Turkish broadcasting initiatives in the Netherlands coincided with the commencement of labor migration from Türkiye to Europe in the 1960s. The Netherlands, in particular, became a pioneer in Turkish radio and television broadcasting in Europe. Turkish-language media outlets have historically provided the Turkish community in the Netherlands with a means of expression, solidarity, and cultural preservation while simultaneously facilitating the maintenance of their native language. Over the past sixty-two years, the Turkish media landscape in the Netherlands has undergone significant transformations. This study examines the historical trajectory and contemporary status of Turkish media in radio, television, and print journalism in the Netherlands.

Turkish Radio Broadcasting in the Netherlands

The first instance of Turkish media presence in the Netherlands was a radio broadcast initiated in 1963. Notably, it is the first media program in Europe designed specifically for newly arrived Turkish migrant workers. In the same year, VARA launched a music program titled "Madrid, Casablanca, Ankara Line" (*"Madrid, Kazablanka, Ankara Hattı"*) (Cankaya et al., 2008: 90). Given that the initial wave of Turkish migrants primarily comprised laborers, VARA, in line with its mission to represent working-class interests, assumed responsibility for initiating Turkish radio broadcasts (Cankaya et al., 2006: 20).

The Dutch public broadcasting system has allocated broadcasting rights to organizations such as VARA, which have obtained a Broadcasting Authority and are allowed to participate in radio and television broadcasts in proportion to their membership size. Since the inception of radio broadcasting in the Netherlands, a pluralistic model has been implemented in the public broadcasting system. This model was formally institutionalized through the 1967 Broadcasting Act. Accordingly, approximately thirty associations or foundations, including seven major broadcasting organizations, were granted rights to participate in public broadcasting. This model gave both airtime and voice to social and religious groups. In 1969, all broadcasting entities operating within the public system were consolidated under the Netherlands Public Broadcasting Organization, NOS (*Nederlandse Omroep Stichting*) (Cankaya et al., 2008: 86-88).

VARA expanded its Turkish programming in 1966, introducing a monthly 30-minute Turkish music program on the radio. During this period, Turkish workers in the Netherlands primarily relied on Voice of Türkiye Radio as their primary news source in their native language (Bakırcı, 2005: 75-76). The significance of these broadcasts for the Turkish community is underscored by firsthand accounts from first-generation Turkish immigrants: *"Voice of Türkiye Radio was like our eyes and ears to the world. We went to great lengths to ensure a clear signal. If we submitted a song request - which we did quite often - we would wait by the radio for weeks"* (Nufel, 2005: 302-311). From 1969 onwards, NOS took over the responsibility of producing Turkish-language radio content. However, in 1995, this responsibility was transferred to NPS (*Dutch Programme Foundation - Nederlandse Programme Stichting*), a public broadcaster tasked with producing cultural, artistic, youth, and minority-focused programs (Can-Engin & Can, 2003: 58).

With the increasing number of family unifications in the 1970s, the scope of Turkish radio programming expanded, transitioning from a music-centered format to include news programs (Güney & Köksalan, 2008: 487). By 1970, Turkish radio broadcasts were scheduled weekly for 30 minutes, and in 1983, this was expanded to daily five-minute segments. Over the years, Turkish-language news programming steadily increased, reaching 45 minutes per day, five days a week, by the early 2000s. Initially, the editorial content of these news programs was prepared by Dutch employees; however, over time, Turkish employees gained editorial autonomy, allowing for more independent news coverage. In 2004, citing the increasing Dutch language proficiency of the Turkish community, Turkish radio programming was reduced to a single weekly 40-minute segment (Bakırcı, 2005: 76-77). By 2008, Turkish-language radio programming within the Dutch public broadcasting system was completely discontinued (Bink & Sterk, 2009).

The Netherlands, known for its distinctive approach to public broadcasting in Europe, grants broadcasting rights to social groups that organize for this purpose. These groups include broadcasting organizations affiliated with var-

"The Netherlands was the pioneering country in the establishment and development of Turkish internet radio broadcasting."

ious Christian denominations, as well as Muslim, Jewish, Hindu, and Buddhist communities. In 1986, the Dutch government authorized the Turkish community to establish a broadcasting organization on behalf of Muslims, named the Islamic Broadcasting Organization (Islamitisch Omroep Stichting - IOS). İbrahim Görmez was appointed as its president, representing the Federation of Turkish Islamic and Cultural Associations, while journalist Şadi Tatlı was designated as the head of the Radio-Television Department. IOS provided Turkish-language radio and television broadcasts for one hour per week over a five-year period before being shut down and losing its broadcasting rights due to evolving circumstances (Karaçay, 2020).

Following the cessation of IOS broadcasts, the Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Organization (*Nederlandse Moslim Omroep* - NMO) was granted the right to broadcast on behalf of Muslims in 1993. NMO, another broadcaster that included Turkish-language content, aired one-hour weekly radio programs in Turkish, Dutch, and Arabic (Cankaya et al., 2006: 25). However, by 2004, Turkish-language broadcasts within NMO transitioned entirely to Dutch (Güney & Köksalan, 2008: 487).

Beyond public broadcasters, Turkish radio programs were also aired through local cable networks operated by municipalities and private enterprises in the Netherlands. However, these initiatives were generally short-lived and eventually discontinued (Cankaya et al., 2006: 19).

In the Netherlands, FM-frequency broadcasting in Turkish was relatively limited. One notable example was *Radyo Vatan*, which operated on the FM 96.9 frequency in Venlo, a city near the German border. This station was run by volunteer broadcasters on a local radio channel affiliated with the Venlo Municipality (Cankaya et al., 2006: 26). Similar initiatives emerged across the country, with numerous local radio stations airing one-hour weekly Turkish-language programs, including Rotterdam-based *Radyo Mozaik*, as well as *Radio Urbania* and *Radio Zafer* (Karaçay, 2012: 358). During the 1980s, Turkish-language pirate radio stations began to emerge in the Netherlands. Despite facing police crackdowns, broadcasting from these stations focused on music and entertainment, particularly in cities with significant Turkish populations (Bakırcı, 2005: 79).

Following the pirate broadcasts transmitted via amateur radio transmitters, *Radyo Deniz* was established in Rotterdam by Özcan Özbay in 1997. *Radyo Deniz* transitioned to internet-based broadcasting in 1999, making it the first internet radio station in the Netherlands and the first Turkish-language internet radio station in the world (Cankaya et al., 2006: 28). As of 2025, both *Radyo Deniz* and *Deniz TV* continue their operations, offering programs in Turkish, Arabic, and Dutch across both radio and television platforms (Soydan, 2018a: 101).

The Netherlands was the pioneering country in the establishment and development of Turkish internet radio broadcasting. Özcan Özbay has described *Radyo Deniz* as a training ground for internet radio broadcasters, with many individuals who initially worked there later establishing their own stations (Soydan, 2018b: 195). In addition to *Radyo Deniz*, several other Turkish-language internet radio stations

emerged in the Netherlands but have since ceased operations. Among these was *Son FM*, which was launched in Rotterdam and later evolved into a digital platform hosting five different radio stations. This platform featured *Son FM, İntizar, Hit Radio, Radio İstanblue,* and *Radio BLK*, all dedicated to Turkish music. Another now-defunct Turkish-language internet radio station was Taksim FM, which was established in Eindhoven in 2012 (Soydan, 2018a: 100-101).

Turkish Television Broadcasting in the Netherlands

Germany was the first country in Europe to launch Turkish television broadcasts. In 1965, WDR introduced Turkish-language programming targeting foreign workers, including the program Senin Vatanın Bizim Vatanımız (*Ihre Heimat Unsere Heimat* - Your Homeland Our Homeland), which featured content in multiple languages, including Turkish. This development was later followed by Turkish-language broadcasts on public broadcasting networks in the Netherlands and other European countries (Soydan, 2019:8-12).

The Netherlands became the second country in Europe to establish Turkish television broadcasts, beginning in 1975 with *Paspoort*, a five-minute segment on the NOS produced by İlhan Karaçay. Over time, the duration of *Paspoort* was extended to ten and eventually thirty minutes; however, the program was discontinued in the latter half of the 1980s. By the 1990s, Turkish-language television programs were phased out not only in the Netherlands but also in other European public broadcasters. Although financial constraints were cited as the primary justification for this reduction, the underlying rationale was the perception that native-language broadcasts among immigrant communities hindered their integration (Soydan, 2019:15-21).

"Turkish television programs held significant value for the Turks abroad who were longing for their homeland."

Prior to the advent of satellite television, the primary sources of news for Turks residing in Europe were Turkish newspapers printed in Germany, Turkish-language broadcasts on public radio and television and community radio stations. Turkish television programs held significant value for the Turks abroad who were longing for their homeland. This sentiment shifted with the launch of TRT International (*TRT-INT*) via the Eutelsat satellite in 1990 (Soydan, 2019:11-19). TRT-INT broadcasts became accessible via satellite dishes in Germany, the Netherlands, and Belgium and were later integrated into cable television networks in several European countries, including the Netherlands (Akarcalı, 2003: 202-205).

The first privately operated Turkish television channel in the Netherlands, Amsterdam Turkish Television (*Amsterdam Türk Televizyonu - Turkse Televisie Amsterdam, TTA*), commenced broadcasting in 1992 but ceased operations in 2008 due to financial difficulties (Soydan, 2019: 15). Founded by Mehmet Akif Çelik, *TTA* provided Turkish-language programming for one hour per week via cable. Another television channel, *TOS TV,* also operated in Amsterdam from the early 1990s until the early 2000s, broadcasting Turkish-language content for one hour per week. Similarly, *X TV*, a Rotterdam-based channel, provided one-hour weekly Turkish-language broadcasts via cable for approximately a decade. *Demet TV*, estab-

lished in The Hague in 2001 by Ali Rıza Başaran, also aired in Turkish and Dutch-language via cable television (Soydan, 2019: 15). The outlet's weekly one-hour Turkish-language broadcasts have recently been discontinued. Most Turkish television broadcasts consisted of weekly one-hour segments aired on frequencies that were financially supported and leased by the state (Bakırcı, 2005: 88).

With government support, 30-minute Turkish-language television programs were broadcast weekly in major Dutch cities, including Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht. These programs were initially titled Migrants' Television (*MTV - Migranten Televisie*), but in 2001, the organization was rebranded as Multicultural Netherlands Television (*MTNL - Multiculturele Televisie Nederland*). However, by 2005, reflecting a broader shift in Dutch government policy, all MTNL broadcasts were required to be exclusively in Dutch (Bakırcı, 2005: 88). While some programs initially continued with Turkish subtitles, these were eventually phased out entirely.

Currently, there are no Turkish-language television broadcasts available via terrestrial broadcasting in the Netherlands. *Deniz TV,* which has been in operation for twenty-six years, has played a pioneering role as the first Turkish-language internet radio station and television broadcasting (Nufel, 2005: 307). Deniz TV also airs live programming (Soydan, 2019:15).

At present, *Kanal Avrupa* is the only Turkish-language television station in Europe that remains operational via satellite. Established by Ali Paşa Akbaş, *Kanal Avrupa* commenced broadcasting on December 1, 2004, from Duisburg, Germany, under a German broadcasting license. Accessible via the Türksat satellite, Kanal Avrupa addresses various issues concerning the European Turks through diverse programming (Soydan, 2019: 14). With its motto, "Television of European Turks," Kanal Avrupa remains an important platform for amplifying the voices of Turkish communities, including those residing in the Netherlands.

Turkish Print Media in the Netherlands

During the initial years of the labor agreement, there was no Turkish-language printed press in the Netherlands. However, this changed in 1967 when the national Turkish newspaper Tercüman began publication in Germany. In response, Turkish residents of the Netherlands, including İlhan Karaçay and Şadi Tatlı, started working as correspondents for the newspaper. Subsequently, in 1969, *Hürriyet* also launched its European edition in Germany, with İlhan Karaçay serving as its Benelux representative. The publication of other Turkish newspapers such as *Milliyet, Günaydın, Sabah, Tan, Star,* and *Fanatik* in Germany facilitated the widespread distribution of Turkish-language newspapers throughout Europe, thereby granting the Turkish community in the Netherlands access to national newspapers. Until the 1980s, *Tercüman* and *Hürriyet* expanded their readership by including Benelux supplements featuring regional news. However, in the 1990s, with the advent of satellite and cable television broadcasts that enabled Turkish residents in Europe to access TRT-INT and later private Turkish television channels, the circulation of printed newspapers declined. As a result, most Turkish newspapers discontinued their European editions (Karaçay, 2012: 358-359).

During the 1970s, centers for foreigners in the Netherlands initiated the publication of monthly magazines. In 1973, a monthly periodical titled *Boğaziçi Gazetesi* was launched under the auspices of the Netherlands Center for Foreigners (NCB) in Utrecht. Two years later, the magazine was renamed İlke, and it continued publication until 1986, distributed primarily through institutional channels and subscriptions. Additionally, during this period, *Çocuk,*

a nationally distributed magazine aimed at Turkish children who had migrated to the Netherlands through family reunification programs, was also published by the Netherlands Center for Foreigners. However, similar to *İlke*, its publication ceased in 1986. Regional centers for foreigners in cities with sizable Turkish populations, such as Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Eindhoven, and Arnhem, also produced Turkish-language magazines. Until the mid-1980s, the publication of Turkish-language media was financially supported by the Dutch government. However, as it became evident that the Turkish community was settling in the Netherlands on a long-term basis, governmental sponsorship for Turkish publications was gradually reduced. Nevertheless, major municipalities such as Amsterdam, Utrecht, The Hague, and Rotterdam continued publishing Turkish-language magazines to provide information to first-generation Turkish immigrants. These publications covered a range of topics, including voting procedures in local elections and municipal services such as waste collection. In 1983, *Haber Gazetesi*, a weekly newspaper prepared by a team with journalistic expertise, became the first independent Turkish-language publication in the Netherlands. However, it ceased operations after two years (Bakırcı, 2005: 77-81).

Following the expansion of satellite and cable television access to Turkish television in the 1990s, national Turkish newspapers based in Türkiye became redundant. They were gradually supplanted by Netherlands-based newspapers and magazines, which increased readership by focusing on news and events that were not covered by Dutch national newspapers or television channels. During this period, *Dünya*, a daily newspaper published in Türkiye, also introduced a weekly Benelux edition, incorporating pages dedicated to social and cultural news from the Netherlands. According to Karaçay, this publication garnered significant attention from the Turkish community (Karaçay, 2012: 358).

The majority of Turkish-language newspapers and magazines serving the Dutch Turkish community relied on advertising revenue from Turkish-owned businesses and subscription models. However, many of these publications eventually ceased operations due to economic constraints. Despite this, several Turkish-language periodicals have continued publication as of 2025. Among these are *Platform Dergisi, Kadın Dergisi, Manşet Gazetesi,* and *Doğuş Gazetesi*, all of which operate on a monthly publication cycle. These periodicals are distributed free of charge to Turkish consulates, cultural associations, sports clubs, workplaces, and mosques.

Ekin Magazine and *Haber Newspaper* were published monthly for several years before ultimately discontinuing operations. *Ufuk Newspaper,* which was established in 2000, also ceased print publication in recent years but has continued its digital presence since transitioning online in 2005 (Yücel, 2015: 261). Several other monthly periodicals that were published for a certain period of time before shutting down include *Merhaba Dergisi, Magazin Dergisi, Kuzey Yıldızı Dergisi, Değirmen Dergisi, Damla Gazetesi, the bilingual Genç Trend Dergisi, Piyasa Dergisi, İzin Rehberi Dergisi, Kral, Euro Huzur,* and the quarterly *Sözhakkı Dergisi* (Karaçay, 2012: 358).

Contemporary Turkish Media in the Netherlands

From the 1960s, when Turkish labor migration to the Netherlands began, until the mid-1980s, Turkish media operations in the country were largely supported through financial resources provided by the Dutch government or local municipalities (Bakırcı, 2005: 80). The emergence of Turkish national newspapers printed in Germany in the late 1960s allowed

"The first privately operated Turkish television channel in the Netherlands, Amsterdam Turkish Television (Amsterdam Türk Televizyonu - Turkse Televisie Amsterdam, TTA), commenced broadcasting in 1992."

the Turks residing in the Netherlands to access a written press in Turkish. These newspapers expanded their readership by incorporating dedicated supplements and pages focused on news specific to the Netherlands. However, with the development of satellite broadcasting in the 1990s, Turkish television became widely accessible, leading to a decline in the circulation of national newspapers. This shift has contributed to the growth of local Turkish media in the Netherlands, prompting the establishment of numerous Turkish-language newspapers and magazines (Karaçay, 2012: 358). The longevity of many of these publications was limited, with a significant number of Turkish newspapers and magazines that originated in the Netherlands ceasing operations, while others transitioned to digital platforms. A study by Temel and Önürmen highlights the substantial decline of Turkish print media in Europe, noting that most publications have been discontinued, while a small number have shifted to digital formats. The study further emphasizes that Turkish media outlets primarily sustain themselves through subscriptions and advertising revenue (Temel & Önürmen, 2021: 322-323). This financial situation persists to the present day. Ebubekir Turgut, the editor-in-chief of *Platform Dergisi* and *Kadın Dergisi*, both of which continue to be published in print, has stated that these publications operate on a voluntary basis without generating profit or income (Özyol, n.d.).

There are considerable challenges faced by Turkish journalists working in the Netherlands. According to Karaçay, journalists who serve as Dutch correspondents for national publications based in Türkiye often work for little or no financial compensation. Additionally, journalists attempting to establish Turkish-language publications in the Netherlands encounter significant difficulties due to a lack of advertising and sponsorship support. As a result, many Turkish-language media organizations have shut down due to financial constraints (Karaçay, 2016).

As of early 2025, *Radyo Deniz - Deniz TV*, which has been operating as an internet-based broadcaster since 1999, remains the only Turkish radio and television outlet in the Netherlands. Turkish-language radio and television broadcasts in the country, particularly those provided by public broadcasting institutions, were discontinued years ago. *Radyo Deniz* also functions as an online news platform.

In the domain of the written press, as of early 2025, *Doğuş Gazetesi, Platform Dergisi, Kadın Dergisi*, and *Manşet Gazetesi* continue to publish monthly in print while also maintaining a digital presence.

Güncel Haber and *Ufuk Gazetesi*, which previously operated as print publications, now function exclusively in digital format. In addition, Türkinfo, established in 1996 as the first Turkish internet news site in the Netherlands, continues to provide coverage online alongside *Sonhaber, N'Haber, Hollanda Postası, Haber Gazetesi*, and *Gazeteci* news websites.

"The existence of Turkish media remains vital for third-generation Dutch Turks - most of whom were born and raised in the Netherlands, are actively engaged in all sectors of society, and are an integral part of the Dutch society - for maintaining their linguistic and cultural heritage in the Netherlands."

Furthermore, several YouTube channels with substantial followings, including Life24 TV, Hollanda Medya, and NFL Media Netherlands, address issues relevant to Dutch Turks and fill the gap left by traditional Turkish-language media in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

The Netherlands has witnessed a rich Turkish media landscape. This study aims to provide a comprehensive overview of Turkish media activities in the Netherlands from their inception to the present day. The first radio program in Europe targeted at Turkish migrant workers was launched in the Netherlands in 1963. Over the years, Turkish radio and television programs were incorporated into the public broadcasting system. The Netherlands also became the site of the first pirate Turkish radio broadcasts and later the establishment of Radyo Deniz, the world's first Turkish-language internet radio station.

In the early years of Turkish migration, radio and television programs in Turkish were produced as part of public service broadcasting, adhering to a multicultural approach. These programs were broadcast by the Dutch public broadcaster NOS as well as by municipal authorities. However, as Turkish migrant workers transitioned into settled communities following family reunifications in the 1980s, the Dutch government gradually reduced its financial and institutional support for Turkish-language broadcasts. This ultimately led to the termination of Turkish programming on public broadcasting platforms. In the 1990s, there was a notable increase in the number of Dutch-based Turkish print publications, with numerous newspapers and magazines emerging. However, with the widespread adoption of the internet, most of these Turkish print media outlets ceased operations, leading to a shift toward digital platforms. The process of digitalization has not only facilitated the preservation of Turkish culture within the local community but has also strengthened connections between Turks across Europe and Türkiye.

At present, four Turkish-language print publications and one internet-based radio-television station continue to operate in the Netherlands, alongside several online news platforms. However, the Turkish community, which constitutes the second-largest ethnic group in the country after the Dutch and has transitioned from guest workers to full citizens, requires a more robust media presence. The absence of terrestrial Turkish-language radio and television broadcasting represents a major shortcoming. While Turkish content created by Dutch Turks on YouTube partially addresses this gap, it remains insufficient. The existence of Turkish media remains vital for third-generation Dutch Turks - most of whom were born and raised in the Netherlands, are actively engaged in all sectors of society, and are an integral part of the Dutch society - for maintaining their linguistic and cultural heritage in the Netherlands.

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Interview

INTERVIEW WITH FILMMAKER FATOŞ ÇERGEL ON MEDIA AND DIVERSITY

FATOŞ ÇERGEL
Manager, Fatusch Productions

✍ Can you tell us a little about yourself?

My name is Fatoş Çergel, and I was born in the Netherlands in 1980. My grandfather was the first member of our family to settle in the Netherlands. He later brought in the rest of the family, and they established themselves in Utrecht. After living in several major cities, I moved to a smaller town near Utrecht. I have a thirteen-year-old son.

✍ How did you enter the media sector? What is your story? Were there any people who inspired you?

My mother, who was a director in the media sector, founded "Fatusch Productions" in 1986. Initially, I had no intention of pursuing a career in the media. However, as a student, I began working at Mira Medya to earn an income while addressing what I perceived as a lack of representation for diverse cultures in Dutch written and visual media. After several successful projects, my parents encouraged me to join our family business. I did not have a source of inspiration, since I had not prepared myself or intended to work in a media organization, but my mother has always been a good role model for me.

✍ What is the story behind your company? How was it established, and what are its purposes? Who did you start with, and how many team members do you have now?

"Fatusch Productions" initially worked as an external producer, creating projects and documentaries for the Dutch Foundation for Public Broadcasting (Nederlandse Publieke

Omroep). Over time, my mother expanded the company's focus to include human rights projects. This diversification brought together a multidisciplinary team that included media professionals, anthropologists, historians, educators, and lawyers. Although the European Sovereign Debt Crisis in 2010 posed challenges, the company has continued its work in media and human rights by collaborating with experts. I assumed leadership of the company in 2023, and our current team comprises five individuals, including myself. The team size varies depending on the project.

✍ What is the company's area of expertise? What types of projects do you undertake, and what topics do you address?

Our expertise spans media, human rights, education, and information. Over 38 years, more than 100 of our documentaries have been broadcast on channels under the Dutch Public Broadcasting Agency. We have also undertaken diverse projects, such as introducing Türkiye to smart signs, an informational content classification system currently utilized by RTÜK in Türkiye.

✍ How do you sustain your presence in the competitive media sector in the Netherlands? What has been the most significant factor in your success?

Operating within the Dutch media sector presents challenges, particularly for human rights projects, which can limit growth opportunities. Moreover, factors such as being a woman, having an immigrant background, and wearing a headscarf add to these challenges. Despite

these obstacles, we remain focused on our work, producing high-quality projects that have been instrumental in our continued success.

✍ Among your projects on migration and people of immigrant origin, which do you consider the most significant? Could you provide a few examples?

Numerous projects stand out, but a most significant one is our portraits on the first-generation Turks who migrated from Türkiye to the Netherlands. As the first generation gradually ages and their stories risk oblivion, it is imperative to document and preserve their narratives for future generations. Such projects are essential to recording their experiences and passing on their legacy. Additionally, we have produced documentaries exploring the migration stories of individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds, highlighting the challenges they encounter. For example, in a documentary I made last year, we addressed the plight of the Sinti and Roma communities in the Netherlands. Notably, the Dutch government has been warned twice by the European Court of Human Rights for its policies toward these groups.

✍ What motivates you in your work?

A guiding principle for my work is the belief that "nobody is free until everyone is free." Defending human rights means advocating for the rights of all individuals. Our work adopts an inclusive, solution-oriented approach that avoids alienation. Rather than seeking blame, we aim to correct negative situations and foster positive change.

✍ On your website, you state your commitment to uniting diverse cultures and advancing societal cohesion. What methods do you employ to reduce prejudice among different groups in Dutch society, and how do you present these perspectives to your audience?

Our approach is rooted in avoiding alienation and eliminating biases. Often, individuals justify their perspectives without engaging with or understanding others. We aim to counter this tendency by promoting communication and empathy. Our work emphasizes respect and humility, avoiding any approach that might alienate or diminish others.

✍ How do you convey the concept of immigration and its emotional dimensions to audiences, especially in the context of prevalent negative discourse on the topic?

Changing the negative perception towards immigration and immigrants cannot be achieved solely through documentaries. It requires collective efforts across all sectors of society in everyday life. Employers, for example, can dismantle stereotypes by fostering inclusive workplaces that embrace individuals from diverse backgrounds. In our projects, we adopt an emotional and human-centered narrative to convey the lived experiences and feelings of immigrants. This approach seeks to resonate deeply with audiences.

✍ In your assessment of the Dutch media sector, do you believe immigrants and minorities are adequately represented? Does the Dutch government have policies addressing this issue, particularly in public broadcasting? Are these policies effectively implemented?

Immigrants and minorities are not adequately represented in the Dutch media sector. While there are policies aimed at promoting diversity, their implementation remains insufficient. For instance, all of the ministries and several government institutions have signed the Diversity Charter. An employer who endorses the Diver-

"The distinct perspectives and experiences of media professionals with immigrant backgrounds significantly enrich the diversity of the Dutch media landscape."

sity Charter commits to implementing and advancing an effective diversity policy within their organization. However, progress has been limited in the Netherlands. Moreover, there is a scarcity of media professionals, particularly of Turkish origin, who possess specialized training in this field.

✍ How are immigrants and individuals of Turkish origin portrayed in documentaries, and what is the general perception towards immigrants and Muslims in such productions?

The representation of immigrants in the media often coincides with anniversaries or events related to migration, after which interest wanes. Immigrants and minorities remain underrepresented in Dutch media. Greater efforts are needed, particularly in public broadcasting, to ensure that diverse voices and experiences are included in media narratives.

✍ What contributions can media professionals with immigrant backgrounds make to the Dutch media sector? Do they possess unique strengths? If so, what are they?

The distinct perspectives and experiences of media professionals with immigrant backgrounds significantly enrich the diversity of the Dutch media landscape. These contributions, however, require greater recognition and appreciation. Media professionals from immigrant communities can present broader and more diverse viewpoints, an asset that enhances the quality of documentaries and other media productions. Furthermore, their presence increases representation within the sector. Promoting skilled and qualified individuals from diverse backgrounds is crucial for advancing the media industry.

✍ How would you assess the Turkish local press in Europe and the Netherlands?

The Turkish local press in Europe appears to face challenges in adapting to contemporary trends and engaging with younger generations.

✍ Does the media influence how immigrant and minority communities perceive one another in the Netherlands?

Yes, it does. The term "minority" often conflates diverse ethnic groups, ignoring their unique cultural distinctions. For instance, during interviews conducted in November, I observed that many young people of Turkish origin held unfavorable views of certain other immigrant groups. The housing crisis in the Netherlands is frequently framed by certain political figures as being attributable to the presence of refugees. However, it is evident that this narrative does not align with the underlying realities of the housing crisis. Despite this, the dissemination of such messages in the media has influenced public opinion, leading many young individuals to adopt negative attitudes toward refugees. This example underscores the media's profound impact on relations between different minority groups.

"In our projects, we adopt an emotional and human-centered narrative to convey the lived experiences and feelings of immigrants. This approach seeks to resonate deeply with audiences."

✍ What responsibilities do media professionals have in an era of rising far-right ideologies?

The ethical standards and practices of traditional media appear to have eroded with the advent of social media, where everyone can assume the role of a media figure. Media professionals, in their attempt to keep pace with the rapid dissemination of information, often compromise ethical principles. Media professionals, like all individuals, are not immune to personal opinions and biases. True impartiality is not simply aligning with majority opinion. This dynamic is exemplified by politician Dilan Yeşilgöz-Zegerius's proposal to ban headscarves for plainclothes security officers and police personnel. However, true impartiality necessitates representing the entire society, rather than catering exclusively to the preferences of the majority. This principle is equally applicable to the media sector, where practitioners must consider such issues when assembling their teams. Furthermore, the audience bears its own share of responsibility in this context; there is a pressing need to enhance media literacy.

✍ What initiatives do you undertake to inspire and support immigrants entering the media sector in the Netherlands?

I actively participate in various initiatives which include mentoring and accepting interns, and expanding my network. However, in undertaking these efforts, I prioritize merit as a fundamental criterion. If individuals demonstrate the requisite qualifications, I strive to create opportunities for those who face systemic disadvantages. Given that young immigrants in the Netherlands often encounter significant challenges in securing internships, I provide guidance to mitigate these barriers to some extent. While offering such support, I carefully assess the potential of each individual. For me, merit takes precedence over factors such as an individual's position or ethnicity.

✍ What is the impact of technological advancements in media production on your company? How do emerging media formats influence your work, and what has been the effect of new media on the visibility of immigrant communities?

Rapid technological advancement necessitates continuous learning and adaptation. This can occasionally pose challenges for our company. In conventional documentaries, we follow a structured narrative format with an introduction, development, and conclusion. However, with the rise of social media, storytelling often begins in the middle of the story. This shift can be frustrating as it feels like a compromise in the quality of storytelling. Nonetheless, younger audiences today prefer concise narratives, seeking to grasp the essence of a story in just two minutes. While this approach may not align with our preferences, we have adjusted by producing shorter, more succinct documentaries to meet this demand. Moreover, the increased visibility

of both positive and negative events across various media platforms is a beneficial outcome of technological progress. In regions with significant media censorship, these new platforms provide an avenue to circumvent restrictions, ensuring information access to broader audiences.

✍ In what areas of new media are immigrants increasingly active in Europe? Are there specific media sectors in the Netherlands where individuals of Turkish origin are particularly engaged?

Immigrants in Europe are notably active in fields such as journalism, directing, and editing. However, I believe they can and should participate in all sectors without compromising their identities or values. Inclusion is especially critical at a time when we are discussing the fourth generation of immigrants. Based on their abilities, this generation should have representation across all domains of media, transcending specific sectors.

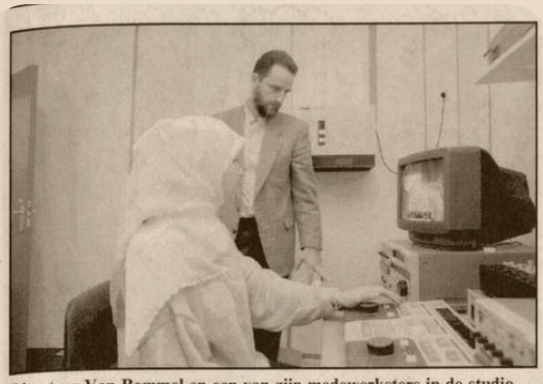
✍ Do younger generations exhibit interest in media as a field of education and career? How closely do they engage with the media, and what guidance would you offer them?

Young people today show significant interest in and concern for the media sector. However, they often seek the easiest pathways to enter the field. I would encourage them to pursue formal education, avoid succumbing to unethical influences, and maintain their integrity. Each generation navigates its own unique challenges and perspectives, making it difficult to prescribe universal advice. Given the sheer volume of information young people are exposed to, the most valuable guidance I can offer is to uphold principles and safeguard their character.

✍ Do you have any upcoming project goals? If so, could you share these plans?

At this stage in my career, I focus exclusively on projects that I find both enjoyable and meaningful. I foresee continuing to work on human rights initiatives, though I occasionally shift toward cultural and artistic projects when the intensity of human rights issues becomes overwhelming. While I have not engaged in international work recently due to personal reasons, I intend to focus more on global projects now that my child is older. My aspiration is to contribute to human rights efforts in Palestine, a cause that remains close to my heart.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE



Directeur Van Bommel en een van zijn medewerksters in de studio.
Foto GPD

Omroep helpt moslims bij integratie

HILVERSUM (GPD) - Programma's maken die de integratie van moslims in Nederland bevorderen. Dat is de belangrijkste taak die de Nederlandse Moslim Omroep (NMO) zich heeft gesteld. De NMO, die sinds een half jaar uitzendingen verzorgt op radio en televisie, is de opvolger van de Islamitische Omroep Stichting (IOS) die voor die tijd namens de Islamitische Raad Nederland programma's maakte.

Het einde van de IOS werd veroorzaakt door een hoog opgelopen bloedgroepenstrijd binnen het bestuur, waarin vertegenwoordigers van een Turkse, een Surinaamse en een Marrokkaanse moslimorganisatie zitting hadden. De drie organisaties lagen echter vanwege culturele verschillen al vanaf de start van de IOS in 1987 met elkaar overhoop. Na diverse mislukte pogingen tot bemiddeling besloot het Commissariaat voor de Media de zendtijd van de IOS in te trekken. Die zendtijd - een half uur per week televisie- en twee uur per week radiozendtijd - werd overgeheveld naar de tweede 'moslimzuil' in ons land, de Nederlandse Moslim Raad, waarin 11 islamitische organisaties zijn verenigd. Deze richtte vervolgens de Nederlandse Moslim Omroep (NMO) op.

De moslimomroep is sindsdien in rustiger vaarwater terechtgekomen. Met de in totaal 18 medewerkers probeert de omroep weer op koers te komen. De islamitische Nederlander A. van Bommel, directeur van de NMO, moet echter omzichtig te werk gaan om de problemen die zich in het verleden voordeden, te omzeilen. Een van die problemen was de grote invloed van politieke organisaties op de programmering van de IOS. Van Bommel: „De Islamistische Raad Nederland, uit wiens naam de IOS-uitzendingen werden verzorgd, bestaat uit organisaties die een sterke band hebben met de overheid van het land van herkomst. Wij zijn onafhankelijk en nemen besluiten op basis van democratische regels. Er worden ons geen zaken opgedrongen door een cultureel attaché van een of andere ambassade, zoals in het verleden vaker gebeurde."

„Bovendien zijn we een zeer pluriforme organisatie. Bij de Nederlandse Moslim Raad zijn naast vrouwen- en jongerengroeperingen bijvoorbeeld ook Indonesische en Eritrese moslimorganisaties aangesloten. In de programmering willen we die brede maatschappelijke betrokkenheid terug laten zien."

A 1994 newspaper report on the Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Organization (NMO) and its efforts, through broadcasting, to support the integration of Muslims in the Netherlands.

Source: *Omroep helpt moslims bij integratie. "Leeuwarder courant : hoofdblad van Friesland". Leeuwarden, 25-03-1994, s. 11. Retrieved from Delpher on 25-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010623196:mpeg21:p011*

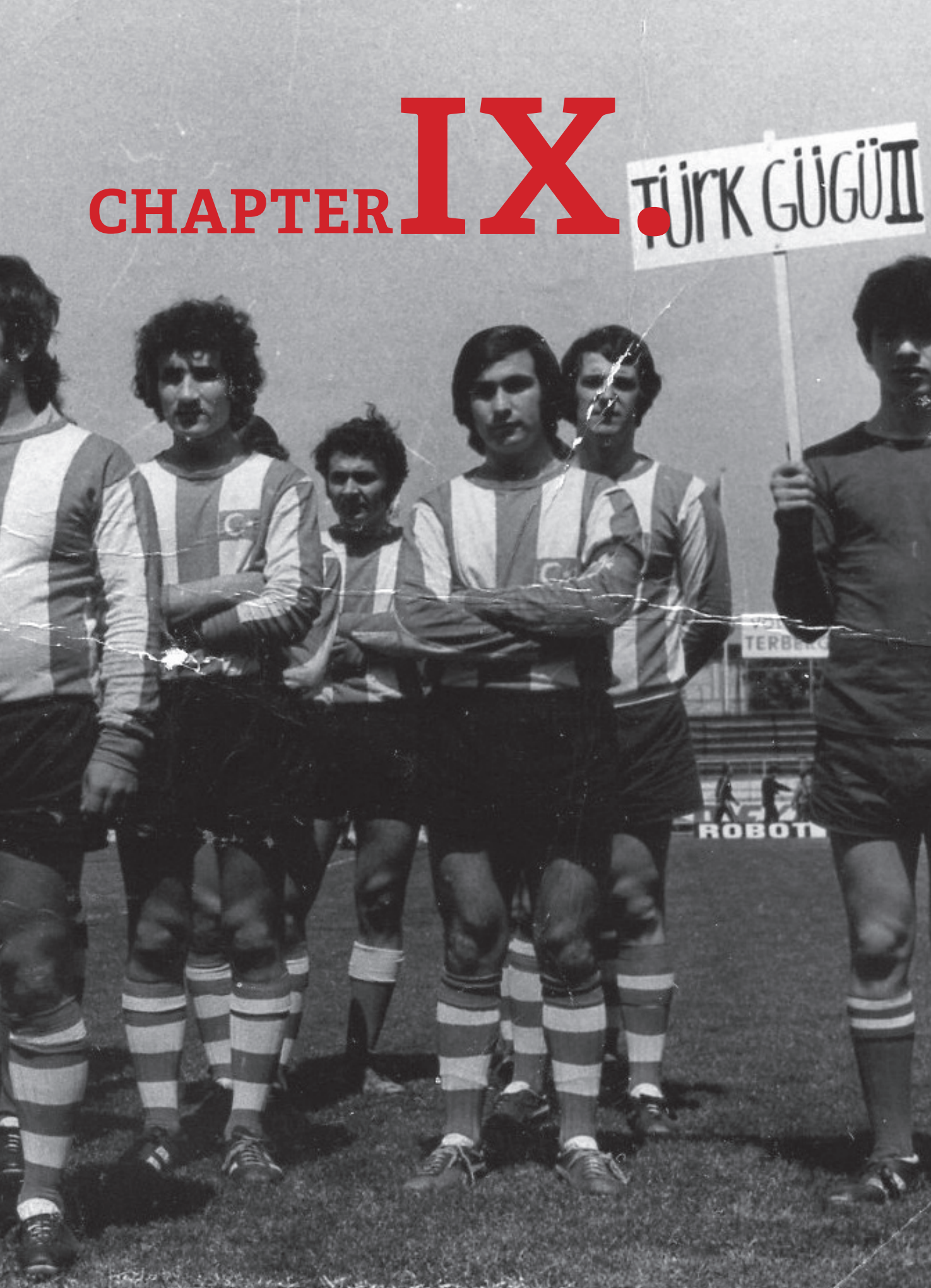
Turkse televisiezender nu officieel in gebruik

HUIZEN — Wethouder drs. J.H. Frijlink heeft maandagavond het officiële startsein gegeven voor uitzendingen van de Turkse zender TRT via de Huizer kabel. De plechtigheid, die voor de Turkse gemeenschap in Huizen als een belangrijke mijlpaal wordt gezien, vond plaats ten huize van de familie Topan op de Haardstedelaan. Na een korte inleiding stelde de wethouder het televisietoestel van de Turkse familie op het juiste kanaal in om vervolgens de eerste beelden van TRT via het Huizer kabelnet te aanschouwen. De televisiezender komt op het kabelnet in de plaats voor het Franstalige RBTF en is te vinden op kanaal 28 of frequentie 52900. In de toekomst zal de Italiaanse zender Rai Uno plaats moeten maken voor TRT.

A 1990 newspaper report on Huizen Council Member J. H. Frijlink officially granting permission for the Turkish state broadcaster TRT to be carried on the Huizen cable network

Source: *Sedat Tapan, Nieuwsblad voor Huizen*

CHAPTER IX.



SPORTS IN DIASPORA

THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN THE DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA

Nuri Kurnaz

ACCESSIBLE DIASPORA, ACCESSIBLE SPORTS: AN INTERVIEW WITH NATIONAL ATHLETE RESUL KARABULUT

Resul Karabulut

INTERVIEW WITH AMSTERDAM YOUTH UNION PRESIDENT MEHMET CILIZOĞLU ON THE DUTCH TURKISH COMMUNITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOTBALL

Mehmet Cılızoğlu

THE ROLE OF SPORTS IN THE DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA

NURİ KURNAZ[1]

Introduction

The involvement of the Turkish diaspora in sports not only facilitates the dissemination of Türkiye's cultural influence but also strengthens the diaspora's sense of identity and solidarity. Within this context, sports function as both a unifying factor and a bridge that reinforces the Dutch Turkish community's connections with the international community. Turkish diaspora's active engagement in various sports is evident in their participation in football, basketball, wrestling, weightlifting, and athletics. The international achievements of Turkish-origin athletes further underscore this presence. Consequently, the role of the Turkish diaspora in sports constitutes both a cultural asset and a significant contributor to the promotion of Türkiye and the Netherlands in the global sports arena. This study examines the participation of the Dutch Turkish diaspora in sports and explores its broader implications.

The Significance of Sports for the Diaspora

The influence of sports on social life, individual behavior, and interpersonal relationships is widely analyzed within the discipline of sports sociology. Diaspora communities often miss their home in a new country, and seek to recreate a sense of home, with sports playing a crucial role in this process (Brah, 1996). On a global scale, urban, regional, and national migration movements often utilize sports to maintain and develop identity. In this context, the European Commission has acknowledged the role of sports in helping integrate minority communities within European societies (European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture, 2007). Furthermore, sports can serve as a mechanism for fostering social cohesion by reducing the visibility of political, religious, and cultural differences.

Empirical research has consistently demonstrated that participation in sports enhances social relations and strengthens

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community cohesion, and provides a sense of confidence and strength, particularly among minority groups. Moreover, there is substantial evidence that sports activities contribute to mental and physical well-being, mitigate health-related issues, and play a role in reducing delinquent behaviors, particularly among young men. As a result, sports serve as a vital factor in improving the overall well-being of diaspora communities (Taylor et al., 2015).

The Role of Sports Among Immigrant Communities in the Netherlands

The Netherlands has a well-established reputation for excelling in various sports. The country's Olympic achievements are notably high relative to its population size (Olympedia, 2024). Among traditional Dutch sports, ice skating, swimming, and cycling are particularly popular and form an integral part of daily life. Cycling, in particular, is not only a widely practiced sport but also serves as a primary mode of transportation. According to a study conducted by Ipsos for the World Economic Forum, the Netherlands ranks among the most physically active countries in the world, with Dutch citizens engaging in an average of 13 hours of physical exercise or team sports per week - double the global average (Clemence, 2021).

Participation rates in weekly sports activities remain consistently high among the Dutch population. Studies conducted under the auspices of the Dutch Ministry of Health monitor sports engagement across different ethnic groups. Although the participation rate of immigrant communities, including those of Turkish origin, is generally lower than that of the native Dutch population, it remains significantly high when compared to global averages and the participation rates in their countries of origin. In general, the sports participation trends among immigrant communities in the Netherlands present a positive trajectory. Furthermore, research indicates that gym membership rates among immigrant groups surpass those of the native Dutch population. In addition to gym-based fitness activities, football and martial arts are particularly popular among children from immigrant backgrounds. Notably, the sports participation rates of second-generation immigrants increasingly resemble those of their native-born Dutch counterparts, suggesting a strong trend toward integration and keen interest in sports (Van Den Dool & Elling, 2023).

The Dutch government has implemented various initiatives to promote sports participation among immigrant communities by appointing specialized sports authorities. Particularly in Rotterdam, structured sports activities - including football, table tennis, volleyball, and swimming courses - have been organized for immigrants since the earliest periods of migration. These efforts have been designed with cultural sensitivities in mind, as exemplified by swimming courses tailored specifically for Turkish women, covered as a success story in the Dutch press. Additionally, immigrant communities have played an active role in sports development by establishing their own sports associations (Algemeen Dagblad, 1982).

The Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands has regarded sports as a vital mechanism for preserving ethnic identity, fostering social integration, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Since the inception of migration, the Turkish community has actively participated in various sports activities and organizations, demonstrating an entrepreneurial spirit by founding their own sports clubs. This

engagement has reinforced a sense of unity and solidarity within the Turkish diaspora, and contributed to the creation of a more inclusive society. Thus, the unifying power of sports has been harnessed effectively.

Pioneering Turkish Sports Clubs in the Netherlands

The early participation of the Turkish diaspora in Dutch sports is closely linked to the historical trajectory of migration, particularly following the bilateral labor agreement signed between Türkiye and the Netherlands on August 19, 1964. During this period, sports facilities for migrant workers were primarily sponsored by companies employing foreign laborers. A significant outcome of this support was the foundation of the *Türk Gücü (SV Turkse Kracht* - Turkish Power) sports club in Deventer on June 1, 1965, which emerged as a response to the recreational needs of Turkish workers.

The Thomassen & Drijver-Verblifa (TDV) company, a packaging manufacturer for the food and chemical industries in Deventer, faced labor shortages. The company's personnel affairs manager, Piet Kempes, leveraged the labor migration agreement to recruit Turkish workers. Other factories, including Noury & Van der Lande, Condens/Coberco, Auping, and Daim, similarly brought in Turkish laborers to the region. As a result, a sizable Turkish migrant community formed in Deventer, and this group congregated to spend leisure time and fulfill their longing to Turkish culture. It was within this context that a group of factory managers, led by Turkish worker Mehmet Sar, proposed the idea that Turkish laborers should actively engage in sports to make the most of their free time. Their efforts culminated in the foundation of SV Turkse Kracht. By integrating sports into their daily lives in their host country, Turkish workers played a significant role in fostering a strong sports culture within the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands (SV Turkse Kracht, 2015).

The Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands has demonstrated significant interest in a range of sports, particularly football and combat sports. This enthusiasm has translated into participation in sports activities and the establishment of diaspora-led sports clubs. Long-established institutions such as SV Turkse Kracht continue to hold a prominent place among the Turkish community in the Netherlands.

The emergence of Turkish sports clubs was particularly concentrated in regions and periods of high levels of labor migration. Before establishing their own sports facilities, Turkish civil society groups often sought inclusion within existing associations. During the 1960s, the Foreign Workers' Solidarity Foundation *(Stichting Bijstand Buitenlandse Werknemers)* promoted participation in sports and entertainment activities among foreign workers. The foundation provided financial and logistical support to Turkish athletes interested in various sports disciplines. Recognizing Türkiye's strong wrestling tradition, the foundation's president highlighted in 1965 that Turkish athletes were among the world's leading wrestlers. In response, the Halter *(De Halter)* sports club in Utrecht provided designated sports facilities for Turkish wrestlers (Algemeen Dagblad, 1982).

Thus, since the early years of migration, Utrecht has emerged as a sports hub, alongside Deventer and Rotterdam. During this period, a special amateur league tournament was established for foreign workers. The league, held in Utrecht between 1968 and 1976, featured teams such as

"Sports serve as a platform for diaspora communities to strengthen diasporic identity awareness and solidarity. This is facilitated through unique spaces of interaction and the universal rules of sports at both national and international levels. Sports often yield success for both countries involved and act as a unifying force between communities and nations due to their transethnic nature."

Türk Gücü, Yaşamspor, and *Ardahanspor* (50jaargastarbeidersutrecht, 2023), attracting a significant number of spectators. Jo Pastoor, the association president of the league for foreign workers, regarded the formation of Turkish football teams in the leagueas a crucial step toward self-organization and community development (De Tijd: Dagblad Voor Nederland, 1973). The experience gained through participation in this league encouraged Turkish migrants to establish their own football clubs. Over time, this process evolved into a broader movement in which Turkish immigrants formed clubs that adhered to the regulations of the Dutch Football Federation. These clubs not only facilitated sports participation but also became community hubs offering various benefits.

A notable example is the *Barbaros Sports Club*, founded in 1979 in Hengelo, in the eastern Netherlands. The club extended its activities beyond sports, serving as a social institution. Its canteen functioned as a gathering space, and it hosted events such as iftar dinners and even established a small mosque to support community needs. Barbaros Sports Club also played a pioneering role in promoting women's participation in sports by founding a women's football division. The club's contributions were recognized in local media and featured in a four-part documentary series (RTV Oost, 2022).

In Amsterdam, early Turkish sports clubs were established within mosque communities. Similar to other mosques in the city, the Selimiye Mosque initiated sports programs, particularly in martial arts, which contributed to the formation of sports federations and related umbrella organizations (Van Heelsum, 2001). A key figure was taekwondo instructor Burhan Yıldırım, who became popular within the Turkish community in Amsterdam with the taekwondo lessons he began at the Selimiye Mosque in 1986. At the time, the mosque was housed in a former school building with a gymnasium, allowing Yıldırım to conduct weekly taekwondo and karate classes for young people of various age groups. Faced with challenges in securing a dedicated facility for martial arts training, Yıldırım went on to establish Hak Spor Karate and Taekwondo School, using the mosque as a base to promote martial arts among youth in Amsterdam. Similarly, *Amsterdam Çağlayan Spor*, a football club established in a mosque in 1987, later rebranded as *Türkiyemspor* and achieved significant success in amateur football (Het Amsterdamsche Voetbal, 2019).

By the 1990s, sports clubs founded by Dutch Turks had expanded their reach beyond the Turkish community, welcoming participants from diverse ethnic backgrounds, including Dutch nationals. In 1997, the cultural association *Türkevi* organized Amsterdam's first oil wrestling tournament, emphasizing traditional Turkish sports and fostering cultural connections within the diaspora (Dibbits et al., 2005).

National and International Achievements of Amateur and Professional Turkish Athletes

The Dutch Turkish community has made significant contributions to sports, particularly in football, at both national and international levels. Many footballers who received their foundational training in the Netherlands have gone on to play in major leagues such as the Eredivisie and the Turkish Süper Lig, contributing to the development of both Dutch and Turkish football. Notably, Hurşit Meriç, who made a name for himself at the Amsterdam-based club *Türkiyemspor*, has built a successful career in these leagues.

Other prominent Dutch-born footballers of Turkish descent, including Halil Dervişoğlu (born in Rotterdam), Orkun Kökçü (born in Haarlem), Deniz Türüç (born in Enschede), and Oğuzhan Özyakup (born in Zaandam), have played for the Turkish National Football Team with distinction. In women's football, Sara Temel has also excelled as a member of the Turkish Women's National Team. Additionally, Uğur Yıldırım remains the only footballer of Turkish origin to have played for the Dutch Men's National Team (van der Horst, 2021). Beyond players, Serdar Gözübüyük has gained recognition as an accomplished referee, officiating matches in prestigious competitions such as FIFA and UEFA World Cup qualifiers and the Dutch Cup final.

Dutch Turks also have international achievements in martial arts. Former boxer Orhan Delibaş made history by winning a silver medal for the Netherlands at the 1992 Summer Olympics. Nicknamed "Turkish Delight," Delibaş became a symbol of pride for the Dutch Turkish community and inspired a new generation of athletes excelling in mixed combat sports including kickboxing and at events like the UFC. Gökhan Saki and Tayfun Özcan also have achieved notable international success.

Female athletes of Turkish descent have also distinguished themselves in global competitions. Canan Yorulmaz, who was named Athlete of the Year in Tilburg in 2008, secured first place in the European Karate Championship the same year. She later reinforced her sporting achievements by winning tournaments on the world stage, establishing herself as a leading Dutch athlete of Turkish descent.

Dutch Turks have also demonstrated excellence in parasports. Mustafa Korkmaz, a Dutch athlete of Turkish origin, serves as the captain of the Dutch national wheelchair basketball team (Basketball Experience NL, n.d.). In fencing, Elke van Achterberg, the world champion in the youth category for disabled athletes, faced challenges in representing the Netherlands at the 2016 European Championship. Thanks to her dual citizenship, inherited from her Turkish grandfather, she opted to compete for the Turkish National Team, ultimately securing a top-10 finish in the championship (ParaWatcher.nl, 2020). Similarly, Resul Karabulut, a member of the Amsterdam Terminators Wheelchair Rugby Team, has represented the Dutch National Team at an elite level. In addition

to these athletes, many other Dutch Turks have achieved success in parasports at both amateur and professional levels.

The Most Popular Sports Among Turkish Diaspora in the Netherlands

Since the early years of migration, football and martial arts have been the most popular sports among the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands. Academic research has consistently highlighted the prevalence of Turkish participation in combat and strength-based sports, attributing this trend to both their popularity in Türkiye and socioeconomic factors. Janssens and Elling, referencing Bourdieu and Hargreaves, argue that the relationship between working-class culture and engagement in specific sports plays a significant role in this phenomenon. They assert that lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to engage in sports such as boxing, as these activities align with professions that require physical strength and may serve as an outlet for endurance and self-defense (Janssens & Elling, 2005).

Football, however, remains by far the most popular sport within the Turkish diaspora. This comes as no surprise, given that both watching and playing football serve as a cultural experience that fosters a sense of social cohesion and unity among community members. The deep-rooted Turkish enthusiasm for football is well recognized across the Netherlands, with the diaspora known for its passionate fan culture and collective celebrations of victories (Bruinewoud, 2024).

Turks in the Netherlands engage in football at higher rates than other ethnic minority groups, both in street settings and within clubs (Janssens & Elling, 2005). While football is predominantly favored by men, individual sports such as fitness and aerobics have gained more popularity among women. According to official statistics, the seven most popular sports among Dutch Turks between the ages of 15 and 79 are detailed in Table 4 (Vogels, 2014).

The field of sports has not been entirely free from challenges for disadvantaged groups or those from immigrant backgrounds. Although sports clubs in the Netherlands are legally obligated to ensure non-discriminatory environments, issues of discrimination persist. Research conducted by the Mulier Institute reveals that four out of ten athletes with an immigrant background in the Netherlands have encountered discriminatory remarks related to their ethnicity, skin color, or religion. Howe-

Table 4: Most Popular Sports Among Dutch Turks

Sports	Participation rate
Fitness/aerobics	43%
Football	34%
Swimming	13%
Walking	11%
Running	9%
Martial Arts	5%
Basketball	3%

Source: Vogels, 2014.

ver, sports clubs that foster diverse participation are increasingly viewed as platforms for reducing discrimination, as they encourage teamwork and facilitate positive interactions (Elling & Cremers, 2021).

Conclusion

At present, the Dutch Turkish diaspora has attained and continues to attain notable success in specific sports, namely football and martial arts. Despite Turkish athletes' commendable performance on international platforms, the representation and participation rates of female athletes in sports remain insufficient, necessitating further advancements (Vogels, 2014). Since the 1960s, the first-, second-, third-, and fourth-generations of the Dutch Turkish community have exhibited their potential by achieving significant milestones in sports. Each successive generation has shown increased interest, participation, and success in athletic pursuits. Presently, talented Turkish football players are part of the youth systems of some of the most prominent football clubs in the Netherlands. Additionally, young talents are gaining recognition in martial arts. To sustain these achievements and enable young individuals to develop their careers, sports awareness, and an understanding of their societal roles, multifaceted support is essential. In this regard, fostering young talent is of paramount importance. Furthermore, Dutch Turks recognize the physical, social, cultural, emotional, and numerous other benefits of sports. Guided by this understanding, they actively work to develop sports facilities, increase club memberships, and identify young talents.

Simultaneously, sports serve as a platform for diaspora communities to strengthen diasporic identity awareness and solidarity. This is enabled through unique spaces of interaction and the universal rules of sports at both national and international levels. Sports often yield success for both countries involved and act as a unifying force between communities and nations due to their transethnic nature. Similarly, sports provide alternative opportunities for disadvantaged groups to enhance their social participation and achieve success, offering a potential pathway for young immigrants with talent in specific sports (Aktaş, 2023). This underscores the broader societal influence of sports within diaspora communities.

The success of the Turkish diaspora in sports that are popular in both Türkiye and the Netherlands, such as football and martial arts, is widely recognized. In the future, it is likely that Dutch Turks, who increasingly become an integral part of Dutch society, will also achieve success in traditional sports popular in the Netherlands, such as jokeying, swimming, and hockey, which have historically done well in the Olympics. The combination of the Netherlands' robust sports infrastructure, societal gender equality, sports culture and tradition, alongside the entrepreneurial spirit and passion for sports among Dutch Turks, will create new opportunities for achieving success on the international stage.

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Interview

ACCESSIBLE DIASPORA, ACCESSIBLE SPORTS: AN INTERVIEW WITH NATIONAL ATHLETE RESUL KARABULUT

RESUL KARABULUT

Player for the Amsterdam Terminators Wheelchair Rugby Team

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself and share your migration story?

My name is Resul Karabulut, born in 1992 in Edremit, Balıkesir. My family's migration journey is quite unique. My grandfather moved to the Netherlands as a worker, and my mother was born there. She grew up in the Netherlands before the family eventually returned to Türkiye. My mother married my father in Türkiye, and they decided to settle there. However, due to my health issues and the insufficient healthcare facilities in Türkiye at the time, my family chose to return to the Netherlands when I was two years old.

✍ How did you start playing rugby, and what motivated you to pursue it?

I started playing rugby by chance. Initially, I was involved in wheelchair basketball but had to pause due to surgeries. Later, I decided to return to sports and was invited to try rugby at a sports event. Initially, I was hesitant, as I had a strong preference for wheelchair basketball and did not view rugby as a prominent sport. However, once I tried it, my perspective changed completely. The most influential factor in my choice was the sense of power I felt in the chair, particularly the thrill of making a tackle at full speed and bringing someone to the ground. The dynamic and exhilarating nature of rugby motivated me further, turning this unexpected venture into an exciting new chapter in my life.

✍ Are you the first Turkish player to be selected for the Dutch National Team in rugby? How was this received by Dutch society, and what is the experience for other immigrant athletes?

I am not the first Turkish player to be selected for the team, as there was another Turkish player before me. Given the multicultural nature of Dutch society, my inclusion was perceived as quite normal. There are also several other immigrant athletes on our team.

✍ Could you describe the process of being selected for the Dutch National Team and your experiences along the way?

The formation of the team brought together many talented players in the Netherlands, and the team gradually strengthened. The selection process and training were integral to this development. By participating in various tournaments, we honed our skills and eventually continued as a national team.

✍ What does it mean to you to be part of the sports world with both your Turkish and Dutch identities?

Being part of the sports world while embracing both my Turkish and Dutch identities is a source of great pride for me.

✍ How do you transform the challenges associated with being disabled into strength and motivation in a competitive environment like sports?

My disability does not make me feel

"Sports bring people from different cultures together around a common goal."

weak; on the contrary, it empowers me. In sports and in competition broadly, it drives me to act with even greater determination and motivation. While it may appear as a limitation to others, I view it as a source of strength that has shaped my resilience not only in athletics but also in life.

✍ As someone who has overcome obstacles, what were the biggest challenges in your athletic career, and how did you overcome them?

One of the greatest challenges I faced was confronting the prejudices of others regarding my abilities. I transformed these negative perceptions into a motivating force, dedicating myself to disciplined efforts to prove my capabilities and overcome such barriers.

✍ How interested are Dutch Turks in sports, and which activities are particularly popular?

Sports are highly popular among Dutch Turks, with football being the most recognized and widely followed activity.

✍ Immigrant athletes are most visible in football. How do you assess this phenomenon?

This is likely due to the global recognition and popularity of football. As a child, I also participated in a special football team for athletes with disabilities.

✍ How does the support of the Turkish community and the Turkish diaspora in rugby affect you?

Rugby, being a relatively lesser-known

"Being part of the sports world with both my Turkish and Dutch identities make me proud."

sport, has a low recognition rate within the Dutch Turkish community. Increasing its visibility is essential to generating greater interest and participation in the sport.

✍ What are your hobbies or interests outside of sports?

Beyond sports, I have a creative disposition. I studied jewelry design and, in my spare time, I engage in various handicraft projects, such as creating jewelry.

✍ What do you think is the unifying power of sports among people? As a Turkish-born Dutch National Team athlete, have you been able to observe the unifying power of sports among societies?

Sports undoubtedly possess a unifying power. Sports bring together individuals from diverse cultures around a common goal, fostering connection and collaboration. This is one of the significant benefits that sports offer.

✍ What is your advice to young athletes and athletes with disabilities?

My advice is to never give up. Always believe in yourself, remain committed to continuous learning and effort. Every obstacle faced is an opportunity for growth that strengthens you. Be patient, trust your journey, and take one step at a time towards achieving your dreams.

Interview

INTERVIEW WITH AMSTERDAM YOUTH UNION FOOTBALL CLUB'S PRESIDENT MEHMET CILIZOĞLU ON THE DUTCH TURKISH COMMUNITY'S RELATIONSHIP WITH FOOTBALL

MEHMET CILIZOĞLU
President, Amsterdam Youth Union

✍ Can you briefly tell us about yourself and your family? Can you tell us about your migration history and life?

I was born in 1984 in Kozan, a village in Yozgat. I completed my primary education in İzmir before moving to the Netherlands in 1998. After completing my education in the Netherlands, I graduated from the Department of Finance. In 2008, I married Gül Cılızoğlu, and we now have three children aged 13, 9, and 3. My late grandfather, with whom I share my name, initially migrated to Germany in the 1970s. While residing there with my father, he tragically passed away in an accident while traveling to Türkiye. My father later lived in Türkiye for some time before emigrating to the Netherlands, where he eventually brought us to join him eight years after his migration.

✍ You are currently the President of the Amsterdam Youth Union (Amsterdam Gençler Birliği - AGB). Can you tell us the story of the establishment of AGB and the mission of the club?

Our club, founded in Amsterdam by our predecessors in 1982, initially operated under the name "Dutch Turkish League" during its early years. In 1986, it officially became a legal entity, was recognized by the Dutch Football Federation (KNVB), and gained the right to compete in Dutch leagues. The primary goal of AGB's establishment was to provide Turkish workers with a platform to come together through football during their leisure time, fostering a sense of community. Since 2016, third- and fourth-generation members who have grown up in the Netherlands have joined

the management, and the club's vision has been updated to address the contemporary needs of the Dutch Turkish community. Currently, our club places significant emphasis on youth-focused initiatives, with the aim of leaving a meaningful legacy for future generations.

✍ What is your club's role in the Turkish diaspora and its contributions to society? Are there any examples you would like to provide on this subject?

More than half of our club members are Turkish origin individuals. In our club individuals who feel excluded for any reason find comfort and a sense of belonging. Our club plays a significant role in fostering the social participation and integration of its members. For instance, two brothers who relocated from Türkiye to the Netherlands three years ago sought to join several clubs but were turned away due to a lack of available spots. When they approached us, we integrated them into a suitable team. During a recent periodic meeting with our players, I observed that these brothers now speak Dutch more fluently. Witnessing how our club facilitates young people's adaptation to life in the Netherlands is profoundly meaningful to us. Clubs like AGB also play a crucial role in the self-confidence and personal development of young people of Turkish origin. Beyond the physical benefits of sports, our club offers a space for enjoyment and self-expression. Here, young people can authentically articulate their identity, values, and emotions. Additionally, our coaches at AGB strive to motivate young people not only in sports but in other aspects of life as well.

As the president of AGB, what strategies do you adopt to manage and develop the club?

After assuming the presidency in January 2023, alongside the new board of directors, we began implementing strategies to advance the club. I had previously served on the club's board since 2016. We categorize children and young people by age and ability, assigning them to teams that align with their level. Our approach involves two distinct pathways: performance-oriented teams and recreational teams. In performance-oriented teams, we include talented players with specific goals, training them to compete at a high level. These teams receive specialized training. Recreational teams, on the other hand, cater to players who may not possess the same level of talent but still deserve the opportunity to enjoy sports and football. By ensuring players are matched with teams aligning their competences, we enable all participants to experience the benefits and enjoyment of sports. All our coaches are certified by the Dutch Football Federation (KNVB), ensuring that the training provided is of a high standard. Comprehensive training programs are designed, and player development is closely monitored using technological tools. This system has started to yield promising results. For example, two of our players have signed contracts with FC Utrecht, one with Feyenoord, and four with FC Almere, all clubs competing in the Dutch Super League. These achievements highlight the significant contributions our club is making to Dutch football.

"The primary goal of AGB's establishment was to provide Turkish workers with a platform to come together through football during their leisure time, fostering a sense of community."

What can you say about the team's position in the Dutch football landscape? What are your future goals?

If our A team wins this season, it will secure promotion to the Dutch 4th league. Our primary goal is to establish permanence in the 4th league, with an eventual aim to advance to the 3rd league. Currently, our A team competes in the 1st division of the regional leagues. Our ambition is to win the championship this year and position ourselves as the highest-performing Turkish club in the European amateur leagues.

How many young football players are currently part of your club? What are your weekend training and youth system activities?

Our club boasts 435 active young football players. We run 23 youth teams across various levels, starting from the age of 8. These teams train twice a week and compete in their age-group leagues organized by the Koninklijke Nederlandse Voetbalbond (KNVB), the Dutch national football federation, on weekends. Additionally, 45 children aged 5-7 participate in our training programs under the AGB framework.

What strategies does your club employ to ensure sustainability and long-term success?

The most notable feature of our club is that it does not solely focus on training football players. We also train coaches, referees, and other essential personnel in the football ecosystem. For the continuity of AGB, we aim to cultivate future generations of presidents, managers, coaches, and referees within the club.

What are your thoughts on the unifying power of football among young people and communities?

I firmly believe in the significant unifying power of football. Amsterdam is home to people from diverse cultural backgrounds, and football fields serve as critical spaces that bring these individuals together. Our club includes players of Turkish, Dutch, Moroccan, African, Surinamese, Portuguese, and Brazilian origin. The ability of

"Clubs like AGB also play a crucial role in the self-confidence and personal development of young people of Turkish origin."

football to create such a vibrant mosaic underscores its immense power to unite communities.

✍ Are young Dutch football players interested in AGB?

We also have Dutch football players within our ranks. While there may initially be some prejudice against us due to our identity as a Turkish club, these perceptions change once individuals join and experience our inclusive and welcoming environment. Many Dutch players who initially joined as team members have gone on to serve as coaches for our youth teams.

✍ What is your perspective on the Dutch Turkish community's relationship with football and sports?

We have observed that parents in the Dutch Turkish community are increasingly encouraging their children to participate in football and sports. While earlier generations emphasized enrolling talented children in sports, there is now a broader focus on promoting socialization and physical activity. This shift represents a positive trend in the community.

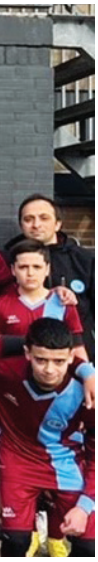
✍ Has AGB faced any advantages or disadvantages as a football club founded by Turkish-origin citizens?

Certainly. Opposing clubs sometimes approach us with prejudice due to a lack of familiarity. However, when they visit our club and witness the positive atmosphere

and hospitality - an integral aspect of our culture - their opinions often shift.

✍ Finally, can you share an interesting or humorous moment from the club's history?

Our club's history includes many memorable moments. Recently, one of our founding members, while observing a youth team's training session, shared a nostalgic story. He pointed to the advanced equipment used by the team and recalled how, during the club's early days, they had only four footballs and no training cones. He recounted an incident where the police stopped them for a routine check on their way to a match. During the interaction, they noticed traffic cones used by the police and inquired about if they might borrow them, explaining that they were in the process of



establishing a new football club and lacked basic equipment. The police explained that the cones were typically collected and reused but agreed to consult their superiors regarding the request. Four hours later, the officers generously provided 15 cones to support their efforts. This marked the acquisition of the club's first training equipment. Today, the club has significantly more resources, with each player training using their own ball. Reflecting on such memories shared by our elders enables us to appreciate the past and better understand the value of the opportunities we now enjoy. Another cherished memory involves the former Amsterdam Consul General, Mr. Engin Arıkan, who actively participated in the club. He was a distinguished member of our "veteran" team, composed of older, more experienced former players.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

Tüfekçi, Önal ve Şengör'den sonra şimdi de Ahmet Keloğlu Avrupa sahalarının tozunu atıyor

Den Haag takımında oynayan Ahmet Keloğlu'na yabancılar gözlerinin içi gibi bakıyorlar...

Kâmuran Sümercan

İlyas Tüfekçi... Erhan Önal... Mehmet Şengör... Engin Verel'den sonra şimdi de Ahmet Keloğlu Avrupa sahalarının tozunu atıyor...

Hollanda'nın Den Haag takımında futbol yaşantısını sürdüren Ahmet Keloğlu'na yabancılar gözlerinin içi gibi bakıyorlar.

Den Haag'ın, Hollanda ligindeki başarısında büyük payı olan Ahmet Keloğlu takımının Rapid Wien ile yaptığı özel maçta harikalar yarattı...

Daha uzun yıllar Hollanda'da futbol oynamayı düşlediğini söyleyen Keloğlu bu konuda şöyle konuşuyor:

"İşçi bir ailenin çocuğu olarak 11 yaşında Hollanda'ya geldim... Gerçekten çok zorlu günler geçirdim... Ancak şimdi zirvedeyim. Bundan böyle kolay kolay kimse beni buradan indiremez."

A 1981 newspaper report on the success of Turkish football player Ahmet Keloğlu in The Hague.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 04-02-1981*

Hollanda'daki Türk takımlarının şampiyonasında Leiden Türk Gücü birinci oldu

KAMURAN SÜMERCAN AMSTERDAM'dan bildiriyor

Hollanda'nın Sliedrecht kentinde final maçında Lieden Türkgücü, rakibi Rosendal Asyaspor'u 3-1 yenerek şampiyon olmuştur. Üçüncülük maçını ise Den Haag Karadeniz Gençliği 2-1 mağlup eden Roterdam Anadolu Gençlik kazanmıştır.

Bu müsabakaları Türkiye'den davet edilen Futbol Federasyonu Başkanı İbrahim İskeçe de izlemiş ve birinci olan takıma şampiyonluk kupasını vermiştir. Maçlara Türk kolonisinin ve Hollanda'da çalışan Türklerin ilgisi büyük olmuştur. İstiklâl Marşı ve folklor gösterileri ile başlayan müsabakalardan sonra Hollanda Büyükelçimiz Özdemir Benler de şampiyon Leiden Türkgücü takımına bir kupa vermiştir.

A 1980 newspaper report on a football tournament organized by Turkish teams in the Netherlands.
Source: *Milliyet* Newspaper, 20-05-1980)

A 1990s photograph of Halis Yıldırım, one of the founders of the Hak Spor Karate and Taekwondo School, demonstrating defensive movements
Source: *Halis Yıldırım*

A 1971 photograph of the Türk Gücü Football Club at Galgenwaard Stadium in Utrecht
Source: *Utrecht 50jaargastarbeidersutrecht*

CHAPTER X.

DIASPORA
AND NEIGHBORHOOD

THE ATATÜRK DORMITORY, THE FIRST DWELLING OF TURKISH WORKERS IN AMSTERDAM: SLEEPING QUARTERS OR HOME?

Ahmed Emin Batman & Ole Lechner

INTERVIEW WITH OĞUZHAN AKDEMİR ON THE SPATIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MOSQUES FOR THE TURKISH COMMUNITY IN THE NETHERLANDS: BEYOND A PLACE OF WORSHIP

Oğuzhan Akdemir

THE ATATÜRK DORMITORY, THE FIRST DWELLING OF TURKISH WORKERS IN AMSTERDAM: SLEEPING QUARTERS OR HOME?

AHMED EMİN BATMAN & OLE LECHNER[1]

Introduction

Woonoord Atatürk, also known as the Atatürk Yurdu in Turkish, was a housing complex established on Klaprozenweg in North Amsterdam to accommodate Turkish migrant workers employed in the construction and shipbuilding industries. It was among the earliest settlements of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands. Commonly referred to as "*Turkenkamp*" (Turkish Dormitory), it was in operation between 1965 and 1978 (Baartman, 1993). For many Turkish workers, feeling home in a foreign environment was challenging, as they frequently encountered suboptimal treatment from Dutch administrators and employers of the dormitory. Consequently, they often had to engage in demonstrations to demand improved living and working conditions. Despite these challenges, the residents of Atatürk Dormitory managed to create a sense of belonging by fostering solidarity and introducing elements of their cultural heritage into the Netherlands. This paper examines the significance of the dormitory in preserving the cultural identity of the Turkish diaspora, facilitating the formation of associations and organizations, and serving as a foundation for social and cultural spaces in the Netherlands. Additionally, it explores how the dormitory's residents sought to shape their living and working conditions in accordance with their own aspirations.

The Migration Process from Türkiye to the Netherlands

Following World War II, the Netherlands experienced an era of rapid economic and industrial expansion. This period of growth, coupled with an increase in the number of Dutch citizens pursuing secondary and higher education, resulted in a significant labor shortage in industries requiring manual and unskilled labor. Sectors such as construction and heavy industry, in particular, faced difficulties in recruiting a sufficient workforce from the local population. To address this shortfall, Dutch employers initially recruited workers from Southern European countries, including Italy, Spain, Portugal, and Yugosla-

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via. By the early 1960s, recruitment efforts expanded to include workers from Morocco and Türkiye (Jennissen et al., 2011; Tuşkan & Vogel, 2004). On August 19, 1964, an agreement was signed between the governments of the Netherlands and Türkiye to regulate the recruitment and employment of Turkish laborers.

Initially, labor migration was perceived as a temporary measure, with both Dutch employers and the government assuming that migrant workers would return to their home countries upon the completion of their contracts. Many workers also shared this expectation, intending to accumulate financial savings in the Netherlands to support their families in Türkiye or to invest in businesses upon their return. However, over time, an increasing number of workers opted to extend their stay, with many ultimately settling permanently, as both workers and employers recognized the advantages of prolonged employment (Tuşkan & Vogel, 2004).

The Establishment of the Atatürk Dormitory

Hüseyin Kayaturan was one of many Turkish migrants who arrived in the Netherlands to work in the industrial sector. Previously employed as a foreman at an American-owned steel and metal manufacturing company in Türkiye, he was recruited by the Netherlands Dock and Shipbuilding Company *(Nederlandsche Dok en Scheepsbouw Maatschappij – NDSM).* Following an evaluation of his physical health and technical skills as a metal worker (using a burner) by a Dutch employer and an interpreter, he successfully met the requirements and was subsequently invited to relocate to the Netherlands. On August 7, 1970, he arrived at Atatürk Dormitory with only a small suitcase containing essential items such as pajamas, a shirt, underwear, a shaving kit, and a towel. The following day, he commenced work at NDSM (Kayaturan, 2023). Although the majority of the dormitory's residents were employed at NDSM, its initial construction was intended for construction workers from the companies Intervam and Indeco-Coignet (Ernst, 2000). The dormitory's construction commenced on May 4, 1965, and within a few months, on November 24, the first group of residents moved in. The official inauguration took place on December 11, 1965, in a ceremony led by the then-Turkish Ambassador to the Netherlands, Reşat Erhan, who raised the Turkish flag. The dormitory was named after Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Türkiye, and a portrait of Atatürk was displayed in the grand hall (SoZaVoX, 1966). The signage of the dormitory featured the Turkish word "Yurt," which translates to "dormitory" or "residence."[3] However, it also means "homeland," subtly evoking a sense of national belonging. Whether this linguistic nuance was intentional remains unclear.

Life in Atatürk Dormitory and Its Significance for the Turkish Diaspora

Atatürk Dormitory was composed of white wooden barracks, containing a total of 34 living units. Each unit accommodated eight residents who shared a small communal area, a dining table, a restroom, a shower room, and a storage space. Each living space measured 60 square meters and was characterized by its modest interior design. The dormitory complex also included an administrative building, which housed offices, an executive office, a small infirmary, and a storage area. Additionally, the facility featured a kitchen building, two staff apartments, an entertainment hall - equipped with a canteen and a stage - a small place of worship, and a garage (Stadsarchief

3-With the accusative case and consonant lenition, the word becomes "yurdu" -trans.

Amsterdam, 1965; SoZaVoX, 1966). The administration of Atatürk Dormitory was divided between the Dutch government and the Municipality of Amsterdam. However, various operational challenges arose, particularly regarding occupancy rates. Due to the dormitory not always being fully occupied, high operational costs were incurred, which remained a persistent issue throughout its existence (Ernst, 2000).

Despite financial difficulties, funding was available for recreational activities during the residents' leisure time. Initially, the library in the complex contained only a limited number of books and magazines, but through the efforts of resident İsmail Polat and others, Turkish literature and magazines were incorporated into the collection (Polat, 2023). The dormitory also organized dance nights and film screenings. While the initial selection of films consisted of British and American productions, Turkish films were later introduced at the residents' request. Sports activities were also an integral part of dormitory life. The residents established a football club, *"Ataspor,"* which competed against company teams and other dormitory teams (Ernst, 2000). Furthermore, theatrical performances were regularly staged at Atatürk Dormitory and others, with residents rehearsing between work shifts. Although the dormitory administration organized some events as well, these did not always align with the expectations of the residents. For instance, a variety show was arranged for the conclusion of Ramadan, featuring an accordion duo, acrobats, an illusionist duo, and a clown. However, this event failed to meet the expectations of the residents (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1970).

The relationship between the dormitory residents and staff was not always harmonious. Resident İsmail Polat noted that "there was not enough respect for Turks in the dormitory" (Polat, 2023). One of the most pressing

Turkish residents of the Atatürk Dormitory in Amsterdam-Noord regularly saved their earnings. The Amsterdam City Savings Bank visited the settlement every two weeks.
Source: Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Ron Kroon / Anefo

"Thereafter, it has been impossible to envision Dutch society without the Turkish community."

concerns was the quality of food. According to Polat, the meals were unpalatable, and, for instance, he was astonished by the texture of the meat, as it remained stuck between his teeth (Polat, 2023). Residents also raised concerns regarding the quality of the bread provided, describing it as unappetizing due to its excessively soft texture and, in some instances, the presence of mold. The portions were also considered inadequate; for instance, four residents were expected to share a single egg, thin slices of cheese, and a tin of stuffed vine leaves. A significant factor contributing to dissatisfaction with the food was the residents' distrust of Dutch cooks. Many suspected that pork was being prepared in the same cookware used for their meals. On one occasion, when the only Turkish cook was absent, the residents mistakenly assumed that he had prepared the meal, leading to all the food being consumed. This incident reinforced the idea that replacing Dutch cooks with Turkish cooks would be preferable (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1971).

Tensions in the dormitory escalated further following a kitchen fire in December 1972. The Turkish cook, who was working alone at the time with the stove operating at a high temperature, was blamed for the fire, which resulted in extensive damage to the stove, kitchen hood, and roof, necessitating repairs (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1972). Prior to the fire, the Dutch administration had already expressed concerns about the Turkish cook, citing issues such as alleged illiteracy, preparing food directly on the stove without using pots, and excessive use of heat that reportedly warped the stove. The fire was the deciding factor that ultimately led to the dismissal of the Turkish cook. The dismissal was met with dissatisfaction among the residents, as it resulted in the loss of "their own" sole cook, the prospect of further "unbearable" meals, and the diminished ability to control the preparation of pork in shared cooking equipment. In protest, the residents initiated a hunger strike lasting nearly three weeks. As a result, the municipality continued food production in the expectation that the protesters would eventually abandon the strike. However, this led to the weekly disposal of approximately 10,000 Dutch guilders worth of food (Het Parool, 1973a).

The dormitory manager, Mr. Jansen, alleged that the hunger strike was incited by certain residents who were swaying others against the dormitory administration. He even proposed expelling these individuals. However, the union rejected these claims and advocated for all residents to retain their accommodations. Ultimately, no one was expelled. Instead, Mr. Jansen retired, and his position was assumed by Mr. Visser. Under the new management, residents were granted permission to cook in their rooms, and a Turkish chef was hired to prepare traditional dishes such as kebabs. The hunger strike was hence concluded successfully. Additionally, with union support, further improvements were secured, including the continuation of Turkish film nights on Saturdays and improved access to a family doctor (Het Parool, 1973b; Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1973; Ernst, 2000).

Despite these advancements, not all protest actions yielded successful outcomes. The economic downturn in heavy industry and

Sleeping quarters for foreign workers in Klaprozenweg Amsterdam.

Source: Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Joop van Bilsen / Anefo

the subsequent closure of companies employing Atatürk Dormitory residents could not be averted. By the 1970s, the housing development sector and shipbuilding industry were experiencing significant difficulties. The 1973 oil crisis, coupled with increasing Asian competition, particularly from Japan, led to a dramatic reduction in labor demand. By 1978, the NDSM faced imminent closure, prompting large-scale strikes supported by prominent politicians. However, despite labor actions, political backing, and government financial aid, the NDSM continued to decline. By the early 1980s, Amsterdam's shipyards had completely ceased operations (Keulen & Kroeze, 2021).

The decline of heavy industry in Amsterdam resulted in widespread layoffs, leading many workers to vacate dormitory accommodations. Throughout the 1970s, the number of residents significantly decreased, making their continued operation financially unviable. Additionally, housing policies that prohibited workers from living with their families exacerbated the situation. As family reunification became more common in the 1970s, many former dormitory residents relocated to Amsterdam's city center. By 1978, the escalating financial burden rendered the Atatürk Dormitory's closure inevitable (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1978).

At the time of its closure, the Atatürk Dormitory had accumulated approximately two million Dutch guilders in operating debts. Moreover, as "guest workers" increasingly settled in the Netherlands permanently, it was considered a better solution to integrate them in the society rather than maintain them in isolated dormitory facilities (De Volkskrant, 1977). Nevertheless, as the dormitory had fostered a strong sense of community among its residents, they actively voiced their opposition to its closure (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1976).

"While the dormitory itself no longer stands, its legacy endures through the monument, 'Atatürk Street,' and the bus stop bearing the same name, all serving as reminders of the Turkish presence."

The Turkish residents were resolute in asserting their rights. During a meeting with City Council Member Louis Kuijpers, the residents' committee presented a list of ten demands, including financial compensation of 5,000 guilders per resident to cover relocation and furnishing costs in the event of the dormitory's closure. Kuijpers expressed confidence that this demand could be accommodated. Furthermore, he ensured that the relocation process would be overseen by a social worker and, if necessary, an interpreter. Ultimately, alternative housing was secured for the residents, primarily in central Amsterdam (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1977).

Additionally, the residents' committee proposed the construction of a monument to commemorate the dormitory's significance within the Turkish community in the Netherlands. This request was granted, and in August 1978, demolition of the dormitory commenced. The same month, a monument designed by M. Türkmen and Y. Mimar was inaugurated in a formal ceremony attended by City Council Member Kuijpers, NDSM representatives, and the Turkish Ambassador to the Netherlands (Stadsarchief Amsterdam, 1976).

Over the 13 years of its existence, Atatürk Dormitory became a home for its residents despite numerous challenges. The workers brought their cultural traditions with them, resisted injustices, and fostered a strong sense of community. While the dormitory itself no longer stands, its legacy endures through the monument, "Atatürk Street," and the bus stop bearing the same name, all serving as reminders of the Turkish presence. Following the dormitory's demolition, many former residents chose to remain in the Netherlands with their families. Thereafter, it has been impossible to envision Dutch society without the Turkish community.

Conclusion

Atatürk Dormitory played a crucial role in preserving the Turkish identity of guest workers. Given the challenging circumstances these workers faced, the dormitory served as a safe haven where they could practice their culture and maintain a sense of belonging. The dormitory was not only as a place of residence but also a cultural refuge where activities such as Turkish literature readings, film screenings, and theatrical performances were prevalent. These activities allowed the residents to stay connected to their heritage despite being physically distant from their homeland. This cultural continuity was essential for their mental well-being, self-esteem, and resilience in the face of frequent discrimination and cultural alienation.

The preservation of identity and cultural heritage remain highly relevant to the Turkish community in the Netherlands today. The establishment of Turkish associations and cultural centers has played a vital role in strengthening collective identity and passing down traditions to future generations. Residents of the Atatürk Dormitory, having

"The lessons in cooperation and collective action learned within the dormitory enabled them to advocate more effectively for their rights and integrate more successfully into Dutch society."

Rob C. Croes, the inauguration of Atatürk monument in Klaprozenweg Amsterdam North (1976)

Source: Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo , Rob C. Croes / Anefo

faced common hardships such as poor living and working conditions, developed a sense of solidarity and collective strength. This organizational experience laid the groundwork for the creation of Turkish community associations in the Netherlands. The lessons in cooperation and collective action learned within the dormitory enabled them to advocate more effectively for their rights and integrate more successfully into Dutch society.

Although the Atatürk Dormitory no longer exists, its historical significance and legacy continue to resonate within the Turkish community in the Netherlands. After its closure in 1978, prompted by both economic and social factors, former residents dispersed across Amsterdam and other parts of the country. Many eventually settled permanently, often through family reunification, further solidifying the community's presence. While the demolition of the dormitory marked the end of a significant chapter in the history of Turkish migration, it also signified the beginning of deeper integration into Dutch society. Today, "Atatürk Street" and the monument at the former dormitory site serve as enduring symbols of the dormitory's history and the Turkish community's contributions to the Netherlands. These landmarks not only commemorate the challenges faced by Turkish immigrants but also highlight the importance of cultural preservation within an evolving society.

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Interview

INTERVIEW WITH OĞUZHAN AKDEMİR ON THE SPATIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MOSQUES FOR THE TURKISH COMMUNITY IN THE NETHERLANDS: BEYOND A PLACE OF WORSHIP

OĞUZHAN AKDEMİR

Secretary of the Board of Directors, Deventer Central Mosque

(Affiliated with the Dutch Diyanet Foundation)

✍ Can you briefly tell us about yourself and your migration history?

My name is Oğuzhan Akdemir, and I was born and raised in Deventer, the Netherlands, although my family originates from Ardahan, Türkiye. I hold a master's degree in Business Administration. I have always considered it important to contribute to society. To fulfil this purpose, I serve as a municipal council member in Deventer, aiming to amplify the voices of diverse social groups and implement positive changes that benefit the local community. Through my work, I strive to address societal needs and provide meaningful service.

✍ What should we think of when we say "mosque" in the Netherlands? As a young person born and raised in the Netherlands, what do mosques mean to you personally?

In the Netherlands, mosques transcend their primary function as religious spaces for prayer. They serve as vibrant social hubs that foster a sense of community, solidarity, and mutual support. For me, as someone born and raised in the Netherlands, mosques represent a vital space for preserving my cultural identity and faith. Beyond their religious role, they contribute significantly to fostering social harmony by bringing together individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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✍ How does a typical day unfold in a mosque? For example, can you describe an average weekend in a mosque? How do people of all ages spend their time in mosques in the Netherlands?

Apart from daily prayers, mosques host various events and programs, especially on weekends. Activities include women's breakfast gatherings, Quran lessons for all age groups, and special events such as iftars during Ramadan. These events provide opportunities for learning, socializing, and community bonding. Consequently, mosques in the Netherlands act as both spiritual and social centers. Additionally, recreational activities like table football and billiards are offered, ensuring a welcoming environment for all age groups.

✍ Mosques in the Netherlands generally operate as foundations or associations. What are the official procedures for establishing a mosque? For instance, are there architectural regulations for mosques with minarets under municipal urban planning laws?

Freedom of religion is a fundamental right guaranteed by Article 6 of the Dutch Constitution. This ensures that all individuals have the right to establish places of worship. When a Muslim community intends to build a mosque, particularly one with distinctive architectural features like minarets, they must adhere to local urban planning regulations and obtain the necessary permits from municipal authorities. Recent laws, such as the Environmental Law (Omgevingswet), play a crucial role in evaluating these projects. This legislation ensures that environmental, aesthetic, and social impacts are considered in the construction process.

✍ In migration studies literature, it is often noted that mosques established in diaspora settings fulfill different roles compared to those in the homeland. What is your perspective on this?

There is indeed a distinct difference between mosques in Türkiye and those in the Netherlands. In diaspora settings, mosques often serve as multifunctional community centers.

✍ What is the role and impact of mosques in the Turkish Dutch community, the Muslim community, and Dutch society in general?

For the Turkish community in the Netherlands, mosques serve as both sacred spaces for religious worship and as hubs for cultural and social activities. They play a vital role in preserving the community's religious and cultural identity while fostering unity and solidarity among Turkish individuals living abroad.

For the broader Muslim community, mosques transcend ethnic boundaries and provide a platform for interaction among Muslims from diverse backgrounds. They serve as centers for religious education, cul-

"As a participant in the Green Mosque Project, the Deventer Central Mosque strives to uphold its environmental responsibilities by integrating Islamic teachings into its daily practices."

tural preservation, and social engagement, ensuring that Islamic teachings and values are transmitted across generations. Additionally, mosques have historically supported the integration of first-generation immigrants by providing a sense of belonging and facilitating the establishment of cultural continuity within the host society.

In the context of Dutch society, mosques symbolize diversity, multiculturalism, and the protection of religious freedom. They serve as spaces where individuals from different cultural backgrounds can engage in dialogue, fostering mutual understanding. By hosting social and cultural events, such as public iftar gatherings, mosques enhance the visibility and interaction of the Muslim community within Dutch society. This contributes positively to social cohesion and integration efforts. The annual iftar programs to which everyone is invited are a good example of this.

Ultimately, mosques fulfill multifaceted roles for these three communities that extend beyond religious functions. They act as bridges of cultural preservation and social solidarity while promoting mutual harmony and understanding.

✍ What is the role of women in the work and activities in mosques?

Women play indispensable roles in the general activities and functioning of mosques. Their contributions range from organizing social and cultural events to supporting mosques financially. For example, women often arrange Ramadan iftars and raise funds for the mosque by selling homemade products. These efforts not only enrich the community's social and cultural life but also empower women to take active roles within the community.

✍ How do you evaluate Dutch society's view of mosques? Are there any challenges mosques face in this regard, and what are potential solutions?

The perception of mosques in Dutch society has evolved over time. A significant portion of the Dutch population respects mosques as part of the country's multicultural fabric and recognizes their function as part of religious freedom. However, rising far-right sentiments and increasing polarization have occasionally posed challenges, leading to prejudices and misconceptions about mosques and Muslims.

✍ Do mosques communicate with Dutch authorities? If so, how is this relationship maintained? Do authorities provide financial or moral support to mosques?

Yes, mosques generally maintain communication with local authorities. In many cases, this communication facilitates a healthy dialogue.

"Mosques in the Netherlands act as both spiritual and social centers."

In a period when far-right movements are on the rise, do Islamophobia and xenophobia affect mosques? If so, how does this situation impact mosques and their communities? Are any measures being taken, and do local authorities provide support in this regard?

The rise of far-right movements, along with Islamophobia and xenophobia, can indeed affect mosques and their congregations by creating feelings of insecurity and anxiety. Such tendencies may also undermine social cohesion and integration. However, in regions like Deventer, there exists a strong dialogue and effective communication channels between the mosque community and other societal groups. This proactive engagement has significantly contributed to fostering social integration in the local community.

How do Turkish mosques differ from places of worship in other societies?

Turkish mosques exhibit differences in both sectarian practice and organizational structure compared to other Muslim places of worship. For instance, Turkish mosques predominantly adhere to the Hanafi school of thought, while Moroccan mosques in the Netherlands often follow the Maliki tradition. In terms of organizational structure, Turkish mosques and managing institutions tend to be centrally administered and well-organized.

The "Green Mosque" is increasingly on the agenda in the Netherlands. What is the "Green Mosque," and how many Green Mosques currently exist in the Netherlands?

The Green Mosque Project was launched in 2016 as a result of the collaboration initiated by the Dutch Diyanet Foundation and the Protestant Church in the Netherlands

"In the context of Dutch society, mosques symbolize diversity, multiculturalism, and the protection of religious freedom."

with the aim of promoting sustainable places of worship. The project is an adaptation of the previously initiated and still ongoing Green Churches Project, tailored to mosques. Since its inception, 22 mosques in the Netherlands have joined the Green Mosque Project, with the number steadily growing. The Deventer Central Mosque, for instance, is the first mosque in the city of Deventer to participate in this initiative.

The concept of the "Green Mosque" (*Groene Moskee*) refers to mosques committed to operating sustainably, in line with principles of environmental conservation and ecological responsibility. Practices implemented by these mosques include installing solar panels, using renewable energy sources, replacing fossil fuels like natural gas with environmentally friendly alternatives, and adopting measures to improve energy efficiency. A comprehensive guide outlines various methods that can be implemented to achieve sustainability within mosques. Recommended practices include organizing educational programs for the congregation, engaging children in environmental activities, creating informative posters, maintaining mosque gardens responsibly, and conducting environmental clean-up initiatives. Additional measures involve promoting the use of local products, encouraging bicycle use, avoiding cleaning materials harmful to the environment, utilizing recycled paper, and reducing plastic consumption during events such as iftars.

Islam conveys a profound message emphasizing the protection of our planet, underscoring that the Earth is a sacred trust bestowed upon humanity by Allah. It is, therefore, a religious duty to safeguard and preserve this gift. As a participant in the Green Mosque Project, the Deventer Central Mosque strives to uphold its environmental responsibilities by integrating these Islamic teachings into its daily practices. Furthermore, the mosque aims to serve as a role model for society by raising awareness and fostering sustainable practices.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

A photograph from 5 May 2024 of Turkish Ambassador to The Hague Selçuk Ünal and President of the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB) Abdullah Eren visiting first-generation Turkish workers who had worked at the former NDSM shipyard in Rotterdam, on the occasion of the 60th anniversary of migration to the Netherlands.
Source: *Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (YTB)*

A 1983 photograph of the Turkish neighborhood committee on Matena Street in Dordrecht (left: Zeykir Yaman, right: Hüseyin Gündoğdu).
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_300977, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/92F41EC997F8D7333828B4AF-9CE7E792/showbrowse*

A 1965 photograph of the 'Atatürk Yurdu' on Klaprozenweg Street in the Netherlands, which housed foreign workers employed in shipbuilding at ADM and NDSM.
Source: *Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Archief van de Dienst Ruimtelijke Ordening en rechtsvoorganger: foto's, http://archief.amsterdam/archief/10009, Dosya numarası:010009013122, https://archief.amsterdam/beeldbank/detail/2fae33cf-08b3-acac-aa7f-66a2840b98d4*

A 1965 photograph of the large hall on Klaprozenweg Street in Amsterdam, designated for foreign workers.
Source: *Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Joop van Bilsen / Anefo*

Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Collectie Turkse Dordtenaren, 669_1525, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/BE77E825AC8711E489FB00163E535DC5/showbrowse*

A 1968 photograph of the Atatürk Yurdu, temporarily used to accommodate Turkish guest workers

Source: *Stadsarchief Amsterdam, Collectie Stadsarchief Amsterdam: foto's eigen fotodienst, Arsath Ro'is, J.M., http://archief.amsterdam/archief/10122, Dosya numarası: 010122044981, https://archief.amsterdam/beeldbank/detail/782ea3bf-1830-4140-0a91-1b9a29f4dbb0*

A 1987 photograph of a Turkish greengrocer in Dordrecht
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, Buunk, J.G., 552_327037,https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/9EC43DB5A4CA0E3A75E3E1BFCB73EE3E/showbrowse*

A 1989 photograph of a Turkish shop in Dordrecht, featuring both vendors and customers
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, Molendijk, Ad, 552_328827, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/0de9fd324391547c0143c3a-64b9701f9/showbrowse*

A 1980 photograph of Turkish residents at the weekly market in Dordrecht
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, Molendijk, Ad, 552_302651, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/88B5F-215B08F485B1D944B21F60E1597/showbrowse*

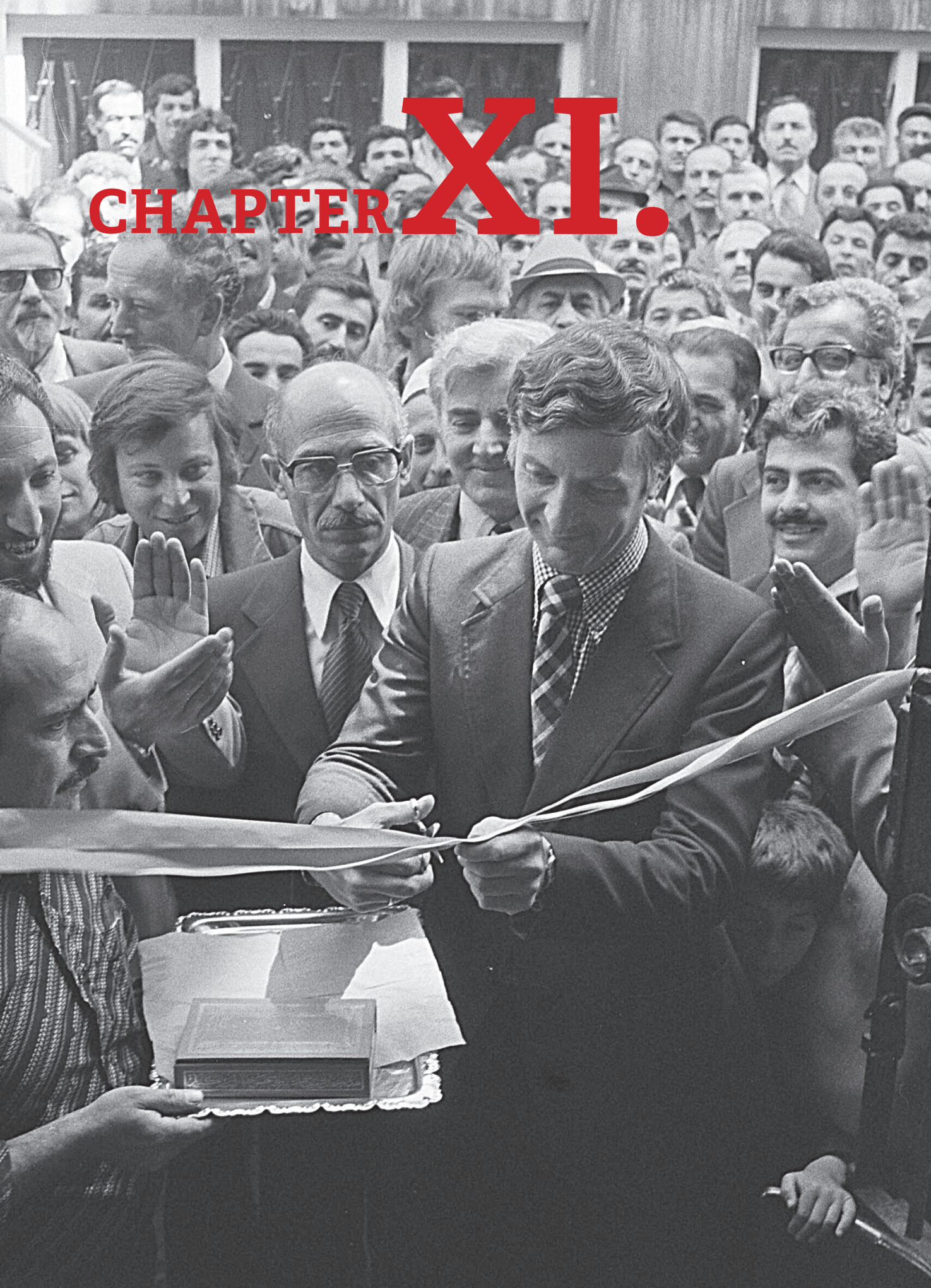
A 1995 photograph of a Turkish migrant sitting in Merwestein Park in Dordrecht
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_302805, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/D5705989F0A0583DF3F526CD3ED4223F/showbrowse*

A photograph of a Turkish family living in Dordrecht, sitting at the doorstep of their home
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Collectie Turkse Dordtenaren, 669_1349, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/BE772D14AC8711E489FB00163E535DC5/showbrowse*

A photograph of women and children posing in front of their homes in a street in Dordrecht, wearing traditional Anatolian clothing
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Collectie Turkse Dordtenaren, 669_1328, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/BE76DE9EAC8711E489FB00163E535DC5/showbrowse*

A 1980 photograph of Turkish residents of a house in the Lombok district of Utrecht (likely Javastraat or the surrounding area)
Source: *Het Utrechts Archief, Photographer J. Lankveld, 01-01-1980, 400874*

CHAPTER XI.



DIASPORA
AND RELIGION

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONTACT GROUP FOR MUSLIMS AND GOVERNMENT FOR THE TURKISH DIASPORA IN THE NETHERLANDS

Muhsin Köktaş & Ebubekir Öztüre

DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION:
AN INTERVIEW WITH YUSUF ALTUNTAŞ ON ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

Yusuf Altuntaş

JOURNEYS FROM TEMPORARY LABOR TO ETERNAL RESTING PLACE: AN INTERVIEW WITH HAMED AMRINO, PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC CEMETERIES FOUNDATION

Hamed Amrino

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONTACT GROUP FOR MUSLIMS AND GOVERNMENT FOR THE TURKISH DIASPORA IN THE NETHERLANDS

MUHSİN KÖKTAŞ[1] & EBUBEKİR ÖZTÜRE[2]

Introduction

The Contact Group for Muslims and Government *(Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid - CMO)* has been an officially recognized organization by the Dutch state since 2004, representing the interests of Muslims in governmental and political affairs as a solution partner. The CMO indirectly[3] affiliates with 382 mosques and serves as an advisory body to government institutions and ministries on matters concerning the Muslim community. Its scope of influence extends to diverse issues, including halal slaughter, Muslim cemeteries, religious education within and outside schools, Islamophobia, discrimination, and racism. Furthermore, the CMO enhances and consolidates the collective action capacity of Muslims in the Netherlands by actively monitoring developments relevant to the community and maintaining ongoing communication with ministries, political actors, and the media. This article examines the significance of the CMO for the Dutch Muslim community, with particular attention to Turkish Muslims, who constitute the largest segment of the Muslim minority in the Netherlands.

The Establishment of CMO

The practice of secularism in Western Europe varies across countries. In contrast to the more rigid and exclusionary laïcité approach adopted in France, secularism in the Netherlands is underpinned by the "principle of inclusive neutrality," This principle mandates that the state must neither discriminate against different religions or beliefs nor favor any particular group. Moreover, it allows for state engagement with religious organizations, including financial support and formal dialogue. The Dutch interpretation of secularism is enshrined in Article 1 (principle of

1-Head of the Contact Group for Muslims and Government (CMO).

2-Former General Coordinator of CMO.

3-The CMO engages in dialogue with mosque umbrella organizations, which serve as the primary representatives of individual mosques within the CMO framework.

equality) and Article 6 (freedom of religion) of the Constitution, which have shaped policies since 1983 (Pels, 2019). Historically, the Netherlands has embraced religious diversity through a system known as "pillarization," which has been a defining feature of the country's pluralistic religious landscape. During the 20th century, major societal groups including Reformed Protestants, Catholics, Liberals, and Socialists, each one of them representing a pillar, developed their own institutional structures including schools and community organizations (İmga, 2011). For decades, the Dutch government followed an Anglo-Saxon model of multiculturalism, emphasizing the role of advisory councils in managing state-religion relations. Within this framework, the government encouraged the organization of religious minorities to facilitate dialogue and address their needs.

Efforts to establish institutionalized consultation mechanisms with Muslim communities began in the 1970s. Over subsequent decades, multiple initiatives emerged, including the National Islamic Committee *(Islamitisch Landelijk Comité)*, the Dutch Islamic Council *(Islamitische Raad Nederland)*, and the Dutch Muslim Council *(Nederlandse Moslimraad*). However, these organizations faced sustainability challenges to various factors (Debeer et al., 2011).

On May 23, 2001, the Minister for Large Cities and Integration Policy held consultations with delegations from national Islamic organizations to emphasize the necessity of a formal liaison body representing these organizations in the Netherlands (Debeer et al., 2011). Following these discussions, on September 11, 2001, the Minister announced the government's intention to establish a national liaison body to facilitate consultations with (Sunni) Islamic organizations on matters concerning the Muslim population (Trouw, 2001). This initiative led to the formation of the Contact Group for Muslims and Government (Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid - CMO).

The establishment of such a liaison body was widely endorsed, resulting in the formation of a preparatory committee. This committee, known as the CMO working group, was tasked with designing a framework for dialogue between the Dutch government and the country's Islamic organizations. It was agreed that each national Islamic umbrella organization in the Netherlands would appoint two representatives to participate in the CMO working group.

The CMO working group convened on multiple occasions, including meetings on November 11, 2001; January 13, 2002; March 10, 2002; April 21, 2002; May 19, 2002; and July 6, 2002. During these discussions, all participating parties affirmed the importance of establishing the CMO. Key outcomes of these meetings included the preparation of a Discussion Paper outlining the governing principles and structure of the organization, the formulation of an Inventory of Acceptance Criteria for Contact Groups, and an assessment of the perspectives of various working group members regarding these criteria. A dedicated Criteria Committee was also established. The Dutch state had previously recognized other religious liaison organizations based on the aforementioned criteria, such as the Interchurch Contact in Government Affairs (CIO), which represents 26 Christian churches and two Jewish communities, the Central Jewish Board (CJO), which represents nine Jewish communities, and the Hindu Council, which advocates on behalf of the Hindu population.

Before the determination of the criteria for the member associations, the CMO working group initially comprised only representatives from national umbrella organizations that had been invited to the consultation meeting held on September 11, 2001. Additio-

nally, a delegation of prospective CMO members was introduced to the moderators of the Interchurch Contact in Government Affairs. The CMO working group sent a formal letter to the Dutch government emphasizing the organization's commitment to fostering social cohesion and expressing its willingness to act as a consultative partner to the state.

The CMO was officially established in 2004 by national umbrella mosque organizations representing the Turkish, Moroccan, and Surinamese Muslim communities to advocate for the rights of Muslims in the Netherlands before the state. In 2006, the Dutch government formally recognized the CMO as the official representative of Muslims in the Netherlands. At present, there are eight state-recognized religious and philosophical/lifestyle organizations in the Netherlands, which engage in annual or biannual discussions with the Minister of Religious Affairs[4] to address religious and philosophical concerns.

Principles of the CMO

The principle of the separation of church and state is a fundamental tenet of the Dutch Constitution, ensuring that the government does not interfere in the affairs of religious communities. For instance, the appointment of clergy falls exclusively within the authority of religious organizations wherein the state cannot interfere. Nevertheless, it is crucial for the government to engage in consultations with representatives of religious organizations and denominations across various domains and to establish agreements on matters of social importance. These include political and social issues such as interfaith relations and integration into Dutch society. Notable examples of such consultative bodies include the Interchurch Contact in Government Affairs, the Central Jewish Board (CJO), and the Hindu Council.

The Dutch Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, which oversees immigrant integration policies, may engage with the CMO on matters related to the inclusion of ethnic minorities, both on its own initiative and in response to requests from the CMO. Additionally, the Ministry of Justice and Security and the Ministry of Defense may consult the CMO for the selection and appointment of Islamic spiritual advisors in correctional facilities and the armed forces. Notably, the Ministry of Justice has an agreement with the Islamic Spiritual Guidance section of the Platform of Islamic Organizations Foundation *(Stichting Platform Islamitische Organisaties Rijnmond - SPIOR)* in the Rijnmond region to appoint Islamic spiritual advisors across South Holland. The CMO's development of a national framework to address this issue represents a significant milestone.

Initially, the CMO consisted of national umbrella organizations which took part in the working group. Given the breadth of the communities these organizations stand for, the CMO is widely regarded as a representative body for Muslims in the Netherlands. Moreover, the CMO operates under an expansion model, allowing for the inclusion of additional Islamic organizations. Ensuring transparency and democratic governance, the CMO is responsible for evaluating all membership applications and determining eligibility.

The Purpose of the CMO

1. Role as a Solution Partner and Interlocutor

CMO serves as a solution partner to the Dutch government, particularly regarding

4-Previously known as the Ministry of Religious Affairs (Ministerie van Erediensten), the responsibility for religious affairs has since been transferred to the Ministry of Justice and Security (Ministerie van Justitie en Veiligheid). Within this ministry, a designated civil servant (beleidsmedewerker erediensten) is tasked with coordinating matters pertaining to religious affairs.

"The CMO not only assumes the responsibility of appointing spiritual guides and Islamic religious teachers to regions and institutions where they are needed but also serves as the official interlocutor for the state on critical issues affecting Muslims, including halal slaughter."

the integration of Muslims. At the request of governmental authorities, as well as on its own initiative, the CMO offers propositions and engages in consultations addressing both structural issues and emerging problem areas. The organization seeks to establish common ground and propose viable solutions through dialogues with the government.

Policy domains in which the CMO actively participates include internal affairs, justice, defense, social affairs and employment, education, culture, science, public health, welfare, elderly policy, and policies related to emancipation. Additionally, the CMO supports the professionalization of media engagement among its affiliated organizations by coordinating public relations efforts and establishing and maintaining press contacts.

2. Role as an Appointing Authority

The CMO serves as the appointing authority designating, among other roles, Islamic spiritual guides to specific institutions and organizations. The CMO, in its capacity as the Appointing Authority *(Zendende Instantie)*, advises relevant ministers on the procedures for the appointment and dismissal of spiritual guides within the Armed Forces and Penitentiary Institutions. In this role, it facilitates communication between the state and representatives of mosque organizations and establishes specific selection criteria for prospective spiritual guides. The CMO, or a committee designated by it, is authorized to accredit spiritual guides and recommend their appointment to ministries and other governmental institutions.

Responsibilities of the CMO

In alignment with its objectives, the CMO undertakes several key responsibilities, including:

- Conducting structured, regular, and ad hoc consultations with the Dutch government
- Coordinating the appointment of Islamic spiritual guides to the Dutch Ministry of Justice and Security, the Dutch Ministry of Defense, and other state institutions as well as in private households, in accordance with the legal rights of citizens
- In consideration of the demands of citizens and their religious affiliations, the state is mandated to provide religious education in schools. Accordingly, the CMO coordinates the appointment of teachers who deliver Islamic religious education in primary schools under the authority of the Dutch Ministry of Education.
- Serving as one of the four signatories and implementers of the "Covenant on Slaughter without Stunning for Religious Purposes," alongside the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture and Innovation, the Association of Slaughterhouses and Meat Processing Companies (VSV), and the Netherlands-Israel Church Community (NIK)

- Acting as a central hub for knowledge and information on Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands
- Coordinating cultural activities including the establishment of a center dedicated to Islamic cultural heritage
- Organizing public relations efforts including designating a media unit representing CMO

Current Issues Regarding Muslims and Key Areas of Focus

As of 2024, marking the 60th anniversary of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands, the CMO advocates for the formal recognition and closer monitoring of anti-Muslim acts as a distinct category within the registration systems of anti-discrimination organizations, as well as within the Dutch Police Department. While the Police Department has recently begun to classify cases of discrimination under this category, there remains a need for broader institutional recognition. Other focal areas of the CMO's work include:

- Facilitating the standardization of halal certification in the Dutch market
- Expanding foster care and elderly care services that accommodate Islamic sensitivities
- Engaging with politicians to improve perceptions of Islam and Muslims
- Enhancing the quality of weekend religious educational programs
- Combating extremist ideologies
- Supporting the development of local imam training programs
- Advocating for increased security measures for mosques and religious congregations against anti-Muslim attacks
- Acting as a spokesperson on issues related to Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands
- Organizing community-building activities aimed at fostering social cohesion, such as national iftar events

Organizations Represented by CMO

CMO comprises ten national Muslim umbrella organizations, the majority of which are mosque associations. Collectively, these organizations represent approximately 84% of mosque associations in the Netherlands, encompassing a total of 380 mosques. Each umbrella organization holds a seat on the CMO Board of Directors, where representatives participate in policy formulation processes. Representing various ethnic groups, the CMO's member organizations are as follows:

- Hollanda Diyanet Foundation (ISN)
- Union of Moroccan Mosques in the Netherlands (UMMON)
- Milli Görüş South Holland (IGMGZN)
- Milli Görüş North Holland (IGMGNN)
- Islamic Centre Foundation in the Netherlands (SICN)
- World Islamic Mission (WIM)
- Bosnian Islamic Association of the Netherlands (IVBN)
- Turkish Islamic Cultural Federation (TICF)
- Federation of Türkiye in the Netherlands (TFN)
- Council of Moroccan Mosques in the Netherlands (RMMN)

Interfaith Cooperation on Shared Concerns

The CMO also plays a significant role in enhancing social diversity and fostering the development of a culture of mutual understanding. The organization is a member of the Consultation Group for Jews, Christians, and Muslims (OJCM), previously known as the CAIRO Committee. This platform brings

together representatives from the Christian community (the Council of Churches), the Jewish community (the Congregation of the Church in Israel and the Dutch Association for Progressive Judaism), and the Muslim community. The OJCM works to promote fundamental principles such as freedom of religion and conscience, the separation of religion and state, and adherence to universal human rights frameworks.

Additionally, the CMO is a member of the "United in Freedom" *(In Vrijheid Verbonden)* platform, which fosters interfaith dialogue and social cohesion among religious and philosophical communities in the Netherlands. This initiative, first inaugurated by Queen Beatrix in January 2005, seeks to strengthen mutual understanding and contribute to societal harmony.

The Demand for Halal Food as a Contemporary Issue and the Role of the CMO

The Netherlands is home to more than one million Muslims, nearly half of whom are of Turkish origin (CBS, 2023). A fundamental daily necessity for this population is access to halal food, which is increasingly in demand also within public institutions such as hospitals, private enterprises, and educational institutions. However, across Europe, access to halal food for Muslims and kosher food for Jews is occasionally limited, posing challenges to the exercise of religious freedom. Recently, Jewish and Muslim communities in Belgium advocated for the allowance of animal slaughter without stunning for religious purposes. However, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) upheld Belgium's regulations prohibiting such practices, ruling that these restrictions do not infringe upon the freedom of religion protected under Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights (Walker, 2024).

A key method for identifying halal products is through halal logos, labels, or certificates. However, consumer trust in halal certification processes remains a significant issue. Research on consumer panels and websites has revealed widespread skepticism among Muslim consumers regarding the authenticity of halal labels on products. Research has further revealed consumer uncertainty about the accuracy of halal quality control logos, confusion over their validity, and dissatisfaction with the current system's ability to provide reliable information. A 2010 study mapping the halal certification industry in the Netherlands identified a lack of consensus among certifying bodies. Moreover, some certificates have been deemed of poor quality or even fraudulent (NPO, 2024).

Consumers possess specific rights when purchasing products or services. The dissemination of false, incomplete, or misleading information is prohibited. While the issue of halal food is part of the political agenda in the Netherlands and Europe, the sensitivities of the consumers are not prioritized. The Dutch Food and Consumer Product Safety Authority (NVWA) has increasingly faced concerns related to halal food, particularly on the slaughter of animals in accordance with Islamic rites.

In the Netherlands, the right to conduct religious slaughter without prior stunning, in accordance with Islamic principles, is regarded as an aspect of freedom of expression and belief. Consequently, it falls under the protection of religious freedom as enshrined in Article 6 of the Dutch Constitution (Janssen, 2014). Hence, this right is legally regulated in the country. During a plenary debate in the Dutch Senate on 13 December 2011 regarding a proposed bill by former Member of Parliament Marianne Thieme of the Party for the Animals, the government was asked to provide a more appropriate approach that would address ani-

mal welfare concerns. In response to inquiries from legislators, the then Minister of State suggested the possibility of a negotiated agreement involving relevant stakeholders. This led to the development of the Covenant on Slaughter without Stunning for Religious Purposes *(Convenant Onbedwelmd Slachten Volgens de Religieuze Riten)*, which was officially signed on 5 June 2012. The agreement was reached between the Dutch government, the Contact Group for Muslims and Government (CMO) on behalf of the Muslim community, and the Netherlands-Israel Church Community *(Nederlands-Israëlitisch Kerkgenootschap – NIK)* representing the Jewish community (Rijksoverheid, 2012).

Under the terms of the agreement, and with the participation of the CMO, regulations were established to ensure the uniform implementation and monitoring of religious slaughter practices in all slaughterhouses. This framework guarantees that halal slaughter is conducted in all slaughterhouses in accordance with legal provisions. The agreement seeks to balance constitutional and international protections of religious freedom with measures aimed at improving animal welfare.

To ensure effective implementation and oversight of these regulations, the CMO, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders, developed a National Dutch Halal Standard (NHS), specifically addressing meat and meat products, in the interest of the Dutch Muslim community. Taking into account the religious, technical and procedural complexities involved in developing halal standards, as well as the pressing need for such a framework, the CMO introduced the NHS based on the provisions of the Covenant on Slaughter without Stunning for Religious Purposes. Standards and Metrology Institute for Islamic Countries (SMIIC), international halal certification standards referenced by the Turkish Standards Institution *(TSE-Helal)* and HAK *(Halal Accreditation Agency)*, served as foundational models. Through these efforts, the CMO has played a pivotal role in both securing legal recognition for halal slaughter and developing a standardized certification system for halal meat products in the Netherlands.

Conclusion

Thanks to the historical experience of the Dutch state in managing religious diversity and multiculturalism, particularly since the 1960s following labor migration agreements, Muslim immigrants from countries such as Türkiye and Morocco did not feel significantly alienated in terms of fulfilling their religious needs. During this period, the Dutch state's approach to religion, grounded in principles of inclusive neutrality and equality, distinguished it from other nations and provided space for religious minorities to thrive. By the 1980s, with the growing recognition of migrant workers as permanent residents, legal frameworks evolved to ensure that the rights of Muslims were increasingly aligned with those of Christian and other religious communities. The Netherlands' "poldermodel," a consensus-building approach through social dialogue, was extended to religious groups, leading to the establishment of organizations such as the CMO under the auspices of the state. The CMO not only assumes the responsibility of assigning spiritual guides and Islamic religious teachers to regions and institutions where they are needed but also serves as the official interlocutor for the state on critical issues affecting Muslims, including halal slaughter. Furthermore, it provides a significant platform for Muslims from diverse ethnic backgrounds to unite under a single umbrella organization in the Netherlands.

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Interview

DIVERSITY IN EDUCATION:

AN INTERVIEW WITH YUSUF ALTUNTAŞ ON ISLAMIC SCHOOLS

YUSUF ALTUNTAŞ
President of the Northern Netherlands Islamic Education Foundation
(Stichting Islamitisch Onderwijs Noord-Holland, SIO NH)

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Yusuf Altuntaş. I am 50 years old and a father of four. I completed my undergraduate and graduate studies in the Netherlands. Currently, I work as an administrator at Islamic schools. Previously, I served as a regional director at the employment agency. Additionally, I had several voluntary roles in the past. Due to my age, I have now reduced such responsibilities. These voluntary roles included protecting and improving religious rights in the Netherlands, particularly through lobbying efforts. In summary, my area of expertise lies in working as an administrator within educational institutions and civil society organizations.

✍ Could you provide a brief history and background of Islamic Schools in the Netherlands?

Islamic schools were first established in 1988. At the primary and secondary levels, the main purpose of their establishment was to address the concerns of Muslim families who believed their children could not maintain their religious identity in public or Christian schools. Although parents were satisfied with the quality of education in these schools, Muslim children faced issues regarding halal food, religious education, or celebrating religious holidays. During the early 1990s, the number of Islamic schools in the Netherlands increased rapidly. One reason for this was the relatively easier process of establishing schools at that time. However, this rapid increase sometimes brought challenges, including the establishment of more schools than necessary in some instances.

✍ How many Islamic schools currently exist in the Netherlands?

At present, there are 62 Islamic primary schools and 2 Islamic colleges at the secondary level. Four additional Islamic colleges

are scheduled to open over the next two years. One of these will be established under our Northern Netherlands Islamic Education Foundation in Amsterdam, while the others are planned for Utrecht, The Hague, and Amersfoort. I believe the number of Islamic schools has reached a sufficient level. The number of secondary-level colleges is gradually increasing. However, it remains to be seen how these colleges will progress over the next four years and whether they will develop as planned. Establishing these schools is not easy, and maintaining the quality of education and retaining staff are ongoing challenges. Moreover, the Netherlands is currently facing a severe teacher shortage that has been escalating in recent years.

✍ What is the student population and demographic profile in these schools?

Across the Netherlands, approximately 15,000 to 16,000 students attend Islamic primary schools, while the number of students in colleges is around 1,500. Moroccan-origin students constitute the majority. The Moroccan community is highly sensitive about sending their children to Islamic schools. Turkish-origin students rank second, followed by Syrians, Afghans, and other nationalities. Recently, the number of Dutch Muslims has also started to increase.

✍ What are the Dutch government's policies regarding Islamic schools? Under what laws are these schools established, and to which authorities are they accountable?

Article 23 of the Dutch Constitution guarantees educational freedom in the country. This freedom, in place since 1917,

allows different religious communities to establish schools. As a result, there are Catholic, Protestant, and Reformist schools in the Netherlands, among others. The government provides funding per student. Since there is educational freedom, the state does not interfere with the content of education. Certain criteria must be met, and the quality of education is inspected by educational authorities. Schools must not fall below the prescribed standards. In this sense, the state communicates its expectations but does not dictate how these criteria should be met. The education inspectorate, which is an independent institution under the Ministry of Education, evaluates whether these criteria are met. The state cannot interfere with the inspectorate's operations. Instead, the inspectorate publishes an annual general assessment report. In the Netherlands, educational institutions are afforded certain legal freedom. For instance, the state does not possess the legal authority to directly close a school. Instead, the decision to close a school lies solely with its administration. The state's primary recourse is to withdraw financial support. However, even in such circumstances, a school may continue to operate if it secures funding through sponsorship or alternative means, as schools in the Netherlands are managed by independent foundations. For example, our schools operate under the Islamic Education Foundation of North Holland. While our foundation is independent of the state, the schools themselves maintain an official relationship with the state. The state provides annual funding on a per-student basis, meaning that each student enrolled in the school is concurrently registered within the state education system. The state delegates the management of schools to foundations while simultaneously ensuring financial support. In this context, the school is administered by the foundation. Schools are obligated to submit two annual reports to the state: one detailing financial accountability and the other evaluating the quality of education.

✍ What is the current state of Islamic schools, and what challenges and controversies do they face?

Two main challenges stand out. First, there is the nationwide issue of teacher shortages. The second issue is related to the perception of Islamic schools. Media coverage tends to sensationalize any incidents involving Islamic schools. For instance, we are currently preparing a presentation for the municipality of Amstelveen due to an incident at an Islamic school there last week. Challenges are inevitable in every school. However, when issues arise in Islamic schools, they tend to receive immediate media attention. This coverage often leads to a generalized perception within society, whereby problems in a single Islamic school are assumed exist across all Islamic schools. We will deliver a presentation to clarify that the issue associated with the Islamic school in question is not relevant to our schools.

✍ What progress have Islamic schools made, and how are they performing academically?

Islamic schools have proven their academic success over the past decade. According to research conducted by the Dutch news channel RTL Nieuws, Islamic schools have ranked among the top-performing schools in the Netherlands over the last five years. Two key factors drive this success. First, the schools are established under challenging conditions, which motivates them to excel. Second, the secure environment these schools provide for Muslim children positively impacts their academic performance. In other schools, the approach of Dutch teachers towards Muslim children can be problematic. Some teachers may push for assimi-

"At the primary and secondary levels, the main purpose of their establishment was to address the concerns of Muslim families who believed their children could not maintain their religious identity in public or Christian schools."

lation. In contrast, we aim for integration within Dutch society while rejecting forced assimilation. Certain assimilation-oriented attitudes among teachers can lead to pedagogical challenges. Teachers may inadvertently make inaccurate assessments by comparing children from Turkish or Moroccan backgrounds with their Dutch peers. Behaviors exhibited by children from immigrant families are sometimes hastily interpreted as problematic, reflecting a limited understanding of a child's context. To effectively comprehend a child, it is essential to first demonstrate genuine interest, care, and affection. This approach fosters a bond of trust, which in turn creates a secure environment conducive to accelerated development. One of the primary strengths of our schools lies in their ability to provide a setting where multicultural Muslim children can feel secure and valued. This safe and nurturing environment serves as the foundation for their academic and personal success.

How many students graduate from Islamic schools, and do you track their career paths?

Each year, around 1,500 to 1,700 students graduate from our primary schools. As the number of Islamic schools grows, the number of graduates also rises. Our schools currently serve nearly 300 students, surpassing the average enrollment of approximately 200 students in other Islamic schools. In the Netherlands, the capacity of a school typically ranges between 250 and 300 students. If enrollment exceeds this range, the school must be divided into two to ensure the maintenance of educational quality. Principals are expected to know the names and surnames of all students within their school; otherwise, students risk being perceived as mere numbers. The higher student numbers in Islamic schools can be attributed to the significant demand for these institutions. This demand has resulted in waiting lists for enrollment at our schools. However, the overall quality of education at Islamic colleges is not yet on par with that of Islamic primary schools. Improvement in this area will require additional time. Currently, Islamic colleges graduate approximately 200 to 250 students annually. Among these graduates, we observe individuals who have attained notable positions and successful careers. Nonetheless, due to the absence of academic studies analyzing the career trajectories of our alumni, we lack comprehensive scientific data on their achievements..

What distinguishes Islamic schools from other schools in the Netherlands?

From the moment children are enrolled in our schools, they are entrusted to us and treated as our own. In this way, we are able to establish a sense of intimacy with our students, which distinguishes our approach from others. We believe that in certain other

"The educational freedom, in place since 1917, allows different religious communities to establish schools."

schools, ideas that conflict with our religious values - particularly those concerning identity and cultural value judgments - are often imposed. This creates discomfort among parents, contributing to the increasing demand for Islamic schools.

What are your main goals regarding education of Islam?

Our primary objective is to preserve and nurture the religious identity of our students while also fostering the development of their skills and talents. We do not impose specific career paths, such as becoming doctors or lawyers; instead, we encourage students to pursue fields that genuinely interest them, recognizing that it is easier to excel in areas of personal passion. The education system in the Netherlands supports this approach, as it directs students to various levels of schooling after primary education, with not all students being channeled towards university education. We seek to align with this approach. Historically, both religious and vocational education (beroepslessen) were offered in schools, but religious education has largely been phased out. Our goal is to reinstate religious education alongside vocational instruction. Through vocational education, students gain insight into career opportunities in specific fields, which equips them to make informed decisions about their future educational and professional pursuits.

What courses or activities are included in the curriculum of Islamic schools?

The curriculum in Islamic schools largely mirrors that of other educational institutions, with the addition of two hours of religious education each week. Starting from the age of 8-9, students also participate in the midday prayer. During the month of Ramadan, the theme of Ramadan is integrated into the lessons, and religious holidays are celebrated accordingly. However, certain holidays, such as Sinterklaas, Christmas, and birthdays, are not celebrated within the school, as they do not align with the school's values. Quranic education is not provided, as it is typically addressed through mosque education. The primary focus within the Islamic school context is on personal development, aiming to ensure that students evolve into morally and ethically responsible individuals.

Can you provide information about the education and qualifications of teachers?

Teachers in the Netherlands typically possess an undergraduate-level education. The required qualification for teaching in primary schools is obtained through a vocational program known as "Pabo" *(Pedagogische Academie voor het Basisonderwijs).* This program provides the necessary pedagogical training for prospective educators. In the Netherlands, primary school teaching is considered a legally protected profession. Despite this, there is a nationwide shortage of teachers. As a result, we do not mandate that kindergarten teachers have graduated from the Pabo program, opting instead to hire individuals based on their talent and potential.

In recent years, there has been a growing discourse regarding the inclusion of mother tongue education in schools, par-

"One of the primary strengths of our schools lies in their ability to provide a setting where multicultural Muslim children can feel secure and valued."

ticularly as it supports the learning of the target language. Is this approach adopted in your schools? What are your views on this matter?

I believe that mother tongue education should be offered as an elective course in schools. Currently, Dutch authorities and educational institutions remain cautious about incorporating mother tongue education into the official curriculum, often leaving it to the discretion of parents. If parents wish for their children to receive mother tongue education, they are responsible for organizing it independently. In Islamic primary schools, however, mother tongue education is offered outside regular school hours, provided that parents request it. Unfortunately, such opportunities are rare in public schools due to low demand and limited resources. Only about 20% of Islamic schools offer mother tongue lessons.

✍ How does Dutch society view Islamic schools?

The perception of Islamic schools in Dutch society is influenced by the way the school presents itself. In areas with a strong presence of right-wing or anti-immigrant sentiment, challenges may arise. The school's public relations efforts are crucial in shaping public opinion. Effective promotional activities, such as engaging local communities and establishing working groups, can help foster a positive image of the school. Ultimately, the success of these efforts largely depends on the skills of the school principal.

✍ Do Islamic schools face challenges due to anti-Muslim sentiment? If so, are there any initiatives addressing this issue?

As I explained at the beginning of the interview, as a result of some negative incidents unrelated to our school, we find ourselves frequently engaging in activities, such as the presentation to the Amstelveen Municipality, that require us to spend more time defending our institution rather than focusing on education. While it is tiresome to continuously explain ourselves to challenge prejudices in society, this task is an integral part of our work. If we do not actively present our case to the relevant authorities, prejudices will continue to persist. When we are able to convince others of our commitment to educational excellence, it brings us satisfaction.

✍ Are there religious schools established by individuals from other faiths in the Netherlands? How do these schools compare to Islamic schools, and what is the societal response to them?

In the Netherlands, there are approximately 6,500 primary schools, of which 62 are Islamic schools. Religious schools, including Islamic, Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant schools, make up about 65% of the total, while public schools account for the remaining 35%. In large cities, many Catholic and Protestant schools no longer maintain a curriculum rooted in Christianity, reflecting the secularization of religious education over time.

The state and institutions often treat the opening of Islamic schools differently than

schools of other religions. There is a noticeable hesitance and a sense of anxiety surrounding the establishment of Islamic schools, and unfounded claims are made regarding their potential negative impact on integration or the academic success of students. Approximately 70% of the 62 Islamic schools in the Netherlands were established only after legal intervention, following court rulings that granted permission for their opening after municipalities initially rejected them.

✍ Are there any Islamic higher education institutions, alongside primary, secondary, and high schools?

As a Muslim Turkish community, we do not confine Islamic education solely to primary and secondary levels. Our vision includes the establishment of the Amsterdam Faculty of Theology at the International University of Applied Sciences Amsterdam[1] *(Islamitische Theologische Faculteit Amsterdam)*. This institution will train imams, spiritual guides, and religious educators at the master's level. By achieving this goal, we aspire to address the growing need for qualified religious teachers in Islamic schools and to offer more comprehensive solutions for the local training of imams and spiritual guides, which has become a critical necessity in Western Europe.

The efforts for establishing this university have been ongoing for 11 years, and formal education commenced in 2019. In the Netherlands, a university must first graduate its initial cohort of students to gain official recognition. Accreditation can only be applied for once this milestone is achieved. We have successfully graduated our first group of students, submitted our accreditation application, and passed the initial two stages. As a result, our institution has received official recognition. The final step requires approval from the Dutch Minister of Education. We have prioritized quality throughout this process. Additionally, our university undertakes international initiatives. And to address the teacher shortage in primary schools, we plan to establish a general teaching department alongside the department for religious education.

✍ What are your thoughts on the future of Islamic schools in the Netherlands, and what are your goals?

I remain optimistic about the future of Islamic schools in the Netherlands. It is essential to maintain hope regardless of the challenges faced. When efforts are undertaken with sincere intentions, they tend to yield positive outcomes. Persistence in pursuing one's cause is crucial, a lesson we have learned firsthand through the establishment of our university. We anticipate that the Dutch government will eventually restrict the practice of receiving imams from Türkiye. Rather than waiting for such measures to take effect, we have proactively begun training imams domestically through our university. Having aspirations and acting upon them with conviction are vital for progress. Our objectives for the next two decades include sustaining the existing Islamic schools, continuing Islamic education initiatives, increasing the number of Islamic institutions at the university level, and further developing our academic staff. In the Netherlands, academics hold a significant role in shaping societal discourse. Their opinions are often given greater weight than those of politicians.

1. i-ua.nl

Interview

JOURNEYS FROM TEMPORARY LABOR TO ETERNAL RESTING PLACE: AN INTERVIEW WITH HAMED AMRINO, PRESIDENT OF THE ISLAMIC CEMETERIES FOUNDATION

HAMED AMRINO
President of the Islamic Cemeteries Foundation
(Bijzondere Islamitische Begraafplaatsen in Nederland- BIBIN)

Could you provide a concise overview of your background?

My name is Hamed Amrino, and I am 58 years old. For the past 56 years, I have resided in the Netherlands, having emigrated from Morocco with my father at the age of two. My father, an entrepreneur, established the first Islamic butcher shop in the Netherlands. However, upon reaching the age of 18, I chose to pursue a different professional path. I have dedicated the past four decades to the textile industry, specializing in design and styling, with our company distributing clothing across Europe.

You are currently the president of BIBIN *(Islamic Cemeteries Foundation - Stichting Bijzondere Islamitische Begraafplaatsen In Nederland).* What was the main reason that led you to focus on Muslim cemeteries?

I am the founder of BIBIN and have been its president for four years. Established in 2004, BIBIN was created to address the growing need for private cemeteries in the Netherlands that align with Islamic values. My personal journey with this issue began in 2002 when my father passed away and was buried in Morocco as he had been in the country at the time of his death. During the return flight to the Netherlands, I was struck by the profound sense of loss - not only because my father was no longer in my life but also because I would not be able to visit his grave as often as I wished. This experience deeply impacted me and led me to reflect on why my father, and so many others, were not buried in the Netherlands. At the time, it was uncommon for Muslims, particularly Moroccans and possibly Turks, to be interred in the Netherlands; instead, the deceased were often repatriated to their countries of origin for burial. Motivated by this experience, I founded BIBIN in 2004 to bring about meaningful change. Since then, I have dedicated

myself to the development of Islamic cemeteries in the Netherlands.

✍ How much need is there for Muslim cemeteries in the Netherlands? Why do you think more and more Muslims are choosing to be buried in the Netherlands?

The need for Muslim cemeteries in the Netherlands is both evident and increasingly urgent, a reality that became particularly pronounced during the COVID-19 pandemic. This period left families with no alternative but to bury their loved ones locally. This experience underscored the practicality and emotional significance of local burial options. For many, having the graves of their parents, grandparents, or other relatives nearby allowed for more frequent visits, providing both convenience and a sense of peace.

In contrast, prior to this shift, it was common for families to repatriate their deceased loved ones to their countries of origin, such as Morocco. Visits to these gravesites were often infrequent, typically occurring during annual summer holidays or even less frequently as families began traveling elsewhere in the summer. Meanwhile, observations at Muslim cemeteries in the Netherlands reveal a marked increase in the number of visitors, reflecting a growing preference for local burials. This shift has prompted more individuals to choose burial for their relatives in the Netherlands, with many explicitly bequeathing this preference to their families. The establishment of more and more Muslim cemeteries has become a crucial priority to accommodate the needs of the Muslim community.

✍ Could you elaborate on the story behind BIBIN's establishment? What are the main activities currently undertaken by BIBIN, and how many volunteers are involved in its operations?

BBIBIN was founded in 2004 as a non-profit foundation guided by the principle, "For

the Ummah, by the Ummah." This principle informs all aspects of our work. Our organization operates almost entirely on a volunteer basis, with only one salaried staff member in our office. The entire team, including myself, serves as volunteers, without receiving salaries or reimbursement for travel expenses.

The primary focus of our activities, and our overarching goal, is the establishment of Muslim cemeteries. In addition to facilitating burials in our existing cemetery, we are actively working to create new cemeteries in other locations. For example, we have recently acquired land for a cemetery in the city of Tiel and have undertaken extensive efforts to incorporate it into the local development plan. This process is highly demanding but integral to our mission.

Beyond cemetery establishment, we engage in discussions regarding alternative projects almost weekly. For instance, I have an upcoming meeting with the Municipality of The Hague, which has expressed interest in having us manage a cemetery in the city. With our expertise, knowledge, and expe-

rience in this field, we are committed to advancing such projects. Collaborating closely with municipalities requires significant effort, akin to full-time work. Nevertheless, we remain motivated by the understanding that our endeavors serve not only this world but also the hereafter.

Since BIBIN is not an association, we do not have members. However, we are nationally recognized, and our visibility continues to grow, largely thanks to our commitment to transparency. All expenditures are detailed on our website, fostering trust among the public. While individuals often express interest in membership or funeral insurance, we do not provide such services.

BIBIN functions solely as a funeral service business. When someone passes away, their relatives can contact any funeral service provider to arrange the funeral. All funeral service providers in the Netherlands are familiar with BIBIN. The relatives are informed about burial options, including our cemetery, and if they choose our cemetery, the burial process begins. We have developed a fully automated portal to streamline operations. Funeral service providers log into the portal, submit the necessary information and documents, and schedule the burial date and time. Once confirmed, the burial takes place. The funeral service providers handle the entire funeral process, including the washing of the deceased, transportation to and from the mosque, and preparation for burial. BIBIN's role is to ensure that the deceased is interred in our cemetery.

✍ What are the organizational and structural arrangements within your cemeteries?

For instance, in the Zuidlaren cemetery, individuals are interred sequentially, with each person placed next to the one buried earlier. Individuals do not have the option to select specific plots within the cemetery. Additionally, customization of headstones is not permitted. All graves and headstones in our cemeteries are uniform in size and design. This uniformity reflects the values of equality and simplicity that underpin our burial practices. When observed collectively, all headstones appear identical.

✍ Who are typically the providers of funeral services?

Funeral services are sometimes provided by Islamic funeral service providers, though this is not a strict requirement. Any funeral service provider can fulfill this role. For example, I am insured with a Dutch funeral service provider. However, when I or a family member passes away, we contact the insurance company, which then appoints an Islamic funeral service provider. This provider subsequently organizes the burial arrangements, including cemetery-related processes.

✍ What is the biggest challenge you have faced in establishing Muslim cemeteries?

Collaboration, collaboration, collaboration! Unfortunately, as Muslims, we often struggle with effective collaboration. For example, cooperation between funeral service providers can be challenging. Even for an organization like ours, establishing partnerships with other Islamic institutions, such as mosques, can sometimes be difficult. We always emphasize that everyone should focus on what they do best. For this reason, it would be ideal for regions with a mosque to have at least one cemetery.

However, the best solution is to collaborate with an organization that possesses the necessary knowledge, experience, and expertise. That organization is us—BIBIN. When trust is built between two organizations, progress is much quicker, and the process of establishing cemeteries becomes significantly more efficient. This issue of fostering collaboration is our greatest challenge.

"Established in 2004, BIBIN was created to address the growing need for private cemeteries in the Netherlands that align with Islamic values."

You were instrumental in opening the Muslim cemetery in Zuidlaren. How was the decision made to establish a Muslim cemetery there, and can you provide its key features? What is its size and capacity?

From the inception of our foundation, I had a clear vision: to establish five Muslim cemeteries across the Netherlands and then pass on this responsibility to others. My aim was to create five cemeteries positioned like the five dots on a die, ensuring a balanced geographical distribution across the country. This would make cemeteries accessible within a reasonable distance for everyone. I did not want all cemeteries to be concentrated in regions like Randstad or Groningen.

One day, a gentleman contacted me and said, "I've heard you want to establish a Muslim cemetery. I have inherited a plot of land from my mother, and it is zoned for cemetery use. Would you be interested?" I immediately replied, "Yes, of course! Where is the land located?" He informed me that the land was in Drenthe, which happened to align perfectly with one of the five locations I had in mind. Without hesitation, we accepted and initiated the process. The capacity of a cemetery depends on the size of the land. For example, the cemetery in Zuidlaren has a capacity of approximately 1,500 graves.

Are there similar initiatives for Muslim cemeteries in the Netherlands outside of BIBIN? If so, does BIBIN collaborate with these initiatives?

Yes, there is one in Almere, which I believe was established by the Surinamese Muslim community. They have their own Muslim cemetery, which is similar to what we do. Additionally, a new cemetery was recently ope-

"For many, having the graves of their parents, grandparents, or other relatives nearby allowed for more frequent visits, providing both convenience and a sense of peace."

ned in Arnhem. However, this cemetery is a commercial enterprise, making it distinct from our foundation. Our foundation operates as a non-profit organization, whereas the Arnhem cemetery is a limited liability company driven by commercial interests with multiple owners. In contrast, BIBIN operates solely for the benefit of the Muslim community and relies on donations. In essence, BIBIN belongs to the Muslim community; you are as much a part of it as I am, as this project is for the ummah. In addition, many Muslim burial areas in the Netherlands are small sections within larger non-Muslim cemeteries, rather than independent cemeteries.

What municipalities currently have Muslim cemeteries? How many Muslim cemeteries exist in the Netherlands, and how many applications have been submitted so far?

Exclusively Muslim cemeteries are located in the municipalities of Almere, Arnhem, and Zuidlaren. Recently, our application for Tiel was approved. The cemeteries owned by BIBIN are in Zuidlaren and Tiel.

What is the process for applying for a Muslim cemetery? What are the requirements and procedures?

Applying for a Muslim cemetery involves a specific procedure, which typically requires collaboration with the municipality and thorough knowledge of the relevant regulations. The main requirements can be summarized as follows: First, the applicant must be a church association, which includes mosques as they are recognized under this status. This means that Muslims can apply through their mosques. Second, there must be a sufficient Muslim population in the municipality where the application is made. Usually, a threshold of 12.5% is set, although I am not certain of the exact figure. This percentage indicates adequate demand for a Muslim cemetery in the area. Finally, an application must then be submitted to the municipality, which is obliged to process it. Municipalities must cooperate in allocating suitable land for cemetery use. The process can be lengthy due to the numerous evaluations and procedures involved. Municipalities often act cautiously, as allocating land for a cemetery is not a straightforward decision like opening a bakery or butcher shop. Sustainability and long-term planning are essential.

The municipal council is a critical part of the process and cannot outright reject an application, but the approval and negotiation phases can take considerable time. The most crucial aspects of the process are knowledge and experience. Without the necessary information, the process of applying for a cemetery can incur significant time and financial costs. Our organization has experienced substantial financial losses. In other words, considerable sums can be wasted when proper procedures are not followed, or critical information is lacking. Consequently, partnering with an experienced organization is highly advantageous. Collaboration is, therefore, essential for the successful establishment of a Muslim cemetery. In summary, applying for a Muslim cemetery requires close cooperation with an organization that possesses expertise in managing such applications, as well as with mosques holding church association status. While the process can be lengthy, it can be

completed more efficiently and economically when guided by accurate information and experienced partners.

✍ The Muslim community in the Netherlands is notably diverse, with a significant proportion comprising Turkish and Moroccan immigrants. Are there observable differences in burial preferences and application rates among these groups?

Within the Turkish community, interest in burial within the Netherlands is remarkably low. This may be attributed to a stronger sense of cultural and emotional connection to Türkiye, resulting in a higher preference for burial in their country of origin. It appears that Turks who are buried in the Netherlands are often individuals who are unable to return to Türkiye, such as political refugees or those who have intermarried with non-Turks including Dutch nationals. In contrast, the preference for burial in the Netherlands is significantly higher among Moroccans. Additionally, the arrival of Syrian immigrants in recent years has led to an increase in burial in the Netherlands. However, with conditions stabilizing in Syria, I anticipate that many Syrians may choose to return to their homeland, potentially decreasing the demand for burial in the Netherlands among this group. At present, the disparity between Turks and Moroccans in burial preferences remains stark: approximately 98% of those seeking burial in the Netherlands are of Moroccan origin, while only 2% are Turkish.

✍ What is the situation in the Surinamese Muslim community regarding burials?

The Surinamese community has a significant presence in cities like Rotterdam and The Hague. In The Hague, burials are particularly common, as there is a large cemetery with a substantial section reserved for Muslims. Traditionally, many Surinamese individuals have been buried there. However, the percentage of Surinamese Muslims buried in the cemeteries managed by our organization remains relatively low.

✍ Could the low burial rate among Turks in the Netherlands be related to the higher costs of funeral procedures compared to Türkiye? Additionally, could this trend within the Turkish community be partly due to the Dutch Religious Foundation professionally organizing these procedure?

No, I do not believe cost is a significant

factor, as funeral arrangements are also well-organized within the Moroccan community. Many Moroccans maintain accounts with Moroccan banks that include funeral insurance. This insurance typically covers repatriation costs, ensuring that the deceased can be sent back to Morocco without incurring financial burden. Therefore, I do not see financial factors as the primary issue. The main reason appears to be that Moroccans increasingly view burial in the Netherlands as more convenient and beneficial for the family members who remain behind.

✍ How do local communities typically respond to the establishment of a Muslim cemetery within a municipality, and how does BIBIN address such reactions?

The portrayal often seen in the media and discussions in the Dutch House of Representatives does not align with my experiences. For instance, when we sought to purchase land in Zuidlaren, we proactively informed the local residents about our plans. In response, De Telegraaf, a far-right newspaper, decided to visit Zuidlaren to gauge public reactions. Their reporting, however, highlighted the respectful attitude of the locals toward the initiative. Residents expressed sentiments such as, "Don't Muslims also have the right to a cemetery?" - demonstrating overwhelmingly positive reactions. This outcome is largely attributable to our transparency with the local community. By inviting locals, engaging in open discussions, and clearly explaining our plans, we found that potential concerns were addressed effectively, fostering understanding.

✍ What is the government's stance on the issue of Muslim cemeteries? How do you evaluate your communication with government authorities when advocating for the establishment of such cemeteries? Are there notable differences in the attitudes of local governments, and could you provide examples?

In matters concerning the establishment of Muslim cemeteries, interactions are limited to local governments, specifically the municipality in which the cemetery is to be developed. For instance, if one intends to purchase land for the purpose of establishing a cemetery, the involvement of the municipality is necessary for the approval of the development plan. However, it is important to note that municipalities are not required to allocate land for this purpose. In principle, any individual or organization - be it you, me, or another entity - can purchase land and develop a cemetery. National institutions have no direct role in this process, as it is entirely managed at the local government level.

✍ The Netherlands, with its relatively small land area, faces unique challenges in managing cemetery space. To what extent do you believe it is feasible to ensure "eternal peace" in such circumstances?

In my view, this is not a significant issue. On the contrary, if approached strategically, the Netherlands could derive substantial economic benefits from it. I have communicated this perspective to the House of Representatives through a formal letter, though I have yet to receive a response. My argument is that establishing additional Muslim cemeteries could result in more efficient land use, as it does not require the allocation of new land. Instead, existing non-Muslim cemeteries, which are increasingly underutilized, could be repurposed for this objective. Non-Muslim cemeteries in the Netherlands are becoming progressively emptier due to the decline in burial rights renewal and the rising popularity of cremation among the Dutch population. As a result, many cemeteries retain their original size despite a decrease in usage, leading to significant maintenance costs. My proposed solution is to repurpose unused portions of these large non-Muslim cemeteries as Muslim burial grounds. This approach could generate substantial revenue for municipalities, alleviate the financial burden of cemetery mainte-

nance, and allow for the reallocation of funds to address other pressing issues, such as poverty alleviation. Additionally, this strategy negates the need to allocate new land, thereby addressing the problem in a sustainable manner.

✍ What initiatives does BIBIN undertake to inform and raise awareness among the public and the Muslim community about Muslim cemeteries? Has BIBIN engaged with the CMO and organizations representing different Muslim immigrant groups?

Yes, BIBIN has actively engaged with various organizations. Over time, we have established a strong reputation within the Netherlands, and our organization is now well-recognized nationally. Virtually all Islamic organizations, funeral service providers, and mosques in the Netherlands are familiar with our work. However mosques, as central institutions within the Muslim community, bear a significant responsibility in educating Muslims about burial practices in accordance with Islamic teachings. It is essential for mosques to explain the Quranic teachings and the principles of Islam regarding burial. For instance, the Sunnah of the Prophet emphasizes that a Muslim should ideally be buried in the place of their passing. Historical examples, such as the burial of the Prophet's companions on battlefields where they lost their lives, underscore this principle. This awareness must be conveyed to Muslims by the mosques. Ensuring that relatives and loved ones can visit the deceased is also of significant importance. We emphasize to Muslims that all land is sacred for burial, not just land in traditionally Islamic countries.

✍ Are there comparable initiatives in other countries within Western Europe? If so, how do they differ from the Dutch model?

While I am not fully acquainted with the specific arrangements in other countries, I can provide some insight based on available information. In Groningen, particularly in Zuidlaren, a district near the German border, there have been instances where individuals from Germany, Belgium, and France have been interred. This may be attributed to the absence of suitable cemeteries in certain countries that allow for the possibility of eternal rest. It is conceivable that similar initiatives to the Dutch model could be adopted in other Western European nations; however, the implementation of such initiatives would likely vary depending on the distinct local government policies and the opportunities for collaboration between religious communities in each country.

✍ What are BIBIN's goals for the future?

Personally, I find myself feeling quite fatigued after two decades of work in this field. My primary goal is to establish five cemeteries, after which I intend to pass the responsibility on to younger generations. Currently, we are in Tiel, where we have already acquired the land and plan to open the cemetery soon. As a person deeply rooted in Utrecht, my wish is to be buried there. We are currently working on a project in Utrecht, and if it proves successful, I hope to transition my duties to the youth, entrusting them with the continuation of this work and the legacy we have built.

✍ Do you have a message for our readers?

I would like to address the youth and society at large. According to Islamic teachings, the location of one's burial is of great significance. When selecting a cemetery, it is crucial to choose options that are both appropriate and religiously acceptable, taking into account the needs of both ourselves and our families. In accordance with the Quran and the Sunnah, it is everyone's duty to be mindful of this matter. Specifically, it is important to ensure that when we pass away, we are buried in the place where we die.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

A photograph from 7 January 1995 of the opening ceremony of the Millî Görüş Sultan Abdülhamid Han Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands, attended by, among others, the current President of the Republic of Türkiye, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan.
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A photograph from 7 January 1995 of the opening ceremony of the Millî Görüş Sultan Abdülhamid Han Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A photograph from 7 January 1995 of the opening ceremony of the Millî Görüş Sultan Abdülhamid Han Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A 1994 photograph taken in front of the Mescidi Aksa Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands, featuring former IGMG President Osman Yumakoğulları
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A 1994 photograph of the Mescidi Aksa Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A 1982 photograph of the Deventer Central Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands, affiliated with the Dutch Diyanet Foundation
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A 1982 photograph of the Deventer Central Mosque in Deventer, the Netherlands, affiliated with the Dutch Diyanet Foundation
Source: *Şükrü Ekici*

A 1979 photograph of Christian Turks in front of the St. John's Cathedral (Aziz-Jans Katedrali) in Den Bosch, the Netherlands
Source: *Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Rob Bogaerts / Anefo*

A 1977 photograph of the interior of a Turkish mosque in Amsterdam
Source: *Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Rob Bogaerts / Anefo*

A 1977 photograph of the opening ceremony of a Turkish mosque in Amsterdam, featuring İbrahim Görmez (bearded gentleman on the left), who facilitated the mosque's opening
Source: *Nationaal Archief, CC0 / Anefo, Rob Bogaerts / Anefo*

A 1997 photograph of Muslim Turks praying in a mosque in the Vest district of Dordrecht
Source: *Regionaal Archief Dordrecht, Gemeentelijke Prentverzameling, 552_302076, https://beeldbank.regionaalarchiefdordrecht.nl/search/detail/id/8B75EE9499327FA808EC1DB7BF25B3BD/showbrowse*

A 1985 photograph of a Muslim Turkish individual purchasing a sheep for the ritual slaughter during Eid al-Adha
Source: *Noord-Hollands Archief, Een Turk koopt een schaap bij een handelaar tijdens het ritueel slachten, Boer, C. de (1918–1985), 1478 – photos and negatives from Fotopersbureau De Boer, Haarlem, Collectie van, 3605, , https://hdl.handle.net/21.12102/984C7020EA800FF0582A5DB75FE8CF15*

A 1982 photograph of the opening of the Dutch Diyanet Foundation in The Hague
Source: *Dutch Diyanet Foundation*

Vreemdeling heeft recht op ruimte voor religie

door Jan Krajenbrink

Dit land kent vele honderdduizenden inwoners van niet-Nederlandse komaf. Deels hebben we deze mensen naar Nederland gehaald (bijvoorbeeld Molukkers en geworven gastarbeiders). Deels zijn zij eigener beweging ons land binnengekomen (bijvoorbeeld Surinamers en Antillianen, vluchtelingen, gezinshereniging). Een steeds groeiend deel is hier reeds in Nederland geboren en kent het land van afstamming alleen van horen zeggen.
Het gaat hier om etnische en culturele groepen, die in hun normen en waardenpatronen vaak sterk verschillen van de Nederlandse samenleving. Evenzeer geldt, dat bijvoorbeeld de Molukse leefwijze een geheel andere is dan de Turkse, zoals ook de Marokkanen heel anders leven en denken dan Vietnamezen. Deze verschillen kunnen bevruchtend op elkaar inwerken, zij geven ook aanleiding tot fricties.
Wij gaan er sedert enige jaren van uit dat deze ethnische groepen langdurig of blijvend in Nederland zullen wonen. Samen vormen zij ongeveer vier procent van de totale bevolking. Dit plaatst onze samenleving voor een grote uitdaging. Het vereist immers een herinrichting van die samenleving, zodanig dat Nederlanders en vele honderdduizenden van andere herkomst in dit land op een menswaardige en gelijkwaardige manier kunnen leven. En dan mogen wij niet blijven steken bij het begrip „verdraagzaamheid", al blijkt dat in de praktijk reeds veel moeilijkheden op te leveren.
Aan christenmensen mag je een iets hogere eis stellen: wij dienen elkaar te aanvaarden als **medemens**, hoe die er ook uitziet, hoe die ook denkt en handelt. Hij is immers „de beeldrager van God".

Houvast

Het beleid met betrekking tot de etnische groepen is over een brede linie in discussie. Ik meen dat daarbij een wezenlijk element veel te weinig aandacht krijgt. Ik doel hier op de religieuze ontplooiingsmogelijkheden van onze nieuwe medeburgers. Wanneer wij mensen in hun eigen waarde willen laten, wanneer wij hen de kans willen geven hun eigen identiteit te beleven, wanneer wij hen volwaardig als medemens accepteren, dan is het kunnen beleven van de eigen religie van essentiële betekenis. Die religie is immers de motor van de eigen identiteit.

In Nederland bestaat voor zo iets kennelijk een afnemend begrip. Voor veel leden van etnische groepen is hun religie echter het integrerende element in hun totale bestaan. In landen als Suriname, Turkije en Marokko speelt de godsdienst een veel belangrijker rol dan in de Nederlandse samenleving. Etnische groepen vinden Nederland sterk geseculariseerd en materialistisch ingesteld. Veel van de problemen die ze hebben hangen juist ook hiermee samen. In zo'n situatie wordt de religie een sterker houvast.

Zo is voor de moslim zijn godsdienst in Nederland wellicht nog belangrijker dan in zijn land van herkomst. Vanuit een christelijk denken moeten wij dit kunnen invoelen. Wij hebben daarenboven ons eigen verleden en heden. Dat moet ons er toe brengen om ook in de Nederlandse samenleving voor de religieuze beleving van de respectievelijke etnische groepen zoveel mogelijk ruimte te maken.

Taak overheid

Maar wij kennen in Nederland toch godsdienstvrijheid? Waar maken wij ons eigenlijk druk over? Het grondrecht van de godsdienstvrijheid is een belangrijke verworvenheid, maar het heeft pas echt betekenis als het ook werkelijk beleefd kan worden.

Wanneer er belemmeringen zijn om dit grondrecht ook werkelijk in de praktijk te kunnen brengen, kan er een taak voor de overheid liggen om mee te helpen die belemmeringen weg te nemen, om „voorwaardenscheppend" bezig te zijn.

Zo ligt er een overheidstaak met betrekking tot de godsdienstvrijheid, wanneer die vrijheid in sterke mate wordt belemmerd door sociaal-economische factoren. Wij hebben dat vaker meegemaakt in Nederland. Ik denk aan de Wet Premie Kerkenbouw, die werd ingevoerd, toen wij ons realiseerden dat de kosten van kerkenbouw onmogelijk geheel door de bestaande kerkgenootschappen konden worden opgebracht.

Etnische groepen in Nederland verkeren veelal feitelijk in een zelfde situatie. Het betreft hier immers bij uitstek zwakke groeperr in onze samenleving, die niet in staat mogen worden geacht geheel op eigen kracht de nodige basisvoorzieningen te treffen. Wanneer we deze medemensen recht willen doen in hun volle mens-zijn, behoren we juist dit feit ook onder ogen te zien en mee te helpen aan de oplossing van dit knelpunt. Natuurlijk, steun van particuliere Nederlandse zijde, bijvoorbeeld van de Nederlandse kerken, is hier zeer wel denkbaar en komt ook reeds voor. Het belang an de zaak vraagt evenwel ook een – in beginsel tijdelijke – helpende hand van de overheid, bijvoorbeeld bij de bouw van gebedsruimten e.d.

Kerk en Staat

Komen wij hier dan niet in strijd met het beginsel van de scheiding tussen Kerk en Staat? Ik meen van niet. Het desbetreffende beginsel kennen wij reeds lang en het functioneert uitstekend: geen zeggenschap van de Staat in kerkelijke zaken noch andersom. De Staat is religieus gezien neutraal. Dat betekent echter nog niet dat zij zich op geen enkele wijze zou mogen bemoeien met het religieuze gebeuren.
Neutraliteit is iets anders dan afzijdigheid. Binnen bepaalde grenzen mag de overheid wel degelijk voorwaarden stellen aan het functioneren van religieuze groepen. De godsdienstvrijheid heeft nadrukkelijk zijn plaats **binnen** onze rechtsorde. Evenmin verhindert het beginsel van scheiding van Kerk en Staat de overheid om mede voorwaarden te scheppen voor het ook feitelijk functioneren van de godsdienstvrijheid. Ook onder de Wet Premie Kerkenbouw, ook bij de bouw van de kerken voor de nieuwe bevolking an de IJsselmeerpolders, kenden wij het beginsel van de scheiding van Kerk en Staat. Het bleek geen belemmering te zijn.
Wordt Nederland zo dan niet overspoeld door Moslims, Hindoes, Boeddhisten enzovoort? Moeten Christenen en moet een christelijke partij juist niet waken voor het „overeind blijven" van het christelijk geloof en de daarmee verbonden normen en waarden? Persoonlijk poog ik als christen in deze wereld bezig te zijn. Ik zal daarbij graag in discussie gaan met mensen die een andere religieuze overtuiging hebben. Ik zal dat overigens met bescheidenheid doen in de wetenschap dat wij wellicht beiden van elkaar kunnenleren. Maar voor de dialoog ben ik niet bang.

Een christelijke politieke partij behoort het grondrecht van de godsdienstvrijheid werkelijk inhoud te willen geven. Dat betekent niet alleen de godsdienstvrijheid voor christenen, het betekent godsdienstvrijheid voor iedereen. Het gaat er om het belang van de religie in het menselijk leven te onderkennen en te waarborgen. Christelijke politiek is er niet om mensen te bekeren maar om ze respecteren.

A 1984 newspaper report discussing the right of immigrants living in the Netherlands to practice their religion freely
Source: *Vreemdeling heeft recht op ruimte voor religie. "Trouw". Meppel, 23-02-1984. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/-resolve?urn=A-BCDDD:010820239:mpeg21:p005*

Turken vieren „Ramadan" in Brielse kerk

OOSTVOORNE — De ongeveer honderd Turkse arbeiders die in Botlekgebied en Europoort werken zullen hun Ramadanfeest kunnen vieren in de Brielse Sint-Jacobskerk.

Deze kerk die tot 1961 bij de Nederlandse Hervormde gemeente in gebruik was en sedert de restauratie van de Sint Catharijne kerk leeg is blijven staan werd door kerkvoogdij ter beschikking gesteld als gebaar van gastvrijheid tegenover deze buitenlandse arbeiders.

De bijeenkomsten zullen dagelijks gedurende de mohammedaanse vastenmaand, van 28 december tot 27 januari, worden gehouden. De kerk is voor dit speciale doel geheel belegd met tapijten.

DEN HAAG — „Wij stellen de eis, dat in afwachting van een definitieve regeling, een tijdelijke voorziening wordt getroffen, analoog aan het „nood-verband" zoals dit indertijd voor de u.l.o.-onderwijzers werd gecreëerd. Wij kunnen ons eenvoudig niet indenken, dat de hoofden van scholen tot 1968 moeten wachten op een aanvaardbare financiele regeling". Dit zei de heer J. W. Harting, algemeen voorzitter van de vereniging van hoofden van scholen in zijn openingsrede op de jaarvergadering in restaurant Boschlust in Den Haag.

A 1965 newspaper report on approximately 100 workers in the Botlekgebied and Europoort regions of the Netherlands being allowed to perform their Ramadan prayers at the Sint-Jacobskerk Church in Brielle

Source: *Turken vieren „Ramadan" in Brielse kerk. "Trouw". Meppel, 29-12-1965. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010815534:mpeg21:p002*

Turkse moskee in Twente

ALMELO — Op initiatief van Turkse werknemers in Twente is te Almelo opgericht de „Stichting Turkse Moskee Twente te Almelo". In het bestuur der stichting zijn Turken en Nederlanders gelijk vertegenwoordigd

Met de bouw van deze Turkse moskee zal in totaal een bedrag van ca. ƒ.150.000 gemoeid zijn. De financiering zal geschieden door bijdragen van de Turken in Twente en naar wordt verwacht in andere delen van ons land, een actie onder de Almelose burgerij, medewerking van het bedrijfsleven en overheidssteun. Behalve enkele partuculiere giften is tijdens de bidstond ter afsluiting van de ramadan door de Turken zelf reeds ƒ 4.000 ingezameld voor de stichting.

A 1972 newspaper report on Turkish workers' initiatives in the Twente region to establish a Turkish mosque in Almelo

Source: *Turkse moskee in Twente. "Nederlands dagblad : gereformeerd gezinsblad / hoofdred. P. Jongeling ... [vd.]". Amersfoort, 15-11-1972, s. 2. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010-558903:mpeg21:p002*

TROUW/KWARTET MAANDAG 13 JANUARI 1975

Turken op bezoek in Almelose Noorderkerk

Van een onzer verslaggevers

ALMELO — Een groep van vier Turkse trekarbeiders hebben de nieuwjaarsdienst en de daarop volgende nieuwsjaarsreceptie meegemaakt in de Almelose Noorderkerk. Het initiatief daarvoor is uitgegaan van de Turkse moeftie (geestelijke), die ter gelegenheid van het offerfeest enkele weken in Almelo was. Hij vond het vreemd dat de Turkse trekarbeiders zo weinig wisten van de kerk, hoewel ze toch wonen in een land met vele kerken.

De Turken hebben het contact met de Noorderkerkgemeente gewaardeerd en het ligt in de bedoeling de relatie verder uit te breiden. De commissie voor contact tussen trekarbeiders en de Nederlandse bevolking in Almelo, een dertigtal Turken en Nederlanders onder voorzitterschap van de heer D. Slettenhaar heeft echter haar plan voor een leergang christendom-Islam moeten afgelasten. Er bleek daarvoor te weinig belangstelling. De heer Slettenhaar meent dat dit gebrek aan interesse komt door een tekort aan contact tussen de trekarbeiders en de Nederlandse bevolking. Hem was opgevallen dat de kennis bij de Nederlanders van de koran zeer gering is. De moslims weten daarentegen wel het een en ander, met name van het Oude Testament.

Leergang

De heer Slettenhaar, die voor het textielconcern Nijverdal-Ten Cate belast is met de werving en begeleiding van Turkse trekarbeiders in Almelo, deelde mee dat het gemeentebestuur van deze stad ruime medewerking verleent bij de opvang van de trekarbeiders. Ook binnen de plaatselijke kerken bestaat de bereidheid tot samenwerking. De moslims hebben volgens hem wel belangstelling voor de kerk, maar kunnen aan die belangstelling nog weinig uiting geven.

In Almelo staat de eerste Turkse moskee van ons land. Het gebouw wordt op 27 januari officieel geopend door de minister van sociale zaken, drs. J. Boersma. De bouw van de moskee, die anderhalve ton heeft gekost, is mogelijk geworden onder meer na een huis-aan-huis-collecte in Almelo, die 10.000 gulden heeft opgebracht. De moskee kwam ook in aanmerking voor een rijkssubsidie uit dezelfde kas waaruit de overheid ook de kerkenbouw steunt.

A 1975 newspaper report on the opening of the first Turkish mosque with a minaret in the Netherlands, in Almelo, noting that funding for the mosque came from both the government and the public

Source: *Leergang. "Trouw". Meppel, 13-01-1975. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010821839:mpeg21:p002*

„Als de luidspreker alleen pal voor de moskee is te horen, heeft het natuurlijk geen zin"

Gemeente Sneek 'luistert' naar Turkse gebedsoproep

SNEEK - Wie na 1 maart op een vrijdagmiddag in Sneek in de buurt van het Grootzand loopt, moet niet vreemd opkijken als een microfoonstem in het Turks van over de daken mohammedanen oproept tot gebed. Het geluid komt uit luidsprekers, die zijn geplaatst op de nok van een pand aan de smalle Havenstraat, dat door de Turkse vereniging Atatürk sinds twee jaar wordt gebruikt als ontmoetingsruimte.

Op de bovenverdieping ervan bevindt zich een zaaltje, dat als moskee is ingericht. Hoewel het gebouwtje, dat de gemeente aan de vereniging in bruikleen heeft afgestaan, dagelijks is geopend, komen de (mannelijke) leden, zo'n vijftig in getal en wonend in met name Sneek, Bolsward en Lemmer, er vooral vrijdags graag, omdat er dan een gebedsdienst wordt gehouden. In hun geboorteland, net als trouwens in andere islamitische landen, wordt een aantal keren per dag vanaf minaretten tot gebed opgeroepen.

Om die sfeer wat te kunnen benaderen, vroeg de vereniging - als eerste in Friesland - aan het gemeentebestuur of zij zoiets vrijdags ook in Sneek mocht gaan doen. Zoals bericht, heeft het college daar onder bepaalde voorwaarden in toegestemd. Marten de Boer van het sociaal-cultureel centrum De Espel, die als woordvoerder van de Turkse vereniging optreedt, noemt de gemeentelijke toestemming „op himsels hiel aardich en ek in sekere ferriking fan it kulturele patroan fan Snits, foar safier asto der alteast fan sprekke kinst. Minder aardich fyn ik, dat de gemeente it gebou hielendal fertuearze hat omt it sloopt wurde moat, sûnder dat de gebrûkers al dy tiid dêdlik makke is wer't hja yn'e takomst oan ta binne en hinne kinne. Mar miskien is dit in earste stap yn'e goede rjochting", wacht De Boer af.

Met het bestuur van Atatürk heeft de gemeente afgesproken, dat het vooreerst gaat om een proefperiode, die loopt van 1 maart tot 1 september. Als in die tijd blijkt, dat winkeliers, omwonenden en anderen de oproep niet als hinderlijk ervaren, ligt het voor de hand, dat aan Atatürk definitief een vergunning wordt verleend. Tjeerd Heidstra van de afdeling welzijn van de gemeente Sneek zegt nauwelijks problemen uit de buurt te verwachten, gezien de ervaringen elders in het land.

75 decibel

„Het gaat tenslotte maar om twee oproepen van elk hooguit vijf minuten. We hebben verder gesteld, dat de sterkte van het geluid, gemeten op de meest dichtbij zijnde muur, het maximum van 75 decibel niet mag overschrijden. Of we daar straks nu zo nodig met een decibelmeter moeten gaan staan, lijkt me trouwens wat overdreven. Persoonlijk zou ik zeggen: het is acceptabel als het geluid een paar straten ver, tot zeg de Waterpoort aan de ene kant en het Kleinzand aan de andere, kan reiken. Als blijkt, dat je de oproep alleen kan horen, als je pal voor het gebouw staat, heeft het, gezien vanuit het standpunt van de aanvragers, natuurlijk ook geen zin", vindt Heidstra.

Uit een eerste, heel voorlopige peiling onder enkele bewoners en anderen die in dit deel van het stadscentrum werken of verblijven, blijkt dat Heidstra er waarschijnlijk met zijn verwachting niet ver naast hoeft te zitten. De meesten zeggen rustig af te wachten hoe een en ander zal uitpakken. Geen van hen wist overigens iets af van de gemeentelijke toestemming, waaruit blijkt, dat ze vooraf niet door de gemeente van dit voornemen op de hoogte zijn gebracht. Zo ook waarnemend-directeur Meine Boerstra van de naast het ontmoetingscentrum gelegen en pas verbouwde Praktijkschool voor voortgezet speciaal onderwijs aan de Oude Koemarkt.

Het Turkse gebedshuis in Sneek in de Havenstraat.

„Nee, ik wist hier niks van, moet ik zeggen. Niet dat het me overvalt of zo, maar een telefoontje vooraf van de gemeente had misschien geen kwaad gekunt", veronderstelt Boerstra, die „helemaal gerustgesteld" is, als hij vernoemt, dat de gemeente blijkbaar wel degelijk met de school rekening heeft gehouden door de oproepen buiten de lesuren te laten doen. De eerste valt precies in de lunchpauze tussen kwart voor twaalf en kwart voor één, terwijl de tweede gebedsoproep pas na het sluiten van de school, vanaf kwart over drie, over de daken mag klinken.

Leiden

Sneek mag de eerste gemeente in deze provincie zijn die voor het doen van genoemde oproep toestemming verleent - bij gemeenten als Leeuwarden en Heerenveen is zo'n verzoek tot nu toe overigens ook niet binnengekomen -, elders in het land is het geen uitzondering meer. Nadat de gemeenten Leiden en Almelo ruim een jaar geleden hiertoe overgingen, volgde minstens een handvol andere, waaronder Alkmaar en het Brabantse Son. Gebleken is, dat de 'hinder' die mensen van de gebedsoproep zeggen te hebben, zich verhoudt met die welke zij van klokgelui ondervinden.

„Dat is ook onze ervaring", vertelt een woordvoerder van de gemeente Leiden. „In tegenstelling met wat ik nu over Sneek hoor, hebben wij de bewoners uit de omringende straten van zowel het Turkse als het Marokkaanse gebedshuis wel vooraf geïnformeerd over wat we van plan waren. Daar kwamen zo weinig negatieve reacties op, dat de burgemeester het verzoek heeft ingewilligd. Ook tijdens de proef bespeurden we nauwelijks problemen, waarna is besloten de proef steeds met een half jaar te verlengen. Dat laatste is gedaan, omdat je maar nooit weet of het ook in de toekomst maatschappelijk en politiek een haalbare kaart is".

Een pas ingediend verzoek door de Turks/Marokkaanse verenigingen, naast de vrijdagse oproep ook op een andere doordeweekse dag de mohammedanen via de luidspreker tot gebed op te roepen, is door de Leidse burgemeester overigens afgewezen. „Daar was 'ie zeker nog niet aan toe", is de reactie daarop. „Maar, wie weet, verandert hij nogeens van gedachten".

A 1987 newspaper report on a Turkish mosque in Sneek, discussing that the call to prayer would be audible in the street where the mosque is located

Source: *75 decibel. "Leeuwarder courant : hoofdblad van Friesland". Leeuwarden, 27-02-1987, s. 13. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010566281:mpeg21:p013*

Islamieten vieren vastenmaand

GRONINGEN — De gebedsruimte in het gebouw van de Turkse Culturele Vereniging aan de Oude Boteringestraat in Groningen heeft de kenmerken van improvisatietalent en gebrek aan geld. Het gaat om een huiskamer-moskee: groene vloerkleden, borden met spreuken uit de Koran en een lessenaartje op lage pootjes. De imam (voorganger) Ali Canbaz is door de regering van Turkije naar Nederland gestuurd om de Turkse islamieten geestelijke bijstand te verlenen tijdens de vastenmaand Ramadan. De Ramadan ging vanmorgen in bij zonsopgang.

Dinsdagavond begon de voorbereiding op deze vastenmaand. In de preek die aan het gebed vooraf ging, hield Ali Canbaz de gelovigen voor dat zij niet moeten verzaken in hun plicht zich vijf keer per dag naar Mekka te wenden om te bidden.

In de stad Groningen wonen ongeveer 800 islamieten; Nederland telt een kleine half miljoen aanhangers van het geloof dat door Mohammed in de zevende eeuw na Christus is gegrondvest. Overigens, islamieten zijn er in alle soorten en maten naargelang de herkomst van de mensen: Surinaamse islam-aanhangers, Pakistaanse, Turkse en Egyptische moslims. De religie is verspreid over de vele etnische groepen in Nederland

Eigen kalender

De negende maand van de Arabische kalender — die afwijkt van de Europese jaarindeling — is de maand van vasten. De Arabieren delen het jaar in volgens de loop van de maan. Hierdoor mist men, in vergelijking met de Europese telling, elke maand een dag. De kalender is in ongeveer dertig jaar de Europese jaartelling een keer rond geweest. Maar alle islamieten houden naast hun eigen kalender ook gewoon de Europese tijdsindeling aan.

De Arabist dr. Fred Leemhuis, werkzaam bij de Groninger universiteit, geniet bekendheid wegens zijn vertaling van de Koran: "Je moet dat allemaal nuchter bekijken. De islam is een hele praktische godsdienst. Er zijn weliswaar veel regels, maar tegelijk is men ook zo verstandig om naar gelang de plaatselijke omstandigheden de regels aan te passen."

Toewijding

De Ramadan is in wezen een periode van vasten waarbij men zich tussen zonsopgang en zonsondergang onthoudt van alles wat de aandacht afleidt van de overgave aan God. Geneugten als voedsel, seksueel verkeer of enthousiast sociaal leven zijn overdag verboden omdat ze deze toewijding in de weg staan. In andere religies, zoals het christendom en het boeddhisme kent men ook vormen van vasten. Die worden alleen bedreven door mensen die geacht worden een bijzondere toewijding tot de god te hebben, zoals monniken, kluizenaars en priesters. In de islam wordt elke gelovige geacht zich tijdens de Ramadan tot god te wenden. Oorspronkelijk is het ook de bedoeling geweest dat men als gelovige publiekelijk duidelijk maakte dat men zich in deze maand speciaal bezon op de relatie met God."

Golfbewegingen

Wat is het wezen van deze vastenmaand? Leemhuis: "Een maand onthouding van de geneuglijke dingen van het leven is goed voor de toewijding aan god en is tegelijk goed voor de mens zelf. In het hele Midden-Oosten leeft men in golfbewegingen van overvloed en schaarste. Van de schaarste heeft men een deugd gemaakt. Dat zie je in alle religies in het Midden-Oosten."

● *De iman Ali Cambaz houdt de Turkse islamieten voor vast te houden aan de dagelijkse vijf gebeden.* *(Foto: Johan Berrevoets/EFG)*

Officieel zou de Ramadan gisteren zijn begonnen op het moment dat de nieuwe maan voor het eerst werd waargenomen. Leemhuis: "Daar zijn allemaal voorschriften voor. Volgens de leer gaat de Ramadan in op het moment dat men in de duisternis geen verschil meer kan zien tussen een zwarte en een witte draad. In de praktijk luistert men gewoon naar de Arabische radiozenders die uitzenden dat de Ramadan is begonnen."

Hoe praktisch de islam is blijkt uit de lijst die de imam in Groningen al heeft opgesteld van de tijden van zonsopgang en zonsondergang tot en met 26 maart. Regels en aanwijzingen zijn mooi, maar het moet wel praktisch blijven.

Uiteraard kan het probleem van het ontbreken van een moskee in Groningen niet onbesproken blijven. De islamieten willen steun van de gemeente, of van welke overheid dan ook, om een eigen, goed aangekleed gebedshuis te kunnen stichten. De gelovigen voelen zich gediscrimineerd omdat blijkbaar alles en iedereen in Nederland steun en subsidie kan krijgen, behalve de islamieten, zo zeggen ze. De imam: "Katholieken, joden, noem maar op, in Turkije krijgt iedereen van de staat steun voor het stichten van kerken en gebedshuizen. Men zou in Nederland dezelfde verdraagzaamheid moeten opbrengen."

Fred Leemhuis heeft een uitgesproken opvatting over deze kwestie: "Je moet gewoon erkennen dat de godsdienst tot de cultuur van deze mensen behoort. Hun cultuur omvat meer dan volksdansen en exotische markten organiseren. Ooit zijn deze mensen als gastarbeiders naar Nederland gekomen. Ze blijven duurzaam in Nederland en als zodanig hebben ze recht op het beleven van hun godsdienst in redelijke omstandigheden, net als katholieken en protestanten. Wat hen bijzonder grieft is dat een aantal jaren geleden de steunregelingen van de overheid voor de kerkgenootschappen zijn afgeschaft. Ze hebben het gevoel dat juist op het moment dat zij zich meldden om steun, gauw die regeltjes werden veranderd." Een andere reden om de islamieten te steunen bij het verwezenlijken van eigen gebedshuizen vormt voor Leemhuis de buitenlandse beinvloeding. "Wanneeer zij in Nederland niet voldoende worden gesteund, krijgen ze hulp uit het buitenland, van de rijke Arabische landen. Ik vrees dat bijvoorbeeld een imam uit Saudiarabië niet goed op de hoogte is van de eigenaardigheden van de Nederlandse samenleving.

A 1990 newspaper report on the celebration of Ramadan at the prayer room of the Turkish Cultural Association building in the Groningen region of the Netherlands
Source: *Mediahuis Noord, De Krant van Toen, Nieuuwsblad van het Noorden, 28-03-1990, s. 11, https://dekrantvantoen.nl/vw/article.do?id=NVHN-19900328-AE0011002*

Subsidie voor turkse moskee in Amsterdam

(Van een onzer verslaggevers)

AMSTERDAM — B. en W. van Amsterdam zijn bereid 10.000 gulden subsidie te verlenen voor een eigen gebedsruimte voor de Turkse moslims in Amsterdam. De werkgroep Moskee van de Stichting Welzijn Buitenlandse Werknemers had om 15.000 gulden gevraagd.

De wethouder voor Sociale Zaken mr. drs. A. van der Eijden zegt in een brief aan de werkgroep dat, „nu het huren van de Nieuwe Zijds Kapel weer een serieuze mogelijkheid is", de gemeente bij CRM ook nog om extra bijdrage voor de inrichting ervan heeft gevraagd.

Ondanks de subsidie komt de werkgroep geld tekort voor de realisering van twee moskees in Amsterdam, die volgens werkgroepswoordvoerder H. de Veth „meer dan alleen maar gebedsruimtes zijn omdat het leven van de moslims veel nauwer met zijn religie verweven is dan in de westerse maatschappij gebruikelijk is". De 6000 Marokkanen in Amsterdam beschikken over het gebouw „De Hoeksteen" in de Van Ostadestraat, maar de Turken hebben nog niets. Eerverleden jaar vierde de Turkse Moslimgemeenschap het einde van de jaarlijkse vasten, de ramadan, in de Schinkelkerk.

A 1977 newspaper report on the lack of Turkish-owned mosques in Amsterdam and the request submitted to the Amsterdam Municipality for a subsidy to establish a worship place for Turkish-origin Muslims

Source: *Subsidie voor turkse moskee in Amsterdam. "Het Parool". Amsterdam, 11-03-1977. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDDD:010839992:mpeg21:p005*

Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 26 februari 1992, blz.13

Islam wordt gevestigde godsdienst in Nederland

Geestelijk Leven

redactie, Ton van der Werf

De tijd dat islamitische gastarbeiders hun gebedsmatje alleen in de fabriekshal uitrolden, ligt ver achter ons. De minaretten die hier en daar in het stadsbeeld verrijzen, symboliseren dat de islam één van de gevestigde godsdiensten van Nederland aan het worden is. Dat schrijft de theoloog dr. Nico Landman in het proefschrift 'Van mat tot minaret' over de institutionalisering van de islam in Nederland, waarop hij vorige week in Utrecht is gepromoveerd.

Op dit moment heeft Nederland 300 moskeeën en bijna 600 islamitische organisaties. De immigratiestroom uit met name Turkije, Marokko en Suriname zorgde voor een enorme toename van het aantal moslims in Nederland, van 0,5 procent van de bevolking in 1971 tot bijna 3 procent in 1990.

Volgens Landman zijn studies specifiek over de islam schaars. Dat komt omdat veel onderzoek gedaan wordt door de overheid, die in haar minderhedenbeleid weinig aandacht besteedt aan religieuze aspecten van de problematiek. Verder waren de betrokken moslims weinig toegankelijk voor de meeste onderzoekers, onder meer door de taalbarrière en de anonimiteit en het isolement waarin zij tot voor kort hun activiteiten ontplooiden.

Hierin is volgens Landman de laatste jaren verandering gekomen. Moskeeën gaan steeds minder verscholen achter dichtgeplakte winkelruiten, de Islamitische Omroep Stichting laat van zich horen en ook de opkomst van islamitische basisscholen wijst op een grotere zichtbaarheid van de islam in de Nederlandse samenleving. Verder heeft de Rushdie-affaire de belangstelling voor de religieuze aspecten van het verschijnsel multi-etnische samenleving vergroot.

Landman onderscheidt drie grote groepen moslims in Nederland: Turken (46 procent van alle moslims in Nederland), Marokkanen (38 procent) en Surinamers (6 procent). Daarnaast noemt hij Indonesische, Pakistaanse, Tunesisische en Egyptische moslims. Zij zijn georganiseerd in overkoepelende organisaties, grotendeels gegroepeerd naar land van herkomst en om die reden enorm versplinterd. In zijn proefschrift behandelt hij uitgebreid alle verschillende overkoepelende, nationale en locale organisaties.

Veel lokale moslimorganisaties richtten zich in de jaren zeventig en tachtig vooral op het vinden van een ruimte waar ze een moskee konden inrichten. In 128 gemeenten zijn inmiddels 300 moskeeën gevestigd. Maandelijks komen er nog nieuwe bij. In tegenstelling tot wat vaak wordt gedacht, wordt de bouw van deze moskeeën slechts in uitzonderlijke gevallen gefinancierd door Arabische geldschieters. In verreweg de meeste gevallen komen zij tot stond door de inspanningen van plaatselijke islamitische leiders, zonder externe ondersteuning.

De meeste islamitische organisaties onderhandelen afzonderlijk met de Nederlandse overheid over het beschikbaar stellen van faciliteiten en verkrijgen van inspraak. Landman wijst erop dat een Nederlands sprekend kader hiervoor onontbeerlijk is. Daarnaast is het belangrijk om de autoriteiten te overtuigen van een grote achterban en een gematigde opstelling. Een 'fundamentalistisch' of 'extremistisch' imago schrikt af. Afgezien daarvan is de houding van de overheid slechts in zeer beperkte mate afhankelijk van religieuze of politieke kleur. De overheid werkt over het algemeen mee aan voorzieningen waarvoor een wettelijke basis is. Zo ontstond de Islamitische Omroep Stichting en kwamen er islamitische scholen. Op beleidsterreinen waar geen verplichting tot overheidsoptreden bestaat, maar welis-waar sprake is van een achterstandspositie van moslims, is overheidssteun marginaal.

In de jaren zeventig werden regelmatig kerkgebouwen verhuurd aan islamitische organisaties. Er werden minder kerken aan islamitische organisaties verkocht dan men mocht verwachten op grond van het grote aantal gebouwen dat door de kerken moest worden afgestoten. Dat hangt samen met grote terughoudendheid van de top van de Rooms Katholieke Kerk op dit vlak en weerstanden bij de achterban van protestantse kerkgemeenschappen.

A 1992 newspaper report on Islam becoming an established religion in the Netherlands and the presence of Islamic symbols in public spaces

Source: *Mediahuis Noord, De Krant van toen, Nieuuwsblad van het Noorden, 26-02-1992, s.13, https://dekrantvantoen.nl/vw/article.do?id=NVHN-19920226-AE0013002*

Sporthal fungeert als moskee

Islamieten vieren einde van Ramadhan

Daar voor de Ramadhanviering de Sporthal tijdelijk als Islamietisch bedehuis werd gebezigd, mocht de hal niet betreden worden met schoenen. Wat dit merkwaardige plaatje opleverde!

(Van een onzer verslaggevers)

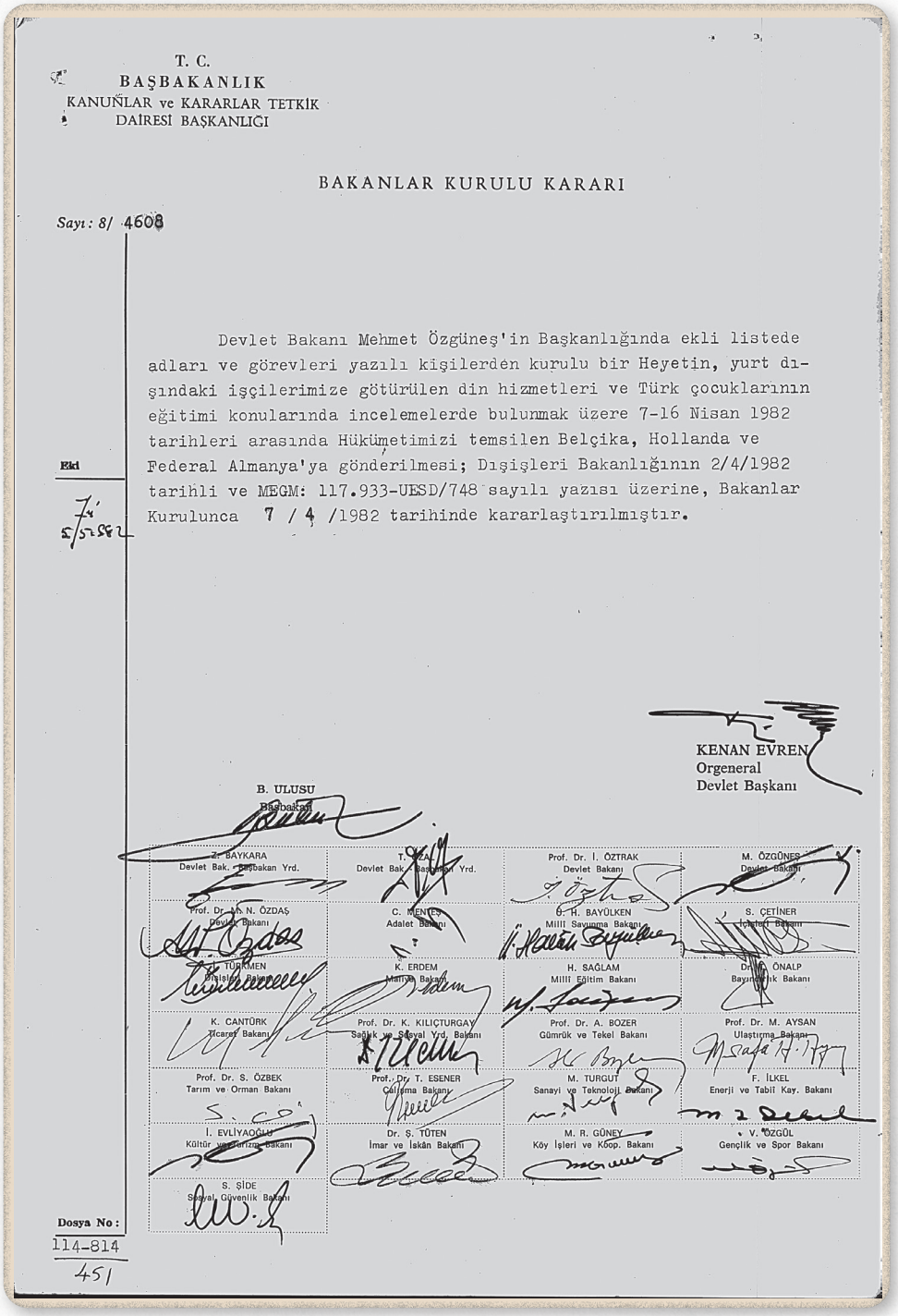
SCHIEDAM, dinsdag. — In de Sporthal vierden gistermorgen ongeveer 2000 islamieten (voor het overgrote deel Turkse gastarbeiders) het einde van de een maand durende Ramadhan, tijdens welke periode zij slechts na zonsondergang mochten eten en drinken.

De organisatie van de Ramadhanviering rustte in handen van de Stichting Hulp aan Buitenlandse arbeiders en van de Turkse ambassade. Er waren 5000 uitnodigingen verstuurd.

De Nederlands-Turkse Vereniging weigerde echter medewerking te verlenen, daar men van mening was, dat het einde van de Ramadhan vandaag zou zijn. Dit in verband met de maanstand. Iman O. S. Akddgan, leider van de Turkse geestelijke verzorging in Nederland, toonde zich verheugd en dankbaar tegenover de organisatoren en legde in zijn predikatie de nadruk op de manier waarop de islamieten hun godsdienst in Nederland kunnen beleven. De Sporthal zal in maart en december van dit jaar wederom als moskee dienst gaan doen.

A 1968 newspaper report on approximately 2,000 Muslims, mostly of Turkish origin, performing the Eid prayer at the end of Ramadan in a sports hall in Schiedam, organized by the Foundation for Assistance to Foreign Workers and the Turkish Embassy

Source: *Sporthal fungeert als moskee Islamieten vieren einde van Ramadhan. "Het Rotterdamsch parool". Rotterdam, 02-01-1968, s. 5. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=MMSARO03:259052001:mpeg21:p00005*



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Devlet Bakanı Mehmet Özgüneş'in Başkanlığında ekli listede adları ve görevleri yazılı kişilerden kurulu bir Heyetin, yurt dışındaki işçilerimize götürülen din hizmetleri ve Türk çocuklarının eğitimi konularında incelemelerde bulunmak üzere 7-16 Nisan 1982 tarihleri arasında Hükümetimizi temsilen Belçika, Hollanda ve Federal Almanya'ya gönderilmesi; Dışişleri Bakanlığının 2/4/1982 tarihli ve MEGM: 117.933-UESD/748 sayılı yazısı üzerine, Bakanlar Kurulunca 7 / 4 /1982 tarihinde kararlaştırılmıştır.

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A 1982 government decision assigning a delegation led by former State Minister Mehmet Özgüneç to Belgium, the Netherlands, and West Germany to conduct examinations regarding religious services for Turkish citizens living abroad
Source: *Directorate of State Archives*

Eerste islamitische basisschool geopend

ROTTERDAM - In Rotterdam is gisteren de eerste islamitische basisschool van Nederland officieel geopend. De school telt 160 leerlingen, die enkele uren per week godsdienstes in de Islam krijgen. Binnenkort komt in Einmdhoven een tweede isamitische basisschool. Op de foto de kinderen, getooid met hoofddoeken en vlaggetjes. (foto ANP)

A 1988 newspaper report announcing the opening of the Netherlands' first Islamic school in Rotterdam with 160 students

Source: *Eerste islamitische basisschool geopend. "Leeuwarder courant : hoofdblad van Friesland". Leeuwarden, 19-11-1988, s. 9. Retrieved from Delpher on 17-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010566812:mpeg21:p009*

Dagblad van het Noorden, 20 maart 2004, blz.9

Begraafplaats voor moslims in Veendam

VEENDAM ■ Op de begraafplaats Buitenwoel in Veendam komt een aparte moslimbegraafplaats. Het verzoek daartoe is gekomen vanuit het onderzoek Turkse ouderenhuisvesting.

Hoewel de eerste generatie Turken zich veelal in het land van herkomst laat begraven, kiest de tweede en derde generatie steeds vaker voor een begrafenis in Nederland. Dat schrijven Geri Dijstelberge en Hazime Tasci van welzijnstichting Compaen in de wijkkrant van Veendam Noord.

De Turkse gemeenschap heeft de gemeente Veendam aangegeven dat het creëren van een eigen begraafplaats bijdraagt aan het zich thuis voelen in Nederland. Daarnaast wordt een eigen begraafplaats gezien als erkenning van de culturele en religieuze identiteit.

De begraafplaats is niet alleen bedoeld voor de vroegere Turkse gastarbeiders en hun kinderen, maar ook voor een groot aantal nieuwkomers en vluchtelingen dat in de toekomst wellicht in Veendam begraven wil worden. Het gaat dan ook om een algemene begraafplaats, die in principe voor elke moslim, ongeacht geloofsrichting, toegankelijk moet zijn.

Het verzoek is neergelegd bij de gemeente. Voorlopig wordt uitgegaan van een terrein van 500 vierkante meter, met plaats voor zo'n 250 graven. De wensen van de moslimgemeenschap zijn onlangs geïnventariseerd tijdens een bijeenkomst.

In die bespreking zijn de afmetingen van het graf, het grafgebruik en de daarvoor bestaande regels besproken. De gemeente en een werkgroep van belanghebbenden brengen gezamenlijk een bezoek aan de begraafplaats Buitenwoel. Naar aanleiding daarvan wordt een eerste schets gemaakt.

■ **WERKGROEP**

De werkgroep zoekt moslims van verschillende herkomst om eventuele verschillen van mening of benadering aangaande de inrichting van de moslimbegraafplaats te achterhalen, zodat daarmee rekening kan worden gehouden bij het definitieve ontwerp. Overigens liggen op de begraafplaats Buitenwoel al meerdere Turken begraven.

A 2004 newspaper report on the arrangement of a cemetery plot in Veendam suitable for the sensitivities of the Muslim community

Source: *Mediahuis Noord, De Krant van Toen, Dagblad van het Noorden, 20-03-2004, s.9, https://dekrantvantoen.nl/vw/article.do?id=DVHN-20040320-GM01009011*

Lahey'deki Türkler cami yapmak için eski bir sinagogu satın aldılar

● Hollanda Sosyal İşler Bakanlığı caminin satın alınması ve bakımı için 5 yıl süreyle 5 milyon lira yardım yapacak

LAHEY, KAMURAN SÜMERCAN bildiriyor

YILLARDAN beri ibadet yeri sıkıntısı çeken Lahey ve çevresindeki Müslüman Türkler nihayet kent belediyesi ile anlaşarak cami yapmak üzere eski bir sinagogu 970 bin florine (yaklaşık 23 milyon TL) satın almaya karar vermişlerdir. Nitekim Lahey Belediye yetkilileri ile önceki gün masa başına oturan Cami Yaptırma Derneği yöneticileri bu anlaşmayı sağlarken Hollanda Sosyal İşler Bakanlığı'ndan da 5 yıl süreli maddî yardım vaadi almışlardır.

Sosyal İşler Bakanlığı, cami yapımı ve bakımı için 5 yıl içinde yaklaşık 5 milyon lira verecektir. Eski sinagogun bedeli ise çok uzun vadede ödenecektir.

A 1979 newspaper report on the purchase of a synagogue by the Turkish community in The Hague, with support from the Dutch government, to convert it into a mosque.
Source: *Milliyet Newspaper, 07-09-1979*

CHAPTER XII.

DIASPORA
AND SOCIAL SERVICES

THE DUTCH TURKISH COMMUNITY: A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

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THE DUTCH TURKISH COMMUNITY: A PSYCHOSOCIAL PERSPECTIVE

BAHAR KARA-DENİZAŞAN[1]

Introduction

The Turkish community in the Netherlands, which began migrating in the 1960s under labor agreements, has since become one of the largest immigrant groups in the country. With the recognition that these immigrants were becoming permanent residents, integration policies were developed to facilitate their adaptation to society. One of the key areas addressed in the first Minority Note (Minderhedennota) of 1983, which laid the foundation for integration policies, was the provision of social and healthcare services for ethnic minorities. As part of broader integration efforts, concerns related to the health of immigrants were initially addressed during this period. The Dutch government aimed to improve access to healthcare services, including psychosocial support, for migrant communities or, at the very least, to equip them with the means to manage their own healthcare needs effectively (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 1983). Academic literature highlights migration as a significant risk factor for the development of mental health disorders. The challenges associated with integration and adaptation can contribute to psychological distress. Low socioeconomic status may further hinder individuals' ability to meet their psychological and physiological needs. Individuals whose fundamental psychological needs are met exhibit greater happiness, motivation, and self-confidence. Conversely, those whose needs remain unfulfilled often experience diminished mental well-being, perceive themselves as socially ineffective, and report lower life satisfaction and self-esteem (Deci & Ryan, 2000). This article examines the psychological challenges frequently encountered by individuals of Turkish origin in the Netherlands and provides an overview of the initiatives undertaken to address these mental health concerns.

Mental Health Disorders Among Dutch-Turks

The first generation of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands faced particularly challenging socioeconomic and working conditions. Many initially perceived themselves as temporary guest workers and planned to return to Türkiye, which led them to invest little effort in social development and welfare. These individuals often left behind social networks, including family and friends, and faced significant language barriers, limiting their ability to interact with ethnic Dutch people or access social support systems. Consequently, this generation expe-

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rienced a low quality of life, social isolation, and limited educational and professional development opportunities. Limited social integration and insufficient social networks are significant contributing factors to the onset of psychological disorders.

A 2005 study conducted in Amsterdam found that among Turkish migrants aged 55-75, 61% exhibited symptoms of depression (Van der Wurff et al., 2005). Among psychiatric conditions affecting the Turkish community in the Netherlands, depression, anxiety disorders, and adaptation difficulties are the most frequently reported. Depression is an affective disorder known for its profound impact on quality of life. A study by Schrier et al. (2010) found that individuals of Turkish origin in the Netherlands displayed higher rates of depressive symptoms compared to the Dutch. Additionally, Turkish migrants face a greater risk of developing depression than other ethnic minority groups in the country. Research also revealed that at a given time, Turkish-origin individuals used antidepressants at three times the rate of other ethnic minority groups and native Dutch population. Therefore, there is a pressing need to enhance the mental health of individuals of Turkish origin. To safeguard mental health, it is crucial for professionals to identify psychological issues among immigrants, provide accurate information, and facilitate referrals to mental health services when necessary.

A significant concern regarding the mental health of individuals of Turkish origin in the Netherlands is the heightened prevalence of loneliness compared to other ethnic groups. Feelings of loneliness are not exclusive to the first-generation elderly population but are also widely reported among second- and third-generation Turkish youth (Tilburg & Fokkema, 2018). In addition to depression, anxiety disorders, and adaptation difficulties, many Turkish-origin individuals seeking mental health support present with multiple comorbidities. Furthermore, individuals of Turkish origin often require assistance with daily life management in addition to professional psychological support. Compared to ethnic Dutch individuals, Turkish clients frequently seek help for routine tasks, such as managing financial obligations, accessing social and domestic assistance services, and requiring translation support for bureaucratic processes. These difficulties stem from socioeconomic disparities, including lower levels of education, higher unemployment rates, poorer living conditions, and the struggle to cope with a greater prevalence of physical health issues among the Turkish population. These stressors negatively impact psychological well-being.

Mental Health Services in the Netherlands

The Dutch mental healthcare system operates through a tiered structure based on the severity and complexity of a client's psychological complaints. This system is divided into three levels of care. The first level involves referrals for mild psychological complaints that typically arise from day-to-day stressors. The second and third levels are deployed in cases involving more severe, complex, and persistent complaints. A diagnostic evaluation and treatment plan are formulated by the mental health institution based on the presenting complaints. The widely utilized Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) published by the American Psychiatric Association and diagnoses covered by health insurance are used as diagnostic benchmarks. Unless cove-

red by either, the applicant is not eligible for psychological support, and their treatment is not covered under the insurance scheme.

The Immigrant Communities' Access to and Expectations from the Healthcare System

A research report published by the Community Health and Society Board (Raad Volksgezondheid & Samenleving) in the Netherlands in 2000 revealed that immigrants utilize mental health services less frequently compared to their ethnic Dutch counterparts (Struijs & Wennink, 2000). The Turkish community faces several challenges in accessing mental healthcare. Mental health services are covered by basic health insurance, but to receive specialist care, individuals must first consult a family doctor, who serves as the initial point of referral for psychological support. Correct referral by the family doctor serves as the initial step in ensuring access to appropriate psychological support. However, research indicates that Turkish-origin individuals often struggle to effectively articulate their mental health concerns during initial consultations with family doctors (Simon et al., 1999). While ethnic Dutch patients are typically able to verbalize and express emotional distress directly, Turkish-origin individuals often experience difficulties in expressing themselves. Thus, this difficulty culminates in higher prevalence of somatization disorder, wherein psychological distress manifests as physical symptoms. As a result, the underlying mental health issues may go undiagnosed. Additionally, language barriers, cultural differences, and occasionally the prejudiced attitudes of local professionals can contribute to misunderstandings.

Local family doctors in the Netherlands frequently encounter communication challenges when engaging with immigrant patients, leading to shorter consultations and limited sharing of information about mental health services (Los et al., 2016). This may contribute to misguidance, unmet expectations, inadequate psychological support, and delays in accessing necessary care. Among individuals of Turkish origin, the psychological treatment process is often challenging, with many discontinuing treatment due to language barriers, discrepancies in value judgement, cultural and religious differences, and differing expectations between patients and mental health professionals. Turkish-origin individuals seeking mental health support often present with a range of aforementioned issues beyond psychological concerns. When individuals of Turkish origin seek mental health services, they often expect solutions to broader issues encountered in their daily lives. However, these challenges frequently fall outside the scope of what mental health services in the Netherlands can address. The inability to meet these expectations may lead to discontinuation of treatment.

Evolution of Multicultural Approach in Mental Healthcare

As immigrants became a permanent demographic in the Netherlands, the government incorporated healthcare accessibility into its integration policies in the 1980s. The first Minority Note of 1983 acknowledged the lack of data on immigrant access to healthcare, including mental health services. In response, policy objectives were defined to include free translation services, specialized outreach programs for immigrants, and enhanced healthcare personnel training to cater to immigrant health needs. For ins-

"To safeguard mental health, it is crucial for professionals to identify psychological issues among immigrants, provide accurate information, and facilitate referrals to mental health services when necessary."

tance, the Ministry of Education and Science allocated funding to 15 vocational schools of higher education to develop methodologies for healthcare service delivery to ethnic minorities (Tweede Kamer der Staten-Generaal, 1983). These efforts marked the initial steps toward a culturally sensitive care *(cultuursensitieve zorg)* model, which aimed to integrate cultural considerations into healthcare services (Van Herwaarden et al., 2020). However, implementation challenges arose due to increasing ethnic and cultural diversity among mental health service users and uncertainties regarding how to adapt services to diverse cultural needs (Struijs & Wennink, 2000). Theoretical debates also emerged, with universalist scholars arguing that cultural differences are superficial, and deeper aspects of human psychology remain consistent among all individuals. However, accumulating research demonstrated that culture significantly influences behaviour patterns, affecting emotions, perception, moral and spatial reasoning, and self-concept. Empirical evidence has since shown that culturally sensitive treatment approaches enhance patient outcomes (Van Els & Knipscheer, 2017). To promote culturally competent healthcare, certain initiatives were introduced over time. These included collaborations with immigrant organizations, employment of mediators from an immigration background, healthcare personnel training, employment of cultural experts, and integration of intercultural services in care facilities. However, according to Devillé (2010), these initiatives have predominantly been confined to a limited number of experts who assume leadership roles at the local level, and the extent of their short-term or long-term impact on macro-level healthcare services remains unclear. Furthermore, research from the Verwey-Jonker Institute indicates that healthcare professionals have yet to fully adopt culturally sensitive practices (Nhass et al., 2023). Additionally, the lack of official ethnic or citizenship data collection in the Dutch healthcare system restricts comprehensive analysis of immigrant health trends and service utilization (Devillé, 2010).

Conclusion

The difficulties faced by the Turkish community in accessing Dutch mental health services during the initial referral phase often persist into the diagnostic stage. A primary challenge is that the terminology and concepts used in the DSM-5 are rooted in Western references and conceptual frameworks, which may not align with the cultural expressions of mental health issues among individuals of Turkish origin. This misalignment, coupled with language and communication barriers, complicates the interpretation of symptoms and complaints. Many Turkish-origin individuals prefer to consult with Tur-

"Empirical evidence has since shown that culturally sensitive treatment approaches enhance patient outcomes."

kish-speaking mental health professionals to better articulate their concerns. The terminology or expressions employed by Dutch specialists when assessing individuals from different cultural backgrounds can result in misunderstandings, leading to comprehension issues between the client and the specialist, adversely affecting diagnosis, treatment planning, and therapeutic outcomes.

To enhance the Turkish community's access to mental health services in the Netherlands, several key measures can be implemented. First, clear and accessible information about mental health services should be provided in a visual format, removing linguistic barriers. Additionally, during preliminary consultations, expectations from psychological support and treatment should be clearly established, and specific recovery-oriented goals should be defined throughout the therapeutic process. Psychological concerns and social difficulties should be differentiated, ensuring appropriate guidance and referrals. Furthermore, it is equally crucial for professionals to adopt a holistic perspective when formulating treatment plans, ensuring that clients receive comprehensive psycho-education regarding the issues they are experiencing. To better address migration-related psychological issues, mental health professionals should receive specialized training, and alternative therapeutic approaches for immigrants beyond Western-centric models should be developed.

At this point, the ongoing insufficiency of culturally sensitive care in the Dutch health system is evident. To improve mental health services for immigrant populations, state-funded health services should undergo enhancements to ensure accurate research and appropriate therapy referrals. Additionally, increasing state support for local and civil society initiatives that provide culturally sensitive care *(cultuurspecifieke zorg)* could prove highly significant.

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Interview

CULTURALLY-BASED AND ATTENTIVE ELDERLY CARE SERVICE: AN INTERVIEW WITH SEDA ARSLAN ABOUT LALE PATIENT AND CARE CENTER

SEDA ARSLAN

Public Relations Manager, Lale Patient and Care Center

✍ Can you tell us briefly about yourself, your professional journey, and what your work means to you?

My name is Seda Arslan, and I am 33 years old. My family and I immigrated from Türkiye to the Netherlands in 1990 when I was just two years old. My journey in this field began at middle school when a care center for children with special needs sought volunteers. My teacher encouraged me to get involved, and I began offering voluntary music and dance lessons to children with Down syndrome every weekend. In the meantime, I began an internship at a daycare center for children with special needs. The supervisor there recognized my aptitude for this work and offered me a position. Working with individuals with Down syndrome, autism, and other special needs taught me invaluable lessons, including how to develop a unique communication style tailored to their needs. After years in the field, I pursued formal education in social work.

Meanwhile, my mother worked at an elderly and patient care center specializing in dementia, Alzheimer's, and geriatrics. A health coordinator position became available at her institution, which she encouraged me to consider. After having worked in social care for 11 years, I returned to school to retrain as a nurse.

Leveraging the knowledge and experience I acquired, I advanced in my career by assuming various roles within the ins-

titution where I was working. The Dutch healthcare sector prioritizes innovation, but changes are often implemented without consulting healthcare professionals, frequently in the form of imposition. To be honest, I was frustrated about this, which motivated me to further my education in Health Administration *(zorgmanager)*, as I wanted to contribute to decision-making processes at a higher level. After obtaining my diploma, I earned the opportunity to join discussions with decision-makers and share my ideas. Today, I am a medical professional with 21 years of experience in patient and care services. I currently serve as a board member, storyteller, trainer, and life coach across various institutions. I work as the public relations manager at Lale, the only Turkish care center in the Netherlands offering inpatient care. Additionally, I am a board member of the Dutch Alzheimer's Foundation and the project manager of a national theater initiative to boost dementia awareness. I also volunteer across various institutions.

For me, work is not just a profession; it is life itself. It integrates what I learn in books and from practical experience with the real world. Therefore, I approach my work not only in material terms but also as a spiritual pursuit. Initially, when I started working in this sector at the age of 14, I did not fully grasp its significance. Now, as an educator, I find great fulfillment in sharing my knowledge with young people. My goal is to inspire young people to deve-

lop a passion for this field and assist them in pursuing the most important aspect of their lives: a career they truly love. When individuals are engaged in work they are passionate about, they neither grow weary nor lose interest.

✍ Could you share the origins of Lale, the sole institution in the Netherlands providing inpatient elderly care services specifically for Turkish individuals, and its parent organization, Egala Zorg?

Lale has been operating as an inpatient care center for approximately 14 years, with its journey beginning 18 years ago in 2004. This initiative was spearheaded by a mosque affiliated with the Dutch Diyanet Foundation in Breda. At the time, a nearby building was vacated when *Raffy*, an organization providing care services to Indonesian and Moluccan elderly individuals, relocated. The mosque management proposed repurposing the building to serve elderly individuals of Turkish descent. The authorized manager of *Egala Zorg*, Raffy's parent organization, supported the idea, marking the inception of Lale. This collaboration culminated in 2009 with the admission of the first Turkish elderly residents into Lale. Today, Egala Zorg oversees three culturally-sensitive care homes in the Brabant region: *Raffy, Lale*, and *De Leystroom*. Raffy continues to serve Indonesian and Moluccan elderly individuals, while Lale caters specifically to Turkish elderly individuals. De Leystroom addresses the needs of Dutch elderly residents in Brabant, with a focus on cultural sensitivities. These care centers aim to bring together elderly individuals who share similar cultural backgrounds, offering services tailored to their cultural needs. This approach ensures that healthcare and eldercare services align with the diverse cultural fabric of the society.

✍ What was the founding purpose of Lale, and what significance does it hold for the Dutch Turkish community?

Lale was established to address the unique needs of the first-generation Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands who, after choosing not to repatriate to Türkiye, began to face the challenges of aging and age-related medical conditions. Recognizing these emerging needs, the authorities of the time responded to the demands of the Turkish community by founding Lale. Lale is a 50-bed care center designed to provide care for patients with dementia and Alzheimer's disease, fully integrating Turkish cultural, linguistic, and religious practices. Dementia and Alzheimer's cases among Turkish elderly individuals are expected to rise in the coming years. These conditions are considered pressing health

"Lale was established to address the unique needs of the first-generation Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands who, after choosing not to repatriate to Türkiye, began to face the challenges of aging and age-related medical conditions."

challenges for the future. As such, Lale is proud to provide culturally relevant care today while preparing to address the increasing demands of the future.

What does culturally-based elderly care entail?

Culturally-based elderly care is designed to mitigate the challenges faced by Turkish-origin elderly individuals in the Netherlands, stemming from cultural differences. For instance, Turkish elderly individuals may encounter language barriers, difficulties accessing halal food, or social exclusion from other Dutch residents in other care centers. Moreover, within the Turkish community, cultural differences may arise based on the place of origin in Türkiye. Managing these differences effectively is critical for providing quality care, particularly for individuals with dementia and Alzheimer's disease. Understanding the geography, cultural norms, and culinary traditions of a patient's place of origin is crucial in reviving their memory and delivering optimal care. For example, one distinguishing feature of Lale is its use of the melodic structure of folk songs and traditional music that dementia patients often retain. We strive to consider their unique perspectives and sensitivities while creating a secure and supportive care environment. Our culturally tailored elderly care services distinctly differentiate us from other care centers in the Netherlands.

What services do you provide?

Our primary focus is to offer a secure environment for our residents. At Lale, we aim to provide care that meets hospital standards while maintaining a warm and compassionate atmosphere. Most of our residents are elderly individuals diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease and receive palliative care. At this stage, where recovery is no longer possible, our efforts concentrate on delivering the highest quality of care.

We administer medications to alleviate symptoms and manage pain. The objective is not to prolong life but to enhance the quality of patients' remaining days with a dedicated team that genuinely cares for and engages with the residents. Daily routines include morning activities, breakfast, and spiritual care sessions. A volunteer visits weekly to lead Quran readings, sing hymns, and address the spiritual needs of our residents, aiming to bolster their mental health. Additionally, we organize culturally specific activities that reflect Turkish traditions, allowing residents to feel as though they are in their home country.

To engage their motor skills, we carry out small tasks, such as rolling vine leaves or peeling potatoes. We also organize events like nature walks, picnics, and sira

"Our culturally tailored elderly care services distinctly differentiate us from other care centers in the Netherlands."

nights, a communal entertainment tradition specific to a Turkish city. Meals are prepared on-site, and all essential needs are fully met.

For me, one of our most impactful services is Turkish music therapy provided by a trained music therapist. This therapy has proven effective in managing symptoms like anxiety and depression. Through these tailored services, we strive to enhance our residents' quality of life, even at the terminal stage.

What type of residents do you admit?

Lale accommodates individuals with mental and physical conditions, including dementia, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, Huntington's disease, and those requiring palliative terminal care. Admission begins with a diagnosis from a medical professional. Once diagnosed, the family doctor or social health specialist applies for personal budget assistance provided by the state under the Long-Term Care Act *(Wet langdurige zorg - Wlz) (formerly known as Algemene Wet Bijzondere Ziektekosten - AWBZ).* This act ensures financial coverage for individuals with complex healthcare needs, such as chronic illnesses, disabilities, or vulnerable elderly people. It covers the costs of inpatient care, general healthcare, medical equipment, guidance and treatment. Fol-

lowing the approval of these procedures, the resident's care journey at Lale begins.

✍ How many employees do you have?

Lale currently employs 99 staff members, whose roles align with varying levels of expertise and responsibility. Salaries are determined based on the Netherlands' collective labor agreement *(Collectieve arbeidsovereenkomst - CAO).* Employees are categorized into levels. For example, general coordinators who oversee treatment techniques and healthcare methods are at Level 5. Level 4 comprises specialist nurses authorized to make critical decisions regarding high-risk residents and administer advanced nursing care. Patient care workers who handle medication distribution and bed care are ranked as Level 3. Level 2 staff provide support services including bedside care, though they are not authorized to handle medications. Level 1 staff focus on responsibilities such as serving meals, supporting activities, and providing general assistance in communal areas.

✍ Do you exclusively serve patients of Turkish origin?

Yes, Lale primarily serves residents of Turkish origin. At present, we care for 50 residents aged between 41 and 89 years. However, when there are vacancies, we occasionally offer short-term care to the next patient according to needs.

✍ What work do you do to increase Lale's visibility and accessibility?

We actively utilize our social media platforms. Additionally, we participate in Turkish fairs, presenting ourselves to the Dutch Turkish community and broader public. Theater performances in mosques and community associations form another

integral part of our outreach efforts, providing a way to inform and raise awareness among the audience about dementia and Alzheimer's disease.

✍ Have you witnessed any cultural and traditional hesitations regarding leaving family elders in nursing homes? If yes, can you explain?

There is a significant need for nursing homes like Lale within Turkish society, as reflected by statistical data. Despite recommendations from family physicians that patients require professional care in a nursing home, some families remain hesitant and reluctant to pursue such care. Consequently, families often delay seeking professional care until their loved one's condition becomes unmanageable, resulting in many patients arriving at Lale during advanced stages of dementia, typically stages three or four. We work to inform the families and patient's relatives, and raise awareness about the early stages of the illness. Through activities at mosque associations, including theater performan-

ces and interactive dialogues, we educate families on managing dementia at home in its early stages. These sessions are supported by specialist doctors and psychologists and have been well-received in nine cities. However, we require additional funding to reach more families and to expand these efforts further. At this stage, we aim to strengthen our project by communicating with various sponsors and supporters.

✍ Do you carry out information and awareness activities for Turkish society so that the necessary services can be provided to the elderly without delay?

Yes, we actively organize informational activities, including voluntary seminars and theatrical events in mosques. Additionally, in collaboration with the Alzheimer Netherlands Foundation, we host monthly "Alzheimer Meeting Spots." These gatherings serve as a platform for Alzheimer's patients and their relatives to socialize and get information, often over tea and conversations.

✍ What is the demand for nursing homes? Have you observed a decrease or increase in applications over the years?

Although there is a significant demand for elderly care facilities in the Netherlands, the negative experiences of such centers in Türkiye, as portrayed in the media, have contributed to a negative societal perception. This perception often complicates the process of convincing families to seek professional care. Moreover, societal pressures regarding elderly and patient care centers are considerable. It is essential to recognize that Turkish families who migrated to the Netherlands from various regions of Türkiye initially prioritized maintaining strong familial bonds, often shaping their lives around these relationships and supporting one another. However, over time, this sense of unity can lead to family members exerting influence over each other and placing pressure on certain decisions. In Turkish culture, the responsibility of children to care for their elderly parents is highly valued, and as a result, placing elderly individuals in nursing homes may be perceived as neglecting filial duties. This cultural expectation can delay the decision to seek professional care for aging relatives.

✍ What do you value in care? Do you provide psychosocial support and activities?

Indeed, we provide comprehensive daily medical care for our patients, which includes administering medications, examining and treating wounds, and addressing technical needs such as urinary catheters. Additionally, we focus on supporting the mental well-being of our patients through various psychological and psychosocial activities, including music therapy and hot massages. We also incorporate other age-appropriate treatment methods, utilizing disciplines such as physiotherapy and occupational therapy. Recognizing the unique needs of each patient - such as difficulties with swallowing - we tailor our care by developing individualized care plans. These plans are reviewed every three months, with new goals set in accordance with the prognosis of each patient's condition.

✍ Are there any other culturally-based nursing homes in the Netherlands? Are they sufficient in number or do they provide the required quality of service?

Based on our current research, there is no other nursing home in the Netherlands exclusively dedicated to Turkish culture.

While some facilities include sections designed for Muslim patients, these initiatives often fall short of meeting the specific needs of the community. The Muslim population in the Netherlands is diverse, comprising various ethnic and linguistic groups, which poses a challenge for generalized care approaches. Although some institutions adopt the "cultuursensitieve zorg" (culturally sensitive care) approach, they often struggle to address the full spectrum of cultural diversity within Dutch society. Furthermore, while Egala Zorg and Lale provide a culturally-based care model, it is difficult to ascertain how similar these services are to those of other institutions. Our knowledge on this matter might be limited. There may be smaller-scale efforts elsewhere, but further study is required to identify and evaluate them.

✍ What are the needs of elderly people with immigrant backgrounds in the Netherlands? How are the cultural and religious needs of immigrants reflected in elderly care services?

The primary needs of immigrant elders in the Netherlands often revolve around their spiritual needs. At Lale, we pay particular attention to meeting these needs by facilitating religious practices such as ablution and prayer. Every Thursday, a religious official from the mosque visits our nursing home to recite the Quran, sing hymns, and provide spiritual guidance, if needed.

Our elderly residents also have cultural needs. We create an environment where Turkish is spoken, Turkish music is played, and traditional Turkish cuisine is served. These elements play a significant role in satisfying their needs. Additionally, we regularly celebrate religious and national holidays. Beyond these efforts, addressing the elders' basic needs - such as providing nourishing meals, engaging in conversations, and offering a friendly environment - is equally important in ensuring their well-being.

✍ What are elderly care services like in the Netherlands?

Elderly care services in the Netherlands are diverse. For example, dementia patients and their families can access a "case manager" who helps plan and oversee the patient care process. This case manager acts as a guide, facilitating a personalized care process tailored to the specific needs of each patient. Additionally, centers known as "dagbesteding" in Dutch provide daytime activities designed to meet the requirements of the elderly. State-supported home care services, referred to as "thuiszorg," are also available. Through this service, trained personnel visit the homes of elderly

individuals with specific medical conditions to assist with personal care, administer medications, monitor health status, and help with household tasks. Social workers further support dementia patients and their families in managing the challenges associated with the condition. In response to the growing elderly population, the Dutch government has promoted "mantelzorg," which encourages family members to voluntarily undertake caregiving responsibilities. All these services operate within a comprehensive legal framework.

✍ What are the legal regulations and policies covering elderly care for people of immigrant origin in the Netherlands?

Elderly care in the Netherlands is governed by several key legal regulations and policies. The Long-Term Care Act *(Wet langdurige zorg)* is a significant framework that provides round-the-clock care and supervision for elderly individuals with severe physical or cognitive impairments. This includes services offered in nursing homes and is implemented by the central government and municipal health offices. The Social Support Act *(Wet maatschappelijke ondersteuning)* is another critical policy aimed at helping elderly individuals live independently in their own homes. This act provides support such as assistance with household tasks, daily activities, and individual guidance, with implementation overseen by municipalities. While these regulations establish a framework for elderly care, their application varies depending on factors such as the individual's access to services, migration background, housing situation, and specific care needs.

✍ What practices exist in the Netherlands for culturally-based care services beyond nursing homes?

In the Netherlands, culturally-based care services include a variety of practices designed to address the unique needs of diverse ethnic groups. These practices often involve providing interpreters or healthcare professionals fluent in the patient's native language to bridge language barriers. Additionally, care personnel receive cultural competence training to enhance their ability to deliver culturally sensitive services to ethnically diverse patients. Examples of such practices include accommodating religious and cultural preferences, such as facilitating prayer times or providing halal food. A holistic approach is essential in culturally-based care.

✍ How are the costs of elderly care services covered?

Elderly care services in the Netherlands are predominantly funded by the state. However, there may be additional costs covered by personal contributions or private

health insurance. In some cases, private institutions or family support can supplement financing. The state offers various financial aids to ensure that elderly care remains accessible to all citizens.

✍ How is access to elderly care services provided? What are the application processes and requirements?

Access to elderly care services begins with an application process, during which the needs of the elderly individual are assessed, and a care plan is developed. Following this, a formal request for support is submitted to the municipality or relevant healthcare providers. Upon approval, suitable care services are made available based on the elderly person's needs and condition. A fundamental aspect is the guidance provided both to the elderly person and their families.

✍ How do you view the future of elderly care for immigrants in the Netherlands? What role does the Turkish diaspora have in this?

The future of elderly care for immigrants in the Netherlands is a critical issue as the immigrant population continues to grow. Elderly immigrants often have distinct cultural, linguistic, and social needs that must be addressed. Neglecting these aspects can lead to inadequate services, especially for those with conditions such as dementia or Alzheimer's disease. However, the concept of culturally-based care is gaining traction in the Netherlands, with increasing academic attention. For instance, Egala Zorg's De Leystroom wing accommodates local cultural differences in care approaches, extending beyond immigrant communities. In the future, it will be essential to integrate culturall-

y-based elderly care more effectively into the healthcare and social service models of the Netherlands. The provision of culturally sensitive care for immigrants is a critical issue, and the Turkish diaspora can play a pivotal role in addressing this need. Turkish society should actively work to raise awareness among the general public and relevant government institutions, highlighting the unique needs of elderly immigrants. The Turkish diaspora should actively engage in civil society to offer appropriate guidance in the delivery of culturally-based services. Furthermore, the diaspora should seek representation on platforms where the voices of elderly immigrants can be amplified. Such efforts will contribute to a more inclusive and comprehensive elderly care system in the Netherlands.

✍ What are your expectations of the Turkish state regarding care services for elderly Turkish citizens abroad?

It is essential to recognize the value of our elderly and honor them appropriately. We must listen to the stories of our elders who migrated to the Netherlands as workers in the 1960s, contributing significantly to both nations and representing the first generation of our diaspora. Preserving and passing these narratives to future generations while standing by them during the final stages of their lives is the most meaningful way to show our respect and affection. The Turkish state could enhance its support for culturally sensitive care services. Additionally, contributions to awareness-raising initiatives could help the community fully benefit from available services. Furthermore, the Turkish state could promote the model we implement at Lale, developed through the collaboration of the Dutch Turkish community and Dutch authorities, as a benchmark for other countries and work to expand its reach.

Interview

THE FUTURE OF CHILDREN IN NEED OF CARE IN THE DIASPORA: AN INTERVIEW ON FOSTER CARE WITH THE YILDIZ FAMILY

YILDIZ FAMILY
(Bünyamin Yıldız and Rahime Yıldız)

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourselves and share your migration story?

My name is Bünyamin Yıldız, and I was born in 1987. I worked as an imam for 12 years and have been serving as a religious teacher and spiritual guide since 2024. My family migrated from Kastamonu, Türkiye, to the Netherlands in the 1960s. Similarly, my wife's family relocated from Kayseri, Türkiye, to Gelsenkirchen, Germany, as part of a worker migration. I completed my education up to high school in Delft, Netherlands, while my wife, Rahime, graduated from high school in Germany. Later, we both returned to Türkiye through the International Theology Program, which marked a turning point in our lives and brought us together. After marriage, we lived in Rotterdam for eight years where my work was based and subsequently moved to Bergen op Zoom. We are blessed with a daughter and a son.

✍ You are one of the few foster families within the Dutch Muslim community. What motivated you to become a foster family?

Our journey as a foster family was inspired primarily by my wife, Rahime. Her experiences as a theology student and a volunteer in the Young Volunteers Club, where she visited nursing homes and served as a caregiver in orphanages, helped forge her strong bond with children in need of love.

After marriage, we shared a desire to provide a nurturing and warm home for a child in need, alongside our own children. Our research eventually brought us into contact with Dutch Foster Family Institutions.

✍ What steps did you take to become a foster family? Could you elaborate on your experiences and the stages involved in the process?

Our initial step was to research the process online and attend an information session organized by the nearest Foster Family Institution. This session was an eye-opener for us. Initially, we approached fostering with hopeful and idealistic intentions. However, after the meeting, we became acutely aware of the dire need for foster families and felt a moral obligation to take action. In the Netherlands, finding suitable foster families for Muslim children is particularly challenging due to the limited number of Muslim foster families. During the information session, we noticed we were the only Muslim family in attendance. Afterwards, we submitted a written application to the institution. The process began with an interview at the institution's office, followed by a home visit from their representatives to assess our family structure. We also submitted extensive documentation. The institution required us to attend mandatory preparatory courses designed to equip foster families with the skills to address challenges that may arise during fostering. However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic temporarily halted our progress. Additionally, a change in my professional assignment required us to relocate, which meant starting the entire application process anew with a different institution. The courses, held exclusively in the evenings and requiring the attendance of both parents, posed logistical challenges for us, which delayed our completion of the procedures. During this period, we discovered a social media post about three Muslim children placed in a non-Muslim household, announcing the urgent need for a Muslim foster family for them. We immediately contacted the relevant authorities, and through an expedited procedure, we were granted foster parent status.

How is the concept of foster care defined in the Netherlands? Could you summarize the current regulations and practices surrounding foster care in the Netherlands?

Foster care in the Netherlands is defined as a temporary arrangement where children, who cannot remain with their biological families due to unsafe conditions such as neglect or abuse, are cared for by foster families. These children are placed in foster homes to ensure their safety and well-being until either their home environment becomes safe again or a permanent solution is found.

Foster care in the Netherlands is regulated in various ways. Firstly, foster care is legally regulated under the Youth Act *(Jeugdwet),* which specifies how foster care is to be provided and ensures that the foster family is supervised by youth services. This act prioritizes creating a safe and stable environment for children in foster care.

The second regulation pertains to the selection and training of foster families. Prospective foster families in the Netherlands are required to fulfill specific criteria. First of all, individuals or families wishing to become foster parents must notify the relevant foster care institution of their interest. App-

"In the Netherlands, finding suitable foster families for Muslim children is particularly challenging due to the limited number of Muslim foster families."

licants are assessed on criteria such as compatibility, stability, financial capacity, and availability. They must also complete mandatory training programs to prepare them for their responsibilities as foster parents.

Third, foster families are supported by professional foster care organizations. Also, the child's circumstances and progress are regularly monitored.

Fourth, foster care is generally intended to be temporary, with the aim of returning the child to their family as soon as it is safe to do so or finding another permanent solution. In some cases, however, care may be extended if reunification with the biological family is not possible.

Finally, foster families are encouraged to collaborate with the child's biological family, where feasible, and with relevant institutions, such as municipalities and children's services. This collaboration helps maintain a holistic approach to the child's welfare.

✍ What are the requirements for citizens who wish to become foster parents?

To become a foster parent in the Netherlands, individuals must meet certain criteria. They must be at least 21 years old and have stable living conditions. Additionally, they must obtain a certificate of good conduct from the Child Protection Board *(Raad voor de Kinderbescherming)* to confirm they have no criminal record. A safe and secure home environment must also be provided for the child. Prospective foster parents must complete various procedural steps, including attending seminars, filling out extensive documentation, and allowing home visits from authorities to assess their suitability.

✍ Is there sufficient cultural and religious sensitivity in the Dutch foster care system? What are your observations on this issue? Have any efforts been made by relevant institutions to increase such sensitivity?

The Foster Family Agency prioritizes placing children in environments that maintain their stability, such as families located close to their schools, while also considering religious and cultural compatibility. However, based on our observations, the limited number of Muslim foster families in the Netherlands poses a significant challenge. Consequently, Muslim children often find themselves placed with families of differing cultural and religious backgrounds. In my opinion, civil society organizations have a critical role in addressing this issue. They can amplify the importance of fostering within communities, raise awareness, and facilitate broader engagement. Only through collaborative efforts can we address the shortage of Muslim foster families. By uniting under shared goals, fostering dialogue, and advancing awareness, it is possible to create meaningful change. My wife, Rahime, and I have been actively working to encourage and inform our community about the importance of becoming foster families. By sharing our own experiences, we aim to inspire others to

"Many Muslim families may not fully comprehend the concept of foster care, the responsibilities it entails, or whether it aligns with Islamic principles."

take action. Over the past few years, we have seen a growing interest within our network, and this momentum has extended to a wider audience. Through social media, seminars, and partnerships we continue to highlight the critical need for foster families. And we are grateful to the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities for making our voice heard. We hope our efforts will lead to the creation of more nurturing environments for children in need. Every child welcomed into a caring home is like a beacon of hope for a brighter future.

What have been your experiences as foster parents? How have these experiences shaped your perspective, and what has left the greatest impression on you?

Although we have been engaged with children through education for years, welcoming foster children into our home has provided us with new and profound insights. These experiences have highlighted the privileges we once took for granted, such as the simple joy of sharing meals as a family, and engaging in conversation with a sense of family togetherness around the dinner table. We came to understand that in some households, family members do not gather around the same table, meals are sporadic, and the atmosphere at the table lacks the warmth, conversation, and joy shared among family members. For instance, we found out that some of the children we hosted had previously hesitated to practice their faith openly in non-Muslim foster homes. Witnessing their relief and happiness

at being able to recite the Basmala freely in our home was deeply moving. Similarly, the comfort they found in the recitation of the Qur'an during moments of anxiety revealed the significant impact of creating a nurturing, faith-affirming environment. While our own children can be picky eaters, our guests exhibited joy and gratitude for every dish served, reminding us of the stark contrasts in lived experiences. Some of our most cherished memories include their first experiences - visiting a mosque, reciting the Talbiyah, or enjoying trips to the zoo, cinema, bowling alleys, and playgrounds. Each moment enriched not only their lives but ours as well. While they may have been with us temporarily, the lessons they taught us and the light they brought into our home will remain with us forever. Wherever they go, they will always be in our prayers.

✍ What do you think are the reasons behind the low number of Muslim foster families? What are your thoughts and comments on these reasons?

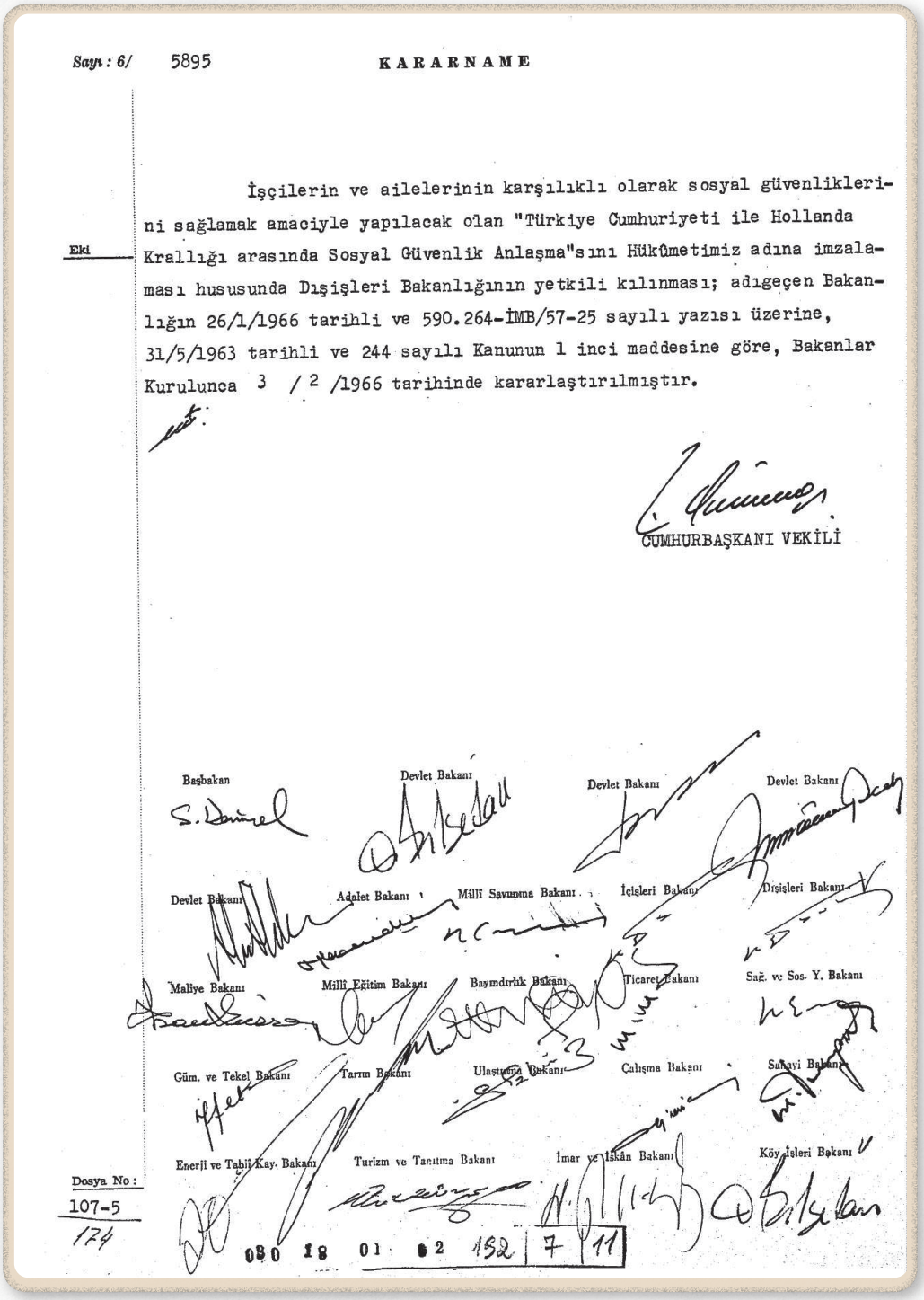
One of the primary reasons for the low number of Muslim foster families is the lack of adequate information and awareness on this issue. Many Muslim families may not fully comprehend the concept of foster care, the responsibilities it entails, or whether it aligns with Islamic principles.

It is crucial to communicate the significance of becoming a foster family, both in moral and religious terms, within the Muslim community. Misconceptions and prejudices surrounding foster care must be addressed. Emphasis should be placed on the importance of Muslim foster families, particularly in preserving the religious and cultural identities of Muslim children. Answers should be provided to address any religious concerns families might have. Moreover, showcasing successful examples of Muslim foster families and sharing their experiences can inspire and motivate others to take on this role. Civil society organizations can play a pivotal role in spreading awareness and educating the community. Ultimately, it is essential to highlight the transformative impact foster families can have on children who cannot remain with their biological families, as well as the enriching experience it offers to the foster families themselves. By cultivating a collective sense of responsibility within the community, the number of Muslim foster families can be significantly increased.

✍ Have you undertaken any initiatives to raise awareness about foster care in the Netherlands as a foster family? What do you think are the responsibilities of society and state institutions in this regard?

As a foster family in the Netherlands, we have made individual efforts to raise awareness about the importance of foster care. We actively share our experiences with those around us, explaining what it means to be a foster family, the challenges involved, and the profound difference it can make in the lives of children. We especially focus on encouraging participation within the Muslim community by providing accurate information and addressing common concerns. In recent years, with increased visibility, we have assumed the role of a bridge between Foster Family Institutions, the Youth Care Office, and the Muslim community across the Netherlands. This has allowed us to reach Muslim families in various regions, encouraging them to consider foster care. We also respond to questions about the religious and procedural aspects of becoming a foster family, helping to alleviate uncertainties.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE



Sayı : 6/ 5895

KARARNAME

İşçilerin ve ailelerinin karşılıklı olarak sosyal güvenliklerini sağlamak amaciyle yapılacak olan "Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Hollanda Krallığı arasında Sosyal Güvenlik Anlaşma"sını Hükûmetimiz adına imzalaması hususunda Dışişleri Bakanlığının yetkili kılınması; adıgeçen Bakanlığın 26/1/1966 tarihli ve 590.264-İMB/57-25 sayılı yazısı üzerine, 31/5/1963 tarihli ve 244 sayılı Kanunun 1 inci maddesine göre, Bakanlar Kurulunca 3 / 2 /1966 tarihinde kararlaştırılmıştır.

Ekl

CUMHURBAŞKANI VEKİLİ

Başbakan
Devlet Bakanı
Devlet Bakanı
Devlet Bakanı
Devlet Bakanı
Adalet Bakanı
Millî Savunma Bakanı
İçişleri Bakanı
Dışişleri Bakanı
Maliye Bakanı
Millî Eğitim Bakanı
Bayındırlık Bakanı
Ticaret Bakanı
Sağ. ve Sos. Y. Bakanı
Güm. ve Tekel Bakanı
Tarım Bakanı
Ulaştırma Bakanı
Çalışma Bakanı
Sanayi Bakanı
Enerji ve Tabii Kay. Bakanı
Turizm ve Tanıtma Bakanı
İmar ve İskân Bakanı
Köy İşleri Bakanı

Dosya No :
107-5
174

080 18 01 02 152 7 11

A 1966 decision on the Social Security Agreement between the Republic of Türkiye and the Kingdom of the Netherlands, established to ensure reciprocal social security for workers and their families

Source: *Directorate of State Archives*

Trouw DINSDAG 23 AUGUSTUS 1988

Mensen

'Migrant in eigen taal helpen'

Hulpverleners tegen opheffen van Amsterdamse stichting

door Frank Siddiqui

AMSTERDAM – „Het categoraal werk voor migranten moet blijven bestaan. Niet alleen voor de eerste, maar ook voor de tweede en derde generatie is dit werk onmisbaar."

Dat zegt Gunduz Barlas, Turks 'nationaliteitswerker' bij de Stichting sociale en juridische hulpverlening (SJHB) in Amsterdam.
Vorige maand besloot de Amsterdamse gemeenteraad de SJHB per 1 januari volgend jaar op te heffen. De stichting is een van de laatst overgebleven instellingen in Nederland die zich uitsluitend bezighouden met individuele hulpverlening aan migranten. Per jaar behandelt de instelling meer dan 8 000 hulpvragen van migranten.
Barlas is een van de zes fulltime nationaliteitswerkers bij de SJHB. Met zijn hulpverleners die migranten hun eigen taal te woord kunnen staan, en door hun eigen achtergrond bekend zijn met de vaak ingewikkelde positie van migranten in de Nederlandse samenleving. Door de inzet van vrijwilligers werken er in totaal vijftien nationaliteitswerkers, zodat Turks, verscheidene arabische talen, Spaans en zelfs Pakistaans geen probleem vormen.
Daarnaast beschikt de SJHB over twee gespecialiseerde juristen. Intensief overleg tussen de hulpverleners en de juristen vormt een deel van de speciale aanpak, die de SJHB sinds haar oprichting in 1982 ontwikkelde. In de praktijk blijkt slechts een klein deel van de cliënten voldoende te hebben aan advies en informatie, de 'kortdurende hulp' waarvoor de SJHB wordt gesubsidieerd. Volgens B en W van Amsterdam is het beter voor de integratie van migranten dat zij net als Nederlanders door Nederlandse hulpverleningsinstellingen worden geholpen. Het ministerie van van WVC vindt dat ook en trok begin vorig jaar de subsidie in voor individuele hulp voor speciaal voor migranten bedoelde instellingen (de regionale centra buitenlanders). De overheid redeneert als volgt: Nu de eerste generatie gastarbeiders zich heeft gevestigd of teruggaat, en de tweede generatie de weg in Nederland kent en steeds beter Nederlands gaat spreken, is het categoraal werk (speciaal voor buitenlanders) overbodig geworden.
Barlas noemt dat een verkeerde redenering. „Veel ouderen spelen nog elke dag met de gedachte naar Turkije terug te gaan. Hoe moeilijk een terugkeer na vele jaren vaak ook is, de gedachte om hier te blijven kunnen ze niet accepteren. Maar pas als ze dat wel hebben gedaan, kunnen ze zich hier beter gaan voelen."
„Het probleem van de jongeren, de tweede generatie, is dat zij hun wortels zijn kwijtgeraakt. Als ik bij mensen thuis kom, weten de ouders vaak niet waar hun zoon uithangt. 'In het café waarschijnlijk, hij zwerft'. Dat hoor ik vaak, en dan weet ik wat er aan de hand is. De meeste jongens zwerven, ook letterlijk dus, tussen de Nederlandse en de Turkse samenleving. Ze zijn meestal tweetalig, maar spreken beide talen slecht."

Geen tijd

Volgens Barlas kunnen migranten vaak niet van het algemeen maatschappelijk werk profiteren zoals dat hoort. „Maatschappelijk werkers beseffen onvoldoende dat de regelingen voor buitenlanders veel ingewikkelder zijn dan voor Nederlanders. Ze krijgen met de regels van twee landen te maken, die soms lijnrecht tegenover elkaar staan. Daar komt de taalbarrière nog eens bij. Het algemeen maatschappelijk werk heeft de extra tijd die dat vraagt, niet. Maatschappelijk werkers begrijpen het probleem vaak zelf niet eens."
Barlas denkt dat Nederlandse hulpverleners minder goed in staat zijn met de problemen van migranten om te gaan. „Ik denk dat wij het beter kunnen. Je hebt kennis van zaken, je kent de gebruiken en de grenzen. Mensen zijn vaak erg terughoudend, en ik weet dan waarom. Omdat ik zelf die problemen achter de rug heb, ken ik ook de gedachten die er spelen. Je durft brutaler te zijn. Ik zeg voortdurend: 'De problemen zijn op te lossen, maar zet even door'. Van een Nederlandse hulpverlener klinkt dat niet zo geloofwaardig."
Barlas bestrijdt het idee, dat categorale hulp de mensen afhankelijk zou maken. „Emancipatie, dat is het woord hier. De mensen moeten de kans krijgen te leren hoe het hier in elkaar zit. Ze kunnen niet altijd in één keer een formulier invullen. Maar zonder formulieren kunnen Nederlandse ambtenaren niets. Het probleem blijft dus hangen. Waarom, dat wordt niet begrepen. Maar hoe moet een analfabeet een brief van de raad van arbeid van een dwangbevel onderscheiden?"
De Amsterdamse migrantenorganisaties noemen het werk van de SJHB in een stad met twintig procent migranten „onmisbaar". Na hun aanhoudende protesten tegen de opheffing besloot de Amsterdamse gemeenteraad tot een tussenoplossing. De zes betaalde nationaliteitswerkers en een van de juristen van de SJHB zullen worden toegevoegd aan het gemeentelijke bureau sociaal raadslieden, een onderdeel van de sociale dienst. Zij kunnen nog twee jaar als team voor migranten blijven werken, maar wat daarna met hen zal gebeuren is onzeker.
J. van Zanten – als hoofd van het bureau sociaal raadslieden is hij de toekomstige baas van de SJHB-medewerkers – reageert op vragen als of hij wel iets belangrijkers aan zijn hoofd heeft. Van de cliënten van zijn bureau is vijftig tot zeventig procent migrant. Volgens hem reden om te twijfelen aan de noodzaak van een aparte instelling voor migranten in Amsterdam.
Van Zanten denkt wel dat er op het terrein van psycho-sociale problemen en het ingewikkelde vreemdelingenrecht „wat problemen kunnen liggen".
Het bureau sociaal raadslieden wordt (evenals de SJHB) gesubsidieerd voor 'kortdurende hulp' in de vorm van advies en informatie. Het bureau heeft twee Turkse mannen, een Marokkaan en een Antilliaanse vrouw in dienst. Die worden overigens niet ingezet voor de eigen nationaliteiten. Een geïrriteerde Van Zanten: „Dat is toch ook helemaal niet nodig. We hebben hier een tolkentelefoon." Volgens hem zijn in het verleden „talloze initiatieven" genomen om de deskundigheid van de Nederlandse medewerkers te vergroten. Hij doelt daarmee op scholingsdagen.
Barlas vindt gelijke hulp voor iedereen een goed streven, maar op dit moment onrealistisch. De tussenoplossing in Amsterdam biedt volgens hem geen uitkomst. „De eerste twee jaar kunnen we als categoraal team blijven werken, helaas wel met een juris minder. Maar we hebben geen aparte naam of plaats. Het bureau sociaal raadslieden werkt met vaste wijken. Dus hoe dat in zijn werk moet gaan is mij niet duidelijk. Van sociaal raadslieden hoorde ik, dat wij meer opleiding zouden moeten krijgen. Dat vind ik jammer. Wat wij aan ervaring hebben, daar kan hun opleiding niet tegenop."

De meeste buitenlandse jongeren zwerven – letterlijk en figuurlijk – tussen twee samenlevingen. Nederlandse instanties hebben vaak onvoldoende tijd en begrip voor hun problemen.

FOTO ROB HUBERS

A 1988 newspaper report on the closure of the Social and Legal Aid Foundation in Amsterdam, one of the few organizations providing individual assistance to migrants, emphasizing the importance of migrants receiving aid in their own languages

Source: *Mensen 'Migrant in eigen taal helpen' – Hulpverleners tegen opheffen van Amsterdamse stichting, Frank Siddiqui. Trouw, Meppel, 23-08-1988. Retrieved from Delpher https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDD-D:010826732:mpeg21:p002*

'Nederland moet meer doen voor de oudere allochtonen'

DEN HAAG (ANP) — Vooral oudere allochtonen beheersen het Nederlands vaak niet of slecht. Bovendien weten ze bij problemen niet de juiste hulp- en zorgvoorzieningen te vinden en leven ze nog dikwijls in twee cultuurwerelden. Dit constateert de voorlopige Raad voor het Ouderenbeleid in de nota 'Kleur bekennen', die gisteren is aangeboden aan minister D'Ancona van wvc.

Minister d'Ancona

Het aantal oudere Nederlanders van buitenlandse afkomst is niet omvangrijk, maar zal de komende jaren relatief snel stijgen. In 1990 waren dat er 80.000, maar in het jaar 2000 is dat opgelopen tot ongeveer 130.000. Sommigen, de vroegere 'gastarbeiders', zijn hier oud geworden, terwijl veel anderen pas op latere leeftijd kwamen in het kader van de gezinshereniging. Wat betreft werken, wonen en inkomen, en op psychisch en sociaal terrein blijken zich steeds meer knelpunten voor te doen, aldus de raad.

De titel *Kleur bekennen* slaat op de tot nu toe afzijdige houding van de Nederlandse samenleving en de nog aarzelende houding van de overheid ten opzichte van deze groep ouderen. De minister van wvc zal volgens de voorlopige Raad voor het Ouderenbeleid het voortouw moeten nemen om hierin verandereing te brengen.

De overheid moet er voor zorgen dat de allochtonen beter Nederlands leren, omdat met name ouderen dan niet geïsoleerd raken. Van Turkse en Marokkaanse oudere vrouwen is bekend dat ze vaak erg geïsoleerd leven.

Ook zal aan de ouderen meer informatie moeten worden verstrekt, zo wordt gesteld in de nota. De nadruk moet daarbij liggen op mondelinge overdracht van informatie, omdat velen niet kunnen lezen of zelfs de tekst van een folder in hun eigen taal maar moeizaam begrijpen.

Vooral steden met meer dan 100.000 inwoners hebben veel oudere inwoners van buitenlandse afkomst. De raad dringt er op aan dat de gemeenten in hun huisvestingsbeleid speciale aandacht schenken aan het wonen in groepsverband voor deze mensen. In verzorgingstehuizen kan een enkele Surinamer of Marokkaan erg eenzaam worden en gedesoriënteerd raken. Dit komt door taalproblemen en andere leef- en eetgewoonten.

De raad meent dat een belangrijke rol is weggelegd voor de zelforganisaties van allochtonen als schakel tussen de ouderen en de samenleving. Zij hebben taken wat betreft onder meer voorlichting en bemiddeling. Daarvoor is wel een gekwalificeerd kader nodig, waarvoor het ministerie van WVC middelen beschikbaar zal moeten stellen.

A 1993 newspaper report on the obstacles faced by elderly migrants in accessing healthcare services and the need for Dutch government policy to address these issues.

Source: *'Nederland moet meer doen voor de oudere allochtonen'. Nederlands Dagblad: gereformeerd gezinsblad / hoofdred. P. Jongeling ... [vd.], Amersfoort, 18-08-1993, p. 3. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ddd:010628666:mpeg21:p003*

CHAPTER XIII.

EVOLVING DIASPORA

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF TURKISH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE NETHERLANDS

Tüzin Baycan

INTERVIEW WITH GÜROL ÜZENÇ ON THE EVOLVING TURKISH DIASPORA AND THE TECH STARTUP ECOSYSTEM WITHIN DIASPORA COMMUNITIES

Gürol Üzenç

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF TURKISH ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE NETHERLANDS

TÜZİN BAYCAN[1]

Introduction

The migration of Turkish nationals to Europe commenced under labor force agreements enforced as part of the "guest worker" programs initiated by Western European countries following World War II to address labor shortages through recruitment from external sources. The first official migration from Türkiye occurred in 1961, following the signing of a labor force agreement between Türkiye and West Germany. Subsequent agreements were signed with Austria, the Netherlands, and Belgium in 1964, France in 1965, and Sweden in 1967. Between 1961 and 1973, there was a significant wave of labor migration from Türkiye to other countries, which was subsequently followed by family reunification movements throughout the 1970s. Following the cessation of labor recruitment by Western European nations in 1973-1974, migration patterns shifted towards political migration in the 1980s, and marriage-based migration in the 1990s and 2000s (Baycan, 2013). In recent years, migration has continued at a more limited scale, predominantly in the form of high-skilled migration and brain drain.

Over the past 60 years, Turkish migration to Europe has been characterized by complex economic, social, political, and cultural exchanges. Today, the Turkish immigrant population in Europe exceeds 5 million, surpassing the total populations of several EU member states such as Estonia, Ireland, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, and Slovenia. Turkish immigrants constitute the largest immigrant community and entrepreneurial group in several

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EU countries, particularly in Germany, the Netherlands, Austria, and France, contributing significantly to job creation. The increasing participation of second-generation immigrants and female entrepreneurs, coupled with their expansion from traditional to non-traditional sectors and transnational business activities, has driven a transformation from "Immigrant Entrepreneurship" to "New European Entrepreneurship," facilitated by the widespread acquisition of EU citizenship (Baycan, 2013).

On the occasion of the 60th anniversary of Turkish migration to the country, this study examines Turkish entrepreneurship in the Netherlands in terms of historical development, transformation, and emerging trends. It explores intergenerational and gender differences, new entrepreneurial trends, and the motivations of future generations based on findings from previous research.

Immigrant Entrepreneurship: Push and Pull Factors

From a socioeconomic standpoint, migration significantly impacts labor markets, particularly through the growing presence of self-employed immigrants. The concept of immigrant or ethnic entrepreneurship emerged out of the entrepreneurial behavior observed among various immigrant groups. This phenomenon plays a crucial role in job creation for ethnic communities, reducing social tensions, fostering social integration and cohesion, and contributing to national and regional economic growth, particularly in the United States and Europe (Baycan-Levent, 2010; Baycan, 2013; Baycan-Levent & Kundak, 2009; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009).

Comparative analyses of immigration and immigrant entrepreneurship across different countries reveal both similarities and notable differences. While unemployment rates, opportunities limited to lower-status jobs, labor market discrimination, and social exclusion often push immigrants into entrepreneurship, the nature of immigrant entrepreneurship varies across countries and regions in Europe (Baycan-Levent, 2010; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2009). Over time and generations, the motivations for entrepreneurship evolve, shifting from push factors to pull factors, from an "inward-looking focus" on ethnic markets to expansion into external markets, and from traditional sectors to non-traditional ones (Baycan-Levent et al., 2009).

Research on immigrant entrepreneurship indicates that immigrants are more likely to engage in self-employment compared to natives. The opportunities and constraints that influence immigrant entrepreneurship can be defined as follows:

- *Structural factors:* social exclusion, discrimination and high unemployment
- *Cultural factors:* particular values, skills, cultural traits, adaptability, personal motivation, a strong work ethic, informal networks within the ethnic community, and flexible financial arrangements.
- *Interaction model:* combination of structural and cultural factors (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003).

While immigrants generally demonstrate a greater propensity for entrepreneurship than natives, motivations for entrepreneurship differ across immigrant groups. Turkish immigrants in Europe exhibit a higher rate of entrepreneurship compared to natives and other immigrant groups in host countries. Turkish entrepreneurs consti-

tute a vital component of local economies, particularly in major urban centers of Germany, Belgium, France, and the Netherlands (Baycan, 2013; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2007; Baycan et al., 2012).

The Development of Turkish Entrepreneurship in the Netherlands: Industry Orientations and Motivations of the First-Generation Entrepreneurs

During the first two decades (1960s and 1970s), the Turkish migration to Europe, driven by labor agreements under the guest worker program, was characterized by limited entrepreneurial activity, with only a small number of businesses emerging in sectors such as food, transportation, and community-based services to address the needs of the Turkish community. These early entrepreneurial endeavors were largely internally oriented, fostering the growth of a niche economy and playing a crucial role in the development of Turkish entrepreneurship during the 1980s. From the 1980s onward, as the prospect of returning to Türkiye diminished, the motivations and aspirations of Turkish immigrants shifted. The expansion of Turkish entrepreneurship was largely driven by pursuit of higher income, social prestige, and economic independence, combined with the support of traditional family networks (Baycan, 2013).

Turkish migration to the Netherlands began with the 1964 labor agreement and continued with family reunification in the 1970s. During the first two decades, Turkish immigrants primarily occupied low-status jobs within the Dutch labor market. However, from the 1980s onward, their status transitioned from temporary "guest workers" to permanent residents. They began establishing their own businesses, driven by both the aspiration for higher income and social prestige, as well as the need to address the specific demands and needs of the Turkish community. The motivations driving first-generation Turkish entrepreneurs were twofold: the desire for independence and self-sufficiency, and the need to circumvent unemployment and low-status jobs in the labor market, which they faced due to limited education and skills. Additionally, the Turkish community and ethnic networks they were part of, along with the advantages provided by the niche economy, significantly shaped their entrepreneurial aspirations. These factors not only facilitated their entry into entrepreneurship but also enabled them to serve as "role models" for one another, thereby accelerating the rapid proliferation of Turkish entrepreneurship in the Netherlands. First-generation Turkish entrepreneurs predominantly focused on traditional sectors, such as food services, hospitality, and transportation (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2007). The long working hours of these industries led to the emergence of family-run businesses, where women and children were required to participate. The traditional family structure and its inherent support mechanisms provided additional advantages, playing a significant role in the growth and development of Turkish entrepreneurship (Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2007). Thus, first-generation Turkish entrepreneurship in the Netherlands can be characterized as family-based entrepreneurship within traditional sectors. This entrepreneurial legacy and the culture of business ownership played a pivotal role in shaping second-generation entrepreneurship and fostering greater participation of female entrepreneurs in subsequent decades.

"Given their prominent involvement in mainstream entrepreneurial activities and transnational business ventures, it is no longer accurate to categorize Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands as 'immigrant entrepreneurs.' Instead, they can be more aptly defined as New European Entrepreneurs."

The Second-Generation Turkish Entrepreneurs in the Netherlands: Intergenerational Differences and Shifting Orientations

Empirical studies analyzing the factors influencing second-generation immigrants' labor market integration and entrepreneurial choices in the Netherlands (Baycan-Levent et al., 2009; Baycan et al., 2012) highlight substantial differences between first- and second-generation entrepreneurs. First-generation entrepreneurs predominantly exhibit an internal market orientation, concentrating on ethnic niche economies. In contrast, second-generation entrepreneurs adopt an external market orientation, expanding their customer base beyond ethnic networks. This external orientation necessitates higher levels of education, specialized skills, diversified communication channels, and access to government incentives. First-generation entrepreneurs primarily enter self-employment due to push factors, such as labor market discrimination, high unemployment, and low-status jobs. Conversely, second-generation entrepreneurs are influenced by pull factors, including higher educational attainment, professional experience, and emerging business opportunities in new industries. In other words, first-generation entrepreneurs can be categorized as "forced entrepreneurs", whereas second-generation entrepreneurs are "entrepreneurs by choice."

Second-generation Turkish entrepreneurship in the Netherlands emerged in the late 1990s, gaining considerable momentum throughout the 2000s. While first-generation Turkish entrepreneurs predominantly established businesses in traditional sectors, such as wholesale and retail trade, food services, and hospitality, second-generation entrepreneurs exhibit greater sectoral diversification. This new generation is increasingly active in non-traditional industries, including information and communication technologies, finance, accounting, insurance, advertising, and real estate. The entrepreneurial motivations, sectoral choices, and business strategies of second-generation entrepreneurs are strongly shaped by higher educational attainment, technical and language skills, and previous background in their sectors as employees or entrepreneurs. These factors facilitate their transition away from ethnic market dependence, enabling them to establish businesses with greater autonomy from their ethnic community. In addition to factors such as business ownership and management, higher flexibility, and independence, the presence of

entrepreneurs within the family or among relatives also significantly motivates the second generation. The entrepreneurial culture inherited from first-generation entrepreneurs, combined with second-generation entrepreneurs' increasing involvement in creative industries and professional services, aligns them more closely with Dutch entrepreneurs than with their predecessors.

Turkish Female Entrepreneurship in the Netherlands: Ethnic Entrepreneurship or Gendered Entrepreneurship?

Differences in entrepreneurial motivations are not only observed between generations but also between genders. While the initial wave of Turkish migration to Europe was male-dominated, with women predominantly arriving through family reunification, the demographic composition of migration gradually changed. Over time, the proportion of female migrants increased significantly, leading to a parallel rise in female entrepreneurship, particularly among immigrant women. Immigrant women represent the fastest-growing group of business owners in various host countries and demonstrate higher entrepreneurial activity than both immigrant men and native-born women. In many OECD countries, the business ownership rate among immigrant women is now approaching that of immigrant men (Baycan-Levent, 2010).

Although the extent varies by country, the initial phase of migration was predominantly male, with women joining the migration process largely through family reunification in the second stage. Migrant entrepreneurship, initially structured as family businesses, enabled women to enter the labor market as family employees. However, with the arrival of the second generation, women increasingly engaged in entrepreneurship independently. Similar to the motivations observed in second-generation or younger-generation entrepreneurship broadly, the motivations driving women's entrepreneurship are primarily shaped by pull factors such as education, skill level, and work experience, which are closely linked to their second-generation status. While migrant female entrepreneurs differ from first-generation migrant entrepreneurs, the extent to which they resemble second-generation migrant male entrepreneurs remains an important question for further analysis. A key question to answer is whether migrant women exhibit characteristics more aligned with ethnic entrepreneurs or with female entrepreneurs, given the dual influence of their ethnic and gender identities. In other words, the fundamental question is whether ethnic female entrepreneurs should primarily be classified as ethnic entrepreneurs or as female entrepreneurs. Studies that compare immigrant and female entrepreneurship in terms of their defining characteristics, advantages, opportunities, and challenges indicate both significant similarities and notable differences, particularly in relation to ethnic and gender-based barriers, needs, and networks (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Baycan-Levent et al., 2006; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2011).

Research specifically examining Turkish female entrepreneurs in Amsterdam, where a significant portion of Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are concentrated, reveals that Turkish women's entrepreneurship began in the 1990s and expanded rapidly after 2000. Nearly half of the interviewed female entrepreneurs migrated to the Netherlands between 1970 and 1980 and

had the opportunity to pursue education there. Approximately 75% of them graduated from vocational schools and reported no language barriers. Additionally, more than half were relatively young (between 30 and 40 years old), and the majority (over 70%) were married with children. These characteristics largely align with the profiles of female entrepreneurs in other countries (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Baycan-Levent et al., 2006; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2011).

An analysis of the motivations and experiences of Turkish female entrepreneurs highlights their strong entrepreneurial family background, with nearly 80% reporting at least one family member engaged in entrepreneurship. Moreover, 70% had prior work experience, and 20% had previously owned a business (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Baycan-Levent et al., 2006; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2011). This suggests that Turkish female entrepreneurs often enter entrepreneurship based on their work experience or as a continuation of existing entrepreneurial activities within the family. However, despite their strong entrepreneurial heritage, their primary motivation is not to sustain family businesses but rather to establish independence and become their own employers. The desire to assert oneself as a professional emerges as a stronger motivating factor than financial gain. Thus, the core motivation of Turkish female entrepreneurs is centered on independence, self-employment, and personal fulfillment (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2011).

An analysis of the sectoral distribution of Turkish female entrepreneurs reveals that they run businesses exclusively in the service sector, with a particular concentration in four key industries: driving schools, hairdressing salons, apparel retail, and human resources management. These sectors present distinct opportunities for both ethnic and female entrepreneurship. Notably, women tend to learn more readily from their peers (driving schools), and they often prefer service providers from the same gender (hairdressing salons). Additional factors such as language proficiency and adherence to religious and cultural values also play a significant role in shaping sectoral preferences. Furthermore, low capital requirements, flexible working hours, and the presence of women serving as "role models" in these sectors attract many women to these fields, contributing significantly to their growth and expansion. However, the development of women's entrepreneurship cannot be attributed solely to the specific needs of ethnic women. While market opportunities catering to the demands of ethnic communities are occasionally pursued, the primary orientation of female entrepreneurs is shaped by broader business opportunities that go beyond ethnic and social boundaries. A closer examination of employee and customer profiles indicates a strong preference for hiring within ethnic networks, whereas customer bases are diverse and predominantly composed of non-Turkish groups. The preference for hiring from within one's own ethnic network can be explained by the small-scale nature of most businesses, which typically employ no more than five workers (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003; Baycan-Levent & Nijkamp, 2011).

In summary, the motivations and entrepreneurial trajectories of Turkish female entrepreneurs in the Netherlands are influenced by:

- he period during which they migrated to the Netherlands
- their educational background, language proficiency, and work experience

- family support, including financial assistance and entrepreneurial traditions

The findings of this study highlight gender-based differences in ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship. While ethnic background contributes to many commonalities between male and female entrepreneurs, significant distinctions emerge in four key areas: prior knowledge and experience, motivation and driving forces, sectoral choices, and business goals and strategies. Female entrepreneurs are more likely to engage in entrepreneurial activities due to their higher levels of education and work experience compared to their male counterparts. In contrast, male entrepreneurs often enter self-employment as a response to unemployment, making their entrepreneurship more "necessity-driven", whereas female entrepreneurship is more "opportunity-driven". Unemployment emerges as the most significant differentiating factor in the motivations and trajectories of male and female entrepreneurs. While men are more likely to pursue entrepreneurship due to limited employment opportunities, women are primarily motivated by their educational attainment, professional experience, and exposure to an entrepreneurial family tradition. Furthermore, female entrepreneurs exhibit a stronger preference for service-oriented industries compared to men. Additionally, female entrepreneurs demonstrate higher levels of loyalty to their ethnic communities in terms of employee recruitment, a tendency that can be attributed to a niche strategy designed to minimize business risks (Baycan-Levent et al., 2006).

The gender-based differences observed in ethnic and immigrant entrepreneurship closely resemble those found in entrepreneurship more broadly. This similarity suggests that gender plays a more decisive role than ethnicity in shaping the entrepreneurial characteristics and behaviors of ethnic entrepreneurs. Turkish female entrepreneurs in Amsterdam exhibit business profiles, motivations, and entrepreneurial behaviors that align more closely with those of native Dutch female entrepreneurs. Consequently, their entrepreneurial patterns suggest a greater affiliation with female entrepreneurship rather than ethnic entrepreneurship (Baycan-Levent et al., 2006).

Next-Generation Entrepreneurship in the Netherlands: Intentions and Motivations of Turkish Youth to Become Entrepreneurs

Recognizing that today's university students and young individuals will shape the entrepreneurial landscape and leadership of the future, a study conducted by Baycan (2021) examined the entrepreneurial interests and intentions of students from universities and colleges in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, The Hague, and Utrecht, which together form the Randstad metropolitan area of the Netherlands. The study is based on a comparative analysis of

- career motivations,
- ethnic and gender-based differences, and
- perceived leadership skills.

Additionally, the study sought to identify critical factors that will shape the future of entrepreneurship in a multicultural society.

The study, which included 1,212 university students from six ethnic groups - Dutch, Antillean, Moroccan, Surinamese, Turkish, and other backgrounds - revealed several key findings through comparative analysis:

- Interest in entrepreneurship varies by ethnicity and gender.
- Immigrant male students demonstrate a higher interest in pursuing entrepreneurship as a career compared to both Dutch students and female students.
- Male students' motivation to become entrepreneurs is primarily influenced by external factors such as family and peer influence, social prestige, and financial gain.
- Female students exhibit lower levels of interest in entrepreneurship compared to their male counterparts.
- Female students' entrepreneurial motivation is largely driven by internal factors, including the desire to harness their own talents and skills.
- Autonomy, flexibility, and independence are equally important motivators for both male and female students (Baycan, 2021).

The analysis of motivations for pursuing higher education among different ethnic groups demonstrates that Dutch students generally prioritize securing a broad range of job opportunities, while Turkish and Moroccan students focus on achieving a stronger position in the labor market. Surinamese, Antillean, and Moroccan students display a heightened interest in entrepreneurship, with Antillean and Surinamese students particularly motivated by financial aspirations (Baycan, 2021). Gender differences in educational motivation are also evident. Female students tend to prioritize job security and career advancement in the labor market, whereas male students are more focused on attaining a higher social status, engaging in entrepreneurship, and increasing their financial earnings. Ethnic and gender-based differences also influence students' career aspirations. While Dutch students predominantly envision careers in the private sector, Moroccan students aspire to positions in the public sector; and Antillean, Surinamese, and Turkish students display a strong inclination toward business ownership. The desire to establish one's own business is particularly pronounced among male students, whereas female students are more likely to seek employment in the public sector (Baycan, 2021).

An in-depth examination of the educational aspirations, career plans, and entrepreneurial motivations of Turkish university and college students in the Netherlands yields several notable findings:

- The primary motivation for Turkish students in higher education is to attain a higher status in the labor market.
- Turkish students exhibit a significantly higher entrepreneurial inclination compared to other ethnic groups, demonstrating a strong desire to establish their own businesses in the future.
- They display a high propensity for risk-taking.
- Earning the respect of family and peers serves as a crucial motivator.
- Key determinants of their entrepreneurial motivation include aspirations to become their own boss, achieve financial success, gain social prestige, and contribute to their family's well-being (Baycan, 2021).

An examination of the entrepreneurial interests and motivations of the next generation in the Netherlands suggests that Turkish youth will play a pivotal role in shaping the future business landscape and fostering the creation of new enterprises.

"Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands represent the second-largest Turkish entrepreneurial group within the EU, following Germany."

Conclusion

Sixty years after the initial wave of migration, the question arises as to whether Turks in Europe can still be classified as "immigrants." Although the term remains in use, alternative concepts such as "European Turks" or "New Europeans" have gained prominence. Given the increasing diversity within EU member states, the term "New Europeans" has emerged to describe individuals residing in the EU who maintain transnational connections beyond their country of residence. In contrast, "Old Europeans" refers to individuals whose affiliations are confined to their country of origin (Baycan, 2013).

Over the past six decades, migration to Europe has facilitated a profound transformation, with Turkish immigrants increasingly identifying as European Turks or New Europeans. Simultaneously, the past four decades have witnessed a significant evolution from traditional Turkish entrepreneurship toward what can be characterized as New European Entrepreneurship. Today, entrepreneurs who are EU citizens and engaged in transnational business ventures hold substantial economic and social potential for Europe. The transnational networks cultivated by New European entrepreneurs serve as crucial conduits for expanding market opportunities within the European economy (Baycan, 2013).

Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands represent the second-largest Turkish entrepreneurial group within the EU, following Germany. Presently, the overwhelming majority of Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands - exceeding 90% - belong to the second and third generations and are under the age of 50. A defining characteristic of this entrepreneurial community is their high rate of Dutch citizenship, with approximately 80% holding Dutch nationality. While Turkish entrepreneurs continue to maintain a strong presence in sectors such as retail and gastronomy, there has been a notable shift toward the service industry and, more recently, the creative sectors. In particular, second- and third-generation entrepreneurs are increasingly venturing into non-traditional industries, including information and communication technologies, finance, insurance, real estate, and creative sectors. These entrepreneurs, whose educational attainment levels now parallel those of the Dutch population, are playing an active role in high-skill and high-tech industries (Baycan-Levent et al., 2009; Baycan et al., 2012; Baycan, 2013). As the second-largest entrepreneurial group in Europe, Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands make substantial contributions not only to the national economy but also to the broader European and transcontinental economies. Given their prominent involvement in mainstream entrepreneurial activities and transnational business ventures, it is no longer accurate to categorize Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands as "immigrant entrepreneurs." Instead, they can be more aptly defined as New European Entrepreneurs.

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Interview

INTERVIEW WITH GÜROL ÜZENÇ

ON THE EVOLVING TURKISH DIASPORA AND THE TECH STARTUP ECOSYSTEM WITHIN DIASPORA COMMUNITIES

GÜROL ÜZENÇ

Founding Partner of Exelerate, based in Amsterdam, and President of "Turktech Diaspora" – High Skilled Immigrant

✍ Can you briefly tell us about yourself? What is your educational background?

I hold a degree in Environmental Engineering from Istanbul University and a degree in Business Administration from Marmara University.

✍ In which sector do you currently work?

My professional journey began as an intern and, somewhat paradoxically, ended in a similar capacity, but it has evolved over the past 15 years into a dynamic career in the entrepreneurship ecosystem. Throughout this period, I have held diverse roles, including innovation manager, entrepreneurship center manager, founder, investor, and service provider. At present, I focus on facilitating the internationalization of technology companies, with an emphasis on open innovation initiatives.

✍ What motivated you to enter this sector?

To be candid, after an educational trajectory focused strictly on engineering, I soon realized that I did not wish to pursue this field further. I explored various disciplines in the social sciences and visual arts, yet I found that none fully resonated with my aspirations. Eventually, I gravitated toward the entrepreneurship ecosystem, where I found a way to merge my passion for innovation with the business world and my interest in artistic expression. Entrepreneurship allowed me to address worldly affairs while also reflecting my own reality. In the future, I would be honored to refer to myself as an "innovation artist."

How did you decide to become an entrepreneur in the Netherlands?

The material and intangible opportunities I encountered during my professional career, particularly over the last 5-6 years, were certainly favorable within the context of our own region. However, having engaged with more than 1,000 entrepreneurs in our local community, a recurring topic of discussion was "globalization." I desired to avoid the contradiction of being a mentor or entrepreneur advocating for globalization without having personally embraced internationalization, which ultimately drove me to pursue entrepreneurship beyond borders.

Can you describe your relocation process?

To cite Orhan Veli, "Everything happened all of a sudden" encapsulates the essence of my experience. However, I would describe it more precisely as the realization of long-held dreams, visions, and plans. When the right conditions aligned, I acted swiftly. I moved not only to challenge myself but to leave behind familiar comforts - my social status, privileges, and opportunities. My professional network, business culture, and commercial activities were confined within the borders of my home country. As I often advised the startups and entrepreneurs I worked with to adopt a "global" perspective, it became inevitable for me to take a personal leap in that direction as well. In essence, this represents a story of individual "rescaling" within a broader global context.

Why did you choose the Netherlands? What were the key factors influencing your decision to relocate here?

When considering regions with well-developed entrepreneurial ecosystems and high levels of welfare, with relatively short travel to Türkiye, European countries naturally stood out. Particularly after Brexit, I observed that countries such as Germany, France, and the Netherlands were competing fiercely within the European Union. The Netherlands, despite its small population and geographical size, stood out as a major trading hub with an ecosystem that rivals those of the aforementioned countries. Its ease of doing business,

consistent ranking in the top five across various vital indices, and favorable economic and social environment ultimately convinced me that the Netherlands would be an ideal place to establish my base.

✍ How did you develop your business network in the Netherlands? Could you elaborate on the process of establishing business connections?

I can confidently state that my business network in the Netherlands was primarily developed through participation in events, both in-person and virtual meetings, as well as through platforms such as LinkedIn. I sought out every possible opportunity and venue where I could engage with relevant individuals and organizations. While some meetings yielded limited results, others proved highly productive. Importantly, many of the connections I established led to further networking opportunities, creating a ripple effect. Over the course of two years, I have been able to significantly expand my business network across various levels and sectors.

✍ What were the biggest challenges you faced when establishing a business in the Netherlands?

One of the most significant challenges I encountered was the lack of accessible, accurate, and up-to-date information which proved to be particularly difficult. At times, one must also contend with the constraints of time. Our current mission is to institutionalize the knowledge we have built and make it more readily available to other Turkish entrepreneurs.

✍ What are the key differences and similarities you have observed between Turkish and Dutch work cultures? Do high-skilled Turkish immigrants, particularly those from the "new wave" of immigration, adapt more easily than previous generations?

Several key differences stand out between Turkish and Dutch work cultures. First, productivity is a notable distinction. While Turkish people are known for their hard work, there often seems to be a gap in productivity. It is not simply a matter of working hard; rather, the focus should be on generating greater added value. From my observations, Dutch professionals tend to work more efficiently. Another difference lies in communication styles. Dutch people are generally very direct and clear in expressing their thoughts. They tend to present ideas in binary terms - either black or white - without much ambiguity. Such clarity contributes significantly to productivity. A third notable difference is punctuality. The Dutch have a strong cultural commitment to being on time, and I have never encountered a Dutch person who was late for a meeting.

Regarding the adaptation of high-skilled Turkish immigrants from the new wave of migration, I believe that the question often asked by the Dutch, "Are you one of the new generation Turks?" signifies the increasing distinction between this generation and previous waves of migration. The new generation of Turkish immigrants has successfully ascended to senior positions in corporate sectors within a span of five to eight years. This trend suggests that we can expect to see even more Turkish individuals in leadership roles in the near future.

✍ What can you say about the opportunities and challenges for Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands?

The Netherlands offers a highly supportive ecosystem for innovation and technology companies. The country serves as a trade hub, boasts significant resources and has a well-functioning economic system. Entrepreneurs equipped with the right structural framework would be well-positioned for success

"I envision a Turkish diaspora characterized by mutual trust, a strong sense of community, a shared entrepreneurial spirit, and a collective willingness to support one another."

in this system. However, challenges do exist, particularly in terms of high investment and labor costs.

What is your perspective on entrepreneurship in the Netherlands? Could you share your experiences regarding the support and resources available?

The Netherlands provides a highly conducive environment for entrepreneurship, with a range of programs and resources that support innovative projects and young entrepreneurs. The system offers substantial advantages in terms of business development and access. One of the key benefits is the entrepreneur visa. However, it is important to note that while this visa provides opportunities for establishing a business, it does not offer direct grants or financial resources, unlike similar programs in countries like Germany and others.

What is the contribution of the Turkish business community to the Dutch economy? What is the added value of Turkish entrepreneurs in the business sector?

The influence of Turkish entrepreneurs is particularly visible in specific sectors such as construction and transportation. However, I believe that their impact does not fully reflect the potential contribution they could make. There is significant room for growth, especially within the high-value-added technology ecosystem. With the right strategic approach and better representation, Turkish entrepreneurs could better position themselves.

The Dutch government recently introduced a new regulation limiting the 30% tax exemption for highly skilled immigrants to a maximum of five years, with discussions suggesting the potential for the exemption to be phased out entirely. How do you think this will affect the inflow of high-

"As the primary focus of my current endeavors, I am working to introduce Turkish tech startups to the European market, specifically through the Netherlands, as part of an internationalization strategy."

ly skilled immigrants to the Netherlands? If the exemption is abolished, do you think the so-called "new wave" of immigrants will return to Türkiye or migrate to other countries?

The 30% tax exemption has undoubtedly played a crucial role in attracting highly skilled immigrants, particularly those weighing offers from multiple countries. As the tax incentive is temporary, its expiration is widely anticipated, and many immigrants are aware that it is a finite benefit. That being said, another segment of highly skilled immigrants wishes to establish their lives in the Netherlands. Furthermore, there is a group of highly skilled individuals who initially arrive on student visas, move onto self-employment, and later bring their families. For them, the impact of the tax exemption may be less significant. The competition with countries such as Germany, which has a robust incentive package for skilled immigrants, may intensify. This could prompt the Netherlands to reconsider its decision to phase out the exemption.

In which sectors do you observe a higher concentration of highly skilled immigrants from Türkiye?

While there are individuals across various industries, engineering seems to be the dominant field for this demographic.

Are sustainability and social responsibility prominent on the agenda of the Turkish business community in the Netherlands? Which initiatives or projects are focused on these issues?

I do not think sustainability and social responsibility have been relevant to the first-generation Turkish entrepreneurs in the Netherlands. However, the newer generation of entrepreneurs, particularly those working within the technology sector, is increasingly attuned to these dynamics. Many of these

entrepreneurs are leading sustainability and social responsibility initiatives. I have observed a growing trend of Turkish entrepreneurs developing business models that prioritize these areas.

✍ What has been your experience with basic services such as social security and healthcare in the Netherlands? What support is available for high-skilled Turkish immigrants in these areas?

My social security expectations were initially higher; however, I would not characterize the system as inadequate. In certain isolated incidents, I anticipated greater sensitivity, but overall, the system functions acceptably. Healthcare services, on the other hand, remain a topic of concern for many, though based on my limited experience, I cannot point to any significant shortcomings. One of the key differences, however, is that highly skilled immigrants from Türkiye are generally accustomed to a private healthcare system. In terms of support, both our Consulates General and the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities make concerted efforts to assist Turkish immigrants in navigating these systems in the Netherlands.

✍ How would you assess the impact of Turkish culture on Dutch society? Conversely, how do you perceive the influence of the dominant Dutch culture on Turkish-origin citizens, who number over 400,000?

The Turkish community has contributed notably to Dutch society in several areas, such as the service sector, the diversity of food offerings, and the spread of street market culture. On the other hand, the influence of Dutch culture on Turkish-origin citizens is equally significant. Notable aspects include the Dutch emphasis on business practices, adherence to rules and regulations, an increased focus on personal care, as well as attitudes toward working hours and holidays.

✍ Looking at the past 30 years, can we say that the profile of the diaspora has diversified and transformed with the "new wave" of migration and the emerging generation of Turkish diaspora?

Among the third and fourth generations, some individuals maintain a strong connection to their Anatolian roots, while others no longer speak Turkish and feel little attachment to Turkish culture. One side has fully preserved its own culture by remaining insular, while the other has adapted unconditionally to the local context. In between these two extremes, there are individuals who strike a balance. The "new wave" of immigrants, particularly highly skilled individuals, display greater self-confidence and adaptability. They are more attuned to both their identity and the realities of their host country, allowing them to navigate cultural dynamics with greater flexibility.

✍ Do you participate in events organized for the Turkish community in the Netherlands? How do you assess the meaning and impact of these events, particularly for highly skilled Turkish immigrants?

Yes, I do participate in such events. My primary professional focus is on introducing Turkish tech startups to the European market, specifically through the Netherlands, as part of an internationalization strategy. Particularly during the sales phase, connecting with fellow Turks within corporate organizations can greatly ease the process. Unfortunately, these connections are often made through considerable effort or by chance in social contexts. I envision a Turkish diaspora characterized by mutual trust, a strong sense of community, a shared entrepreneurial spirit, and a collective willingness to support one another. This vision motivates my participation in community events. Rather than creating a loosely organized network, I am dedicated to

"The efforts surrounding the production of events and content designed for Turkish expatriates, particularly those arriving through recent waves of migration, remain insufficient. This demographic often seeks a sense of belonging and can experience isolation."

developing the "Turkish Tech Diaspora" initiative - a more systematic and inclusive platform that specifically targets the new generation of immigrants. The efforts surrounding the production of events and content designed for Turkish expatriates, particularly those arriving through recent waves of migration, remain insufficient. This demographic often seeks a sense of belonging and can experience isolation. Consequently, events targeting this group tend to attract significant interest. Participants from all walks of life and political backgrounds actively engage with these events, traveling long distances to attend both business-oriented and social gatherings.

✍ What types of activities do you believe should be organized to enhance interaction and communication among high-skilled Turkish immigrants?

Activities that are pluralistic, sustainable, and aligned with contemporary needs should be organized. These activities should incorporate up-to-date tools and provide benefits to the majority of the community.

✍ What approach should be taken to foster a sense of belonging and unity within the transforming diaspora?

An organizational framework that is tailored to the lifestyles of high-skilled Turkish immigrants, as well as the context of the Netherlands, should be established. This structure should be sustainable and must host activities and content that resonate with the community's needs and aspirations should be produced.

✍ Can associations, institutions, organizations, or the government in the Netherlands play a role in these activities?

It would be most effective if they adopt a supportive role rather than assume direct control over these initiatives.

✍ What are your views or suggestions regarding this issue?

I believe that the high-skilled Turkish immigrant community is highly talented in various fields. Many individuals have already achieved significant professional success and have ascended to prestigious positions. These success stories will continue to proliferate in the coming years. The key challenge now is to find ways to create platforms or institutions that can teach others.

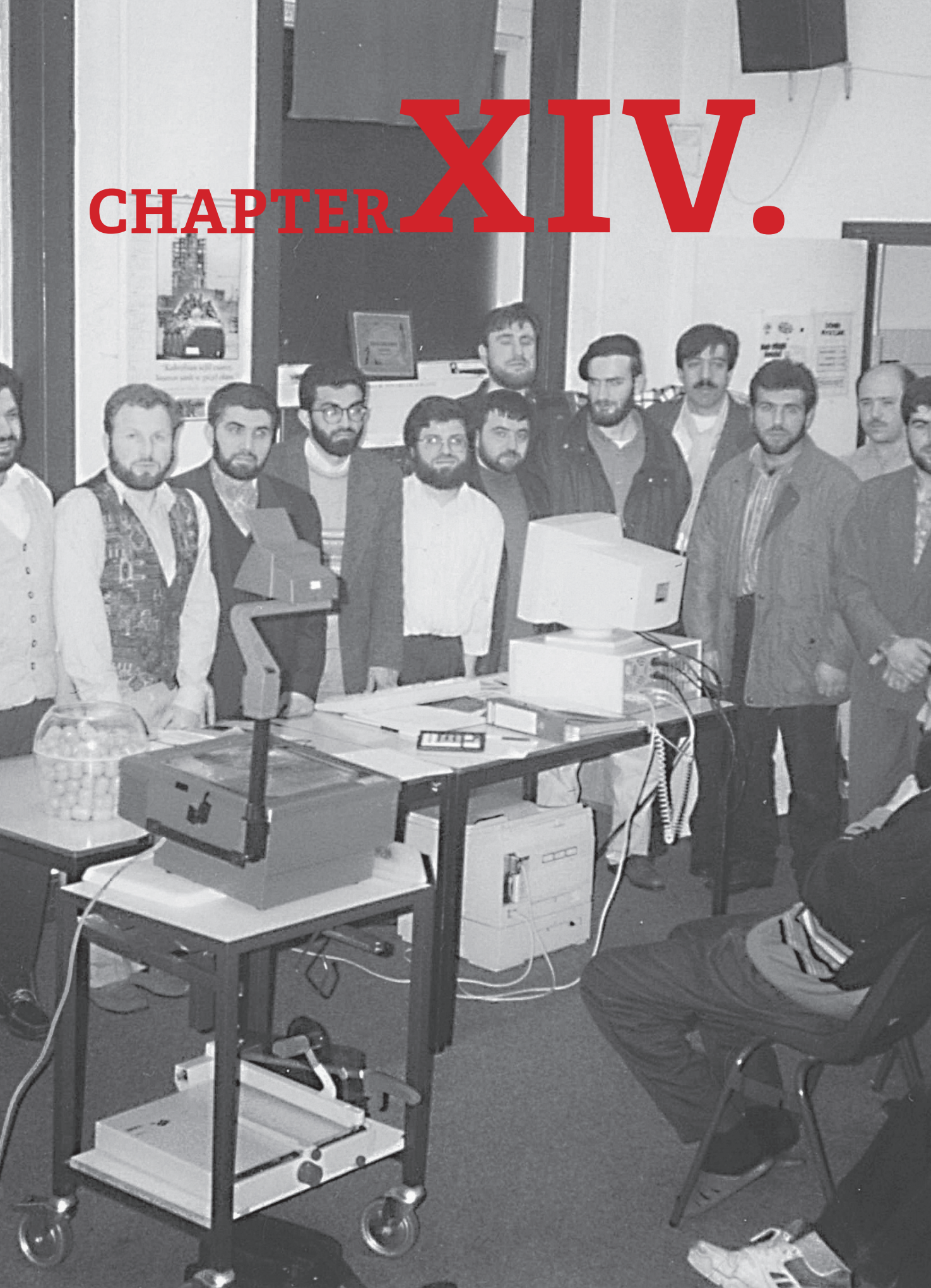
✍ What are your future business plans?

I intend to continue my work within the entrepreneurship ecosystem, focusing on expanding my efforts. In the near future, I plan to transition into a more corporate structure, concentrating on creating added value by developing the investment side of my business.

✍ What advice would you offer to other Turkish entrepreneurs considering starting a business in the Netherlands?

Accessing accurate and relevant information, connecting with the right individuals, and adapting to the unique conditions of the Netherlands are critical steps. Once these foundational aspects are in place, entrepreneurs should proceed with a clear and strategic approach.

CHAPTER XIV.



RETURN TO THE HOMELAND

ANALYZING THE CONCEPT OF REVERSE MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKISH IMMIGRANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

Ayşenur Kırılmaz-Başer

FROM THE NETHERLANDS TO ANATOLIA: MUSTAFA ÖZDEMİR'S JOURNEY TO THE HOMELAND AFTER 30 YEARS

Mustafa Özdemir

BETWEEN LEAVING AND STAYING: AN INTERVIEW WITH MEHMET AKBULUT ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, FINANCIAL, AND FAMILY ASPECTS OF RETURN

Mehmet Akbulut

ANALYZING THE CONCEPT OF RETURN MIGRATION IN THE CONTEXT OF TURKISH IMMIGRANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS

AYŞENUR KIRILMAZ-BAŞER[1]

Introduction

Migration, a widely discussed theme in social sciences, has increasingly compelled states to formulate more proactive policies regarding their transnational citizens in response to evolving international dynamics and political, economic, and security-related developments. In line with this, certain theoretical perspectives conceptualize migration as a state of mobility or even a cyclical process, suggesting that it ultimately reaches a natural conclusion (Adler, 1975; Gullahorn & Gullahorn, 1963). The primary objective of this study is to examine the phenomenon of return of the migrant to their homeland - often referred to as "returning home" - through the lens of reverse migration. In order to contextualize the reverse migration experiences of migrants in the Netherlands and establish a robust academic framework, it is essential first to delineate its conceptual underpinnings.

The Concept of Reverse Migration

The literature argues that the enduring ties between transnational communities and their countries of origin render the notion of return a persistent and dynamic possibility. In other words, the migrant community is always open to the possibility of return (Cohen, 2019). These active transnational connections facilitate return migration while simultaneously shaping migrant communities with evolving perceptions of the homeland. The transformation of the home country -

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whether economic, political, or identity-based - can serve as a catalyst for return, mobilizing individuals to reconsider their place of residence (King & Christou, 2011).

However, the approach to return migration differs significantly between first-generation migrants and their second- and third-generation descendants. For newer generations, migration to the ancestral homeland does not constitute a return in the traditional sense but rather represents an initial migration experience. Since they have never lived in the country of origin, they are not "true" returnees but rather new immigrants settling in a new environment. King and Christou (2011) assert that the return of second- and third-generation migrants alters the spatial distribution of diaspora communities and fosters a dual transnationalism, wherein returnees establish new transnational networks with their country of birth. This phenomenon suggests a more holistic form of transnationalism. Consequently, the return of migrants born in the host country to their ancestral homeland is often perceived positively yet involves numerous complexities.

Morawska (2004), in her study on migrant integration and transnationalism, highlights the various factors influencing both assimilation and transnational identity. These include characteristics of both the sending and receiving countries, migrant's individual traits, and various in-group and out-group dynamics within the settlement context. In other words, the majority of the returnees continue to be marginalized under the broader classification of migrants. Individuals in the homeland often perceive these returnees as extensions of their host countries, viewing them as detached from their original identities and belonging. Such perceptions contribute to their marginalization, as they are often accused of adopting a collective mentality distinct from the native population and lacking historical memory. In reality, reverse migration - often intertwined with identity and belonging - can lead individuals to become migrants that transcends conventional identity categories (Wessendorf, 2014). Regardless of the political contexts of either the homeland or the host country, belonging increasingly emerges as an abstract and imagined concept rather than a tangible reality (King & Kılıç, 2013). From the perspective of migrant individuals and groups, the concept of home and homeland has acquired an abstract dimension that transcends many ideals.

William Safran (2004) underscores the importance of maintaining strong cultural connections and identifications with the homeland in transnational communities. However, Hall (1992) critiques this perspective by arguing that the link between diaspora communities and their homelands, as well as their perceived connection to the past, is far more precarious and ambiguous than often assumed. Consequently, for transnational communities that rely on historical memory, the notion of home is significantly more intricate than traditionally perceived. Within the literature, the term reverse migration is frequently presented in quotation marks. This underscores the complexity arising from the idea that first-generation migrants, along with parents of the second- and third-generations effectively relocate to what they consider their home countries (King & Christou, 2011).

The Netherlands-Türkiye Migration Process and the Conceptual Framework of Return Migration

Currently, approximately 500,000 individuals of Turkish origin reside in the Netherlands (CBS Statline, 2023). However, this migration movement has not been unidirectional nor concluded in the Netherlands. The migration flow from Türkiye, which began in 1964 primarily for economic reasons, has evolved over time. It has sometimes even transformed into a pattern of reverse migration, closely aligned with the political landscape of the homeland (De Haas et al., 2015). Consequently, migration remains a significant phenomenon that continues to shape the lives of many individuals in contemporary Türkiye. At the core of the reverse migration concept is the emphasis on the contributions of returnees to the peace-building and socio-economic development of their homeland. Particularly in the Turkish context, return migration is a multifaceted process that extends beyond economic considerations. Indeed, it is essential to define the reverse migration impulse through more nuanced approaches, incorporating dimensions such as identity, politics, and psychology. Within the framework of transnational identity, it is essential to analyze the key factors influencing Turkish reverse migration from the Netherlands. This includes examining the contextual, social, and individual determinants that inform the decision to return. In addition to the pull factors associated with the homeland, it is equally important to recognize the push factors stemming from the migrants' experiences in the Netherlands, including citizenship policies and broader social challenges.

Although migrants may not always be consciously aware of their adaptation to the host culture, their value systems, attitudes, social behaviors, and perceptions often undergo significant transformations. Upon returning to the homeland, these individuals must reconcile their personal values, cognitive frameworks, and behavioral patterns with the prevailing cultural norms of their homeland (Kunuroğlu et al., 2015). Returnees are often perceived as out-group members within their own country, which increases the likelihood of encountering adaptation difficulties (Sussman, 2000).

First-generation returnees, as well as second- and third-generation migrants who have acquired innovative linguistic and educational skills, face distinct challenges in the reintegration process. Key difficulties include cultural dissonance with contemporary Turkish society, linguistic barriers, and challenges related to the social and linguistic adjustment of children who were not born or raised in Türkiye (Kunuroğlu et al., 2016). Furthermore, many young-generation individuals have only experienced Türkiye through short-term transnational visits (usually during summer or Islamic holidays), often associating it with family gatherings, a shared linguistic environment, and favorable weather conditions. As a result, both second- and third-generation and their retired parents, who return after decades abroad, struggle to adapt to Türkiye's internal dynamics. Tannenbaum's (2007) conceptual framework highlights the role of shifting conditions in the country of origin, emphasizing the potential mismatch between migrants' idealized memories of their homeland and the contemporary realities they encounter upon return. This issue becomes particularly pronounced in intergenerational return migration, as the expectations and sociological characteristics of earlier and

"The literature argues that the enduring ties between transnational communities and their countries of origin render the notion of return a persistent and dynamic possibility."

later generations often diverge significantly. Many first-generation returnees leverage their economic capital accumulated in the host country or economic benefits of the retirement to start businesses or invest in local enterprises. However, studies indicate that some returnees ultimately find it difficult to sustain their businesses due to challenges in adapting to local business norms and values (Kunuroğlu et al., 2016).

Beyond the economic aspects of return migration, other influential factors include the strength of family ties, financial earnings acquired abroad, accumulated social and educational capital, and perceived job opportunities in the homeland. While economic motivations often serve as a primary driver for return migration, ethnic and religious affiliations, as well as emotional attachments, also play a critical role in shaping the decision to return (King & Christou, 2011). When reverse migration is analyzed within the context of Turkish labor migration using a neoclassical economic framework, certain focal points emerge in explaining both migration to Europe and the subsequent return, primarily driven by economic motivations. It is suggested that individuals who return may be those who were less entrepreneurial and sociable or struggled to withstand demanding labor conditions abroad. This situation sheds light on the motivations behind the return migration of individuals who moved in the 1960s. Conversely, more recent waves of labor migration exhibit a higher degree of strategic planning, with migrants carefully mapping out their return to maximize financial stability and professional success (Kunuroğlu et al., 2017). In this context, reverse migration can be viewed as both a necessity and a strategic choice, depending on the specific circumstances of the migrants involved. Based on these perspectives, four primary motivations for reverse migration can be identified (King & Anastasia, 2010):

- *Return as a consequence of failure:* This often becomes the choice for those who remain confined within their identity definitions and face exclusion due to their identity. It pertains to immigrants who struggle to adapt to their host countries because of socio-political challenges, such as discrimination - sometimes racism - and language barriers.
- *Loyalty to the memory of the homeland or identity-based conservatism:* This category, which serves as a rationale for reverse migration driven by a profound allegiance to one's essence, predominantly encompasses individuals who initially migrated with the intention of accumulating savings and returning to their homeland. These individuals typically repatriate after fulfilling their initial objectives.

Family ties often function as a defining element of identity, playing a pivotal role in managing the entire migration process.

- *Retirement or fulfilment of purpose in the host country:* This category pertains to returnees who, having concluded their working lives in the host country, choose to spend their retirement years in their country of origin.
- *Return as a form of innovation:* A distinct category of returnees consists of individuals who have successfully integrated into the host society, acquired new skills, and seek to contribute their knowledge and experiences to their home country. This group is primarily characterized by a strong inclination to return with enhanced qualifications.

Research on reverse migration highlights that a key determinant of whether returnees feel a sense of belonging in their home country is the reception they receive from the local population (Christou, 2006; Ní Laoire, 2008; Ralph, 2012). In some instances, societal attitudes in the homeland significantly influence the increasing tendency for reverse migration among Turks living in Europe (İçduygu & Aksel, 2013). This phenomenon is partly linked to the rise of far-right ideologies in European countries, and partly to the personal preferences of returnees. Studies on second-generation reverse migration, particularly from the Netherlands, categorize motivations into micro-level (cultural, familial, emotional) and macro-level (economic, political, historical) factors (Böcker, 1993; Berkhout et al., 2005). The profile of returning Turkish immigrants has significantly influenced various parameters of their homeland, including socioeconomic and political conditions, policy frameworks, the duration and trajectory of immigrant mobility, and even local development. To understand the broader forces driving Turkish migrants' return, it is essential to consider Castells' (2013) concept of the "network society." This approach highlights the emergence of a global, dynamic identity that seeks to maximize economic and social opportunities transcending borders, facilitated by the strategic use of technology. Therefore, when analyzing second- and third-generation immigrants through this lens, it becomes evident that economic, occupational, educational, and social welfare preferences play a significant role in shaping their choices of residence in reverse migration. This phenomenon generates a multi-layered impulse for return. These second-generation immigrants, integrated into the network society, operate within a mobile and borderless realm. For instance, due to their dual citizenship, higher education levels, and strong transnational connections, they are often more inclined and better positioned to consider return migration (Castells, 2006).

According to national data, the Turkish community, the largest immigrant group in the Netherlands, has been steadily increasing since 1964. Initially driven by family reunification, the nature of migration has evolved over time, influenced significantly by the political dynamics and conditions in the home country (Focus Migration, 2014). The increasing diversity of the Netherlands' immigrant population has placed economic pressures on the system, while the rise of cultural pluralism has simultaneously fueled the spread of neo-conservative ideologies across Europe (Becker & Cuperus, 2010). Challenges such as social polarization, difficulties in integration, and housing crises have further strengthened far-right political movements

"Although return migrants may not always be consciously aware of their adaptation to the host culture, their value systems, attitudes, social behaviors, and perceptions often undergo significant transformations."

in the Netherlands (Harici, 2024). As a result, Turkish migrants, like many other immigrant groups, have encountered challenges in their host country, prompting a growing number to consider returning to Türkiye. Many returnees bring with them the educational and professional skills acquired abroad. Additionally, Türkiye's economic, social and political transformation since the early 2000s has made the prospect of return more appealing, further facilitating reverse migration (van Gent & Hochstenbach, 2019). Beyond being a significant topic of discussion within the Turkish community, reverse migration has also gained prominence in both public discourse and political debates.

One of the key drivers of reverse migration among Turkish-origin youth in the Netherlands is their struggle to fully integrate into Dutch society. Many young individuals find themselves unable to complete their education, develop sufficient social networks, or secure a stable foothold in society. This challenge is closely linked to the limited access to human and social capital outside the homeland. In other words, Turkish immigrants may face disadvantages when attempting to establish economic and social stability abroad, particularly in areas that are crucial to identity formation, such as education and linguistic rights. Another significant factor contributing to this phenomenon is the lack of robust social networks and intergenerational integration. Compared to their Dutch peers, Turkish-origin youth often need to exert greater effort to achieve similar levels of success. In some cases, this additional burden can diminish their motivation and long-term aspirations within Dutch society. As a result, many young individuals from Turkish backgrounds may prefer to build their future within their own ethnic community. Alternatively, this experience can foster a stronger connection to Türkiye, prompting them to envision their educational and professional futures in the homeland. While concerns about assimilation remain prevalent among more conservative segments of the community, it is also important to acknowledge the existence of a new generation that feels fully integrated into Dutch society (Crul & Heering, 2008). Notably, in recent years, there has been a significant increase in the migration of highly skilled professionals, including doctors and other qualified individuals, from the Netherlands to Türkiye, highlighting a reversal of the traditional brain drain phenomenon. Empirical data further indicates that the rate of reverse migration among Turks in the Netherlands is approximately 10% higher than that of Moroccans, the second-largest ethnic minority group in the country (Crul & Doomernik, 2003). This

suggests that the aspiration to return to the ancestral homeland remains a prominent reality for many Dutch Turks.

The concept of return migration has been a consistent feature of Turkish migration patterns since the early years of labor migration to Europe. From the outset, migration motivated by economic opportunities was rarely perceived as a permanent relocation; instead, it often carried the implicit expectation of an eventual return to Türkiye. Since the early 2000s, however, the motivations for return have expanded with an increased number of younger generations beginning to view Türkiye as a place where they can actively participate in modernization, industrialization,

"First-generation returnees, as well as second- and third-generation migrants who have acquired innovative linguistic, and educational skills, face distinct challenges in the reintegration process."

and broader transformation processes (Şener, 2018).

Push and Pull Factors Shaping Reverse Migration

Turkish migrants in the Netherlands, across first, second, and third generations, experience a complex interplay of push and pull factors that influence their decision to return. Push factors are those that drive individuals away from their host country. Among the most significant push factors are social, political, economic, and environmental conditions. In particular, experiences of social exclusion, discrimination, reduced access to welfare benefits, and rising unemployment rates within immigrant communities have played a critical role in motivating return migration (Reniers, 2001). Conversely, pull factors are conditions in the home country that make return migration more appealing. These include positive developments such as economic growth, the presence of familiar and supportive social networks, political stability, and improvements in perceived freedom and overall well-being. The early 2000s marked a turning point when Türkiye began to emerge as an increasingly attractive destination for highly educated members of the Turkish diaspora. During this period, Türkiye's evolving social and political landscape, coupled with improved labor market integration, became key determinants in the return migration decisions of Dutch Turks (Pusch & Splitt, 2013).

It is equally important to compare the social networks of Turkish immigrants with those in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, social networks are often structured around ethnic, religious, or other identity-based affiliations, creating distinct community clusters. For instance, it is common for Turkish immigrants to have Turkish neighbors, shop at Turkish grocery stores, and reside in cities with a high concentration of Turkish-origin residents. Moreover, advancements in communication technologies have enabled Tur-

kish immigrants to sustain close ties with family and friends in Türkiye, preserving their identity. Frequent visits to the homeland are not only possible but are also a common occurrence. Thus, close ties with friends and family in Türkiye, coupled with a strong emphasis on social networks among Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands, serve as a significant pull factor that influences their decision to return to their homeland. The idea of reverse migration gained momentum particularly during Türkiye's candidacy for European Union membership, and subsequent socioeconomic advancements further enhanced the appeal of returning. Türkiye's growing economy, which led to its recognition as a G20 member state, has reshaped its global and regional image, positioning it as an increasingly attractive destination for migration. This progress constitutes a pull factor for Dutch Turks.

Among the primary groups engaged in reverse migration are young, educated professionals and entrepreneurs. The Turkish government actively encourages this form of return migration, viewing it as a strategic gain. Activities aimed at preserving and promoting Turkish culture, supported by educational opportunities (such as scholarship and internship), religious institutions, employment prospects, economic organizations, and non-governmental organizations, play a significant role in fostering return migration. Educational opportunities, for example, go beyond merely providing Turkish language instruction through government-appointed teachers abroad. Efforts are also directed toward fostering cultural and historical awareness among diaspora communities. The preservation and transmission of Turkish language and culture not only prevent assimilation but also ensure smoother reintegration for those who choose to return. Skilled young generations are increasingly engaging in reverse migration to Türkiye, seeking to establish new lives and contribute to the growing Turkish economy. (Öktem, 2014). In this context, the Turkish government, through both state institutions and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), is actively implementing policies aimed at developing the diaspora in every possible dimension and reinforcing its connections with the homeland. Key institutions such as the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities, the Turkish Maarif Foundation, and the Yunus Emre Institute play a fundamental role in strengthening the ties between Turkish diaspora communities and the homeland. These institutions promote Turkish language and culture while also providing tangible incentives, such as scholarships, project funding, and internship opportunities, which further encourage return migration.

Young Turkish immigrants, similar to their Dutch peers, often prioritize employment opportunities that offer international career prospects. While Dutch youth frequently explore international experiences in countries such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, Dutch Turkish youth increasingly consider Türkiye as a viable alternative due to their cultural heritage (Bakan, 2016; Vietze, 2018). Although initial perceptions of return migration often frame it as a temporary move, positive experiences in Türkiye can shift perspectives, leading many to settle in the country. This trend is further reflected in educational mobility patterns. According to a 2023 report by Nuffic, the Dutch organisation for internationalisation in education, Türkiye has emerged as one of the top five destinations for Dutch students pursuing education abroad, alongside the United

"While Dutch youth frequently explore international experiences in countries such as the United States, Australia, and the United Kingdom, Dutch Turkish youth increasingly consider Türkiye as a viable alternative due to their cultural heritage."

States, the United Kingdom, Germany, and France (Nuffic, 2023).

In addition to the aforementioned pull factors, it is equally important to examine the push factors contributing to reverse migration. The global transformation following the September 11 attacks significantly impacted immigrant communities, particularly those with backgrounds in regions and religion associated with the attacks. In the Netherlands, Islamophobia has played a crucial role in shaping the political climate and, consequently, influencing the migration tendencies. The aftermath of events such as September 11 and the murder of Theo van Gogh exacerbated negative sentiments toward ethnic minorities, particularly Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands (Cassarino, 2004). The global rise of far-right movements following the attacks further intensified Islamophobia, resulting in notable increases in return migration, particularly in 2016 (IOM, n.d.). A survey conducted among immigrants in the Netherlands revealed that over a quarter of Turkish and Moroccan Muslims expressed a desire to leave the country. Additionally, the negative portrayal of immigrants in the Dutch media has been identified as a contributing factor to the growing tendency of Dutch Turks to re-migrate (Belabas & Jong, 2024).

Communication and relationship skills grounded in the cultural sensitivity derived from a migrant identity may become a disadvantage among younger generations due to deficiencies in language proficiency and challenges in accurately interpreting social behavior norms or the cultural interaction necessary for integration into Dutch society. These integration challenges are particularly evident in the educational attainment of immigrant groups contributing to the labor force, as their academic progress and social mobility often lag behind that of native-born Dutch citizens (Oldac & Fancourt, 2021). This disparity serves as a driving force behind increasing return migration, as many individuals struggle with the dilemma of whether to fully embrace Dutch national identity or maintain strong ties to Turkish culture and community. This dual identity dynamic has allowed Turkish immigrants to establish a cultural space in which they selectively adopt elements of Dutch culture while preserving aspects of Turkish culture.

Beyond aforementioned push factors, the Netherlands has also implemented incentives to encourage return migration. Under the Remigratiewet (Remigration Act), Moroccan and Turkish labor migrants who originally arrived in the Netherlands are eligible for a lifetime remigration allowance upon permanently returning to their home countries (Rijksoverheid, n.d.). The financial support provided by this policy is based on family sta-

tus, which is categorized into three groups: individuals living alone, single parents with children, and married or cohabiting couples. Notably, an increase in the number of dual citizens benefiting from this policy has been observed, particularly after 2021 (Nederlands Migratie Instituut, 2022).

Reverse migration is generally understood as a voluntary process in which migrants choose to return to their home country. While much of the migration literature has focused on the structural necessity of migration, less emphasis has been placed on the agency of migrants in making conscious and voluntary decisions to return. While Turkish immigrants who initially moved to the Netherlands are returning to Türkiye, those born and raised in the Netherlands are also becoming part of this reverse migration trend. For the first generation, a combination of practical and intangible factors often acted as barriers to leaving the host country, but these obstacles have largely diminished for the newer generations (Focus Migration, 2014). The decision to return is frequently influenced by emotional ties to the homeland. However, the primary focus lies on understanding the motivations driving the younger generation of Dutch Turks to engage in reverse migration.

Conclusion

The decision to return is influenced by the economic conditions, social environment, and political climate in the country of residence, but it is also significantly shaped by the growing opportunities in the home country. The rapid improvement in Türkiye's economic and social welfare levels since the turn of the millennium has emerged as a major pull factor in this context (Bendriouch & Uslu, 2023). As Türkiye continues to develop into a more favorable environment for return migration, the actions and choices of immigrants play a decisive role in shaping the final outcome.

Türkiye's rising economic prosperity in the 2000s has marked a turning point, particularly in attracting a highly educated workforce. Simultaneously, entrepreneurs capable of establishing international networks have facilitated the return of the Dutch Turkish community, enhancing Türkiye's appeal as a destination for investment and settlement. In addition to these factors, willingness to have an international experience - such as education and work opportunities in countries beyond the Netherlands - has further motivated the younger generation of Dutch Turks to consider returning to Türkiye. Examined collectively, the socioeconomic development of Türkiye and its potential for future progress stand out as critical pull factors encouraging Dutch Turkish immigrants to contemplate resettling in their homeland.

The framework and social identity of the Turkish community in the Netherlands, as explored in this study, reveal that the possibility of returning to Türkiye remains a persistent consideration for Dutch Turks. However, the myth of return can be disrupted by generational differences and shifting conditions in both the host and home countries, often making the process of return more challenging than anticipated. Furthermore, during the writing of this article, it became evident that there is a dearth of academic studies focusing on the expectations of those who return to Türkiye after retirement. This gap highlights the need for further research to explore this dimension of return migration and its implications.

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Interview

FROM THE NETHERLANDS TO ANATOLIA:

MUSTAFA ÖZDEMİR'S JOURNEY TO THE HOMELAND AFTER 30 YEARS

MUSTAFA ÖZDEMİR

Retired Tailor

Could you briefly introduce yourself?

My name is Mustafa Özdemir. I was born in 1960 in the Derebucak district of Konya. I spent my childhood and early youth in Derebucak, located on the eastern peaks of the Western Taurus Mountains, bordering Antalya. During my youth, migration abroad was quite prevalent in our region, particularly following a devastating fire in 1955 that acted as a catalyst for this movement. Like many young people at the time, I was drawn to the prospect of emigrating. My first experience abroad was in 1979 when I traveled to France. Later, I spent some time in Switzerland before returning to Türkiye to complete my military service. In 1986, I moved to the Netherlands, where I married the daughter of a first-generation Turkish worker. Together, we settled in the city of Enschede.

Did your family support your decision to emigrate? What were their reactions?

My family was not entirely supportive of my decision to emigrate. While they were reluctant to see me leave the country at such a young age, they did not actively oppose my choice.

How was the idea of emigration to Europe perceived in Türkiye at the time?

While some segments of society were critical of it, the majority viewed it favorably. During that period, social and economic challenges, coupled with the political turmoil following the 1980 military coup, drove many to seek opportunities abroad. In our region, family migration became particularly common after the coup, as individu-

als who had initially migrated alone began bringing their families to join them.

✍ How many years did you reside in the Netherlands? Could you identify key periods or turning points during your time there?

I lived in the Netherlands for approximately 30 years. Reflecting on this time, I can divide it into four distinct periods. First, the settlement period which includes the initial years of migration, spanning about three to five years. During this time, I started a family, learned the language, secured a residence permit, and found employment. The second phase, the integration period, involved adapting to Dutch society and culture. This period also marked my involvement in civil society organizations. The third period is the family and career development period. This phase centered on establishing a stable professional life and raising children, marking a shift towards long-term adjustment. Finally, I went through a maturation period. By the time I entered my 50s, I began longing for my homeland. This phase was characterized by nostalgia and a growing desire to return, a common sentiment among Turkish migrants. However it is not easy to decide and make it real.

✍ What was your experience of living abroad?

In the initial stages, living abroad was exciting - a new life filled with hope. However, this excitement was soon tempered by the

A photograph taken during the meeting at Al-Ummah Islamic Primary School in Enschede

challenges of adapting to real life in a foreign country. Establishing a new life within a different culture required significant effort. Additionally, the sense of belonging remained incomplete. There was always a lingering sense of being out of place, accompanied by a constant yearning for familiar elements of home.

✍ How did migration impact you, your family, and those you left behind?

Migration created a physical divide within our family, as I was separated from my relatives in Türkiye. This separation initially brought sadness, but over time, it also led to social and economic differences. Among Turkish communities abroad, it is common to form emotional, cultural, and social bonds with others who share similar experiences. These relationships contribute to a sense of differentiation from those who remain in Türkiye, fostering new perspectives on life.

✍ What was your occupation in the Netherlands? Did you continue the same profession you practiced in Türkiye?

In the Netherlands, I worked in various roles over the years. During my early youth in Türkiye, my sister was a tailor, from whom I learned the basics of tailoring. My father practiced traditional Turkish blacksmithing, and we also ran a grocery store. These diverse experiences had a significant impact on my later life in the Netherlands. In the Netherlands, I worked as a tailor for most of the 30 years I resided there, primarily in the city of Enschede. In my early years, however, I also worked on canal maintenance in Rotterdam and Groningen.

✍ Were there differences between practicing tailoring in Türkiye and the Netherlands?

In Türkiye, tailoring was more of a localized profession for me. Upon moving to the Netherlands, I started as a freelance tailor. Over time, I transitioned to running a workshop, focusing on design and modeling, and producing custom orders.

"There was a constant yearning for familiar elements of home."

✍ Did you observe differences in customer preferences and demands between the Netherlands and Türkiye?

Indeed, there were notable differences influenced by cultural values and shopping habits. Clothing preferences and customer interactions varied significantly. In the Netherlands, the business environment was more competitive and built on mutual trust. For example, bargaining was virtually nonexistent in the Netherlands.

✍ What did you learn or experience about Turkish culture and traditions while living in the Netherlands? Were there any differences compared to Türkiye?

In Türkiye, I had grown up in a culturally homogeneous environment. However, the Turkish community in the Netherlands presented a rich tapestry of diversity, with individuals from various regions of Türkiye. This allowed me to observe and experience a broader range of cultural practices. Moreover, a new Turkish culture and identity began to emerge within the diaspora in Europe. Turkish generations born and raised in European countries synthesized elements of Turkish and European cultures through socialization, leading to the development of a unique cultural identity among Turks in Europe.

✍ What surprised you the most when you moved to the Netherlands? Do you have an unforgettable memory?

One of the most surprising aspects was the bicycle culture. It was fascinating to see people from all walks of life - from students to professionals - using bicycles as their primary means of transportation. City planning was highly accommodating, with dedicated bicycle lanes everywhere, and city centers were filled with bicycles. Another surprising element was the Dutch culture of greeting. People would greet strangers on the street. Over time, I observed cultural exchanges as well. For example, our Dutch acquaintances began to embrace Turkish-style hospitality after recognizing its importance in our culture. Additionally, I found the Dutch lifestyle to be modest and unassuming; even those in high-ranking positions preferred to be addressed by their first names rather than their titles.

✍ How did it feel to live between two cultures as a member of a minority?

In contrast with Türkiye where vertical institutional culture is prevalent, the Netherlands has a horizontal institutional culture, which facilitated closer communication between minorities and society at large. This allowed us to maintain and express our cultural identity. Turks, in particular, are adept at organizing and coming together as a community, which strengthened our identity awareness. However, living as a minority inevitably brought challenges. Despite the opportunities available, the feeling of being a minority was always present. This became more pronounced with the rise of far-right movements in Europe over the past two decades.

"Among Turkish communities abroad, it is common to form emotional, cultural, and social bonds with others who share similar experiences. These relationships contribute to a sense of differentiation from those who remain in Türkiye, fostering new perspectives on life."

✍ Did you have any concerns as parents while raising children between two cultures abroad? If so, what were they, and what solutions did you develop?

Indeed, we were concerned. In the 1980s, many Turkish individuals who had brought their families in Europe sent their children back to Türkiye for education due to fears of assimilation. We benefited from the Dutch Constitution's inclusive provisions, which allowed for religious and cultural diversity. Naturally, individuals are deeply concerned about safeguarding their identity, language, and religious values while raising their children. There is a prevalent fear of assimilation and the potential loss of identity and cultural heritage. To address these concerns, Turkish Muslim organizations initiated efforts to establish Islamic schools, drawing inspiration from Christian and Jewish communities in the Netherlands, which had institutions aligned with their religious sensitivities. This spectrum extends from primary education to university. We made significant efforts to establish Islamic schools that would provide equal opportunities for Muslim children, and we succeeded. Such schools were also established in the city of Enschede, where we resided. My children were fortunate to receive their education at one of these institutions, allowing us to nurture them in alignment with our religious and cultural values and identities. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the Dutch government and local authorities for their support in this endeavor. Furthermore, we deeply appreciate the dedicated volunteers who contributed their time and effort to make this meaningful initiative a reality.

✍ What motivated you to be active in associations?

Our primary motivation was to preserve our cultural identity and ensure its transmission to future generations. Additionally, community organizing was a vital aspect of establishing a presence in Dutch society. The Netherlands encourages civil society engagement, asking communities to define their identity, articulate their needs, and express their aspirations. This system allowed us to organize, collaborate, and advocate effectively. The Dutch framework, which supported diverse cultures in freely organizing and existing peacefully, was invaluable to us. It provided opportunities for self-expression and facilitated the preservation and promotion of our cultural heritage.

✍ How did Turkish associations emerge in the Netherlands, and what transformations did they undergo?

I dedicated at least 25 of my 30 years to self-organizations and civil society initiati-

ves. The earliest organizations were established before our involvement and were primarily focused on workers' issues. However, over time, these organizations expanded and diversified, addressing a broad range of areas, from local cultural initiatives to political engagement. In the Netherlands, the environment strongly supports association and organizational activities, making it relatively straightforward to establish associations and foundations. Additionally, institutions provided subsidies to those who met the necessary criteria. We actively participated in these associations, contributing to their growth and development. Over the years, we witnessed their process of professionalization, allowing them to gain greater influence in public discourse and political arenas. During this 25- to 30-year period, the Turkish community in the Netherlands experienced remarkable social advancement. Progressing from small-scale associations to achieving representation in parliament demonstrates a significant and commendable achievement.

✍ What is the significance of civil society organizations for the Turkish community abroad?

Civil society organizations serve three critical functions for the Turkish community abroad. First, they enable the community to preserve and express its culture and identity, ensuring its permanence in the host society. Second, they foster peaceful coexistence and contribute positively to the broader Dutch society. Third, they maintain and strengthen ties with their homeland, Türkiye. These three dimensions are indispensable and underscore the importance of such organizations.

What challenges did you face during the establishment and early stages of these associations?

The establishment of associations was not without its challenges. Since these organizations were largely volunteer-based, balancing professional responsibilities with association activities required significant personal sacrifices. The most difficult aspects included dedicating time to navigate the bureaucratic procedures required to establish associations and building a community network within the Turkish diaspora.

During your time actively involved in associations, how was your communication with the Dutch community and local authorities? Did they contribute to the associations? If yes, on what issues?

Our communication with Dutch authorities was consistently positive, and I do not recall any significant challenges in this regard. In particular, our relationship with municipal authorities was strong and characterized by regular interaction. In the Netherlands, where the mayor is also the head of local government, we benefited from effective collaboration. For instance, in Enschede, the city where I lived, we did not have any negative experiences with institutions. Various Dutch organizations often sought to provide information about their initiatives. The municipality particularly had programs focused on community development, awareness-raising, and public education. When these programs were implemented, they often included subsidies allocated to support associations. Institutions would organize regular information sessions, typically held weekly or monthly, featuring speakers from various fields to foster dialogue and understanding. Additionally, in the city where we resided, we established an umbrella platform that brought together Turkish associations. This platform served as a collective voice for the Turkish community, enabling us to effectively represent our interests to the municipal authorities. Through this framework, we held meetings with the municipality to address our community's needs and demands. When our requests aligned with the municipality's criteria, support was generally provided.

Did you engage in collaboration or partnership with the municipality during your term?

Yes, there were several collaborations with various departments of the municipality. One significant area of cooperation involved cultural activities aimed at integrating immigrant communities. For example, during open day events hosted by associations, we collaborated to showcase cultural diversity and encourage mutual understanding within Dutch society. Another prominent example was housing policy. In the 1990s, the Turkish Platform entered into a long-term housing agreement with the municipality. This initiative stemmed from the municipality's commitment to preventing ghettoization. Drawing from historical lessons, Dutch authorities sought to avoid the concentration of specific ethnic communities in one area. The Turkish community generally preferred to reside in close proximity, with many seeking to settle in specific neighborhoods. To address this tendency and promote more balanced integration, we entered into an agreement with the municipality. This agreement stipulated that no more than 20% of the housing in any given neighborhood would be allocated to individuals of Turkish origin.

How did your association try to

"Returning feels like uprooting a tree with its surroundings."

A photograph from a members' meeting held in the 1990s at the Davet Association of the Islamic Community Milli Görüş (IGMG) in Enschede

implement this within the Turkish community? Were they receptive and cooperative?

We implemented this policy by focusing on education and communication, emphasizing its long-term benefits and addressing potential concerns. The Turkish community often took these briefings seriously. While some individuals expressed initial reservations, the majority recognized the rationale and were largely supportive.

Can you tell us a little about your return to Türkiye? Did you return alone or with your family? How did you make the decision to return?

The decision to return to Türkiye is one that many Turks living abroad aspire to but find challenging to actualize. Migrating at a young age, building a family, and raising children in a foreign land deeply roots one in the host society, akin to planting a tree that becomes intertwined with its surroundings. Returning, therefore, feels like uprooting that tree. Historically, large-scale returns following migration are rare, and individual returns, though more common, remain fraught with difficulties. For our family, the decision to return unfolded gradually. Our children, eager to experience life in Türkiye, applied for and secured jobs in Ankara, which became a catalyst for our move. This development significantly facilitated our transition. Moreover, our dual citizenship provided an additional sense

A photograph from former Enschede Mayor Peter den Oudsten's visit to the Davet Association

of security, ensuring that we could return to the Netherlands if we faced challenges adapting to life in Türkiye.

Many Turks dream of returning for good, but what triggered your decision to return in your story?

Although life in the Netherlands offers a sense of order and calm, the lack of a profound sense of belonging ultimately influenced my decision. The Dutch refer to this concept as the "sense of being native," a notion deeply rooted in their historical experiences with colonialism and migration. I came to realize that when this sense of being native does not fully develop, the feeling of being perpetually out of place within Dutch society can become profoundly exhausting. While this sentiment might not always be evident in daily life, it becomes more pronounced as one engages more deeply with the social and cultural fabric of the community. I particularly noticed this during interactions with Dutch individuals or in formal meetings with authorities. Overcoming this feeling of otherness seems challenging and perhaps only achievable after several generations, potentially four or five. In my view, this is an inevitable consequence of existing as a minority in a society. It is an issue of considerable sensitivity, and while not everyone may experience it to the same extent, I found it to be a significant personal challenge.

What did you feel when you returned to Türkiye permanently?

Upon returning to Türkiye permanently, we knew that a new chapter in our lives was about to begin. Having spent 30 years abroad, the reality of returning was a significant adjustment. I was conscious that it would not be possible to simply "start over" in Türkiye, as the 30 years spent away had irrevocably altered the trajectory of my life. It felt as though I were rewinding the clock, anticipating various challenges upon our return. We experienced a blend of emotions: joy from returning to our homeland, but also sadness at leaving behind the place we had come to know as home. We had formed lasting friendships and connections in the Netherlands, and I felt a deep sense of loss as I left behind a city and people with whom I had developed deep love. This period was emotionally complex and multifaceted, difficult to encapsulate in mere words. It is a profound experience that could only be captured in the depth of a novel.

Did you have any concerns when you returned? If yes, what were they?

My primary concern upon returning was

the future of my children. I feared that they might struggle to adapt to a lifestyle that was unfamiliar to them, given that they had grown up in a very different environment. This was the foremost worry that occupied my thoughts.

✍ How did your other family members react to your permanent return?

Our family in Türkiye largely responded positively to our return. However, I did find it difficult to understand why some of my relatives were not as enthusiastic about the idea of someone returning to Türkiye after living abroad. I believe that living as a minority abroad alters one's perspective on life, as well as one's priorities.

✍ Did you go to the Netherlands after your return to visit your remaining family members?

Yes, we visited once, about a year after our return. We revisited the places where we had lived. However, I did not feel any particularly strong emotions during this visit. When I first arrived in Türkiye, I had a sense that it was only a temporary stay and that I would eventually return to the Netherlands. This feeling persisted for 2-3 years, and at times, I still experience it.

✍ Could you compare your village before you left the Netherlands and after your return? Did you see any differences? If yes, in what areas?

Returning permanently felt akin to rewinding time by 30 years, and it was emotionally challenging. Upon my return, I observed that my hometown had undergone significant changes. People had changed culturally. There had been substantial migration to other cities, and as a result, much of what I remembered seemed to have faded. In this sense, returning after such a long absence was emotionally difficult. The experience of living abroad for so long made me more acutely aware of the changes I encountered upon returning.

✍ How did your perspective on being a part of a diaspora change, if it changed at all, after returning?

While returning was emotionally difficult, it became clear to me, upon reflection, that it was a valuable and enriching experience. The time spent abroad allowed me to gain a wealth of knowledge and experience. I now see the diaspora as a critical entity, not only for Türkiye but also for the individuals within those communities. The Dutch, having undergone similar migration experiences before us, have developed a level of expertise in managing diaspora communities, particularly through voluntary associations and foundations. I believe this is a field that requires expertise.

✍ Is there anything you would like to add?

I would like to express my gratitude for the opportunity to discuss these matters. Migration is a complex and broad topic that requires significant academic attention. It is a phenomenon as ancient as human history itself. Migration can bring both innovation and prosperity, but it can also result in challenges and difficulties. It is ultimately a conundrum. I believe that our society has limited knowledge of migration, and it is essential that we increase our understanding of this issue as a society.

Interview

BETWEEN LEAVING AND STAYING: AN INTERVIEW WITH MEHMET AKBULUT ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL, FINANCIAL, AND FAMILY ASPECTS OF RETURN

MEHMET AKBULUT
Businessman

✍ Can you briefly introduce yourself? Can you share some details about your life before immigrating to the Netherlands?

My name is Mehmet Akbulut, born on April 20, 1961, in Elmalı Village, Kayseri. Our village was quite underprivileged. After I completed primary education in the village, my mother urged my brother and me to choose between continuing school and pursuing an apprenticeship in an auto repair shop. I expressed my desire to continue my education, although the nearest secondary school was 11 kilometers away. During my registration for secondary school, my father was abroad and unable to accompany me as a guardian. As the school principal insisted on the presence of a guardian, I managed to register with the help of a grocer who acted as my temporary guardian. After three years of middle school, I needed to move to Kayseri to attend high school, as the nearest institution offering further education was located in the city. In Kayseri, my brother and I shared a residence - he picked up a trade in an auto repair shop while I enrolled in Kayseri Trade High School. However, the political climate in Türkiye at the time was turbulent, with ideological conflicts between the right and left permeating even high schools. Concerned about the unrest, my father decided to take us with him during a visit to Türkiye. Initially, my mother was reluctant to leave her village and livestock for a life in the Netherlands. My father eventually persuaded her to move, albeit temporarily, promising that she would return to Türkiye once her residence permit was secured. On April

19, 1978, my mother, my father, my two brothers, and I departed for the Netherlands. My two sisters, however, were entrusted to my uncles, as it was assumed unnecessary for the entire family to relocate due to my mother's planned return.

✍ Can you share your story of immigrating to the Netherlands? At what age and for what purpose did you move, and what were your initial plans upon arrival?

I immigrated to the Netherlands at the age of 17 through family reunification to join our father. My elder brother was 19 at the time. According to Dutch regulations, he had three months to secure employment in order to obtain a permanent residence permit. Consequently, it became a priority to find him a job immediately. However, I did not feel the same urgency. My initial intention was to explore and familiarize myself with the new environment. An uncle, who had already been living and working in the Netherlands, advised me otherwise, saying, "Don't sit around idly, work! I'll take you to a workplace tomorrow." True to his word, he came the next day, put me on a bus, and, after a short ride, introduced me to a man at a factory. Despite my inability to speak Dutch, my uncle managed to secure a job for me at a factory producing small tomato crates. I was reluctant to start working but eventually complied and worked there for about three months. The job was physically demanding, and I was frail and unaccustomed to such labor. Moreover, Ramadan fell in the summer that year, and fasting throughout hot days left me drained of energy. At

that time, wages were paid in cash, delivered in yellow envelopes. The exact amount of money, calculated down to the last penny, would be written on the envelope. Upon receiving our wages, we would hand them over to our mother. One day, I received both a yellow envelope and a white one. Turkish colleagues who understood the system explained that the white envelope signified termination, and indeed, I was let go. Adding to the insult, a Dutch manager accused me of stealing a pair of pliers. Although I showed him my bag to prove my innocence, and the pliers were eventually located, no apology was offered. This incident angered me deeply, and I resolved to learn Dutch so I could defend myself in the future. Three weeks later, my father found me a new job. In this position, I was paired with a man who had a speech and hearing impairment. Since I did not know Dutch, I felt similarly isolated. Nevertheless, he patiently taught me carpentry skills. One day, our boss saw me holding a hammer and angrily reminded me that I was hired as a cleaner, not a carpenter. He threw the hammer to the ground and reprimanded both of us. Unable to defend himself, my mentor wept, and I joined him. It is likely that I was reassigned to lower-level tasks as a form of punitive action. Encouraged by my colleagues, who recognized my potential, I pursued a carpentry course, I improved my Dutch and completed the training. However, I struggled to find work as a carpenter and eventually came across an advertisement for welding training. I enrolled in the course, obtained my certification, and began working as a skilled laborer at a shipyard, where I remained for five years. During this period, my mother, initially planning to return to Türkiye, decided to stay in the Netherlands. She had grown accustomed to her new life and preferred not to leave us behind. Later, my sisters also joined us, completing our family's transition to the Netherlands.

✍ How did it feel to live away from your homeland?

Upon arriving in the Netherlands, I embarked on a journey of self-discovery. At the time, the Dutch Diyanet Foundation did not exist. After learning the welding trade and achieving considerable success in my profession, I still felt a void in my personal life. During this period, I met an individual deeply interested in literature, and we exchanged books. This friendship sparked my interest in reading, and I immersed myself in books to quench my thirst for knowledge. However, this friend was marginalized by our colleagues due to his dedication to reading and fulfilling his religious obligations. At that time, I was 19 or 20 years old and had limited understanding of religious practices. Despite the challenges, this friend maintained a respectful relationship without imposing his beliefs. Around the same time, my brother had a child, and it was suggested that the Quran be read at home by a preacher. When the preacher arrived, he noticed the young adults in the household and

"I had studied and gained experience in various civil society organizations in the Netherlands, a country I had come to love deeply. However, despite this feeling, I felt a sense of emptiness inside and a strong desire to return to Türkiye."

asked if we knew how to read the Quran. Upon learning that we did not, he offered to teach us within three months. Skeptical yet curious, I agreed and attended the lessons. The classes took place in a small setting where even young children were learning the Quran. As an adult in my twenties, I initially doubted the preacher's ability to teach us effectively in such a short period. As I progressed in learning the Quran, my initial prejudices against the teacher gradually dissolved. During this time, Turkish organizations began to emerge in the Netherlands. Although there was some discussion about a movement called Millî Görüş (National Vision), we knew little about it. The Quran teacher informed us that we could continue our lessons at a newly acquired Millî Görüş building, which had been converted from an old garage. Over time, I became actively involved in these activities. Eventually, we were allocated an unused apartment to establish a youth center. These experiences profoundly influenced me, helping to shape my identity and solidify my sense of purpose. I began to understand who I was, my role in the community, and what I aspired to become. Within this civil society organization I worked as a newspaper reporter for three years and served as the youth president. More significantly, the camaraderie and solidarity within this organization motivated me to pursue higher education and strive for success in the future.

You are one of the pioneers of the Al Ghazali Islamic School, one of the first Islamic schools in the Netherlands. What was the experience of opening an Islamic school like in the atmosphere of that period?

During the 1980s, the Dutch Islamic Federation (Millî Görüş) organized a pivotal conference addressing the challenges faced by Muslims in Europe. Held in Rotterdam over three days, with the participation of the late Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan, the conference emphasized the importance of integration and visibility of Muslims in European society. The final declaration called for the establishment of schools, associations, and other institutions to ensure the active participation of the Muslim community in society. While the vision was ambitious, translating it into reality was daunting, as these initiatives represented novel undertakings for the Muslim community at the time.

On a personal level, my involvement was driven not only by the ideological framework articulated at the conference but also by an unpleasant personal experience. My eldest daughter attended a Protestant school, and as a concerned parent, I sought permission from the school principal to organize Islamic lessons for Muslim students during available hours. Unfortunately, the principal's outright rejection was deeply frustrating and disappointing. However, this incident became a catalyst for exploring alternative solutions. While I was a university student at the time, I began researching the feasibility of establishing an

"My return to Türkiye was a totally different experience from the departure to the Netherlands."

Islamic school. Accessing information in those years required personal interaction. A friend informed me about the Association of Special Status Schools *(Vereniging van Algemeen Bijzondere Scholen - VBS)* in The Hague, and I sought their guidance. The director of the institution explained that if I could gather signatures from the parents of at least 50 children aged 3 to 11, the establishment of a school could be considered. Excited by this prospect, I shared the situation at the mosque, and community members actively began reaching out to parents within their networks, encouraging them to complete the necessary forms. Additionally, I requested permission from the mosque's imam to address the congregation and provide a detailed explanation of the requirements and objectives of establishing an Islamic school. We successfully gathered a total of 450 signatures, which we then submitted to the institution I had consulted. When I presented the signatures, the director expressed astonishment at the community's commitment, cautioning us about the verification process. After submitting the application to the municipality, the official overseeing the process expressed skepticism about our chances of success. Nevertheless, two months later, we received approval to proceed. However, we were not ready yet. We lacked a building and resources. As soon as we received the approval, we started looking for a building. We found a suitable building and quickly began cleaning and renovating it with the help of community volunteers. However, we faced a critical shortage of furniture and supplies. To procure school supplies, it was necessary for the state to officially recognize us first. However, the school year had already commenced before the delivery date for the required materials. As a temporary solution, we managed to acquire tables and chairs from the municipality's warehouse. Another significant challenge was the absence of an established curriculum for Islamic education. With no models to emulate from other countries, we developed the curriculum independently. We also placed advertisements for teachers and prioritized candidates with experience in working with immigrant communities. Eventually, we hired six teachers and a principal.

We finalized our preparations for the inauguration of the school and officially opened the doors of our institution in August 1988, marking the establishment of the first Islamic school in the Netherlands. On the first day, 90 students attended, and this number subsequently grew to 130. On the first day, we gathered in the school gym, recited the Fatiha, offered prayers, and sent the children to their classrooms. However, we faced significant hurdles, particularly due to the lack of Islamic curriculum. We were particularly focused on fulfilling the commitment we had made to the parents. Initially, the educational performance of most of the children was below the expected level. Naturally, this raised concerns for us, but it was our first experience in founding a school. We had teachers, but we had a hard time finding Muslim teachers. In our second year, the number of Muslim teacher applicants inc-

reased. By the end of the first academic year, our student population had increased to 160. By the end of the second year, enrollment had risen to 210, highlighting the substantial demand for Islamic education within the community. Our rapid expansion attracted the attention of the Dutch media. During that period, discussions in the Netherlands revolved around the categorization of schools into "black" and "white" schools, with schools predominantly attended by immigrants being referred to as "black schools." Inevitably, this term was also applied to Islamic schools. I viewed this classification as discriminatory and publicly stated, "We are entirely outside this discussion; we are neither black nor white, we are society itself."

As our school continued to grow, and as the educational level of immigrant populations gradually improved, the supply of Muslim teachers also increased. In our second year, a total of six Islamic schools were established nationwide. With the growth of Islamic schools, we established an umbrella organization to aid in our institutional development. ISBO *(Islamitische Scholen Besturen Organisatie),* or the Organization of Islamic School Administrations, aimed to achieve objectives such as institutional representation for Islamic schools, the development of educational materials, the provision of services where necessary, and the guidance of staff. Today, ISBO remains the sole umbrella organization for Islamic schools.

✍ You are the author of the book "Andermans land" (Someone Else's Country), in which you write about your experiences. Can you tell us about the story of the book's title and its content? How did you decide to write a book?

The title of my book, *Andermans land* (Someone Else's Country), is inspired by the expression "elin ülkesi" (someone else's country) or "elin toprağı," (someone else's land) which is rooted in the village of Elmalı in Türkiye, where I was born. The name of our village is derived from the term "elin malı," meaning "someone else's property." A close friend helped me transform my life story into a book. Prior to writing, I kept a diary and often contemplated the idea of sharing my experiences in a book. I specifically wanted to write my story in Dutch to ensure that my experiences were documented in the Netherlands. Additionally, I aimed to leave a historical record, offering advice and insights for both my family and those in positions of leadership.

✍ Can you tell us a little about your return to Türkiye? Did you return alone or with your family? How did you make the decision to return? When and why did you return to Türkiye? What were the factors that influenced your return?

I had studied and gained experience in

A photograph from the opening of the first Islamic primary school in the Netherlands, Al-Ghazali Islamic School, in 1988.

various civil society organizations in the Netherlands, a country I had come to love deeply. However, despite this feeling, I felt a sense of emptiness inside and a strong desire to return to Türkiye. Many around me questioned this decision, especially considering economic factors. Nevertheless, I believed that my retirement in Türkiye would be sufficient for my livelihood, and that I could overcome any financial concerns by pursuing other work opportunities. When I discussed my thoughts with my wife, she initially expressed her reluctance, as she did not want to leave our children and grandchildren behind. However, we realized that if we did not return, it would become a source of regret. In 2015, we began making gradual preparations for our return, starting with renovating our family home in the village to make it more livable. While the living quarters were ready, we soon realized that the old friendships in Türkiye had faded, and that people had become more materialistic compared to people in Europe. This shift occasionally made us second-guess our decision, but ultimately, in 2018, we made the final choice to return. Fortunately, my wife agreed to come with me, and I promised her that we would visit the Netherlands two to three times a year, with our children also visiting us frequently. Sometimes, when we miss them, we even find ourselves purchasing tickets to the Netherlands the very next day.

How did you feel when you returned to Türkiye? Did you have any difficulties when you returned to Türkiye? If yes, what issues and why?

Returning is, in some respects, a technical matter. Moreover, as we hold dual citizenship, our return to Türkiye was, in essence, a change of address. A common misconception among immigrants is the belief that everything will remain as they left it, an illusion that many, including ourselves - have experienced. The world had changed, and our village and people were no exception. It was not easy to leave behind the place where we had spent nearly all of our youth and adulthood. We had married, raised children, became grandparents, and witnessed the formation of two more generations.

"A common misconception among immigrants is the belief that everything will remain as they left it - an illusion that many, including ourselves, have experienced."

We had started contemplating our return to Türkiye in 2015, gradually extending our stays in the country in order to gain experience. However, the old Türkiye we had longed for no longer existed, and we had to question whether we truly wanted to embrace this new version of Türkiye. When we arrived in 2018, we initially intended to spend most of our time in the village, but this proved challenging. Having lived in a metropolitan city in the Netherlands for many years, the shift to rural life felt overwhelming, leading us to ultimately decide to settle in Kayseri. If you ask whether I have any regrets, aside from the financial challenges, I would say no. I do not disregard Europe, nor the Netherlands, as it has provided me with a wealth of experience. Whenever I am in Türkiye, there are numerous aspects of the Netherlands that I miss.

✍ When you think about it now, was it harder to leave or to return?

When reflecting on the experience now, as a 63-year-old, I recognize that my expectations when I first moved to the Netherlands were significantly different from what I encountered. At that time, I was unaware of concepts such as racism, marginalization, or discrimination, and the country was often portrayed to us as an ideal destination. However, upon arriving in the Netherlands, I faced discrimination and marginalization, which naturally led to a sense of belonging issues. Additionally, acquiring a foreign language at an academic level later in life, while adapting to a new environment, posed its own challenges. My return to Türkiye was a totally different experience from the departure to the Netherlands. I returned with a clearer understanding and awareness of the challenges I would face, without the support of old friendships. While I have since developed meaningful relationships here, my connections in Europe hold a distinct and important place in my life.

✍ You founded the 'Türkiye-Netherlands Friendship Solidarity and Culture Association' in Türkiye to serve those who returned or settled in Türkiye after living in the Netherlands for a while. Can you tell us about the process that led you to establish this association? What are the activities of your association?

Among those who returned to Türkiye, some faced adaptation challenges. Upon my return, I felt a strong need to raise awareness for individuals like myself who had permanently returned and encountered various difficulties. In addition, I established this association to preserve the friendships formed in Europe and to unite individuals who had previously lived abroad and resettled in Türkiye. Unfortunately, the pandemic hindered the association's activities, and due to official procedures, it was eventually dissolved. Nevertheless, the relationships and connections we made during this time continue. Today, the IGMG Kayseri and HASENE Kayseri branches have filled this void, and I occasionally participate in their activities. We continue to meet a few times each year, particularly with friends who have returned from the Netherlands, and converse about our common experiences.

EXCERPTS FROM THE DIASPORA ARCHIVE

5

'Vertrekpremie' verleidt Turken niet tot terugkeer

Van een onzer verslaggeefsters

AMSTERDAM – Het aantal buitenlandse werknemers dat met een 'vertrekpremie' van de werkgever naar het geboorteland terugkeert is gering. Het aangeboden geld speelt geen doorslaggevende rol bij de beslissing te remigreren.

Tot deze conclusies komt Philip Muus, die voor de Universiteit van Amsterdam een onderzoek deed onder 119 Turkse werknemers van een blikfabriek van Thomassen & Drijver in Deventer. Dit bedrijf heeft de afgelopen drie jaar aan tweehonderd Turkse werknemers een premie van 25 000 gulden aangeboden om zich in hun geboorteland te hervestigen.

Tot nu toe hebben in het hele bedrijf, dat meer vestigingen heeft, slechts tachtig werknemers de premie, die ook wel 'oprotpremie' wordt genoemd, aangenomen. Van de groep Turken die Muus enquêteerde zeiden er veertig dat zij definitieve plannen hadden om te vertrekken en tot nu toe zijn er negentien die echt de koffers hebben gepakt.

Twijfel

Muus: „De mensen twijfelen of ze nog wel een toekomst hebben in hun geboorteland. Daarbij speelt de gezinssituatie een belangrijke rol. Met de premie ben je er niet, je zult toch een beginkapitaalje van jezelf moeten meenemen. Het is misschien een beetje raar, maar je zou kunnen zeggen dat de gezinshereniging een belemmerende invloed heeft gehad op de remigratie. De werknemers die hun vrouw en kinderen naar Nederland haalden zijn nauwelijks in staat om te sparen. Ze vergalopperen zich aan luxe voor het gezin, zo verspelen zij bijvoorbeeld hun spaargeld aan een koopwoning."

„De Turkse werknemers die vertrokken waren alleengaanden. Het zijn de gastarbeiders van de eerste generatie. Zij woonden veelal in het bedrijfspension en legden geld opzij om ooit nog eens naar Turkije terug te gaan." Muus koos Thomassen & Drijver uit omdat hij een hoge pet op had van het sociaal beleid in dit bedrijf. „Het bedrijf had de regeling oorspronkelijk niet gemaakt om de buitenlandse werknemers met een som geld te lozen. Niemand hing een ontslag boven het hoofd."

Hij denkt daar nu, drie jaar later, anders over. Bij het verpakkingsconcern zijn inmiddels vierhonderd banen op de tocht komen te staan en Muus verwacht dat veel buitenlanders de laan uitgestuurd worden.

Zachte drang

„De buitenlandse werknemers krijgen nu van hun directie 'de zachte drang' om de premie aan te pakken. Het argument dat het bedrijf gebruikt is dat het niet mogelijk is om deze mensen bij te scholen. Ze spreken te weinig Nederlands om een opleiding te kunnen volgen waarbij ze geleerd wordt het toetsenbord van de computer te hanteren die straks het handwerk gaat overnemen." Thomassen & Drijver heeft Muus laten weten blij te zijn dat het onderzoek aantoont dat de buitenlanders niet om het geld de premie aanpakten.

Gedwongen

„Als de buitenlandse werknemers niet de kans krijgen om bij te scholen dan betekent het gewoon dat ze na de automatisering worden ontslagen. Dat zal dan betekenen dat zij gedwongen worden de vertrekpremie aan te nemen en dan is het dus toch een oprotpremie. Ik was in mijn nawoord zeer lovend over de 'vertrekpremie' bij Thomassen & Drijver, maar na deze ontwikkeling heb er een paar pagina's aan toegevoegd waarin ik scherp van leer trek tegen dit soort methodes."

A 1986 newspaper report on the return incentive failing to persuade Turkish migrants to return to their homeland
Source: *'Vertrekpremie' verleidt Turken niet tot terugkeer. "Trouw". Meppel, 26-06-1986. Retrieved from Delpher on 29-01-2025, https://resolver.kb.nl/resolve?urn=ABCDD:010827633:mpeg21:p005*

Table 5: Turkish Citizens Permanently Returned to Türkiye[1-2]

Year	Total
1980	2,365
1981	3,144
1982	4,831
1983	5,595
1984	6,184
1985	5,052
1986	5,181
1987	3,792
1988	3,631
1991	1,828
1992	1,946
1993	1,842
1994	1,732
1995	1,581

1. The data in the table were compiled between May 2024 and June 2024 by M. Mustafa İyi through archival research conducted at the Directorate General for Foreign Affairs and the European Union of the Republic of Türkiye Ministry of Labor and Social Security, under the required legal permissions. All data are based on annual reports published by the Directorate General for Foreign Affairs and the European Union between 1980 and 2006. If these tables are used, reference should be made to the work of the researcher mentioned.

2. This dataset was recorded from 1980 until 1996; subsequent reports no longer included this data. The data rely on records from Dutch authorities and Turkish Consulates. They do not include individuals who left the Netherlands with the intention of permanent return but later returned, nor those who departed without informing the relevant authorities. After 1995, the data have been recorded as Turkish citizens arriving in and departing from the Netherlands

Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 16 november 1987, blz.2

Terug van weggeweest

Portret van geremigreerd Turks gezin

De documentaire *Terug van weggeweest* is eigenlijk toevallig tot stand gekomen. Programmamaker Joost Tholens wilde in 1984 de twee Turkse gastarbeiders opzoeken, die hij vijftien jaar daarvoor geportretteerd had in 'Hier en daar een Turk'. Hij trof ze niet meer aan in Nederland: Emin Demir en Mehmet Karaaslan bleken inmiddels geremigreerd te zijn. Reden dus voor Tholens om naar Turkije te gaan, en daar het tweetal op te zoeken.

Hij trof ze daar aan, ieder met z'n eigen gezin, in een betrekkelijke vorm van welstand. Demir — die jarenlang in Enschede in de textielindustrie werkzaam was en daar al gauw tot de conclusie kwam dat zijn collega's hem en andere Turken beschouwden als "een beetje simpele mensen, terwijl die Nederlanders zelf denken overal alles van af te weten" — is inmiddels gepensioneerd. Na vijfentwintig dienstjaren mogen Turken volgens de wetgeving in hun land genieten van een pensioen. Hij heeft een auto gekocht, is een klein transportbedrijfje begonnen, en is vooral blij dat hij 'thuis' is.

Demir ging met één doel naar Nederland: geld verdienen. "Om een toekomst op te bouwen in mijn eigen land. Naarmate de tijd verstreek moest ik steeds meer denken aan mijn land. Zo van: zullen we ooit nog terugkeren?" aldus Demir, die zijn kinderen bij zijn moeder in Turkije onderbracht. "En we zijn terug, God zij dank."

Net als Karaaslan laat hij vol trots zijn woning zien, waarin de spulletjes die hij uit West-Europa heeft meegenomen, een plaats hebben gekregen. Karaaslans verwachtingen zijn niet uitgekomen. "We zijn niet onder de indruk van Nederland. We wilden zelf graag terug. Uiteindelijk liep ik zes maanden in de werkeloosheidswet, kreeg 1400 gulden terwijl ik vijfhonderd gulden huur moest betalen. Wat blijft er dan over? Hoe mooi het ook is in Nederland, er gaat niets boven je vaderland." Hij is voor zichzelf begonnen, en rijdt nu in een taxi.

'Terug van weggeweest' is een mooie documentaire. Tholens geeft een goed portret van de twee gezinnen, en lardeert zijn verhaal met mooie beelden over Turkse cultuurgewoonten. Zijn film is een portret, niet meer, niet minder. Slechts even staat hij stil bij de problemen van de remigratie, hij diept ze niet verder uit. Mogelijk dat dat ook niet in een portret past. Hij laat wat dat betreft de kijker *vanavond (Nederland 2, 21.35 uur)* zelf oordelen.

De twee Turkse hoofdrolspelers hebben het getroffen in Turkije. Zij schijnen goed te boeren. Tholens waarschuwt dat een dergelijk 'luxe' niet voor iedere remigrerende gastarbeider is weggelegd. "Ik heb gezocht naar de mensen die ik vijftien jaar geleden filmde. Het gaat hen goed. Maar ik zie ook dat vele andere gastarbeiders, die terugkeren naar hun vaderland, het veel moeilijker hebben gehad. Dit beeld is niet representatief voor de positie van de geremigreerd gastarbeider."

Emin Demir met vrouw.

A 1984 newspaper report on the situation of families who permanently returned from the Netherlands to Türkiye

Source: *Mediahuis Noord, De Krant van Toen, Nieuwsblad van het Noorden, 16-11-1987, s. 2, https://dekrantvantoen.nl/vw/article.do?id=NVHN-19871116-AE0002019*

A photograph of the 'Baklouce' dessert served at the program held in Rotterdam on 6 May 2024, commemorating the 60th anniversary of Turkish migration to the Netherlands. This dessert, designed by Ahmed Emin Batman, combines baklava and tompouce, the most iconic treats of Turkish and Dutch cultures, respectively. Baklouce represents an elegant reflection of the intertwined Turkish and Dutch identities of the Dutch Turkish diaspora, now spanning four generations, and symbolizes the friendly ties between the two countries.

DUTCH TURKISH DIASPORA ATLAS

This book has been meticulously prepared as a tribute to the Dutch Turkish diaspora, which occupies a unique and significant position within the broader Turkish diaspora in Europe. This book seeks to honor their struggle for existence, identity, and belonging. It examines the transformation of the Dutch Turkish community from its origins as a group of guest workers to its current status as a well-established diaspora. Through a comprehensive exploration of the social, economic, cultural, and political developments that have shaped this community, the book aims to provide both a scholar and social analysis. It is intended to serve as a source of inspiration and encouragement for the Dutch Turkish diaspora as they navigate their future trajectory. This publication, comprising 14 chapters of articles and interviews authored by experts in the field, offers a detailed account of the historical evolution of the Dutch Turkish diaspora.

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