Transnational migrant politics in the Netherlands: historical structures and current events
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6. **Turkey: Transnational Party Politics, 1974-2005**

First generation Turkish migrants in the Netherlands represented the whole spectrum of Turkish political parties and movements. Several decades later, most of these organisations still exist. Though their contacts with Turkish political parties have remained remarkably stable, the uses of these ties have changed. This chapter addresses this evolving tension between organisational form and political content in the historical development of transnational party politics. In general terms, it asks how involvement in transnational party politics among Turkish migrants emerged, developed and waned over time.

Chapter 4 explored the involvement of Turkish migrant organisations in transnational politics between 1999 and 2005. This chapter traces the origins of these organisations, examining how Turkish political parties were represented in the past, and what has changed (or persevered). Central to the story are the motivations and strategies of political parties in Turkey and in exile as well as those of the Turkish state. In its narrative, the chapter refers to the key factors (presented in chapter 2) related to migrants’ (former) homelands: length of ‘absence’, political opportunity structures, political climate and civil society.

The chapter consists of four main sections in which different actors play key roles. The first section introduces the political parties and factions in Turkey that have been the most influential for Turkish migrants in the Netherlands. The second section describes how ties between these actors and Turkish migrant organisations and elites in the Netherlands have evolved and to what ends they were used. The third section more specifically examines the interests of the Turkish state in migrant transnational activities. In the final section I examine what ‘dual orientation’ means for political participation in the Netherlands, specifically for Dutch politicians of Turkish origin and the Dutch political parties they represent.

**The Turkish Political Landscape**

Turkish migrants have been organised in associations since 1964; the first guest worker organisation with a clear tie to a Turkish political party was founded in 1974. To understand the transnational ties of these organisations in the context of political opportunities in Turkey, the description of political parties and movements in Turkey and the political climate they encountered starts in the 1960s – prior to the coup d’état of 1971 – and stretches until 2005. This section introduces ideologically based parties and movements from the far left to the far right. Additionally, it explores the role of religion for some of these parties.
*The ‘wilderness years’*

Turkish politics in the 1970s was turbulent; Pope and Pope (1997: 126-140) have called this period, not without reason, the ‘wilderness years’. The political radicalism of the 1970s was fuelled by the growth of the militant left (the right had already mobilised in the 1960s). The left radicalised after the electoral failure of the Turkish Workers Party (TİP) (Lipovksy 1992: 67-82; Poulton 1997: 211); after it was closed down in 1970 (see the next chapter), former TİP members became active in Dev Genç, where many future leaders of leftwing organisations were also active.

The nationalist parties and movements of the 1970s were rooted in the Republican Peasant and Farmers Nation Party (ÇKMİ). In the late 1960s its leader, Alparslan Türkeş, injected ‘Turkist’ and anti-Communist ideology into the party’s rhetoric. Türkeş wrote in his memoirs:

Following 1968, an extreme active Marxist and separatist youth movement began. In an evaluation meeting of the party, we said that only a more attractive ideology could overcome this separatist movement. Then we discussed which ideology we could use. We decided that Turkish nationalism could be the counter-ideology and that we should rally around this ideology (Turgut cited in Arslan 2004: 114).

The party organised youth in the Ülkü Ocakları (Hearths of the Ideal), whose members called themselves Bozkurtlar (Grey Wolves). In 1969 they began a campaign to intimidate leftist students, teachers, publicists, booksellers and politicians. The Grey Wolves received paramilitary training form the party in specially designed camps; their mission was to conquer the streets and campuses to defend Turkey from communism (Landau 1974, 1981: 148; Çınar & Ankan 2002: 26-27; Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 256-257).

In the run-up to the 1969 elections the CKMP continued as the Nationalist Action Party MHP. Türkeş began to emphasise Islam as part of the Turkish national heritage, in what became known as the Turkish-Islamic synthesis. By including Islam the MHP aimed to mobilise the conservative-religious electorate of Central Anatolia in its fight against leftist revolutionary groups. The other major party on the right which emerged in 1969 was the pro-Islamic National Order Party (MNP) of Necmettin Erbakan. The MHP and the MNP posed a serious threat to the party in power, the conservative Justice Party (AP) (Landman 1992: 114; Mert 2000; Çınar & Ankan 2002: 27; Yavuz 2003: 141; Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 257).

The AP seemed powerless in the face of leftwing and Grey Wolves violence. On 12 March 1971 the military’s chief general demanded that a strong and credible government be formed, one that would end the ‘anarchy’ and carry out reforms in a ‘Kemalist spirit’. The army exercised ‘its constitutional duty’ and took matters into its own hands: martial law was declared in major urban areas as well as in provinces
where Kurdish nationalists were active. This effectively paralysed political life: youth organisations and all meetings of professional organisations and unions were prohibited (Ahmad 1993). The military began a witch-hunt against anyone with leftist or progressive liberal sympathies (Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 259).

The leftist workers party TİP and the extreme nationalist party MHP were closed down in the summer of 1971. The Islamist MNP of Erbakan was likewise closed by the constitutional court for having used religion for political purposes (Turan 1991: 45). Two years later Erbakan formed the pro-Islamic National Salvation Party (MSP), stating that Turkey was alienating itself from its own cultural and religious roots by copying the West. The party’s slogan became ‘Yeniden büyük Türkiye’ (A Grand Turkey Once Again), referring to the Ottoman Empire (Toprak 1981: 98-102; Sunier 1996: 54).

Political violence became a real problem in the late 1970s. The five coalition governments between 1973 and 1979 were extremely weak and gave small extremist groups disproportionate influence (Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 260-263). Several leftist groups and the Grey Wolves fought for control of the streets and university campuses. The Grey Wolves were most active in recruiting new members, especially among university students. The organisation served as a ‘school’ where future MHP leaders and activists acquired organisational and leadership skills. Most, if not all, current MHP leaders and parliamentarians began their political careers as members of the Grey Wolves. Membership of both the party and the youth organisation was characterised by unconditional attachment and loyalty; leaving either could in extreme cases be lethal (Çinar & Anikan 2002: 26).

Whereas the Grey Wolves formed a relatively homogenous group and combated the left as a whole, the left itself was fragmented. Ideological, political and personal conflicts led to fierce struggles. The struggle between the left and right was unequal, not only due to their relative size (60,000 armed militants on the left against 100,000 on the right), but because the police and security forces had become the exclusive preserve of the MHP. As the MHP had been in government between 1974 and 1977, these institutions were heavily infiltrated by ‘fascists’ who protected the Grey Wolves. By the end of the 1970s whole neighbourhoods came under the control of one or the other of the competing groups and were declared ‘liberated areas’ (Landau 1981: 148; Pope & Pope 1997: 132; Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 263).

The authorities were unable to restore order in the large cities under the control of left and right wing groups and in the southeastern provinces where the PKK was active. This, combined with economic crisis, motivated the army to usurp power once more on 12 September 1980 (Çinar & Anikan 2002: 28; Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 264). Under the new Party Law, politicians were banned from politics for ten years and their parties dissolved. Political leaders were arrested; parliamentarians and local administrators sent home. The Party Law also prohibited cooperation between political parties and associations or foundations to prevent parties being (financially)
supported by civil society. To depoliticise the extra-party political scene, associations were no longer allowed to pursue political aims (Schüler 2000: 203-204; Tachau 2002). All power was in hands of the military, more specifically that of the National Security Council (MGK) (Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 278-280).

Political liberalisation began (except in the southeast) with elections in 1983, involving three new parties approved by the MGK. The ban on former politicians was lifted in 1987; political parties were allowed to re-open under their traditional names in 1993 (Güneş-Ayata 2002: 106; Argun 2003: 140). In 1995 the Party Law was changed to allow cooperation between political parties and civil society, prohibited since 1982 (Schüler 2000: 204).

Turkey in 1996 was for the first time governed by a party and a leader (Erdoğan) positioned outside the established norms of Kemalism. When it was declared that political Islam would not be allowed to come to power, Islamic organisations quickly became part of civil society (Kramer 2000: 55). A ‘soft coup’ followed in 1997, which saw the Islamist party of Erdoğan set aside by the military through the National Security Council (Yerasimos 2000: 21). Hostility towards political Islam is rooted in the secular foundations of the Turkish state. The Turkish version of secularism advocates taking religion as a system of beliefs and morality rather than a prescriptive set of political rules (Heper & Toktaş 2003: 157-158; see for secularism in Turkey Azak 2007). The principles of Atatürk remain omnipresent in Turkish daily life; even the smallest villages boast his pictures and statues, which are obligatory in every public building (see Navaro-Yashin 2002).

Since the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923 military officers have been the most ardent guardians of secularism. The military’s interventions (in 1960-1961, 1971-1973 and 1980-1983) had the stated purpose of safeguarding the secular-democratic state. The military’s role in government is formalised through the National Security Council (MGK), made up of the president, the prime minister, ministers of defence, internal affairs and foreign affairs, general chief of staff, commanders of the army, navy, air force and of the gendarmerie. According to the 1982 constitution, the Council of Ministers must defer to the MGK’s recommendations. The military’s prerogatives remain largely undiluted; it continues to use the MGK to influence government policy in matters considered critical for the internal and external security of the country (Sakallıoğlu 1997; Momayez 1998; Heper & Güney 2000: 636-651; Tachau 2002).

In the wake of liberalisation and the formal re-entry of politicians banned after the 1980 coup and the ‘soft’ coup of 1997, the 1990s were characterised by splits and breaks in several political parties (see appendix F for a historical family tree of Turkish political parties). The following subsections describe the ideologies and splinters of the largest streams: the Islamists, the extreme right, the left and the social democrats.
The Islamists

The MNP, MSP and the Welfare Party (RP) were all founded under the leadership of Necmettin Erbakan, who had to re-establish his parties under new names as predecessors were outlawed by the constitutional court. While party activities were replete with national symbols, national identity was clearly subordinate to religious identity. Erbakan’s parties have enjoyed strong support from society: in the province of Istanbul alone, the women’s wing of the party once had 69,000 members while the party was organised in 600 neighbourhoods and had 2.6 million members in the 1990s (Pope & Pope 1997: 321; White 2002; Yeşilda 2002a).

Erbakan gained ground in institutionalised politics after his RP won the 1995 elections, becoming prime minister and running the country in coalition with the True Path Party (DYP), known as the Refahyl government. Secularists – the CHP and CHP-rooted parties – feared its goals were as extreme as those of the Taliban and the Iranian Islamist regime. The Refahyl government was forced out of power by a ‘soft coup’ in 1997 (Yeşilda 2002b: 68; Ewing 2003: 422-3).

In the following year the RP was closed by the constitutional court and Erbakan was banned from politics for five years. During this ban Erbakan’s closest allies founded the Virtue Party (FP) (Groc 2000). Erbakan, however, continued to provide guidance to the FP. The younger elites in the FP – led by the dynamic former mayor of Istanbul, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and Abdullah Gül – challenged the old guard with ideas to reform the party. In 2001 the FP was closed by the military for threatening the secular nature of the republic – just as its predecessors had been. The so-called ‘Reformists’ and ‘Traditionalists’ had split. Erbakan established the Felicity Party (SP), which became marginal. On the Reformist front Erdoğan established the Justice and Development Party (AKP).

The AKP distanced itself from Erbakan and his policies. Ever since its foundation, AKP leaders have maintained that their party is not based on religion and is strictly a ‘conservative democratic party’; any suggestion that the party was Islamic could have invited closure by the Constitutional Court (Akdoğan 2006; Erdoğan 2006; Hale 2006: 66). The AKP states that religion is one of the most important institutions of humanity but rejects its use for political benefit; it defines secularism as an orienting principle for the state, but not for the individual. The AKP approach is thus no different from what has been stipulated in the Constitution (Heper & Toktaş 2003: 162-184). The party has thus established itself as a pro-Islamic party without any overt association to, or discussion of, Islam (Tepe 2006: 130). Defenders of Turkish secularism, in particular the military and the Turkish president Sezer at the time of study, remained skeptical of the AKP and the claim that the Erdoğan project was not pro-political Islam. Unlike the AKP, they stress that secularism should be adopted by all Turkish citizens in the private sphere (Jenkins 2006; Kuru 2006: 136). The AKP, however, enjoyed overwhelming success in the 2002 elections and formed a single-
party government, attracting a broad spectrum of relatively young, religious, and rightwing people (Çarkoğlu 2006: 174).

The ultranationalists

The nationalist party MHP operated under the name of the Nationalist Workers Party (MÇP) between 1985 and 1993. In the late 1980s the party was marginal. It returned to parliament after the 1991 elections which it had joined in coalition with Erbakan’s RP (Çınar & Arıkan 2002: 29). In 1992 six MÇP deputies left the party and founded the Great Union Party (BBP) under the leadership of Muhsin Yazureoğlu (Poulton 1997: 141). Under the leadership of Devlet Bahçeli, who succeeded Türkiye after his death in 1997, voter support doubled in 1999 and the MHP emerged as the second-largest party (Çınar & Arıkan 2002: 30-31). In the 2002 elections the MHP and BBP failed to pass the threshold.159 Despite this electoral failure the youth branch of the MHP – Ülkü Ozaklan – is one of the largest organisations in Turkey, with around 1,000 branches, nearly 20,000 active members and 100,000 followers (Can 2000: 335).

The left

Although the ban on other former politicians was lifted in 1987, the penal code still made communist politics illegal in Turkey. In fact, certain left parties, such as the Turkish Communist Party (TKP), have been illegal for most of their existence. As a result, their activities mainly took place outside Turkey and in any case were directed from abroad. TKP leaders resided in the capitals of socialist countries such as Moscow or Prague and later moved to Western European cities. In 1987 the TKP and the workers party TİP merged in Brussels to form the United Communist Party of Turkey (TBKP). While their aim was to return to Turkey with legal status, their leaders were jailed immediately upon arrival (see Landau 1974: 105; Lipovsky 1992: 1-3; Zürcher 2004 [1993]: 285).

Rivalry and splits based on differences in ideology and internal conflicts with roots in the 1970s grew after the fall of the Berlin wall in 1989 and drained these movements of their members (see also Østergaard-Nielsen 2003e: 49). In the early 1990s some of these new parties chose to continue their activities illegally; other formed legal entities. Most of these parties, legal and illegal, are rooted in the youth movement Dev-Genç.

Though small in memberships, a large spectrum of legal and illegal groups and parties with ideological orientations and strategies that mirror those of the 1970s are still present in the Turkish political arena.160 People who were previously active in the Revolutionary Road movement (Dev Yol) from the late 1970s until the early 1990s


160 For a complete overview of the Turkish radical left from 1918-2004, see http://www.broadleft.org/tr.htm.
regrouped in the legal Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) in 1996. Illegal parties that followed Maoist communism established the legal Labour Party (EMEP) and the Workers Party (İP). Others founded a wide range of small illegal revolutionary parties of which the most important are the Revolutionary Peoples Liberation Front (DHKP/C) and the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP). None of the legal parties ever managed to pass the threshold in parliamentary elections. On a local level some booked minor successes.

**The social democrats**

Social democratic parties have their roots in Turkey’s first political party, the Republican Peoples’ Party (CHP). The CHP was established in 1923 by the founder of the Turkish republic Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and is traditionally based on the secularism of the Turkish state (see Magoon 2002). After the 1980 coup the CHP was transformed into the Social Democrat Peoples Party (SHP). When political parties were allowed to re-open under their traditional names, the CHP and SHP soon merged. The CHP played a marginal role in the 1990s; it was a coalition partner in the 1991-1995 government. More important in the 1990s was the Democratic Left Party (DSP) centred on Bülent Ecevit who ran the CHP until it was closed in 1980. In 1999 Ecevit became prime minister for the fifth time.

In 2002 a group split from the CHP and (re)founded the SHP. Following the elections of 2002 the democratic left parties DSP and SHP, originating in the CHP, were marginal (Güneş-Ayata 2002: 106). The CHP, however, became the main opposition party and Turkey’s second largest party. In 2003 a minor opposition group, Yeniden CHP (the renewed CHP), was founded by a group of friends who used to be active in the party’s youth branch in the 1970s. Yeniden CHP criticised the current CHP for focusing too much on the old ‘establishment’ and for not following a social democratic line including all layers of society.

**Transnational party politics**

Emigration to Western Europe in the 1960s and 1970s offered parties that were banned in Turkey, such as the communist TKP, a liberal political climate for the mobilisation of guest workers (Landau 1974: 105; Turkije Informatie 1978a). In many cases they targeted workers in Western Europe so that their movements would be strengthened once migrants returned to Turkey. The military interventions of 1971 and 1980 led to the arrival of Turkish political migrants in Europe, individuals who had been members of revolutionary organisations in Turkey and who now brought their political convictions with them (for Germany see Miller 1981: 53-54). Young

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163 Interview with the leader of Yeniden CHP, Istanbul, 11 February 2005.
extreme right Ülkücü Ocaklar leaders also sought political asylum in Europe to escape the left-right violence in the schools and universities (Van Esbroeck 1979; Geerse 1998). Furthermore, Islamists such as Necmettin Erbakan went to Europe to continue their activities for example in Milli Görüş when their parties were banned (Yeşilda 2002b: 65). To counter Marxist-Leninist and Islamist influences, the Turkish state established Diyanet branches all over Europe (Canatan 2001, see also chapter 4). In this way, the conflict between the left and right and the Turkish state and the Islamists in Turkey was transplanted to the Netherlands.

The focus on Turkish politics among migrant workers increased dramatically after the coup in 1980. Political refugees swelled their ranks. Mirroring internal and ideological divides in Turkey, a wide spectrum of radical leftist and Kurdish groups continued their activities in exile and mobilised workers for their party in Turkey. Each of these parties had its own network of members throughout Europe. In the Netherlands they organised activities against the Turkish junta separately, cooperating with their counterparts in Germany instead. They staged demonstrations in front of national parliaments, organised hunger strikes and shared their views of political developments in Turkey with the European public and governments through magazines and pamphlets (for Dev Yol see Turkije Informatie 1981a; Turkije Informatie 1981b; for Dev Sol see Turkije-Turkije Nieuws 1981). Similarly, the social democrats, the Islamists and the extreme right invested in organisations in Western Europe as their parties were closed after the 1980 coup (for Germany see Özcan 1992).

Political developments in Turkey thus clearly had consequences for Turkish organisational life in the Netherlands. Ties between Turkish political parties and Turkish migrant organisations, however, have almost never been formal. One reason is found in a Turkish law on political parties in effect from 1976 until 1995, which prohibited official branches of parties abroad (Argun 2003: 141; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003e: 112). Moreover, the constitution written by the military in 1982, which included the Party Law, also applied to organisations abroad; it forbade political parties to cooperate with, support and receive money from organisations abroad. Political parties and political orientations thus found their way into ‘cultural’ or social immigrant organisations in the Netherlands and Europe (see for example Turkije Turkije Informatie 1978b; Tuskan & Vogel 2004). In the eyes of the Turkish community, an organisation could change its political colour from one day to the next following elections in Turkey (Penninx 1980: 65).

Though the Turkish Party Law was amended in 1995, few migrants used this opportunity to create official party branches in the Netherlands or elsewhere in Europe. Most organisations that unofficially ‘represented’ a political party did not formalise their ties. Some even deny that they have informal ties with a political party at all, in spite of clear evidence to the contrary. The first reason is that the official core objective of most migrant organisations concerns ‘integration’ and not developments
in Turkey. Although leaders’ political orientations are well known within the Turkish community, a fear of politics is still noticeable. This fear is rooted in tensions between left and right organisations in the 1970s and 1980s. Second, those organisations that have maintained their ties with political parties use these differently than twenty years ago. Instead of focusing on developments in Turkish politics, they are mostly used to improve migrants’ position in the Netherlands.

Three key developments inform this shift that began in the mid-1980s. The first is related to the political climate in Turkey, more specifically to the lifting of the ban on politicians. Leaders and parties could now freely conduct their activities in Turkey and no longer needed the ‘free’ space in Europe. At the same time, Turkish migrant organisations, Turkish political parties, and the Dutch and Turkish governments began to accept that Turkish migrants were in the Netherlands to stay and changed their priorities. On the governmental level the IOT was initiated while organisations that were not affiliated to the IOT also began to work for a future in the Netherlands. Finally, the breaks and the splinters and the routes political parties took in the early 1990s are clearly visible in the orientations of migrant organisations.

To illustrate these developments, the next subsections analyse how political parties have been represented by migrant organisations. How have their motivations for engaging in transnational party politics changed? What is the influence of political parties on migrant organisations? The next subsections focus on the representation of and sympathy for political parties in Turkey (or in exile). It shows how ties between political parties and migrants have changed, and how they have been used for different ends over time. As previously noted, practically all Turkish political parties have been involved with Turkish migrant organisations in one period or another. This chapter will focus on the most important denominations in Turkey as outlined in the previous section: the Islamists, the right, the social democrats and the left. After these descriptions I will outline how the respective organisations are embedded in the organisational networks presented in chapter 4.

The Islamists

In Turkey the Sunni Islamic organisation Millî Görüş (National Vision) had existed since 1969 as what one would today call a think-tank of the MNP and its successor MSP (Heper & Toktaş 2003: 160). Erbakan founded Millî Görüş in Switzerland after his party MNP was closed in 1971 (Yeşilda 2002b: 65). Millî Görüş in Europe has been able to conduct its activities and spread its views about Islam and Turkish society with a freedom it never enjoyed in Turkey itself (Landman 1997: 219). In fact, Millî Görüş is one of the ‘Muslim extremist’ organisations that the Turkish state has tried to ‘combat’ with the help of Diyanet (see chapter 4). With the foundation of Millî Görüş in Europe Erbakan hoped to attract support from the Turkish migrant community; during the 1973 elections the MSP (the successor of the MNP) requested its
European followers to come to Turkey to vote. The MSP established a central desk in Edirne, just across the border with Bulgaria.\footnote{164}

The growth of the organisation was aided by the 1980 coup; members of Erbakan’s former party MSP now arrived in Europe. The European umbrella organisation AMGT (later renamed the IGMG) was established in 1985 and directed by a member of the MSP executive committee in Cologne. Via AMGT, the MSP had a tight grip on Milli Görüş organisations in Europe. Throughout the 1980s the federation in the Netherlands, the NIF, could not make autonomous decisions. Its work was monitored by the AMGT through the weekly visits of its director.\footnote{165}

Until the mid-1980s the activities of the NIF mainly focused on Turkey, especially on opposition to the junta. When civil government returned, the NIF began to develop more activities for migrants. The tie between the NIF and AMGT and between the AMGT and Erbakan’s Refah Party (by then the successor of the MNP) remained strong. When party officials visited the AMGT, they also often came to the Netherlands.\footnote{166} The AMGT further scheduled guest lectures by prominent RP leaders for the NIF in the Netherlands. Erbakan lectured at a conference in Arnhem in 1989 where he explained how migrants could introduce and spread Islam in Europe: ‘The Europeans are ill. We have the medicine to cure them…Europe becomes Islamic…You are the new army of Sultan Fatih. Europe will learn the Islam from you’ (Tercüman, June 1989 cited in Landman 1992: 127). According to Landman, such rhetoric should not be taken too seriously; it was ‘internal pep talk’.

The RP in the early 1990s was especially active in Europe during election campaigns. In 1990 Erbakan toured Europe to raise funds and garner support from AMGT-affiliated organisations. In 1991 six million Deutsch marks were transferred from Germany to Turkey and mainly used to support the RP’s election campaign (Amiraux 2003: 163). In Turkish municipal elections in 1994, two members of German Milli Görüş organisations and a co-founder of the federation in the Netherlands were elected as RP mayors. In the 1995 elections around 30 persons from the German branch of the IGMG ran as candidates for the RP; three were elected (Seufert 1999: 296). Following Erbakan’s election victory in 1995 attention for the European organisations decreased as his party now had a sufficient base in Turkey.\footnote{167}

Neither the NIF in the Netherlands nor the confederation in Germany openly expressed their sympathy for Erbakan’s parties. This can be explained by the constitutional constraints on Turkish political parties abroad and the delicate situation of religiously oriented parties in Turkey in general. Apart from frequent visits by party officials, the close tie between the European confederation (renamed IGMG) and the

\footnote{164} Interview with SP vice-president, Ankara, 2 December 2004.

\footnote{165} Interview with AMGT founder and SP Istanbul chairman, Istanbul, 2 February 2005.

\footnote{166} Interview with MG-NN director, Amsterdam, 24 June 2003.

\footnote{167} Ibid. and interview with NIF chairman, Rotterdam, 6 October 2004.
RP grew more significant when Erbakan’s nephew became the General Secretary of the IGMG in 1995 (NRC 1998a). Other close relatives of Erbakan linked the party to ethnic businesses in Germany and financed the leadership of the RP in Turkey (Abadan-Unat 1997: 234).

Ties between the AMGT and the NIF started weakening around 1990 when younger NIF board members began claiming autonomy from the European confederation (Sunier 1996: 68). This was especially true for the federation in the north of the Netherlands (MG-NN), founded in 1997 and discussed in chapter 4. The IGMG, however, retained a strong voice in the appointment of NIF board members (the federation in the south of the Netherlands).

Erbakan’s relative disinterest in the European organisations was short-lived as his Refahyol government was displaced by a ‘soft coup’ after only two years. The National Security Council (MGK, which was dominated by the military) especially denounced financial support by Islamic groups in Europe. One of the measures the MGK took in 1997 was prohibiting the funding of Turkish political parties by ‘organizations installed in Europe like Milli Görüs’ (Amiraux 2003: 157-163). In 1998 the RP was closed and Erbakan banned from politics; soon thereafter he reinvigorated his efforts towards the European organisations, speaking at the yearly IGMG congress held in the Netherlands in 1998. Erbakan was welcomed by 40,000 Turks from different European cities (NRC 1998b). He stated: ‘Europe has been built with your sweat. Still you live in a backward position… it’s our duty to solve your problems’ (ANP 1998).

The break between the ‘traditionalists’ and ‘reformists’ within Erbakan’s FP affected the political orientation of organisations in Europe and the Netherlands. Through its tight connections with the IGMG, the NIF remained closer to the party founded on the ‘traditionalist’ front by Erbakan, the SP, than the MG-NN. Before the split the NIF maintained relations with FP politicians such as Tayyip Erdoğan and Bülent Arınç, prime minister and AKP speaker of parliament at the time of research. After the break NIF only maintained relations with politicians of Erbakan’s SP. Over the past years the NIF has organised voting trips to Turkey on its own initiative, not on the request of the SP. In 2002 it organised a short trip to vote at the airport and visit relatives. Two-hundred of its Dutch members used this opportunity.168

The SP vice president emphasises the party does not have organic ties with Milli Görüs organisations. They are, however, ideologically close and consider each other ‘relatives’. The SP vice president visits the Netherlands once a year to update Turkish migrants on current developments in Turkey. Furthermore, he emphasises the

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168 Interview with NIF chairman, Rotterdam, 6 October 2004.
importance of integrating without losing one's cultural and religious values.\(^{169}\) Milli Görüş delegates are invited to SP congresses in Turkey.\(^{170}\)

At the time of research it was unclear whether the MG-NN had strengthened its relations with the AKP. MG-NN members are critical of the NIF’s relation with the SP: ‘In Turkey they still think of us as the uneducated labourers, they think we don’t have our own opinions.’\(^{171}\) At the yearly NIF congress SP representatives are invited as guests of honour. ‘It is a ritual, a pep talk in Turkish rhetoric… a waste of money.’\(^{172}\) The MG-NN is considered ‘progressive’ and its viewpoints are seen as reflecting the ‘reformist’ attitude of the AKP (see also Avcı 2006). In contrast, the NIF maintains more conservative positions, reflecting the ideology of the ‘traditionalist’ SP. The differences are clear in their stance towards Turkey’s EU membership: the MG-NN has lobbied for Turkey’s EU candidacy whereas the NIF has not.\(^{173}\) The position of the MG-NN reflects that of the AKP, which actively campaigns for Turkey’s EU accession. The SP is against any EU interference and also against Turkey’s membership.

The AKP initially attempted to tie the Milli Görüş movement in Europe to the party by ordering Turkish embassies in Europe to reinforce their contacts with Milli Görüş organisations. In response, the secretary of the MGK, General Tuncer Kilineç, undertook a tour in his personal capacity in 2003.\(^{174}\) In the Netherlands he held a closed meeting with representatives of Turkish organisations where he emphasised the importance of integration and warned against the dangers of radical Islam (AIVD 2004: 53-54), meaning Milli Görüş. The AKP did not establish further contacts with Milli Görüş, nor did they set up official party branches in Europe.

The AKP, however, does support the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD),\(^{175}\) established by highly educated German citizens of Turkish origin in 2004. The UETD wants to improve the position of European citizens of Turkish origin in European countries. It also aims to facilitate smooth diplomatic relations between Turkey and EU member countries of settlement, especially regarding Turkey’s accession to the EU.\(^{176}\) The UETD has branches in six European countries including the Netherlands. The Dutch branch organises seminars on Turkish EU accession and investment opportunities in Turkey.\(^{177}\) Like the German founding members,

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\(^{169}\) Interview with SP vice-president, Ankara, 2 December 2004.

\(^{170}\) Interview with SP member of the executive committee, Ankara, 25 November 2004.

\(^{171}\) Interview with MG-NN director, Amsterdam, 24 June 2003.

\(^{172}\) Ibid.

\(^{173}\) Personal observations during several debates on the accession of Turkey to the EU attended by the MG-NN director in Amsterdam in 2004.

\(^{174}\) Interview with the Dutch ambassador, Ankara, 26 November 2004.

\(^{175}\) Interview with AKP member of parliament – former imam in the Netherlands and member of parliament for the of RP – Ankara, 19 November 2004.

\(^{176}\) See http://www.uetd.de/, accessed on 8 June 2006.

directors of the Dutch branch are highly educated Dutch citizens well-positioned in Dutch political parties and the Turkish community in the Netherlands.178

According to the AKP, the UETD differs from traditional Turkish migrant organisations in that it is not a Turkish association but a European body. Via the UETD the AKP hopes to improve the image of Turkey in Europe and to discuss Turkey’s problems with European governments.179 The inauguration of UETD headquarters in Cologne in 2005 was attended by Prime Minister Erdoğan and the German chancellor Gerhard Schröder; in his speech Erdoğan emphasised the integration of Turks in countries of settlement and expressed his pride in European Turks.180

The ultranationalists

In the 1970s the MHP began organising Turkish workers in Western Europe through cultural institutions and mosque organisations. Under the leadership of the MHP, the Federation of Democratic Idealist Turkish Associations in Europe (ADÜTDF) was founded in Germany in 1978. In the Netherlands the Idealist Turkish Workers Association (HÜTİD) functioned as an umbrella body for local organisations (Landman 1992: 114). From 1978 to 1992 MHP leader Türkeş directly appointed the chairmen of European organisations from Turkey. Türkeş sent protégés to Europe for one or two years to lead the organisations in the ‘right’ direction; they worked directly under his guidance.181

Mirroring extreme nationalist mobilisation in Turkey in the 1970s, the extreme nationalists in Europe had more members than leftist organisations and were better organised on the European level. Like the MHP, these European federations used sport associations to spread their ideology and to gain members, emphasising pride and physical strength (Penninx 1980). The mobilisation of the extreme nationalists in Western Europe also benefited from the inclusion of ‘Outer Turks’ (Diş Türkler), for example Turks living in the Soviet Union, in the MHP ideology. In the eyes of the MHP, these ‘Outer Turks’ were in danger of losing their Turkish identity (see Landau 1974: 194-195, 1981). When Turkish workers started to emigrate in the 1960s and 1970s, Europe was integrated in this ideology.182

The 1980 coup had a great impact on extreme nationalist organisations in Europe. The arrival of extreme nationalist political migrants, however, did not lead to stronger ties with the MHP – on the contrary. In the 1980s a part of the ‘Grey

178 See also https://www.cda-enschede.nl/Overig/Kandidaten/Suat-Ari/, accessed on 8 June 2006.
179 Interview with AKP Deputy President Foreign Affairs, Ankara, 3 December 2004.
181 Interview with former chairman of the Ülkücü Öakli in charge of MHP contacts with Turks abroad and present member of the MHP executive committee, Ankara, 24 January 2005.
182 Ibid.
Wolves’ in Europe distanced themselves from Türkeş and his party. MHP influence on organisations in Europe hence waned. In the Netherlands the HÜTİD dissolved in 1983 but was in some ways continued in the Federation of Turkish Associations in the Netherlands (HTDF), which had a broader composition. The federation aimed to introduce and spread Turkish-Islamic culture in the Netherlands. In the 1980s HTDF gathered 34 local organisations, including some mosque organisations. After Türkeş’ return to the Turkish political arena in 1987 his sympathisers took over the HTDF with assistance from the ADÜTÜDF in Germany. HTDF (renamed HTF in 1995, see chapter 4) thus became closely related to Türkeş’ MÇP (the successor of the MHP). The HTF functioned as a branch of the ADÜTÜDF until 1998.

Since 1992 board members of extreme nationalist organisations have no longer been appointed by the MHP leadership. According to the MHP official formerly in charge of the party’s contacts with Turks abroad, this had two reasons. First generation Turkish workers were uneducated, had insufficient knowledge of MHP ideology and organisational skills; ‘now they have sufficient knowledge and can do it on their own’. The second reason, according to the MHP official, was that since the early 1990s Turkey was no longer the sole reference point for migrants who would, it increasingly became clear, stay in the Netherlands. This did not mean MHP contacts with European organisations weakened; they intensified in response to growing Kurdish diaspora activities. Rising Kurdish nationalism created a new role for the Grey Wolves in Europe as Turkish nationalists (see also the next chapter). In some German cities they even controlled individual streets (Arslan 2004: 132).

In recent years the HTF, the federation of the Grey Wolves in the Netherlands, has invited politicians of Turkish parties such as the MHP, DYP and ANAP to its yearly congresses. HTF invites Turkish experts to conferences, for example the advisor of the Turkish president (TFN 1997: 260-261). The HTF chairman explains that it is mostly MHP politicians who accept their invitations ‘because they have similar ideas. They want us to become active in Dutch politics, to carry out our own vision.’ Depending on the topic, the MHP selects a delegate from the party or its youth organisation Ülkücül Öoklari. The ‘mother of the Grey Wolves’ (Asena) was invited to answer questions at meetings of HTF female membership organisations. This appeal to expertise has decreased over the years, and will, according to the MHP, wither away within the coming two decades since an increasing number of Turks in the Netherlands have university degrees: ‘Maybe we need them in the future to tell us about Europe’.

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183 Ibid.
184 Interview with HTF chairman, Amsterdam, 26 October 2004.
185 Interview with former chairman of the Ülkücül Öoklari in charge of MHP contacts with Turks abroad and present member of the MHP executive committee, Ankara, 24 January 2005.
186 Interview with member of the MHP executive committee, Istanbul, 12 January 2005.
187 Interview with former chairman of the Ülkücül Öoklari in charge of MHP contacts with Turks abroad and present member of the MHP executive committee, Ankara, 24 January 2005.
Though the MHP and the HTF exchange information and ideas, the latter is certainly not a MHP branch, explains a member of the party’s executive committee.\(^{188}\) Another MHP official states that chairmen are elected solely by members in the Netherlands, even if the MHP leader Bahçeli is present as a guest of honour at these congresses.\(^{189}\) The MHP vice-president underlines that organically there are no longer any relations between the HTF, other European organisations of the Grey Wolves and the MHP: ‘the organisations are independent of Turkey and of one another. They live a happy life there, they are integrated, and that’s very good’.\(^{190}\) But, he continues, ‘the MHP is like a school; we are not only a political movement but also an ideological movement of ülkücü’s [idealists or Grey Wolves, LN]. People who grew up here will never lose that bonding, and it is likely their families will support us.’ This support is visible at the yearly MHP summer festival in Kayseri where conferences, horse races and concerts are held for one week. This festival attracts Turks from all over Turkey and the world and is attended by individuals who are members of HTF-affiliated organisations: ‘a lot of people are already on holiday in Turkey, they just go on their own, we don’t organise this’.\(^{191}\) The MHP, however, officially invites HTF board members to send representatives, which they sometimes do (TFN 1997: 21).

The MHP argues it does not campaign in the Netherlands during elections because migrants can follow the campaign on television. Only a small number of people who can afford it go to Turkey to cast their votes. The MHP favours migrants being able to vote at consulates in the country of settlement.\(^{192}\)

Finally, the nationalist party BBP – which broke away from the MHP in the early 1990s – maintains contact with Turks in Europe. The ideological split between organisations that later sympathised with the BBP or MHP took place in Europe and the Netherlands a few years earlier than in Turkey. Due to Türkiye’s renewed attempt to regulate the European confederation ADÜTDF, half of its member organisations split off under the leadership of Musa Serdar Çelebi (Landman 1992: 115-116). Çelebi founded the European Union of Turkish-Islamic Cultural Associations (ATİB) in 1988 (Argun 2003: 144), which distanced itself from the MÇP (the name under which the MHP operated between 1985 and 1993). Though the ATİB saw the Turkish and Islamic identities as related (as did the MÇP), the union emphasised the religious component (Landman 1992: 116). Parallelising this development in West Germany, a board member of the Dutch federation HTDF who had been sidelined by Türkiye

\(^{188}\) Interview with member of the MHP executive committee, Istanbul, 12 January 2005.

\(^{189}\) Interview with former chairman of the Ülkücü Oaaklan in charge of MHP contacts with Turks abroad and present member of the MHP executive committee, Ankara, 24 January 2005; personal communication with a former HTF member who used to guide Türkiye during his visits to the Netherlands, Ankara, 24 January 2005.

\(^{190}\) Interview with MHP vice-president, Ankara, 24 November 2004.

\(^{191}\) Interview with HTF chairman, Amsterdam, 26 October 2004.

\(^{192}\) Interview with former chairman of the Ülkücü Oaaklan in charge of MHP contacts with Turks abroad and present member of the MHP executive committee, Ankara, 24 January 2005.
sympathisers founded the federation of Turkish Islamic Associations in the Netherlands (HTİV) in 1988. HTİV later became known as the Dutch Union of Turkish Islamic Organisations (HTKİB) (Comité Stop de Grijze Wolven! 1996: 36 see also chapter 4). HTKİB clearly distanced itself from Türkeş and his party (Landman 1992: 116).

After the split with the MHP, most BBP followers in the Netherlands were united under the HTKİB (see Geerse 1998; Canatan 2001: 96; Den Exter & Hessels 2003: 10). The BBP (which maintains close relations with HTKİB’s ‘ideological’ equivalent in Germany, the ATİB) set up its own federation in Europe known as the European Federation of World Order (ANAF). In Amsterdam ANAF founded a mosque that includes the organisation Turkish Islamic Assistance (THİS). THİS maintains an interlocking directorate with the BBP; its chairman is a member of the BBP executive board and regularly travels to Turkey to attend party congresses. The BBP and ANAF chairmen are frequently invited to THİS meetings.193

The BBP considers Turkish emigrants as representatives of Turkey in Europe. As potential bridges between Turkey and Europe, the BBP chairman argues it is important to motivate migrants to become active in political parties in their country of residence. The BBP aims to support the Turkish community abroad in maintaining its identity and in its struggle for equal rights. The party further claims that due to Turkish policy failures, emigrant remittances have decreased; it aims to create incentives for emigrants to invest in Turkey (BBP 2004: 44).

The BBP has representatives of the party all over Europe; at the time of research, it was even considering setting up a formal branch in Brussels. Once a year the BBP organises a training week for youths and families living in Europe. During this week BBP officials give lectures about the party; the trainings are attended by all European BBP representatives. During election time the BBP does not campaign in Europe although some sympathisers with dual nationality vote at the airport. Some of them campaign for the party at these airport polls.

The social democrats

The CHP was the most important social democratic party in the 1970s and 1980s. Especially in the early 1970s it maintained close relations with Turkish workers’ organisations in Germany. CHP leader Bülent Ecevit actively campaigned for migrant votes in the Federal Republic of Germany and was enthusiastically received by Turkish workers (Miller 1981: 45). Organisations in Germany held fundraisings events to support the campaign financially in 1973 (HDB 1984: 11). Following the 1980 coup the CHP was banned and Ecevit detained. CHP sympathisers in Europe, including the Netherlands, maintained contact with each other via the Social Democratic Peoples Federation (HDF). HDF was founded in Germany in 1977 in the presence of 600

193 Interview with BBP chairman, Ankara, 8 December 2004.
delegates from European countries and politicians from the CHP (HDB 1984: 23). During his detention Ecevit sent messages to his followers in Europe via touring CHP representatives. In the Netherlands the former chairman of the CHP youth branch arranged for CHP representatives to meet with the chairman of the Dutch social democratic party (PvdA). The aim was to update the PvdA on political developments in Turkey and to rally support for their ‘equivalent’ in Turkey. The cooperation between the HDF and CHP sympathisers in the Netherlands eventually led to the foundation of the Federation of Social Democratic Federations (DSDF) in 1986.

Like other organisations, DSDF in its formative years was concerned with the aftermath of the coup in Turkey. In the past DSDF’s ties with the CHP were facilitated via the former HDF chairman, who later represented the CHP in the Turkish National Assembly. HDF no longer maintains exclusive ties with the CHP and criticises the Turkish state on human rights issues. In its annual meetings the HDF formulates positions on issues and informs the respective parties. They further invite CHP, SHP and YTP (the last two are splinters of the CHP) members of parliament to conferences.

The CHP does not actively try to tie Turkish organisations in Europe to the party. Its deputy chairman argues ‘our contacts should be with political parties, such as the PvdA and with politicians of Turkish origin’. The CHP, however, appeals to the Turkish community in Europe to vote via the state channel TRT-INT. Although an unknown number of people did travel to Turkey for this purpose, the trip was not organised. Alongside several other parties, the CHP supports changing the law to allow Turkish citizens to vote at consulates because ‘it’s too difficult to travel to Turkey only for the elections’.

The CHP stimulates both the integration of migrants and the upkeep of their traditions: ‘outside their homes they should feel a full member of that society and learn the language; this is written in the party programme’. Furthermore, the CHP feels that Dutch political parties and especially the PvdA should consult Turkish parties when developing integration policies: ‘we are always discussing problems of Turkey, but not the integration problems of the countries where Turkish migrants are settled. That is our problem too.

As a federation DSDF has no ties with the CHP; individual DSDF members, however, have direct ties to the party. The present DSDF chairman has an extensive network within the CHP dating back to his leadership of the Young Socialist branch of the party in Adana in the late 1970s. Members of this youth branch have attained

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194 Interview with former chairman of the CHP youths in Adana and present DSDF chairman, Amsterdam, 19 October 2004.
195 Interview with HDF chairman, Venlo, 2 October 2004.
196 Interview with CHP deputy chairman, Ankara, 9 December 2004.
197 Interview with the CHP international secretary, Ankara, 7 December 2004.
198 Ibid.
199 Interview with CHP deputy chairman, Ankara, 9 December 2004.
high positions in the party one is mayor of a district in Ankara. The DSDF chairman travels between Turkey and the Netherlands to visit party congresses and other party-related events. In particular he campaigns for Yeniden CHP, whose leader was also active in the same youth branch of the party. Through this tie DSDF in the Netherlands has become one of Yeniden CHP’s platforms to express its ideas on social democracy in Turkey. The leader of Yeniden CHP values his contacts with Turkish elites in Germany and the Netherlands; their knowledge of the problems confronting Turkish migrants may contribute to CHP policy-making. Contacts with these migrants can also contribute to the party’s international relations.

In Turkey social democratic parties are supported by Kemalist NGOs (Atatürkçı Düşünce Derneği) (Erdoğan 2000). Such organisations are relatively strong in Germany (see Argun 2003; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003e) but marginal in the Netherlands. On a personal level, however, there was a transnational tie between a board member of an Atatürk organisation and a CHP candidate running for mayor in a Turkish city in 2004.

The two parties that split from the CHP – the DSP and SHP – do not have direct ties with Turkish organisations in Europe. The present SHP at the time of research was working on establishing party branches in Europe and reactivating ties with Turkish federations in Germany including the Alevi AABF and the social democratic HDF. While the DSP encourages Turkish migrants to vote, results are difficult to measure. According to its vice-president, turnout would be higher if elections were held during the holiday season when Turkish emigrants are visiting Turkey.

The radical left

Although numerous migrant organisations sympathetic to radical leftwing parties were founded in the 1970s, the focus here lies on the two that exist to this day. The first, HTİB, represented Moscow-oriented communism and was founded in response to the 1971 coup. The second, the Maoist-oriented DİDF, was a response to the coup of 1980.

HTİB was established in 1974 by a group of Turkish workers and refugees who had fled the military repression of 1971 (Can & Can-Engin 1997: 66). HTİB’s initial goal was to include migrant workers living in the Netherlands in the ‘Turkish people’s struggle’ for a democratic Turkey. At the same time, HTİB assisted Turkish migrant

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200 Interview with former chairman of the CHP youths in Adana and present DSDF chairman, Amsterdam, 19 October 2004. See also Aclım 1 (3) January 2004.
201 Flyer of the meeting ‘Sociaal-democratie en Amsterdammers van Turkse afkomst’, at HTDB, Amsterdam, 30 November 2003.
204 Interview with DSP vice-president, Ankara, 16 December 2004.
workers in their ‘struggle’ for rights in the Netherlands. With its Marxist orientation, the HTİB sympathised with the communist party of Turkey, TKP.

Paralleling developments in Turkey in the 1970s, leftwing Turkish groups in the Netherlands fought one another politically as well as rightwing groups on the streets (Turkije Informatie 1977b; Rath 1985). In 1977 HTİB campaigned for banning the Grey Wolves from the Netherlands (Turkije Informatie 1977a). At the same time HTİB was opposed by smaller Maoist groups that viewed both the TKP and HTİB as representatives of ‘social fascism’.

Between 1975 and 1979 HTİB evolved into a national umbrella organisation with different branches in the Netherlands. The organisation also established close ties with Turkish organisations in other European countries that supported the Turkish communist party TKP (see Santing 1987 for ties of its women’s organisation HHTKB with the TKP and leftist women’s organisations in Turkey).205

The establishment of TKP headquarters in Germany and the arrival of TKP leaders after the 1980 coup had an enormous influence on HTİB. TKP leaders became members of the organisation and established a committee for the defence of human rights in Turkey (NTKVMD) in 1982. The NTKVMD tried to put international pressure on the Turkish junta. Their activities included lobbying the Dutch parliament and human rights organisations such as Amnesty International. At the same time, TKP exiles tried ‘to recruit new members, who would eventually return to Turkey and start a revolution’.206 It was, however, difficult to continue the party’s work from abroad. As a former TKP exile explains: ‘our cadre in Turkey were tortured or were in hiding. It was extremely difficult to remain in contact.’207

Although TKP adherence was dominant among HTİB members, the TKP was not the only party with which they sympathised. The present chairman of HTİB, a member of the TKP in the Netherlands in the 1980s, was a member of Dev Yol when living in Turkey. One TKP board member now active within HTİB was previously active in the workers party TİP and the Kurdish workers party PKK. Dev Yol adherents were to be found in Turkish workers organisations throughout the Netherlands, not only within HTİB.

In the mid-1980s TKP members within HTİB tried to work together with exiles from other political movements. An umbrella organisation in exile was created in 1986, made up of individuals from the TKP, Dev Yol, PKK and the workers’ parties TSİP and TİP. Due to internal and ideological conflicts, however, it quickly dissolved. 208

As recounted in the previous section, the TKP merged with the workers’ party TİP into the TBKP in Brussels in 1988. Internal TKP conflicts over the merger with TİP

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206 Interview with HTİB chairman and former TKP member, Amsterdam, 19 October 2004.
207 Interview with former TKP and HTİB board member, Istanbul, 19 January 2004.
208 Ibid.
heavily influenced HTİB in the Netherlands, whose membership was mainly composed of first generation labour migrants attached to the TKP. When the TKP merged with the TİP, many members left the organisation.  

Before the 1980 coup, a small but militant group following Albanian communism was active in the Netherlands (its European headquarters were in Germany). With the arrival of Revolutionary Communist Party of Turkey (TDKP) cadre in the Netherlands after the 1980 coup, the federation DİDF was founded in 1985 (Van Zuthem 1994: 24; Den Exter & Hessels 2003: 11). Its independent sister organisation in Germany had existed since 1980 (Özcan 1992: 261-264). The official aim of DİDF in Germany was twofold: to represent the interests of Turkish workers and to support the reinstatement of democracy in Turkey. In practice, it mainly organised activities against the junta in Turkey. Although political refugees affiliated with the TDKP established the DİDF, the former’s influence on the latter remains unclear.

Since the late 1980s HTİB and DİDF have concentrated their activities on the position of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands. Both have become active in immigrant politics while their members have also entered municipal politics, mainly representing the Dutch party Green Left. But while HTİB has abandoned its mission towards Turkey, DİDF has not.

Individual HTİB members presently maintain good relations with members and leaders of the legal left parties founded in the late 1990s such as the new TKP (no extension of the old TKP). The transnational contacts are personal in nature: continuations of friendships established during past involvement in the TKP or Dev Yol. Some TKP and DSİP cadre lived in exile in the Netherlands for several years and founded or joined these new parties after their return to Turkey.  

HTİB has also harboured Dev Yol members. As in Turkey, former Dev Yol cadres in the Netherlands regrouped in the left socialist party ÖDP. In 1997, one year after the foundation of the ÖDP in Turkey, a former Dev Yol exile and ex-HTİB chairman founded the ÖDP solidarity committee – ÖDK – in the Netherlands. Though founded by a former HTİB leader, ÖDK has no ties with that organisation. Instead ÖDK gathered former Dev Yol adherents in the Netherlands active in other Turkish workers organisations.

ÖDK in the Netherlands has 132 members who pay contributions to the mother party and around 500 sympathisers. In Germany this number lies somewhere between 800 and 1,000. ÖDK further has a European umbrella – ÖDK Europe – which meets every six months to discuss problems of Turks residing in Europe. Their findings are reported to the mother party in Turkey to advise it on specific issues.


210 Interview with HTİB chairman and former TKP and Dev Yol member, Amsterdam, 19 October 2004.

211 Interview with ÖDK NL chairman, Amsterdam, 6 October 2004.
relating to Turks living in Europe. In addition ÖDK takes part in party congresses. ÖDP claims that the input from ÖDK members broadens the vision of the party as many individuals, including the ÖDK chairman, are active in political parties in Europe; their skills and political experience are highly valued.²¹²

Furthermore, ÖDP receives electoral support from ÖDK Europe. In 2003, ÖDP leaders toured Europe to ask for assistance in the 2004 local elections.²¹³ In response, ÖDK members organised trips to Bahadin (Yozgat province, Central Anatolian region) and Hopa (Artvin province, Black Sea region). They arrived in cars with Dutch plates to show they had come all the way from the Netherlands in support.²¹⁴ Those with Turkish passports voted. Those who stayed in Europe contacted their friends and relatives in Turkey and advised them to vote for ÖDP.²¹⁵ ÖDP eventually won mayoralties in the two villages they campaigned in.

The ÖDP wants to turn Hopa and Bahadin into exemplary villages; towards this end ÖDK Europe sends money and material goods. Especially Bahadin is an interesting case. A typical emigration village, temporary returnees from Europe and large Turkish cities swell its population from 500 in winter to 3,200 in summer. The ÖDP mayor is a return migrant from Germany whose election campaign was coordinated by ‘Bahadin hemşeri organisations’ in Europe and Turkey. These organisations, which refer to common local origins, were established in the mid-1980s. In fact they channelled Dev Yol politics as the outlawed movement could not openly exist. Today these organisations are used to facilitate ÖDP politics in Bahadin.²¹⁶

Thus present HTİB members’ contacts with Turkish political parties continued on a personal level with former Dev Yol cadre creating an official solidarity committee for the ÖDP. Although there is insufficient data to compare the formerly Albanian-oriented federation DİDF’s past and present contacts with political parties, the latter’s transnational trajectory clearly differs from that of HTİB and former Dev Yol cadre. Reflecting developments in Turkey, individual members of DİDF now support EMEP (both this Turkish party and DİDF were founded by former TDKP cadre). Although DİDF has no formal ties with EMEP, its members maintain regular contact with the party in Turkey with DİDF’s chairman visiting EMEP congresses in Turkey and EMEP’s leader regularly lecturing at DİDF gatherings. More importantly, DİDF supported EMEP in the national elections of 2002 (see also the next chapter) and in local elections two years later. EMEP entered the 2004 local elections in

²¹² Interview with ÖDP co-founder and member of the party assembly, Ankara, 11 November 2004.
²¹³ Notes of meetings of ÖDP Europe: 4-5 January 2003, 8-9 May 2004 in Basel, Switzerland; 15-16 November 2003 in Paris, France; 31 January – 1 February 2004 in Mainz, Germany. Received by email from ÖDP co-founder and member of the party assembly, November 2004.
²¹⁴ Interview with ÖDK NL chairman, Amsterdam, 6 October 2004.
²¹⁵ Interview with ÖDP co-founder and member of the party assembly, Ankara, 11 November 2004.
²¹⁶ Interview with the coordinator of Bahadin committees in Europe and Turkey, advisor of mayor of Bahadin and former Dev Yol activist, Ankara, 11 November 2004.
coalition with and under the name of the social democratic SHP. DİDF did not urge its members to vote, but stated: ‘If you happen to go and if you still have a right to vote, vote for SHP. If you have relatives who are in doubt, advise them to vote for SHP.’

**Representation of the illegal Turkish extreme left in the Netherlands since the 1990s**

The strategies of leftwing parties established in the 1990s that remain illegal in Turkey are similar to those seen in the 1970s and 1980s. Leaders live in exile in Europe where they more or less freely continue their activities. They have created European branches and networks and have become active in migrant politics and organisations. They try to pressure the Turkish state by lobbying national governments and European institutions. This section traces the activities of the two most important groups, DHKP/C and MLKP.

DHKP/C has its origins in Dev Yol but broke away a year after its establishment to set up DHKP/C’s forerunner Dev Sol. Although Dev Sol activists were clearly represented in the Netherlands and Europe in the 1970s and 1980s (they had their own bulletin), it is unclear whether they were represented in any Turkish organisation in the Netherlands. The reason for this gap in the data stems from the illegality of these parties in Turkey. The analysis of their strategies begins around their foundation in the mid-1990s when they chose to continue an illegal revolutionary course.

In the Netherlands DHKP/C sympathisers follow a peaceful path; several dozen people are actively involved (AIVD 2004: 26). A branch of the party was located in Amsterdam between 1995 and 2003 but has since moved to Brussels. DHKP International, headquartered in Brussels, celebrated the anniversary of the party in the Netherlands in 2002 and 2005, where they commemorated their ‘revolutionary martyrs’. In the Netherlands, DHKP/C is organised around the Dutch branch of the Association for the Support of the Families of Prisoners, TAYAD. TAYAD and DHKP/C headquarters in Brussels jointly organise demonstrations, for instance in solidarity with the Death Fast Resistance. Demonstrators protest in front of the European Parliament and the Turkish embassy holding photos of hunger strikers who died in Turkey while shouting the names of DHKP/C ‘martyrs’. Despite the DHKP/C’s legality in the Netherlands, the Dutch government cooperated in an international police raid against suspected DHKP/C-affiliated organisations in 2004. In response DHKP/C members participated in what they called the ‘International Platform Against Isolation’ in Brussels, mobilising European lawyers and human

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217 Interview with DİDF chairman, Amsterdam, 15 July 2004.
218 Interview with a spokesman of press agency Oğuzluk, Amsterdam, 17 September 2004.
rights advocates to observe the trials of DHKP/C activists in Istanbul later that year.\footnote{221}

The MLKP in the Netherlands is made up of a tiny group of sympathisers involved in non-violent actions such as participation in Dutch leftwing demonstrations (AIVD 2005: 23). In its European magazine the party publishes solidarity statements for the ‘martyred’ members of their armed wing in Turkey (MLKP 2005). In the Netherlands MLKP members are organised in the cultural organisation VEKSAV, linked to the cultural magazine *Hayat ve Sanat* (Life and Art) in Turkey and its European federation in Germany. VEKSAV organises politically-loaded cultural activities.\footnote{222} On the European level VEKSAV participates in the European Confederation of Oppressed Migrants, AVEG-Kon, which organises protests against globalisation, discrimination and the expulsion of political refugees who supported the Death Fast Resistance in Turkey, in which MLKP and DHKP/C prisoners participated.\footnote{223}

While there is a clear difference between the homeland sympathies of the current left and radical left, their migrant political activities overlap. For instance, members of the illegal leftist parties and representatives and supporters of the legal Turkish parties all participate in the Dutch demonstration platform *Keer bet Tij*. This platform – which unites roughly 500 leftwing organisations and parties – was founded in 2002, a response to the more conservative Dutch government that came to power that year. Sympathisers, members and branches of Turkish leftwing parties – the illegal parties MLKP, TKP/ML, TKP and DHKP/C; the migrant organisations DİDF, HTİB and the Anatolian Cultural Centre; the branch ÖDK and the Turkish NGO TAYAD – were all present at a *Keer bet Tij* demonstration in 2005.\footnote{224} In their struggle for social justice, they have found common ground in protest movements in the Netherlands.

### Parties’ embeddedness in migrant civil society

Figure 4.3 showed that the organisations of Islamists, ultranationalists, social democrats and the left – political competitors or even enemies both in Turkey and the Netherlands – were all tied to each other. Figure 6.1 and 6.2 present the transnational ties of Turkish political parties. Most parties do not have official branches; third country transnational ties play an important role in mediating contacts with migrant organisations. The parties that do have a branch – the Kurdish DEHAP (see the next chapter), the leftist ÖDP in figure 6.1, and the extreme leftist DHKP/C and MLKP in figure 6.2 – form denser clusters.

\footnote{221} Personal communication with delegate from the UK at TAYAD demonstration in Brussels, 21 October 2004.
\footnote{222} *Hayat ve Sanat* invitation, Den Haag, 8 October 2005.
As noted in chapter 4, the Dutch government’s influence is one explanation for Turkish migrant organisations of different political signatures gathered in the IOT. Many organisations have lost their radical edge and through the IOT are now more embedded in migrant civil society. Although the leftist organisation DİDF and the ultranationalist federation HTF have also largely shed their radical tendencies, the ideological heritage of the 1970s is more present in their activities than in the other central organisations in figure 4.3. This may explain why their organisational ties in the Netherlands are not as diversified as those of IOT members. The organisations that resemble the radical leftist organisations of the 1970s are isolated from the largest cluster and grouped in a small leftist cluster (figure 4.5).

**Figure 6.1 National and transnational ties of Turkish parties**

Despite the different degrees to which migrant organisations’ homeland political ideologies have changed, all are actively involved in immigrant politics. All organise activities to improve the living conditions of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands and champion their full equality; it is their strategies and partners that differ.

The historical sketch of the influence of Turkish political parties on migrant organisations in the Netherlands has shown that extreme right and Islamist organisations were often controlled by Turkish political parties via umbrellas in Germany. These umbrellas even appointed board members in the Netherlands.
Umbrellas founded by exiles in Germany were likewise important in the founding of leftist and social democratic organisations in the Netherlands.

Figure 6.2 National and transnational ties of Turkish extreme left parties

With the growing focus on migrant issues in the mid-1980s, associations became more autonomous from organisations and parties in Turkey. This did not mean their transnational contacts diminished, but that they came to be used for different purposes. Rather than aiming for political change in Turkey, transnational ties were now used to enhance the position of migrants in the country of residence.

Political parties in Turkey less and less see Turkish emigrants as backward; instead they appeal to highly educated, successful and well-integrated young Turks born in or permanently residing in Europe. More recently, transnational ties have also been used to try to improve Turkey’s image in the European Union.

Differences remain, however. HTF and NIF organisations, for example, are still heavily influenced by political parties in Turkey. This can partly be explained by the MHP and SP’s ideologies, where the Turkish nation includes all Turkish people irrespective of where they reside.

Finally, the Turkish extreme left continues to pursue its goals via diplomatic channels. Nevertheless, the social and cultural organisations these parties in exile use to mobilise people are nowadays mainly geared at the everyday lives of migrants.

Turkish state interest in Diş Türkler (Turks Abroad)

The Party Law which prohibited party branches abroad and ties between political parties and organisations in Turkey and Europe had an enduring impact on the
political opportunity structure for transnational party politics. However, the 1982 constitution in which this law was implemented also included other amendments which affected migrant organisations and their political participation. The basic principles for emigration policy were laid down in the 1982 constitution (amended in 1995). It states:

The state shall take the necessary measures to ensure family unity, the education of children, the cultural needs, and the social security of Turkish nationals working abroad, and shall take the necessary measures to safeguard their ties with the homeland, and to help them on their return home (Turkish constitution Article 62 cited in Östergaard-Nielsen 2003e: 108).

A wide range of measures were adopted following from this provision, including social security arrangements for citizens abroad through agreements with receiving countries (see also Östergaard-Nielsen 2003e: 108).225 Most consequential for migrant civil society was the installation of Diyanet branches in Europe. Diyanet had been sending imams to Turkish communities since 1971 (see Den Exter 1990: 46-56; Landman 1992: 101-105); its organisation in the Netherlands, HDV, was established in 1982. The policy was based on the assumption that guest workers would return and needed temporary aid while abroad. The situation of guest workers in Germany served as the template for policy covering Turkish (former) nationals throughout Europe.226

Between 1983 and 1986 the minister of state in charge of information was responsible for Turks living abroad. Organising within the Turkish community was a means to counter the spread of radical groups outlawed in Turkey, as he explains:

We facilitated this by founding Diyanet organisations in these countries. At that time some Turkish radical [Islamic, LN] groups organised their own mosques, like Milli Görüş… We thought the activities of these radical groups emerged because of the lack of official services… We also started to open Türk Evleri, cultural organisations for Turks living abroad. We have opened such cultural and religious branches in Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Cologne, Brussels, etc.227

In 1987 Turkey implemented measures enabling Turks abroad to cast their votes during elections. Turkish migrants can now vote at customs two to three weeks before

225 Interview with representative of the Social Insurance Institution (SSK) and with a representative of the Ministry of Labour, Ankara, 22 February 2005.
the elections. But according to the former minister of state, the method has not been widely used: ‘They want to vote at the consulates in their residing countries. Turkish laws do not allow this and there are also legislative problems with host countries.’

Turkish authorities and institutions in the late 1980s and 1990s realised that their citizens were not going to return. Parliamentary debates have thus increasingly focused on understanding and solving the problems of Turks abroad. The most important legislative measure was the 1995 introduction of the so-called ‘Pink Card’ (Pembe Kart) which grants those who gave up Turkish nationality certain rights in Turkey (voting excepted). The card is particularly used by Turks in Germany; it is unnecessary for most Turks in the Netherlands who have dual nationality (for a historical overview of Turkish citizenship laws see Fermin & Van der Hijden 2004: 225-226; Kadirbeyoğlu 2007).

Reflecting concern over their treatment as second-class citizens and their loss of Turkish culture (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 108-109), a special commission was set up in 1995 to assess the situation of Turks living abroad. Against this backdrop the ANAP-DSP government in 1999 set up the consultation commission for citizens living abroad to stimulate Turkish integration without assimilation and loss of Turkish culture. The commission worked closely with the National Security Council – and thus the military – which had thus far dominated policy vis-à-vis Turks abroad. The commission was chaired by the minister of state responsible for Turks living abroad and consisted of representatives from the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Interior and Diyanet. Also included were 45 Turkish migrants ‘who had strong societal positions in the countries of residence and were not exclusively focused on Turkey’. The migrant delegates were screened by Turkish embassies and consulates and were selected as individuals, not as representatives of organisations. The council thus completely bypassed those migrant organisations that had been calling for Turkish government action for years (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003: 110-111); migrant organisations responded by campaigning against their exclusion.

The commission officially met once a year, with the minister of foreign affairs debriefing the government with information gained through the embassy and consulates in Germany. One of the main projects was a report on the education of Turkish children, co-written by a delegate from the Netherlands. The participation of the Dutch delegate, who was also an IOT board member, led to questions about her

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228 Ibid.
230 Ibid.
231 Ibid.
loyalty in the Dutch parliament in 1999 and 2001 (Fermin and Van der Hijden 2004: 231). The commission has effectively been dormant since its last meeting in 2000. 233

This did not imply lack of interest. While political liberalisation had reduced the influence of the MGK in this area, at the time of research, those organs traditionally concerned with Turks living abroad – the Ministries of Labor, Foreign Affairs and General Affairs (the ‘Ministry of State’ which includes Diyanet) – had their own departments for this issue. The official policy in 2004 was:

From the beginning of the flow of Turkish migrant workers abroad Turkey has spared no effort to ensure that these people are provided with the most favorable living and working conditions in the countries of destination. To realize this, Turkey has signed social security agreements with the receiving countries. Furthermore, the Turkish Government actively participates in all international forums where the rights of migrants are discussed.234

The Ministry of Labor monitors the position of Turks abroad yearly (for 2002 and 2003 see T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı 2003, 2004). These annual reports cover the position of Turks in the 14 most important countries of settlement in Western Europe, the Middle East and the former Soviet Union. They include information on demography, the social security system, income and integration policy, as well as on migrant IOT-affiliated organisations and their representation in local municipalities and parliament (T.C. Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Bakanlığı 2003: 65-87, 2004: 57-84).

The ministry of foreign affairs emphasises Turkey’s desire that Turks living abroad should be fully integrated in their social environments. While children should benefit from educational opportunities in host countries, education in their native language, culture and history remain crucial, it argues. For this purpose Turkey sends teachers to major receiving countries. Between 1998 and 2004 the Netherlands provided school children with Turkish roots Turkish language classes under the OALT programme. OALT has since been abolished, since according to the Dutch government there was no scientific consensus on whether it aided integration. In response the Turkish ministry of state has urged that these classes be continued and has pushed for its own involvement in consultation procedures.235 Regarding political integration, the ministry of foreign affairs states that ‘Turkey wishes that Turks actively participate in the political life of the host countries… Turkey appreciates

233 Interview with coordinator for Turks living abroad at the Ministry of State, Ankara, 26 January 2005.
235 Interview with coordinator for Turks living abroad at the Ministry of State, Ankara, 26 January 2005.
moves and initiatives towards ensuring active participation of migrants in the social and political life of the receiving countries.\textsuperscript{236}

In 2003 another parliamentary commission was installed to study the problems of Turks living abroad, led by the former head of Diyanet and, at the time of research, an AKP member of parliament. The commission consulted embassies, Diyanet officials and representatives of Turks in European countries such as Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium (TBBM 2004). The commission recommended an organisation for Turks living abroad; its findings have been discussed in the Turkish parliament but little has resulted so far.\textsuperscript{237} In 2005 the state expressed interest in re-activating the commission for Turks living abroad, which again would focus on religion and education. The minister of state argues that in a future council, migrant organisations should play a more prominent role to better represent the interests of Turkish migrants.\textsuperscript{238}

Thus the Turkish state – especially governments under supervision of the military in the 1980s and 1990s – had a great influence on political opportunities for transnational party politics. The state shifted its stance towards Turks abroad only after the political climate in Turkey had cooled, and when it became clear that migrants were going to stay in receiving countries. Turkish state strategies thus became more country of residence-directed over time. In the eyes of the Turkish government, identification with the Netherlands is important because of Turkey’s ambition to join the EU, with Turkish emigrants functioning as ambassadors for the Turkish cause (Fermin and Van der Hijden 2004: 233).

This shift in attitude came to the fore in speeches by Minister of Foreign Affairs Gül and Prime Minster Erdoğan in Rotterdam in April and June 2004. In his talk Gül emphasised how the Turkish community is becoming a role model for Turkey in European countries, which in turn may facilitate Turkey’s accession to the EU:

We all know that some European countries are hesitating about Turkey’s accession to the EU... In this context our citizens in the Netherlands have an important task. They may reflect the contemporary, democratic and modern Turkey here [in the Netherlands, LN].\textsuperscript{239}

Both Gül and Erdoğan underlined the importance of integration in the Netherlands. Turks should achieve higher positions in the Netherlands, but without assimilation; they should maintain their own cultural and religious values. Turkey will support this

\textsuperscript{236} http://www.mfa.gov.tr/MFA/Foreign_Policy/MainIssues/TurksLivingAbroad/, accessed on 9 December 2004.
\textsuperscript{237} Interview with AKP member of parliament, chair of parliamentary commission ‘Turks living abroad’, Ankara, 21 February 2005.
\textsuperscript{238} Interview with the minister of state (AKP), Ankara, 31 January 2005.
\textsuperscript{239} http://www.turkishembassy.nl/mesaj/001_Gul_Rotterdam.asp, translated by Ece Öztan, accessed on 10 April 2008.
process by investing in education and preparing a special ‘Education Action Plan’ that targets children and their mothers in particular. The maintenance of Turkish values will help migrants to tolerate and respect beliefs and political opinions that are different from Turkish ones, says Erdoğan: ‘Turkish citizenship [and culture, LN] connects you all [with each other and with Turkey, LN]. The most important element of our civilization is love… We have to love all people with different beliefs… because we all have been created by God.’

Through upward social mobility Turkish citizens will be able to spread new ideas and take part in decision-making – including representation in Dutch local and national politics – thereby strengthening Turkey’s position in the world. The emphasis on upward social mobility should also be seen against the background of Turkish workers abroad being seen as giving Western European countries the wrong image of Turks and Turkey. There is widespread concern in Ankara that Turkish migrants in Europe do not represent the modern, secular Turkey of Ankara, but the traditional rural life of Anatolian villages (Ostergaard-Nielsen 2003: 90).

Whereas the Turkish state traditionally provides opportunities for Turks to maintain ties with Turkey, the policy of the Dutch government increasingly focuses on breaking these ties. The minister of integration, at the time of research, emphasised narrowing possibilities for dual citizenship. Discarding homeland nationality, in her view, would be a sign of loyalty to the Netherlands and would be beneficial for integration in Dutch society (Fermin and Van der Hijden 2004: 225). Thus the Turkish state remains active in country of residence-directed politics with a homeland-directed goal, though the expectation of return has been replaced by acceptance that Turks in the Netherlands are there to stay.

**Dual orientations of Dutch politicians of Turkish origin**

The previous sections have examined transnational party politics and political opportunities provided by the Turkish state since the 1970s and 1980s. Especially the last sections showed that many Turkish parties and state actors have encouraged migrants to participate in Dutch political life. Dutch politicians with Turkey origins, it will be seen below, were active in migrant organisations before entering Dutch mainstream politics (see also chapter 4). The final empirical section of the chapter examines the ties these politicians maintain with Turkish political parties and how these influence their work in the Netherlands.

Interviews with Turkish political parties and the Ministry of Labor and the Ministry of State revealed that they follow the careers of Dutch parliamentarians of Turkish origin with great interest. We saw in chapter 4 that many Dutch politicians with Turkish roots have been or are active in Dutch political parties. These

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parliamentarians, however, are careful and sometimes even reluctant to profile themselves as ‘Turkish’ politicians. This section examines three instances of transnational activity among local and national Dutch politicians of Turkish origin: (1) activities to influence the stance of their Dutch parties vis-à-vis Turkish accession to the EU; (2) attempts to encourage Turkish migrants to vote in Dutch elections; and (3) similar attempts during election campaigns for the European Parliament.

In 2003 a group of five municipal politicians of Turkish origin already active in Turkish migrant organisations established Şiyaset.nl. This website provides a forum to discuss issues related to integration and the work of Dutch politicians with Turkish roots. The webmaster ensures the discussions do not become partisan; the forum is meant to discuss common problems these politicians face, for example in their political careers. Some of the politicians feel Dutch parties use them to gain Turkish migrant votes but do not take them seriously. The online discussions further revealed the need for offline activities; several have resulted, including debates during Dutch elections, visits to the European Parliament, the Dutch Parliament, and Diyanet in The Hague.\(^\text{242}\)

During the Dutch chairmanship of the EU, Şiyaset.nl organised a five-day trip to Turkey. The goal of the trip was to gather information on Turkish (especially local) reforms in light of EU requirements. Şiyaset.nl members each invited a Dutch colleague; the participation of (non-Turkish) Dutch colleagues would enhance the mission’s credibility and prevent accusations that they were using their positions for Turkish politics. The delegation visited the Dutch consulate and embassy, sites where Dutch municipalities were sponsoring projects following the Marmara earthquake, and the mayors of Ankara and Istanbul. The trip culminated in a visit to the Turkish parliament where the delegation was received by its speaker, Bülent Arınç. Arınç underlined the importance of the relationship between the Netherlands and Turkey, not least because two-thirds of Turkish migrants in the Netherlands also have Turkish nationality. The meeting further drew attention to the Dutch parliament’s reluctance to establish a friendship tie between the two parliaments.\(^\text{243}\) The parliamentarian appointed to establish the tie had been turned down by the Dutch ambassador, while parliamentarians of Turkish origin fared no better.\(^\text{244}\)

Comparable to the Şiyaset trip, but party-related, was a visit to Istanbul by the youth branch of the liberal party VVD, JOVD. The visit, which aimed to form an independent opinion of Turkey, was initiated by the former JOVD chairman (who has a Turkish father and Dutch mother). Fadime Örgü, a VVD parliamentarian of Turkish origin, served as a guest delegate and advisor. The delegation visited Turkish

\(^{242}\) Interview with founder of Şiyaset.nl, Adapazarı, 10 October 2004.

\(^{243}\) Observations during the meeting of Şiyaset with the speaker of the Turkish parliament, Ankara, 11 October 2004.

\(^{244}\) Interview with the secretary of the parliamentarian appointed to establish a friendship tie between the Dutch and Turkish parliaments, Ankara, 9 December 2004.
trade unions and the Turkish liberal party LDP which maintains good relations with
the VVD. The JOVD hoped to establish closer relations with the youth branches of
the LDP and AKP and to foster exchange projects.245

One of the siyaset members, a local politician in Venlo and a board member of
the Diyanet federation TİÇF, organised a meeting in Venlo before the 2002 Dutch
national elections with both Turkish AKP and Dutch PvdA parliamentarians present.
According to the organiser, especially first generation Turks in the Netherlands are
more concerned with Turkish than with Dutch politics. This disinterest in Dutch
politics, he states, is due to the language barrier and a perceived lack of political
influence. In contrast, interest in Turkish politics stems from knowledge of the
Turkish language, media coverage, political scandals and ideological differences
between Turkish political parties – all of which make Turkish politics juicy. The goal
of the meeting was to encourage political participation in the Netherlands – with the
help of Turkish politicians. In their speeches the Turkish parliamentarians urged the
migrants to leave Turkish politics to the 70 million people in Turkey. As their future
lies in the Netherlands, they should cast their vote there.246

One local CDA politician of Turkish origin ran for a seat in the European
Parliament in 2004. During his campaign he clearly presented himself as a politician
with dual antennae and extensively used Turkish media in the Netherlands. The last
week of the campaign, he argues, is crucial. The most important thing is to be visible
in the press, but

it is difficult to get into high profile opinion programmes
on Dutch television, like NOVA or Netwerk, but Turks
in the Netherlands use dish antennas like crazy... I
wanted to be visible and thought this is only possible via
Turkish broadcasting... first I went to Germany where
some Turkish stations, like TRT-İNT, TV8 and Canal 7,
broadcast. I have spent the last week of my campaign in
Istanbul and was advised by a Turkish public relations
agency... I have visited 22 TV stations in one week.247

Prime Minister Erdoğan told him during a meeting in Berlin that he was proud of
him. Others said that if he was not elected he should run for a seat in the Turkish
parliament: ‘It flattered me… but no… okay maybe I would think about it if they
would approach me.’248

These examples show that Dutch politicians of Turkish descent are often in a
difficult position. Their parties expect them to attract votes from the Turkish

245 Interview with former JOVD chairman and talk with VVD parliamentarian Fadime Örgü, Istanbul, 15
February 2005.
246 Interview with Siyaset member and TİKF board member, Ankara, 12 October 2004.
247 Interview with CDA municipality member in Gorinchem, Voorburg, 4 October 2004.
248 Ibid.
community but become suspicious when they draw on this electorate too much. Moreover, some feel that they are not taken seriously by their Dutch colleagues if they are elected through preferential votes; others cannot get the same media exposure in the Netherlands as they get in Turkey. Dutch politicians of Turkish descent thus use their ties with Turkey cautiously – in their election campaigns and regarding issues surrounding Turkey’s accession to the EU. As such they are engaged in homeland directed politics with a country of residence directed goal.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the structure of Turkish migrant organisational networks cannot be understood independently of the political climate and specific political opportunities for political parties in Turkey. Most migrant organisations were founded in the 1970s on the initiative of the Turkish state and (representatives of) political parties in response to developments in Turkey.

In the past Turkish parties and the state mainly focused on Turkish migrant workers. Parties rallied support; the state aimed to facilitate their return and to combat the radical movements that could freely exist in Europe. Today, having accepted that emigrants are in the Netherlands to stay, the Turkish state and political parties no longer try to control (former) citizens as they once did. They increasingly direct their attention to highly educated Turks, including the second generation. The state hopes they will serve as representatives of Turkey and improve Turkey’s image in Europe; political parties increasing see highly educated Turks as a way to improve their international relations.

These developments, however, do not mean that the Turkish state and political parties have lost interest in ordinary migrants with a guest worker background. Since the beginning of emigration, the Turkish state has felt responsible for migrants’ well-being; today it tries to stimulate their integration in receiving societies. The Turkish government’s views on integration, however, do not correspond with the Dutch government’s ideas. Whereas Turkey emphasises the maintenance of Turkish culture, secular religion and citizenship (also in non-legal terms), the Netherlands discourages such attachments. Turkey’s stance makes it what Levitt and Glick Schiller call a *strategically selective state* that encourages certain forms of transnational participation while trying to selectively manage what migrants can and cannot do. This chapter has shown that Turkey’s feelings of responsibility towards its former citizens abroad is rooted in the strength of Turkish nationalism as laid down by the founder of the Turkish Republic.

The ties between Turkish political parties and migrant organisations continue to exist; party strategies to attract support through civil society are mirrored in transnational party politics. This especially applies to the Islamists, ultranationalists and illegal extreme left parties. The success of Islamist and ultranationalist transnational mobilisation can be explained by their nationalist programmes that
include ‘outer Turks’, while for the Islamists religion obviously plays a major role. For the illegal parties, Europe remains a place where they can freely mobilise and rally support; these ties are vital for their existence and leadership.

The weakening of ties between migrant organisations and political parties follows their legalisation in Turkey, making support from abroad obsolete. Parties that remain marginal in Turkey, however, still invest in electoral support from abroad. While this is often initiated by migrant organisations themselves, migrants only seem to have a voice in party matters and policy when the majority of the administrative board in Turkey has a migrant history as well. Migrant involvement in transnational party politics is rarely rewarded by political position in the homeland. Instead such ties are increasingly used to facilitate political participation in the Netherlands.

For both the Turkish state and Turkish political parties, Germany has been the main reference point for issues to do with Turks abroad. Linkages often run from Turkey to Germany and from representatives in Germany to the Netherlands. Although organisations have become more autonomous over time, key issues are still handled by headquarters and confederations in Germany. Turkish hopes for EU accession, however, have increased Brussels’ importance, especially for political parties in exile, diaspora groups and marginal parties in Turkish politics.

What this shows is that transnational politics is not only about activities or loyalties that transcend national borders; what happens at the organisational nodes in the country of origin is often crucial for developments in the country of settlement. Indeed, many groups that are unproblematically seen as migrant organisations only became true migrant organisations after their counterparts in the homeland chose a political path that made support from abroad obsolete. This becomes clear when we compare the central collective actors in chapter 4 with the central actors in this chapter: to a large extent they correspond, showing that migrant organisations are part and parcel of transnational party politics, and indeed, have often been established for this reason. Homeland politics thus casts an even longer shadow over transnational politics than is often acknowledged.

These findings suggest that we need to specify homeland-related factors that determine transnational political practices in the country of settlement. Instead of assuming that homeland ‘political opportunities’ similarly affect all groups, we need to ask how specific groups – even within a comparable political stream – are included or excluded from homeland political participation. Only then will we be able to explain how and why migrant organisations continue homeland-directed activities, redirect their interests to the country of settlement, or combine elements of both. Finally, as this chapter has shown, there is no indication that maintaining interest in homeland politics today hinders political integration or threatens Dutch democracy. The next chapter explores how Kurdish diaspora politics has evolved in the context of Turkish and Dutch political opportunity structures and how activities are facilitated through third country transnational ties.