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**Vztah mezi  
Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi  
v Turecku  
a Milli Görüş  
v Nizozemí**

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**THESIS**

**Relation between the  
Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi  
in Turkey  
and the Milli Görüş  
in the Netherlands**

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**By signing below, the author certifies that the work contained herein is their own,  
and that all sources have been duly cited.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

**P.H.M. Meerkerk**

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## **Chapter 1 – Introduction**

### **1.1. Preface**

The topic of my thesis will be the relation between the AKP, the ruling Turkish political party and the Milli Görüş, the biggest Turkish Islamic movement in the Netherlands. After studying Anthropology and Turkish culture in the Netherlands and International Politics in Prague I would like to make a combination of those two topics.

I am from the Netherlands and our country has a lot of immigrants. The biggest minority group is the Turkish one. I don't want to state that integration completely failed but there are many indicators that the Turks had formed their own community within the Dutch one. The Netherlands is widely regarded as a liberal country and that is true in many respects. The immigrants who came to our country, after the Second World War and later on, had the chance to find their own organizations, churches, mosques and schools etc. However, problems occurred in the integration process. Turkish people are less educated; more likely to be unemployed and in general they stick together with people from their own background. Some are suffering of identity problems as they don't belong to neither of the societies.

As a result of this separation the Turkish society in the Netherlands is a very close one; the people stick together and idolize the life which they had in Turkey. Social get-together, language and their religion are very important for the immigrants. Last decades Turkish people founded over 1200 organizations; at least 350 of them are Islamic based. The biggest movement which mixes social work and religion is the Milli Görüş. (National Vision) After I started to think about writing on this subject I noticed that many people in the Netherlands don't know anything about the Milli Görüş. This only strengthened me in continuing my research, a Turkish Dutch organization with 30,000 members is worth to do research on.

What are Milli Görüş' aims, what do they want, are they after integration into Dutch society? Are there any political ambitions? Are they linked with Turkey, if yes: in what way?

The understanding and cooperation between Dutch and Turkish people at the moment is not a good one. Things got worse after Theo van Gogh was murdered by an Islamist. The gap between Dutch people and the immigrants have widened and distrust is replacing the normal tolerance.

Since the 1960's, when the first guest workers came to the Netherlands the situation in Turkey has naturally changed as well. After three military coups and unrest in the 1960's and 1970's, politics in Turkey seemed to be stabilized. Under the surface, however, an Islamist revival can be seen in Turkey. The army, the protectors of Atatürk's thoughts, took violently over power in the restless period Turkey faced. Recently the army strategy is a different one; parties which are not following the secular and innovative ideas get outlawed. Politicians are sent to jail, as parties based on Islam are not allowed. At the moment the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development Party) is the ruling party in Turkey, this is the successor party of the Islamist Milli Nizam Partisi, Fazilet and Refah parties. However, the AKP claims to have lost the severe Islamist ideas of their predecessors.

Several opinions can be found to the questions whether the AKP is an Islamist party or not. I decided to regard AKP representing a more liberal but still Islamist party. Their leader Erdoğan is convicted for spreading religious hatred ideas and the laws the AKP is trying to implement indicate the same. The party won the 2002 elections overwhelmingly so we can not underestimate the power of the AKP has in Turkey.

While the AKP is representing the more liberal stream in Islamism, the small Saadet Partisi represents the more conservative Islamic off shoot of the former, banned, Fazilet Party.

Erbakan, the former president and leader of Fazilet is at the moment an old man. He is in jail, but rumors are persistent that he is actually the true leader of Islamism behind the screens. Others stories which turn up from time to time, is that the AKP has a hidden agenda and the plans they have are not that democratic and secular as one might think.

In my thesis I would like to find out what kind of goals and aims the AKP has in Turkey do they really have the “hidden agenda” which is often mentioned in the newspapers? I will look at their thoughts and try to find out what the AKP really is. AKP itself claims to be a moderate Islamic political party, which believes fully in democracy, without any plans for installing an Islamist based state in Turkey.

The Dutch Milli Görüş and the Islamists in Turkey have a lot of contact, and what is it that the Turkish political parties want? Both the Milli Görüş and the AKP and SP are deriving from one thought, described by Erbakan a few decades ago. Is this still assuring ties between the groups? Does the AKP use the Milli Görüş as lobby group; do the Dutch Turks support the Islamic revival which is taking place in Turkey?

My thesis is the following:

***The Islamist parties in Turkey use Milli Görüş in the Netherlands to reach their political goals in Turkey.***

I will pay attention to the history of Turkey, focused on the political Islam. What happened to Islamic parties and politicians for instance? A special focus will be on the coups, when the army protected Atatürk’s secular state. The second important issue is the history of Turkish immigration to the Netherlands. When did the immigrants arrive, what happened to them afterwards? I will prove that they are badly integrated into Dutch society, and stick together in their own social, often religious based groups.

My research on the broad spectrum Turkish movements in the Netherlands will be mainly on the Milli Görüş movement. This movement claims to be a religious and social one, but maybe they have some political ideas as well. Who are their leaders, what is their tie with Turkey? The name Milli Görüş derives from a pamphlet written by Erbakan. In this pamphlet is explained how an Islamic state should replace secular Turkey. Currently many leaders of Turkey, the AKP and Milli Görüş in the Netherlands are inspired by him and his ideas. The former German leader of the Milli Görüş is as well a nephew of the former president Erbakan.

As well the Diyanet, the ministry of religious affairs in Turkey, is trying to influence, shape and help their citizens abroad. The Diyanet has totally other ideas about the way to deal with Turks abroad and their religious needs for example. In my thesis I will also do research on the Diyanet for this reason.

I will try to find out whether, and how, the AKP with leader Erdoğan, and possibly Erbakan in the background, is actually trying to use the Milli Görüş abroad for its goals. Do they need the money, coming from Western Europe? Are the Dutch Turks still allowed to vote for elections in Turkey? The well educated and westernized people who run the show for Milli Görüş in the Netherlands can also be used as a lobby group for the AKP in Turkey. They might also be able to influence the ideas the Dutch government has about their Turkish inhabitants.

I will show that Milli Görüş since May 2006 has a new, said to be more radical, chairman. The new leader was appointed in the Netherlands under pressure of the German, more fundamental wing of the organization. The Cologne department is headed by more extreme Islamist and closely watched by the German intelligence service. In my thesis I will show that the Dutch government was not inspecting that closely the Milli Görüş movement but after the May 2006 events they started to worry as well. Not without any reason, as in my research it will become clear that the Islamist movement in Turkey is actually trying to use the Dutch Milli Görüş for their own purposes.

AKP's aims are the gradually installations of Islamic reforms in Turkey and Milli Görüş in Western Europe is serving as a great help for them. Human resources, votes, money and a valuable lobby group in Western Europe.

As last remark will be the elections in the Netherlands where for the first time an Islamic based party ran for elections. This party was not successful but might open the way for new parties based on Islam. As the Milli Görüş has such a well educated leaders and a good structure they might start a political party. They already are respected conversations partner of the government and have a lot of experience in public administration.

To conclude I will prove that because of demographic changes half of the young people in the big cities are Muslim. This number will only grow and because of this fact the political landscape will face major changes.

## **1.2 Research methods**

For doing research on the history of the Ottoman Empire and Turkey it was not so hard to find good literature, many books appeared on this topic. In the Dutch libraries especially I found many books with detailed information. More than Czech Republic they are specialized on this theme, as the Netherlands has so many Turkish immigrants. I have found good reports from the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS, Central Office for Statistics) and the Wetenschappelijke raad voor het regeringsbeleid (WRR, Scientific Council for Government Policies) for data on Turkish people in the Netherlands; integration, number of mosques, names of organizations and so on.

Furthermore I decided to use as a primary source websites from the Turkish political parties I am focusing on. The last elections in Turkey were in 2002 and not many books with analysis have been published yet. The Middle East Journal, Middle East Quarterly and Meria (The Middle East Review of International Affairs) have their articles online and turned out to be very useful.

It is obvious that I followed the Dutch media intensively, especially Volkskrant and Parool. The Milli Görüş was often mentioned and the media attention was growing during my writing period. All the translations from Dutch to English are mine; of course I am responsible for possible mistakes. Thanks to some Turkish friends I was able to translate some articles from important online Turkish websites e.g. Aksam or the Milligazette.

It was sometimes very hard for me to write my thesis in Prague, as Milli Görüş is settled in the Netherlands. I have been writing many emails and tried to find out telephone numbers and so on, but getting in contact was sometimes very hard. The Milli Görüş movement has for example no web page. However, I was in contact with some Dutch experts by email and it was very motivating for my research to get some information first hand.

Finally, when the thesis was almost finished I got in contact with Mustafa Hamurcu. Mr. Hamurcu is the spokesman of the Milli Görüş in the Northern Netherlands. After we had email contact we met each other in Amsterdam in the Milli Görüş office. We had a pleasant talk, in which he explained a lot about the Milli Görüş and I was able to get almost all my questions answered. It was very nice to meet somebody who is actual member of the Milli Görüş and not writing on it as an outsider. Hopefully I am able to make his opinion understandable in my thesis, it is important for the thesis.

Furthermore I have been in contact with Mr. Syp Wynia, the chief editor of Dutch weekly Elsevier. Wynia is doing research on both integration of Turks and the accession of Turkey to the European Union. He published repeatedly articles about the Milli Görüş and integration. I am very happy that he helped by giving me an interview which he did with the Turkish ambassador to the Netherlands. Unfortunately I have no permission to quote this, but as background information it was very useful.

Last but not least: I want to mention Arif Potmis from the Dutch political party Islam Democrats. He was so kind to explain me the relation with the Milli Görüş.

During the writing process many people supported and helped me. Some of the people I would like to say a special thank you. Ertan Suleyman thanks for your never ending advice and translations about Turkish politics. Chris Svorcik, for reading parts of my thesis and comment it. Also the Carcassonne evenings helped me a lot... Ondřej Červinka, for helping me writing and being "nadherný" critical. Furthermore Özlem Alioglu thanks for reading together with me many Turkish websites. Sabina Středová, my tutor. She was a great help, reading the first versions and help me to decide which direction to take while writing my thesis. Alice and Liz; you have been great to correct my English. Thanks to all my family and other friends in the Netherlands and The Czech Republic, for supporting me with emails, phone calls and messages. People at Karlova Univerzita: among others Markéta Žídková, Cyril Šimsa and Petra Chumanová thanks for arranging everything in time in order to graduate

### **1.3 Outline of the thesis**

In the first part I will focus on the history of Turkey. Described will be the Islamic Ottoman Empire, the big secular changes which occurred under Atatürk. A big part will deal with the current Islamist leaders and their parties. I will show that Erdoğan, the current prime minister, and his so called tutor Erbakan are main players in the Islamist movement in Turkey.

The second part will focus on the Turks living in the Netherlands. Started to arrive in the late 1960's, nowadays they make up the biggest minority group. The group faces integrations problems, lies behind with education, have difficulties to find jobs and so on. The Turkish people founded around 1200 organizations, and more than 200 mosques. The biggest Islamic religious social movement in Western Europe is the Milli Görüş. It will be further explained what the Milli Görüş exactly is, as can be argued as well that the movement might have a political goal as well.

The third part will try to make the link between the Dutch Milli Görüş and the Islamist stream in Turkey. It will contain the conclusion of my thesis. I made a case study about the new mosque the Milli Görüş wants to build in the Netherlands and what problems they face doing so.

Part number four is a short overview of the last events in the Netherlands. The new board of the Milli Görüş is trying to give the organization a positive image, but the media is not too helpful. I got the chance to speak with their spokesman and he told me about their projects and future plans. Unfortunately I did not have time to closely do research on their current projects and their influence on their supporters and the Dutch people. I regret this, and would like to do more detailed study. This topical subject is without any doubt ground for a fascinating next research.



## Chapter 2 – History of Islamism in Turkey

### 2.1 The downfall of the Ottoman Empire, Atatürk's anti-Islamic reforms.

To understand contemporary Turkey, and its politics, it is necessary to go back to the days before and shortly after the dissolution of the great Ottoman Empire. At its height, this empire stretched from the western coast of North Africa to the frontiers of China, and from southern Poland to what is now Tanzania.<sup>1</sup> The Ottoman Empire was an Islamic based state, meaning that the Tarrikat (Islamic religious order) had the power. They were the religious educated men who had spiritual, economic as well as political power. The Empire was headed by a Sultan, for almost four centuries. A Sultan was the worldly leaders of Ottoman Empire, which was holding as well the title of Caliph. The Caliphate was the religious office of the entire Islamic world, and was held from 1453 by the Ottoman Empire. The task of the Caliph was “to create the socioeconomic conditions needed to allow those citizens to live in accordance with Islam’s tenets.”<sup>2</sup> The Ottoman Sultan, as the Caliph, represented the religious leadership for Muslims all over the world. It is very important for Muslims to unite political power and religion. In this respect the Islamic calendar, which started with the installation of the first Islamic government, can be mentioned.<sup>3</sup> This is just one example of how important the bond between politics and religion is for the authentic Islamic religion.

From 1600, with some intervals, the Ottoman Empire was already in decline. The Empire had the nickname, the Sick Man of Europe. Due to its size it had problems to integrate, many different economic interests and a lot of different ethnic groups assured internal problems.<sup>4</sup> Nationalism grew at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and from time to time the Empire had to give up pieces of their land. The European powers at that time

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<sup>1</sup> [http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheworld/02a\\_civilization.htm](http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheworld/02a_civilization.htm)

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> ibid

<sup>4</sup> (2) Zürcher, E. J. – Een geschiedenis van het moderne Turkije – SUN, Amsterdam 2006

had only one solution for Turkey, and one problem related to that: “how to dispose of the Sick Man's territories without upsetting the European balance of power”.<sup>5</sup> On the website<sup>6</sup> which describes the downfall of big empires the downfall of the Ottoman Empire is blamed on Europe. It says that “European colonialism began to take its toll on the empire” and that some Muslims still see the downfall of their Caliphate as following: “the loss of political power as a result of European colonialism”. In my opinion the downfall of the Ottoman Empire is much more complicated; already in 1875 the Ottoman leaders could not avoid nationalist uprisings. The provinces of Serbia, Montenegro, Bosnia and Bulgaria declared their independence from the Empire in that year. Following the Russian Turkish War of 1877-78, independence was formally granted to Serbia, Bulgaria, Romania and Montenegro, with the other Balkan territories remaining under Ottoman control. It was only a question of time before the Ottoman Empire would collapse.

This important position which the Ottoman Empire had in the Islamic world finally came to an end after gradually losing their power for a few decades in 1918. The Ottoman Empire had fought in the First World War against the Allies. During this war the Sultan had even called for a Jihad (holy war) from all Muslims against the Allied troops.<sup>7</sup> Finally, after the First World War the territory of the Empire was divided by several, sometimes secret, diplomatic agreements between the Allied countries. “During the war, the Allies had negotiated a series of agreements that outlined not only the definitive dismantling of the Ottoman Empire but also the partitioning among them of what Turkish nationalists had come to regard as the Turkish homeland.”<sup>8</sup> The Allies did not play a fair game; they made promises which were contradictory. One of the countries suffering from that unfair game was the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>5</sup><http://www.turkishnews.com/DiscoverTurkey/anatolia/history.html>

<sup>6</sup>[http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheworld/02a\\_civilization.htm](http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheworld/02a_civilization.htm)

<sup>7</sup>[http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/ottoman\\_fetva.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/ottoman_fetva.htm)

<sup>8</sup><http://countrystudies.us/turkey/13.htm>

Under the secret Sykes-Picot agreement, which was signed 19<sup>th</sup> May 1916, the British and French divided the Ottoman Empire; in case it would lose the war. For example, coastal parts in advance were promised to Italy and Greece without any consultation with the Ottoman Sultan.<sup>9</sup>

During the First World War the British had also given their word to the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali, to make him king of the Arabs. Also Arabs were living under Ottoman rule so they wanted to obtain more freedom. In exchange for his support he would get parts of the Ottoman Empire as well. The new map of the region, including new countries like Syria and Lebanon, was finally laid down by the newly created League of Nations.

All plans were written down and became known as the Treaty of Sevres, which was meant to solve the problems of the division of the Ottoman Empire. In 1920, the Sultan's representatives signed the Treaty of Sevres which would have limited Turkey to the Anatolian Plateau. This treaty gave the Ottomans only a small piece of land, and tight restrictions on, among other things, the size of the army.<sup>10</sup> Sultan Mehmet VI, the last Caliph, did not have a great deal of choice in the matter. He feared he would lose his power if he did not agree with the Allied forces. For a long time groups of opposition and the army were discontented with his rule. He was afraid that some opposition groups would form a new government and seize power. The signed Treaty of Sevres however was never executed, as the Turkish people did not accept this. The opposition, who indeed formed a new government in Ankara, immediately decided to start a war of independence against the Greeks, who were occupying the share of Western Anatolia that had been promised to them earlier

During the last period of his reign the Sultan did not have the power to negotiate with, or stop the Allies. "The Sultan was kept in the custody of the Allies to ensure the cooperation of an Ottoman administration."<sup>11</sup> The opposition who founded the

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<sup>9</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J. p; 179-180

<sup>10</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 192-193

<sup>11</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/13.htm>

government in Ankara, mentioned above, became famous as the Young Turks. Their seizing of power would usher in a completely new era for the country. This group of Young Turks is currently described by Zürcher as “rebels attacking an established order”<sup>12</sup> but at the time the Young Turks were emergent they “strove for the regeneration of the Ottoman Empire”.<sup>13</sup> The Young Turks wanted to restore the values and the rule as it had been decided after 1876. Because the Sultan became increasingly autocratic the constitutional and parliamentary rules of 1876 were slowly abandoned. In fact the Sultan “... became so despotic that liberal opposition arose under the leadership of the Young Turks, many of whom were forced to flee to Europe to escape his policy.”<sup>14</sup>

The Young Turks were a group of young students who founded the Ittihat ve Terakki Cemiyeti, (ITC, the Committee of Union and Progress.) in 1889. Their main concern was that the Ottoman Empire was torn apart by separatist minority nationalism. This disastrous development could be avoided by the ideal of the “Unity of the (ethnic and religious) Elements” (Ittihadî Anasir). The Young Turks felt that they could achieve this by giving all communities a stake in the empire through parliamentary representation. It does not fit in the scope of this thesis to point out exactly how the precursors of the Young Turks fought their way to an influential position in the Ottoman Empire.<sup>15</sup> Among other activities, they founded a political party the aim of which they wanted to solve the problems of the minorities. In 1908, they took over power from Sultan Abn Al-Hamid during the constitutional revolutions. “...a revolution led by the Young Turks forced Abn al-Hamid to restore the parliament and constitution. After a few months of constitutional rule, however, a counterrevolutionary effort to restore the Sultan's autocracy led the Young Turks to dethrone the Sultan completely in

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<sup>12</sup> (1) Zürcher, E.J. – The Young Turks – Children of the Borderlands? – University of Leiden, October 2002

<sup>13</sup> *ibid*

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.turkishnews.com/DiscoverTurkey/anatolia/history.html>

<sup>15</sup> (1) Zürcher, E.J.

1909. He was replaced by Mehmed V Rashid, who was only a puppet of those controlling the government.<sup>16</sup>

The Young Turks stayed in power practically till the end of the First World War; the ITC was the main player on the political scene. They implemented many new laws; secularity and modernism were the operative words. The vast majority of the founders were of non Ottoman-Turkish origin, and well aware of the problems caused by living in ethnically mixed areas. Most of the Young Turks came from the border areas of the Ottoman Empire, including the Balkans or the Caucasus. The majority of them were minority Muslims living in non-Muslim communities.<sup>17</sup> Their ideas were certainly shaped by European influences, which became clearly visible after they took over the power in the new republic of Turkey. One of the main members of the Young Turks in that period was Mustafa Kemal Pasha, a well respected army officer.

It was clear however, that other parts of the population felt attracted to the ideas of the Young Turks. That the Turkish people were willing to fight in their war of independence, after the country had suffered severely in the First World War, corroborates this fact.

The Young Turks focused, in their negotiations and later on in the war, on the declaration of Wilson which states the right of self determination. The declaration stated that every people had the right to establish their own country. The effects of the Wilson declaration can be found throughout the whole Middle East. Shortly after the First World War, Wilson made a blue print for today's map of the Middle East.

In 1923, after the Turkish so called Freedom War, the army was able to expel the Allied army. Finally a new state was established; much smaller than the Ottoman Empire used to be, although far bigger than the Allies had in mind when they proposed the Sevres treaty. After one year, in July 1924 the treaty of Lausanne was signed. "With this treaty,

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<sup>16</sup> <http://www.turkishnews.com/DiscoverTurkey/anatolia/history.html>

<sup>17</sup> (1) Zürcher, E.J.

the Allies recognized the present-day territory of Turkey.”<sup>18</sup> The signing of the treaty both fixed the Turkish borders and caused the international recognition of the sovereignty of the new country as the successor state of the former Ottoman Empire.

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With the foundation of this new state the centuries long rule by the Caliph came to an end on the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1924.<sup>19</sup> Already in November 1922 the new government had “separated the offices of Sultan and Caliph and abolished the former”<sup>20</sup> The Sultan had always been the religious leader of the Ottoman Empire; he ruled both as a political and religious leader. Mustafa Kemal Pasha became the president of the new Turkey. As a former army officer, he became president. Turkey became a secular state from that time, and from that moment on the army would see itself as a guardian of secularism. He was to receive the name Atatürk, father of Turks in 1934. This change was naturally of big importance for the Turks, as they no longer lived in an Islamic Empire and their country was much smaller and a secular republic. Atatürk’s leadership is often described as being Kemalistic. Even today’s leaders are sometimes described in such a way, to compare certain characteristics with Atatürk. Kemalism is based on six pillars; republicanism, secularism, populism, nationalism, astaticism and revolutionism. In this thesis focus will be on the secularist pillar of Atatürk’s policy.

It is important to remember the fact that with the leadership of Atatürk the Islamic rule basically ended in Turkey. The Turkey, as we know it today, has existed only since 29<sup>th</sup> of October 1923. The country suffered heavy losses during the First World War, this war served as the proverbial last straw for an Empire in decline. The republic founded by Atatürk was the remaining part of the once very powerful and influential Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>18</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/13.htm>

<sup>19</sup> (2) Zürcher, E. J.; p. 208-210

<sup>20</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/13.htm>

Some important facts, which are noticeable anti-Islamic and pro-secularism about his new rule are the following<sup>21</sup>: We can distinguish three streams:<sup>22</sup>

- The secularism of the state, educations and law system: the Caliphate was abolished. Constitutional amendment, without Islam as the official religion. No longer was it allowed to set up religious movements and parties, Islamic schools were closed. Topics and ideas for the Friday sermons in mosques were from now on given by the state. In order to increase government influence a special ministry was given this task, meaning that the government could use the Friday sermon to spread their own ideas.
- Attacking religious symbols and replacing them by European ones. Sunday replaced Friday as the weekly day off. A new calendar, clock and also the principles of last names were introduced. The Latin alphabet was now used instead of the Arabic one.
- Hindering of the daily practice of Islam. Atatürk used the mosques for other, secular purposes. In 1935 for instance he decided to use an important mosque, Aya Sophia, as a museum.<sup>23</sup> Discouraging of the use of religious clothes, closing monasteries and the Tarrikat order got forbidden. Religious clothing, a loose definition, was only discouraged, due to Atatürk's fear of banning head scarves. From 1925 "religious clothing" was forbidden. However, it was up to universities or employers to judge which clothes they found acceptable.

These new laws were a strong sign that the new Turkey was looking for inspiration from and connection with Europe instead of other Islamic countries. The special ministry Atatürk set up in March 1924 for religious affairs is the Diyanet Isleri Bakanligi (Presidency for Religious Affairs) or in short Diyanet. All religious affairs were by this means under state control. This had two different outcomes: on one hand Islam became more and more a state matter, so in a way Islam was politicized. On the

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.ataturk.com/content/view/24/43>

<sup>22</sup> (2) Zürcher, p. 234-235

<sup>23</sup> [http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ist\\_muze.htm](http://www.allaboutturkey.com/ist_muze.htm)

other hand, its aim was to reduce (the influence of) Islam in Turkey. Keeping the old traditions would have been backward, and would not have fitted into the new modern Turkey.<sup>24</sup>

What followed was the official ban of the Sharia. Atatürk used the Swiss model for family law instead of the laws from the Quran. From that time, polygamy was officially forbidden in Turkey. However, the transformation of the population did not turn out to be that easy.<sup>25</sup>

The people found all kinds of ways to profess their religion, although religion did not fit in Atatürk's view for the new Turkey. The new Turk was supposed to be secular, modern and progressive. Barbarism needed to be replaced, and Islam in the existing form did not fit in the new Turkish structure. Atatürk was trying to introduce the so called "çağdaş İslam" which can be translated as contemporary Islam.<sup>26</sup>

Atatürk was not against Islam itself, Atatürk wanted to ban Islamists from organizing themselves in any way. As above mentioned, the connection between religion and politics was logical for Muslims. Exactly this feature of Islamism was what Atatürk wanted to prevent. Regardless, it is disputable whether Atatürk was against Islam or only against the open profession of it. Some quotes which try to prove the latter statement are:

- The new modern Turk was Muslim; this religion was automatically mentioned in the passport. Atatürk did not regard Islam as something which should be banned or declared illegal.<sup>27</sup>
- Atatürk had Quran translated into Turkish. He wanted people to be able to read it, and freedom of religion was important to him.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J. 234-235

<sup>25</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 234

<sup>26</sup> (1) Yavuz, M.H. – *Islamic political identity in Turkey* – New York, 2003; p.48

<sup>27</sup> (1) Yavuz, M.H.; p. 47

<sup>28</sup> Howe, H. – *Turkey today, a nation divided over Islam's revival* – Colorado 2000; p. 40



- According to Atatürk, secularism was a task for the state. Secularism was the policy trying to stop religious and ethnical difference in the country. His strategy was to create this so called New Turk, who was at least not different by his religion from the other New Turks.<sup>29</sup>

To summarize: Atatürk's measures to ban Islam from the new republic were not working as he had in mind. They can be seen as fairly contra productive; Islam did not vanish at all from Turkey but rather disappeared underground. As will be discussed later on this became fertile ground for the development of extremism. In the West secularism is thought to be positive, philosophers had argued that true religion can be professed in a better way if it is no longer under state control. The population is better able to be religious in its own way. On the other hand, in Islamic societies, secularism is often seen as a brutal attack on religion and religious people.<sup>30</sup> This was exactly what Atatürk was doing; he imposed his citizens to a new secular state and implemented very quickly various kinds of changes. This is something to keep in mind, while discussing secular politics in a Muslim inhabited country like Turkey.

To be more precise: Atatürk and the other reformers of the early 1920s opted for a secular state, they removed religion from the sphere of public policy and restricted it exclusively to that of personal morals, behavior, and faith. Although private religious rituals and life could still continue, religion and religious organization were excluded from public life. The inhabitants however, did not give up their creed, and people found all kinds of ways to profess their religion and form their organizations.

At the beginning of Atatürk's rule, till the 1930's, it was officially allowed to set up political parties. However, the Turkish people were not used to living in a democracy so not many parties were founded. The first significant nationwide party, the Cumhuriyet

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<sup>29</sup> (3) Yavuz, M.H. – *Turkish Islam and the secular state: the Gülen movement* – FILL IN ; p. xxiii

<sup>30</sup> Armstrong, K. – *Geschiedenis van een wereldgodsdienst* – London 2001; p.237

Halk Partisi (CHP, Republican People's Party), was organized by Mustafa Kemal Pasha in 1923.<sup>31</sup>

In 1927, the second political movement appeared when the oppressed Kurdish minority tried to unite all their organizations into one big one Hoyboun<sup>32</sup> (Independence) group. The Hoyboun did not solidify into a political party, but Atatürk took it as a sign that the people were unhappy with the current situation. Although Atatürk did not want any form of opposition, his friend Fethi Okyar set up another party, the Serbest Cumhuriyet Firkasi (SCF, Free Republican Party) which “was established with the approval of Atatürk himself”<sup>33</sup> to give the Kurdish people a way to express themselves. When he found out that this opposition party became very successful he was very displeased. After only three years, in 1930, he decided to ban opposition parties again.

Atatürk died in 1938, and Ismet İnönü became his successor. İnönü came from the same group as Atatürk did; both had been members of the Young Turks group. “The stability of the new republic was made evident by the smoothness of the presidential succession. The day after Atatürk's death, the Grand National Assembly elected his chief lieutenant, İnönü, president.”<sup>34</sup> The new president was a well known politician, as he had been the chief negotiator for the Ottoman Empire when the treaty of Lausanne was signed. He also served as prime minister under Atatürk so it came as no surprise that he was elected as the next president of Turkey. Generally İnönü stayed close to his predecessor's beliefs.<sup>35</sup> His biggest problem was the Second World War which broke out shortly after his appointment. He was able to avoid involvement in the war for a long period. İnönü concentrated instead on the economic and financial problems his country had to cope with. Only in February 1945 did Turkey join the Allied side, as this was “a necessary precondition for participation in the Conference on International Organization... from which the United Nations (UN) emerged.”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 210-211

<sup>32</sup> <http://www.kurdmedia.com/articles.asp?id=9949>

<sup>33</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 223-225

<sup>34</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

<sup>35</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J. ; p 231-232

<sup>36</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

## 2.2 Turkey after the Second World War, multiparty system developed

After the Second World War there were many changes in Turkish politics due to several factors. First of all, Atatürk died in 1938, and in the years which followed it became clear that his successor Ismet İnönü was more open to sincerely pluralize the politics. The second reason was that The United States helped Turkey economically after the war and they summoned reforms on the political field.<sup>37</sup> Because of the economic aid Turkish society itself changed as well. For the first time a new middle class emerged; those people wanted to have influence “to promote specific interests... through representatives in parliament or through the cabinet...”<sup>38</sup> The changing society called for reforms; their wish was to be represented in the government, to be allowed to express their demands. “This trend resulted primarily from factors such as the advent of multiparty politics, economic development and the accompanying expansion of opportunity, and improvements in communications.”<sup>39</sup> This process was already under the surface but the outburst was clear in the 1946 elections.

This all lead to the official introduction of a multi party system. The multiparty system in Turkey is characterized by three important points which will be explained before looking at the details.

- Guardianship of power by the army. In Turkey three coup d’etats took place; in 1960, 1971 and 1980. Another so called “soft” coup happened in 1997.<sup>40</sup> The army took over power in these cases; they defended their actions by arguing that it was their task to protect Atatürk’s secular republic<sup>41</sup>. A major role of the armed forces was to act as guardian of the constitution and directly against the political Islam.<sup>42</sup>
- Many parties have been founded, merged, dissolved or outlawed after a military coup. This kind of game we can see often in the Turkish political scene: People are

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<sup>37</sup> Wetenschappelijke raad voor het regeringsbeleid (WRR) – *De Europese Unie, Turkije en de Islam* – Amsterdam 2004; p. 101

<sup>38</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/85.htm>

<sup>39</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/85.htm>

<sup>40</sup> WRR ; p. 89

<sup>41</sup> Howe, M.; p. 134

<sup>42</sup> WRR; p.106

party members, the party is banned and the same leaders set up another party a few years later. Generally the new founded party is less extreme, more moderate, or at least claims to be so. In the framework of this thesis I will not go into detail to all of the Turkish political parties in the complex years of the 1960's and 1970's. The history shows many parties, fusions and divisions. The whole spectrum has been represented by many parties. In the 75 years between 1923 and 1998, Turkey witnessed the existence of not less than 57 governments; it is of course impossible to mention them all.

- Among those parties had always been Islamic based ones, main players who keep on finding new parties, after bans and dissolutions. Because the main focus of my thesis is on the Islamic parties, they will be discussed more extensively. It will be pointed out that the Islamist movement appeared in many forms, under many names and never lost their influence although the army tried to ban them time after time.

In the beginning of the multi party system the CHP was trying to lose their strong connections with strict secularism.<sup>43</sup> All the other parties which were founded tried to stress the fact that they were against the strict Kemalist principles. In the period between 1945 and 1950, not less than 24 new political parties were founded. All of them had as their main goal to weaken the secularist policies.

Directly after the war Adnan Menderes founded the Demokrat Parti (DP, Democratic Party). Menderes was a former member of Atatürk's party, but he had left the party earlier because of internal disputes. The DP would become the most successful party. In the first free elections, in 1946, the DP received almost 15% of votes in the elections; they did this of course at the cost of the CHP.<sup>44</sup> The DP was, among other things, advocating for more freedom and respect for Islam. Due to their success it became again permitted to make the hajj (Islamic pilgrimage, one of the five obliged to fulfill

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<sup>43</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J. p; 278-288

<sup>44</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

for Muslims) to Mecca. Furthermore religious education as reintroduced as a mandatory subject at secondary schools. The mosques were allowed to do their prayer call in Arabic<sup>45</sup> and so on. In the 1950 elections 80% of the Turks voted for the DP, the CHP leaders reacted by criticizing the DP for having ties with “informal religious networks”<sup>46</sup> The DP continued their struggle for more religious freedom; and for the first time the fear for Islamism was visible in Turkish politics. The secular CHP was afraid of losing its monopoly; it was certainly not the aim of holding free elections that their own party would lose influence and the majority of votes.

In the 1960’s “the inability of the two main political parties to cooperate in the assembly brought the parliamentary process to a standstill as months passed.”<sup>47</sup> The economy was in very bad condition, many people lost their jobs and unemployment rates rose. After a couple of months the army staged a coupe d’etat. The new government was comprised mainly of the army officers who were involved in the coup. In 1960, the trial of a few hundred former government officials and DP party members took place. Most of them were found guilty, and fifteen death sentences were pronounced. Partly in response to public appeals for leniency, the death sentences of former President Bayar and eleven others were commuted to life imprisonment, but Menderes and two former cabinet ministers were hanged.<sup>48</sup>

As said, the beginning of the multiparty system in Turkey was not that easy. At the end of Atatürk’s leadership it was forbidden to find opposition parties. The period immediately after the Second World War saw many parties emerging. A restless period followed, in which the DP took over power from CHP. This DP influence ended when the army stole power in 1960. By 1960 the army was already deeply involved in political affairs because of the government's use of martial law to enforce its policies.

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<sup>45</sup> WWR; p. 101, 102

<sup>46</sup> (1) Yavuz, M.H. ; p. 61

<sup>47</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

<sup>48</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 312-313

“The senior command concluded that the government had departed from Kemalist principles and that the republic was in imminent danger of disintegration.”<sup>49</sup>

In 1960 the army was backed by CHP and the media, due to economic crisis and corruption within the DP the army revolted and DP was overthrown.

From 1961 on, after a new constitution, the Islamists were given more freedom. A new more liberal constitution came into force, but that did not assured that more Islamic parties were founded. The government had a new idea: trying to bring the Islamist radical movements to a standstill, by giving them a bit of what they wanted. More attention was paid to religious education; mosques were built and so on. Of course these mosques and schools were still under control of the Diyanet.

Afterwards, secretly and later on openly, new political parties were founded. Naturally Islamic based ones were among them. The Adalet Partisi (AP, Justice Party) was the first political party used by “semi urbanized and rural Muslims”<sup>50</sup> to express openly their wishes at the religious spectrum after the first military coup. The AP, which is “generally recognized as the heir of the DP”<sup>51</sup> had troubles forming a government after the 1961 elections. While the AP was trying to form a coalition government with CHP they kept on struggling about the amnesty for the former DP members who were found guilty in the big 1960 trial. This issue was finally solved, most of the prisoners were given amnesty and the AP became more and more popular. After the 1965 elections Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel was able to form a one-party government with his AP. This situation lasted till another new military coup was staged in 1971.

At the same time the suppression began: As early as 1967 and 1973 leaders of Islamic Parties were imprisoned for attempting “to bring the Islamic State Constitution to

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<sup>49</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

<sup>50</sup> (2) Yavuz, M.H.; p. 66

<sup>51</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

Turkey”<sup>52</sup>. The Adalet Partisi and CHP were alternately in power, the AP claiming to be the successor of the DP after the ban which followed the 1960 coup.

The AP was a party which “promoted tolerance of the open expression of the traditional Islam”<sup>53</sup> and this appealed to many people apparently as they won the elections in 1965 with a large majority.

From 1973 to 1980, between the second and third military coups, the country had a series of weak coalition governments that were unable to handle increasingly serious economic problems and political violence.<sup>54</sup> The power was alternating between the AP and the CHP but neither of them was able to solve Turkey’s problems. The declining economy was the biggest worry for both parties.

In 1980 the AP was banned, followed after another military coup. After the 1980 coup all other political parties were banned as well, and this lasted until 1987. AP’s leader Erbakan and 21 other party members were accused of “mingling politics and religion”<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>52</sup> Karmon, E. – “Islamic Terrorist activities in Turkey in the 1990s” – Terrorism and Political Violence, winter 1998; p. 102

<sup>53</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.turkishnews.com/DiscoverTurkey/anatolia/history.html>

<sup>55</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J. p. 352

### 2.3 Turkey's last elections, political reforms

This confusing period in the 1960's and 1970's in Turkey has stabilized in recent years. In 1982, the voters approved a new constitution, which established an authoritarian presidential system and installed Kenan Evren as president for a seven-year period.<sup>56</sup> Evren had been the leader of the military coup. Demirel, Ecevit, and other former political leaders were excluded from participation at that time. Elections for the National Assembly were held in November 1983. Turgut Özal first became Prime Minister and later on President in 1989. He suddenly died in 1993, former president Demirel -and at that time Prime Minister- succeeded him as president. Özal had been an important politician for the Islamic case; that is why he needs to be briefly mentioned before heading to the recent politics in Turkey. Özal was the first politician who started the process towards the acceptance of Islamism.<sup>57</sup> Because it was clear the Islamists had big support in Turkey it was decided that "Çagdas Islam", this new state Islam, had to be promoted rather than secularism. It was spread around by the Diyanet. Özal actually wanted to support the non official Islam, not connected with Diyanet, to take the wind out of the sails of the more radical Islamists. Islam was now used as an ideological weapon of the army in fact.<sup>58</sup>

Özal gave the Diyanet a task to create solidarity and unification of the people. Under his reign the number of mosques rose and religious education became a mandatory subject at school. More Islamic publications, movements and groups appeared. Turkey tried to strengthen ties with other Islamic countries on the international level as well.

Because this thesis focuses on the recent developments in Turkish politics a step forward will be made to the last two governmental elections. The elections in 1999 were held after the so called "soft coup" in 1997. On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February the army launched a campaign in which Irtica (Islamist fundamentalism) was pointed out as the biggest

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<sup>56</sup> <http://www.turkishnews.com/DiscoverTurkey/anatolia/history.html>

<sup>57</sup> (2) Zürcher. E.J.; p. 365-67

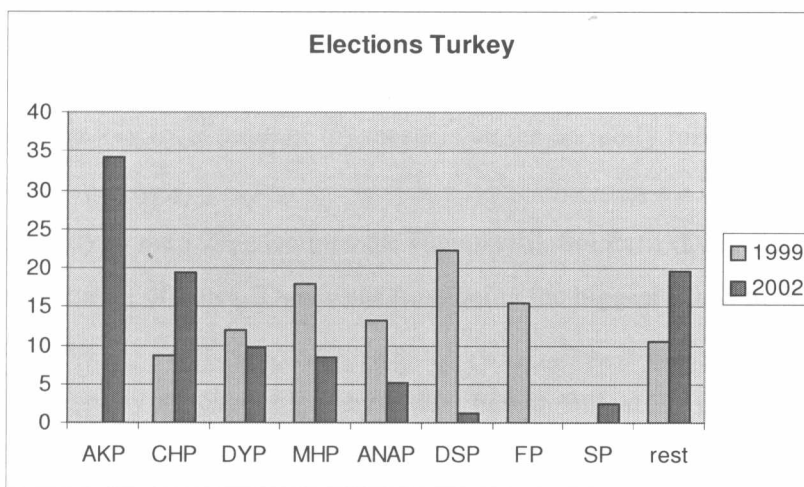
<sup>58</sup> (2) Zürcher. E.J.; p. 365-67



danger of Turkey.<sup>59</sup> I decided to only give an overview of the biggest parties, and a small Islamic based party which was new in the 2002 elections. For example, 21 parties joined the elections in 1999, which is far too much to discuss here.<sup>60</sup>

A short graphical overview of the last two elections and the abbreviations of the several parties will make things more clear.<sup>61</sup>

Figure 1: last two elections in Turkey.



- Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (**AKP**, Justice and Development Party)
- Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (**CHP**, Republican People's Party)
- Doğru Yol Partisi (**DYP**, True Path Party)
- Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (**MHP**, National Movement Party)
- Anavatan Partisi (**ANAP**, Motherland Party)
- Demokratik Sol Parti (**DSP**, Democratic Left Party)
- Fazilet Partisi (**FP**, Virtue Party)
- Saadet Partisi (**SP**, Felicity Party)

<sup>59</sup> WWR; p. 89

<sup>60</sup> [http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil\\_id=13](http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=13)

<sup>61</sup> Information taken from [http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil\\_id=13](http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=13), and <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/modules/secim2002/genel.asp> the graph I made myself

The three biggest parties after the elections in 1999 were the DSP (22%), MHP (18%) and the FP (15%). These parties will be discussed later, with a focus on the FP, being the only Islamist party out of that three.

After 2002, the big winner was the AKP (34%) with CHP as the second biggest party with 19% of the votes. We can assume that the election reflects that the society is split; the struggle between the Islamists and the secularists is visible in the voting results.

As can be seen in the table above the newly created Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP, Justice and Development party) gained the most votes. This is an interesting result, and because the key focal point of my thesis is on the currently ruling party I will discuss them last.

Surprisingly in the 1999 elections the Demokratik Sol Parti (DSP, Democratic Left Party) lost a lot of votes. They went from being the biggest party, to only receiving 1% of the votes.

DSP is the party which was lead by Bülent Ecevit. Bülent Ecevit was the former leader of the CHP, after İnönü had died, from 1973 until 1980. Like many of his colleagues, he is a controversial person. He was banned from political life after the military coup in 1980 but he came back to politics in 1987. This was in fact not that special; after 1980, all political parties were banned and it took seven years before the parties were allowed again. Ecevit's wife had founded the DSP in the meantime and he took over the presidency, after a referendum which was held to let him enter politics, again.<sup>62</sup> The party was not successful at first but in 1998 they received enough votes to become a minority party in the government. Due to the fact the government toppled in 1998, Ecevit was appointed to make a minority government to lead the country to the new elections in 1999. In this period, under Ecevit leadership the Partiya Karkerên Kurdistan (PKK, Kurdish Workers Party) leader Abdullah Öcalan was taken into custody. The capture of this radical Kurdish nationalist gave the DSP an enormous boost and was the explanation for them achieving almost a quarter of the votes in 1999 elections. "Tension,

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<sup>62</sup> [http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil\\_id=13](http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=13)

economic crisis and conflicts both in the government and inside the DSP reached a peak in 2001.”<sup>63</sup> Unfortunately the DSP was not able to solve the problems. This all led to the “resignation of the government”<sup>64</sup> and the newly held elections.

With 18% of the votes in 1999, to 8 % in 2002, the Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP, National Movement Party) lost quite a few of their voters. The MHP is without a doubt highly nationalistic and “labeled by some as fascist.”<sup>65</sup> The MHP is “essentially secularist, the MHP nonetheless regarded Islam as one of the pillars of the Turkish state”. In the framework of this thesis it is not possible to go into much detail but Turkey suffered greatly from terror attacks in the 1970’s and 1980’s. However, it is necessary to mention shortly that many of these “violence-prone groups of the right were apparently attached, directly or indirectly to the MHP.”<sup>66</sup> The best organized of these, the Grey Wolves, were armed and regularly resorted to terrorist tactics. The MHP takes a special place in the Islamist movement in Turkey, as it is known that “some members of the right-wing Nationalist Movement converted to Islam.”<sup>67</sup> (WHAT TO DO WITH THAT?)

The third biggest party, Fazilet Partisi (FP, Virtue Party) which had 15% of the votes in 1999 was declared illegal in June 2001. It was the successor party of Refah Partisi (RP) which had been banned in February 1998. Both parties had leaders who had been influential in the earlier described AK. Those parties were without any doubt based on Islam.

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<sup>63</sup> [http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil\\_id=13](http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=13)

<sup>64</sup> [http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil\\_id=13](http://www.belgenet.net/ayrinti.php?yil_id=13)

<sup>65</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/15.htm>

<sup>66</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/16.htm>

<sup>67</sup> Karmon, E.

The special feature of the Turkish Islamist parties is the fact that they are “fully integrated in the Turkish pluralist system”<sup>68</sup>. For that reason the more violent and extreme groups have a more marginal position; their goals are, at least partly, represented by the RP or FP. The RP is seen as “the Islamic movement’s leading political force.”<sup>69</sup> For this thesis we can assume the FP as the successor as well in this respect. The question is now whether the RP and the FP, were legitimate democratic parties or if they were only misusing the pluralist party system in order to install an Islamic-based state in Turkey. As said the RP was outlawed in 1998, the reason for this was “real threat for the regime, although the sentence was based on political and legalistic grounds and not... the violent or terrorist radical activity”<sup>70</sup>. The biggest difference with the Islamist groups in other countries can be found in the fact that the Turkish Islamist parties are integrated in the political system. The leaders can be elected, become mayor, take place in the government. Their expanding influence and growing popularity is watched closely by the army. Also the Constitutional Court in the latest years made some attempts to stop the Islamic based parties from strengthening their power in Turkish political arena. “No serious terror acts were perpetrated by Islamic groups” in Turkey from the moment RP had their electoral success till the moment the government was forced to resign. After resigning from the RP government most RP leaders were absorbed in the FP, which had further success in the elections by receiving 15% of the votes.

Why those parties were declared illegal in Turkey? The RP “is one of the main avenues for political Islam to articulate its demand in public space”<sup>71</sup> and this coalition shows the duality in Turkish identity. 1996 was a historical moment; it was the first time in the Republic’s history that the prime minister had a political philosophy based on Islam. The RP became as well popular due to the fact they improved social services as education and reduced corruption.

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<sup>68</sup> Karmon, E.

<sup>69</sup> Karmon, E.

<sup>70</sup> Karmon, E.

<sup>71</sup> (2) Yavuz; p.63

In the 2002 elections we find the return of the CHP, Atatürk's party, with a good election result. For a long period they were not represented in government anymore, and a couple of times the party did not even make it to the threshold. Many DSP voters were behind them, because they were disappointed by the result of the DSP government and they turned back again to the CHP. The CHP had many troubles following the aforementioned ban after the army seized power in 1980. Another reason for their success is the fact that CHP was always Atatürk's party. People suppose the party is the protector from secularism and many voters used this assumption as a dissenting vote against the AKP. The temporary struggle in Turkey is between the Islamic and secular parties.<sup>72</sup> In the last elections the Turks voted differently. In the last years there has always been a steady support for Islamic based parties on one hand and a more liberal, secular part on the other side of the political spectrum.

A small party which first appeared in the 2002 elections is the Saadet Partisi (SP, Felicity Party) The more radical members of the former FP and RP set up the SP which, as a newcomer in last elections got only 2,5%. The SP did not receive many votes, but as it is the party which is following the more strict line of Islam, with the FP and RP as predecessor it should be given attention as well in my thesis. The chairman of the SP is Recai Kutan. He used to be deputy chairman of MSP, deputy chairman of Refah Partisi and chairman of Fazilet Partisi. After this party was closed down he became the SP chairman.<sup>73</sup> This is a proof that this is the way it works in Turkey. The one party gets banned and the next one is founded by the same people. Just to illustrate their ideas with one example: they don't agree with the fact that children are hindered to study Koran. "It should be allowed from five years old, not twelve. The moral and national values are in decline and Milli Görüş is the solution."<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p.375-80

<sup>73</sup> <http://www.saadetpartisi.org.tr/page.asp?id=146>

<sup>74</sup> <http://www.milligazete.com.tr> - Kutan: Çare Millî Görüş'te – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005

For the main question in this thesis, it is important to look closely to the 2002 winner of the elections. The center of attention is to see if the AKP has an Islamic agenda. I want to prove, that although they argue differently the AKP has an Islamic program. The fact that there is no ban on the AKP could be explained by fear of the National Security Council. Although they banned two previous parties with Islamic orientations, the National Security Council could not take on the AKP because of its huge popular mandate.<sup>75</sup>

Why is the AKP so popular, and still ruling? What is their party program and the actual policy they follow?

On their website<sup>76</sup> an English language party program can be found. Not many references to religion are written there.

- Our Party constitutes a ground where the unity and the integrity of the Republic of Turkey, the secular, democratic, social State of law, and the processes of civilianization, democratization, freedom of belief and equality of opportunity are considered essential.
- Our Party embraces without discrimination, all of our citizens, regardless of their sex, ethnic origins, beliefs and opinion.
- Basically, secularism is a principle which allows people of all religions, and beliefs to comfortably practice their religions, to be able to express their religious convictions and live accordingly, but which also allows people without beliefs to organize their lives along these lines. From this point of view, secularism is a principle of freedom and social peace.
- It is also unacceptable to make use of religion for political, economic and other interests, or to put pressure on people who think and live differently by using religion.
- It also rejects the interpretation and distortion of secularism as enmity against religion

But as well:

- Our Party attributes a special importance to Turkey's relation with Islamic countries.
- May Allah be the beloved and assistant of our nation?
- Everything will be better with us, with the help of Allah.

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<sup>75</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 423-24

<sup>76</sup> [www.akparti.org.tr](http://www.akparti.org.tr)

This is actually only how the party program of AKP looks. After four years of government some result can be seen, the actual measures the AKP has taken. Some policies Erdoğan has carried out in the last few years I would like to show for the purpose of my thesis:<sup>77</sup>

Erdoğan himself had been educated in an Imam Hatip (religious academy school) and he is a big supporter of these kinds of schools. He realizes that transforming a society starts with education so the AKP put a lot of effort of changing the school system. When Erdoğan was still mayor of Istanbul he said that he would transform all schools into Imam Hatip ones but he reconsidered this statement.<sup>78</sup> He changed the educational system in such a way that also graduates from the Islamic schools can enter the university, which wasn't the case before. In this way, students without any Western Fundamental knowledge can enter normal university and apply for all kinds of jobs which were not within their reach before. In accession talks with the European Union Erdoğan also insisted on removing a reference in which the Turkish educational system was described as secular.<sup>79</sup>

Two other examples I want to mention: Alcohol is banned in public restaurants in areas where the AKP won the municipal elections. Erdoğan was able to also carry out this law in Istanbul, when he was mayor there. The attitude towards the Quran is tested among Turkish Airline employees as well.<sup>80</sup> The time in which Erdoğan was mayor of Istanbul is very interesting, after this period he declared on several occasions that he has changed. Being the prime minister he says that he is no longer in favor of the political Islam but it is assumed that this is only a strategic change.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> (2) Rubin, M. – Mr. Erdoğan's Turkey – Wall Street Journal October 2006  
<http://www.meforum.org/article/1036>

<sup>78</sup> *ibid*

<sup>79</sup> *ibid*

<sup>80</sup> *ibid*

<sup>81</sup> Wynia, S. "Turkije wolf in Schaapskleren" – Elsevier March 2006  
<http://www.geocities.com/mediacontrole/artikel4002.html>

## 2.4 The main players in the Turkish Islamist stream

One of the most well known and controversial political leader of the last decades was Necmettin Erbakan. It is needed to go into the history a little again.

Shortly after the coup in 1971, new elections were held. A newcomer at that time was the Milli Selamet Partisi (MSP, National Movement Party) led by Necmettin Erbakan, who had been leader of the proscribed Milli Nizam Partisi.<sup>82</sup> (MNP, National Order Party). The MNP only existed for one year; it was founded and banned in 1971. The MSP was regarded as a revival of the MNP under a new name. “The principal plank in the MSP's platform was the restoration of Islamic law and practice in Turkey.”<sup>83</sup>

The MSP was the “first republican party to espouse openly Islamic principles inaugurated the politicization of the religious issue”<sup>84</sup> The Turkish society underwent a lot of social changes during the 1960's and 1970's; economical decline and massive emigration.

So, in the 1970's Erbakan's Islamist movement's goal was among other things to develop educated counter-elite by strengthening the Islamic stream in the educational system.<sup>85</sup>

As discussed before, thanks to “clashes between the left and right”<sup>86</sup> and the ever returning guardianship of the army to protect Atatürk's state, a coup was staged again. The MSP was outlawed and all politicians were banned from political life for 10 years.

During the post-1980 coup period, governments perceived Islamic education as a panacea against extremist ideologies. Still, lots of people felt attracted to the Islamist movement and the Refah Partisi (RP, Welfare Party) was set up in 1983. It did not obtain a legal status until 1987, when the ten year political ban was lifted after seven years. The RP became successful because they played “a key role in the political

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<sup>82</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 326

<sup>83</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/16.htm>

<sup>84</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/85.htm>

<sup>85</sup> Narli, N. – “The rise of the Islamist movement in Turkey” – Meria Journal, September 1999 (<http://www.biu.ac.il/SOC/besa/meria/journal/1999/issue3/jv3n3a4.html>)

<sup>86</sup> *ibid*



socialization of the Islamic group by mobilizing them<sup>87</sup>. They brought them to the polls and mobilized in this way the Islamic orientated periphery.

Who are the people voting for the Islamists this time? The socio-economic background, political aims, and interests of those supporting the Islamist movement are very diverse.<sup>88</sup>

- University population, especially upwardly mobile youth who must compete with the established urban middle and upper-middle classes
- Unskilled young urban people, who suffer from high unemployment
- Some from the state-employed bourgeoisie, bearing falling real wages and high inflation, particularly since the early 1990s.
- In Anatolia, there are also sectors of ultra-nationalists who have embraced Islamist attitudes and a sizeable number of religiously conservative Kurds who assume that an Islamic order could possibly bring solutions to the conflict in their region.<sup>89</sup>

The RP, which became very successful only after 1994, became popular thanks to their improvements of public services and the reduction of corruption.<sup>90</sup>

However, the seemingly success of the RP came to an end caused by several factors:

The people in Turkey were disappointed by the Islamist anti-democratic position on several issues. Erbakan for example made critical and insulting comments about people who took part in the "One Minute of Darkness for Enlightenment" civil protest in February 1997.<sup>91</sup> RP's support for constitutional changes caused some worry that it was trying to dilute the secular state. Women were as well worried about the reduction of their rights. The party's allegiance to democracy was also called into question. Finally, there were allegations that the Refah Party had connections with more militant Islamist groups. Altogether this resulted in the escalation of tensions between the military and

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<sup>87</sup> (2) Yavuz, M.H. – "Political Islam and the Welfare (Refah) party" – Comparative politics, October 1997

<sup>88</sup> Narli, N.

<sup>89</sup> *ibid*

<sup>90</sup> (2) Yavuz, M.H

<sup>91</sup> Narli, N.

the RP and also the antagonism between the Islamists and secular public opinion. This provided a legitimate framework to bring RP to court in May 1997.<sup>92</sup>

This was after the successful campaign against İrtica by the army, which was mentioned earlier. This soft coup is very important for Islamism in Turkey, as it forced Erbakan to take measures and implement laws which were set up against Islamism. The mandatory primary education was extended to eight years, instead of five, assuring that their children were not sent to Islamic schools after five years.<sup>93</sup>

After this soft coup, in December 1997, the new Fazilet Party was founded by 33 former RP deputies. At that time it had 144 seats in the parliament which it had obtained as a result of the switchover of the RP deputies. The party's conservative wing controlled by Erbakan elected the parliamentary group leaders before the reformist wing, led by Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, had the chance to do so.<sup>94</sup>

Along with renewing its membership, the FP has tried to rectify its image as anti-women and undemocratic. They did not mention the old rhetoric "Islamic mission" anymore, but they emphasized on democracy, human rights, and personal liberty. They as well started to support for Turkey's EU membership, a step the RP had opposed for three decades. The last big change was that the RP always strongly recommended its supporters to have the Islamic dress but the FP appointed two women without any head coverings to its Central Decision making Board. From this point of view the FP looks very progressive, but Erbakan's also had another policy towards Islamic terrorist groups. This policy was visible by hosting representatives from the radical Islamist including the Palestinian Hamas or Egypt's Muslim Brothers while he was Premier, till the end of 1997. After the FP was outlawed the AKP was founded, and headed by Erdoğan after he was released from prison. Erbakan at the moment is an old man; he does not have any official public function. In 2003 he was sentenced for forging financial documents in his RP.

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<sup>92</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 380-82

<sup>93</sup> WWR; p. 90

<sup>94</sup> Narli, N.

In a Dutch weekly magazine Erbakan is described as “the founding father of a serial of parties which had as central goal to end the secular character of the Turkish state.”<sup>95</sup>

Still at the moment, it is important to see what his ideas were, because he was not the only one convinced by those thoughts. In the Middle East Journal<sup>96</sup> an article was dedicated to the goals of Erbakan. The article was written in 1997, so it mainly focuses on the Refah Party but the main political ideas are not likely to alter much, so a summary of the ideas are needed for this thesis. The main question in the article is whether the RP is honest about their claim that they are secular and democratic. The author doubts this, as the RP has many aspects of an Islamist party.

The proposed “adil düzen” (translated as Just Order) consist of two parts. One part is the economic one; Just Economic Order. This new order is meant to be a third way between capitalism and communism. Experts and party members claim that Islam offers the best economic system. The basic principle is the “the absolute harmony of economic interests among Muslims and the state's duty to manage the economy”<sup>97</sup> It would solve all problems Turkey is facing and in one generation time Turkey would be a leading economic power. The second part is the Legal Pluralism.<sup>98</sup> In this model several law systems would work next to each other, and the different systems are divided along religious lines. Inhabitants can choose to belong to the Islamic law system in this case. Refah ideologues believe that the legal structures of pre-modern Muslim states, including the Ottoman Empire supported legal pluralism.

However, it has been proved to be unpractical and experiences with it proved that the system is inadequate, the same about the Just Economic Order; “It suffers heavily from logical and factual contradictions.”<sup>99</sup> Refah's economical ideas are only a dream, and can never be reached is the conclusion of the article.

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<sup>95</sup> Wynia, S.

<sup>96</sup> Yayla, A. – “Turkey's Leaders - Erbakan's Goals” - Middle East Quarterly September 1997

<sup>97</sup> Yayla, A.

<sup>98</sup> Yayla, A.

<sup>99</sup> Yayla, A.

Erbakan founded the AKP, which is together with the SP the successor party of the Fazilet Party. The AKP represents a more moderate stream than the SP. The AKP reformers made this choice to attract more voters, and to reduce their chances of a ban from the army.<sup>100</sup>

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Erbakan's supposed successor is Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He is the present prime minister of Turkey. The position he held before was mayor of Istanbul, where he was a very popular politician. It is important to stress some of his intended laws during his Istanbul time, although this was fifteen years ago and did not all make it into force. It shows they are typical Islamist proposals: He intended to separate the boys from the girls in school busses, and as well as dividing beaches for women and men. The law which did pass was the ban on alcohol in restaurants.<sup>101</sup> In some more recent speeches Erdoğan distanced himself from those radical ideas.

Serious problems started in December 1997 when he cited a well known poem<sup>102</sup> which he called believers our soldiers and minarets our bayonets. He was convicted for inciting religious hatred for this reason. After he served ten months in prison his FP was banned.

After his stay in prison, Erdoğan set up a new political party, which is the now ruling AKP. The AKP is often abbreviated as AK partisi as the word "ak" is Turkish means white, so it gives a positive sense to the party's name. On the AKP website this is as well used.<sup>103</sup> Of course it was a big problem for Erdoğan to become prime minister, as a convicted person, His friend Abdullah Gül, a fervent supporter, was his stand in and he pushed through a new amendment to let Erdoğan be appointed anyway.

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<sup>100</sup> WWR; p. 106

<sup>101</sup> Wynia, S.

<sup>102</sup> The poem, Asker Duası (Prayer of the Soldier) is written by Ziya Gökalp, a secular nationalist poet

<sup>103</sup> <http://www.akparti.org.tr/>

Some old statements and ideas of Erdoğan had been discussed, but some new speeches are interesting as well. After the big disturbance with the so called Mohammed cartoons Erdoğan made himself known as some speech man of Islamic world. He told that the cartoons were “an attack on our spiritual beliefs”. After Hamas took over power in Palestine, the European countries did not want to keep up diplomatic relations and stopped all financial assistance. It was very surprisingly that Erdoğan invited this Islamic based political party a few weeks after they had formed the government.<sup>104</sup> It was the actually the same thing that Erbakan did. Immediately after he came to power a few of the first countries he visited were Iran and Libya.<sup>105</sup> He did not have much freedom, as he had his coalition, to cut ties of with other countries but these visits can be seen as symbolic.

Recai Kutan, the chairman of Saadet is the last one to mention; as he is derived from the RP and FP. Kutan’s party did not receive many votes during the last elections, but they are considered as the most Islamist party Turkey has now. “The SP as “real” Islamists” even lost many votes in their former power bases.<sup>106</sup>

“Secularism can never be used as a pretext for atheism or as a weapon against religion.”<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>104</sup> Wynia, S.

<sup>105</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 419

<sup>106</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 388

<sup>107</sup> <http://www.saadetpartisi.org.tr/>

## 2.5 Recently Islamist gets more support in Turkey

The AKP says they are not an Islamic based party, but this is not always observable from their steps. In the previous chapter some of the ideas the RP and FP had are pointed out. The AKP, as its heir, has also taken steps which are at least pro Islamism. What does it mean to be Islamic as a political party? It is hard to compare with for example the Christian based parties in Europe, although in Turkey as well religion and state are separated. Islam, in contrast with Christianity, is a complete system, directing all aspects in life. For the Classical Islam the split between church and state is impossible.

In particular, when the Muslims are having a hard time their religion is something they usually fall back on. The politicians and Islamic activists know this and they promote Islam as “a political, social, economic and spiritual embodiment of the solution”<sup>108</sup>

This trend was visible during last century. In general, in hard economic times religion is something people rely on, rather than their government. For example, this message had been preached by the Muslim Brotherhood. Islam would be the solution for all economic and political problems. The Islamists have been trying to win the hearts of the people by giving them social assistance. Schools and food kitchens can be found around the mosques.

In this thesis there is no space to go into details of every aspect of Islam. One important feature of the political Islam that will be discussed is the Islamic keyword tawhid (unity). Tawhid stands for the inseparableness of religion and state. This is an important feature, because as said: In the ideal Islamic state the leader is the Caliph, he is the political and religious leader in one person. In order to reach the Islamic state Islamists usually want to reintroduce the rule by a Caliph. The Caliph was historically always selected by a committee; he holds this title which claims for him temporal and spiritual

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<sup>108</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; 0. 387-88

authority over all Muslims.<sup>109</sup> The last Caliph so far ruled in the Ottoman Empire till Atatürk came to power in 1924 and installed a secular government.

Why is the Islamist stream more popular now? Not only in Turkey but as well in other countries this growth is visible. Six causes for the impressive growth of the Islamist are the following:<sup>110</sup>

- The fall of communism left an empty place in the political scene. On the left scene many intellectuals are looking for an alternative, and they are attracted by Islamist ideas. Islamism is the “the voice of hopelessness”<sup>111</sup>
- Modernization. A pattern is visible, the more modern a Middle Eastern state is, the stronger a revival of Islamism can be seen. Being a modern state it is not surprisingly that an Islamic revival in Turkey is visible.
- The highly questionable form of secularism practiced in Turkey contributed to the religious revival, and so to Refah's growth. Because Muslims do not receive enough freedom to confess their creed they want the RP, or the other Islamist parties, to protect them from any form of oppression.<sup>112</sup>
- The Islamists usually have the best organized parties in Turkey, this is what other parties lack: a good organized leadership. They visit people at home and provide for members (and sometimes potential members) basic needs. Islamists are representing a huge social movement and the faction is evidently highly visible in the whole country.
- Other parties were heavily suffering under corruption in the 1990's, the people are fed up with that and are looking for justice. They hope to find this in Islamism.<sup>113</sup>
- The political parties at the right of the spectrum lost their identity. After the end of Demirel's leadership the parties lost their position as leading force behind

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<sup>109</sup> [http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheworld/02a\\_civilization.htm](http://mediaguidetoislam.sfsu.edu/intheworld/02a_civilization.htm)

<sup>110</sup> Yayla, A.

<sup>111</sup> Yayla, A.

<sup>112</sup> Yayla, A.

<sup>113</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J. ; p. 366

democracy. Center right lost 22% of votes in twelve years and the extreme right, as well as the left parties raised their share of course.

In the 1990's in Turkey a heavy decline was visible: corrupt leaders, bad economic situation. They turned for this reason back to their roots, the Islamic period. Big migration waves occurred in the 1990's towards the cities, the poor people were helped by several social Islamist organizations, and it was "logical that they would follow the election advice" of those Islamic movements.<sup>114</sup>

To what extent is the AKP an Islamist one? Are they really dreaming about the next Caliph instead of a democratic leader? Because many people assume that the AKP wants to reach a more Islamic state, it is important to make clear what that would mean. Maybe those parties are even using the democratic way to finally reach the perfect Islamic state, so it is important to see what their ideas are on the Islamic state, and how it can be reached and so on.

For instance, Erdoğan said in his Istanbul time: "Thank God Almighty, I am a servant of the Shariah"<sup>115</sup> and he had another statement around 1996, which was cynical but might contain some kind of wish: "Democracy is like a streetcar, you ride it until you arrive at your destination and then you step off."<sup>116</sup>

The AKP in Turkey claims not be a political party with a religious axis but many of their voters don't agree with this. Voters choose for the AKP as they believe this party is the one most Islamic based. Recently the AK party got a lot of negative publicity in non-Islamic countries because they did not allow showing the children's cartoon Winnie the Pooh anymore. One of the most important characters in the show is a pig, which is regarded as an unclean animal. The AKP Prime Minister Erdoğan "the offshoot of a

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<sup>114</sup> WWR; p. 106

<sup>115</sup> (2) Rubin, M. – Mr. Erdoğan's Turkey – Wall Street Journal October 2006  
<http://www.meforum.org/article/1036>

<sup>116</sup> (2) Rubin, M.



now-banned Islamist movement” was under fire for seeking to raise the profile of Islam in mainly Muslim but strictly secular Turkey.<sup>117</sup>

Sivan wrote in 1997 very skeptically about Islamists group taking over governmental power.<sup>118</sup> He does not believe it is possible for Islamists to use the democratic way of governing. They are hampered by other parties and usually they can't hold power for a long time. “Further supporting the skeptical view... is the Turkish case, where the radical Necmettin Erbakan was actually permitted to become prime minister but was stymied in every initiative he took and forced out of power within a year of coming to power.”<sup>119</sup>

To repeat once more why political Islam in Turkey became so popular the latest years: The reason can be found in the economically bad situation:<sup>120</sup> “The dead end economical state of the people, and the oppressing regime assured that the population would be driven into the arms of Islamic fundamentalists” and the political Islam would be in this case a “stream of despair” In Turkey this is the case; many people got disappointed by the bad behavior of the different political parties. Corruption and the inability to solve economic problems were the main factors. As seen in many other relatively prosperous Islamic countries, Turkey faces a revival of religion. The AKP has the advantage that they were a new established party, no bad stigmas around them. Erdoğan was a popular politician while he was Istanbul's mayor. The same goes up for another well known politician: Abdullah Gül, former RP and FP member. After Gül gave up his position as prime minister in favor of Erdoğan he is now serving as deputy prime minister and the minister of foreign affairs. Gül has Islamist roots as well; he started his career at the Islamic Development Bank<sup>121</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup> Volkskrant – Winnie de Pooh zonder Knorretje – 14th October 2006

<sup>118</sup> Sivan, E. – “Why Radical Muslims Aren't Taking over Governments” – Middle East Quarterly, December 1997

<sup>119</sup> Sivan, E.

<sup>120</sup> [www.lsp-mas.be/marxisme/2004islam.html](http://www.lsp-mas.be/marxisme/2004islam.html)

<sup>121</sup> Rubin, M. – “Green money, Islamist Politics in Turkey” – Middle East Quarterly, winter 2005

In this respect I also want to mention an influential Islamic stream, the Nakşibendi<sup>122</sup> order. This is one of the few religious Tarrikat which survived all bans and restrictions in Turkey for almost one century. As said: next to the existence of the Diyanet, which represents the official Islam, an unofficial Islam developed. One of those societies is the Nakşibendi: their ideas are mainly focused on the Sharia, the base of religious rules. This order has the reputation of being strict; they were strongly opposed against Atatürk's reforms.<sup>123</sup> It is interesting to see that as well Özal as well as Erbakan were members of Nakşibendi groups.<sup>124</sup>

Some complaints about society of the Nakşibendi were the downfall of values, the growing alcohol consumption, gambling and prostitution. Those developments were, according to them, an evolution which was parallel with European developments. The order recommended members should live according to Islam, the obligation for politics was to promote this good way of living. In my opinion we can find these ideas back in the policy of Erbakan, and his follower Erdoğan.

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<sup>122</sup> WWR; p. 111, 112

<sup>123</sup> WWR; p. 111

<sup>124</sup> (2) Zürcher, E.J.; p. 357

## **Chapter 3 – Turkish migration to the Netherlands**

### **3.1 Turkish immigrants to Western Europe/ the Netherlands**

After looking at the Turkish political situation, the main players in the powerful Islamic movement and their ideas it is time to examine something else. The Turkish people migrated in big numbers to Western Europe, and many people with Turkish roots are currently living in Western Europe and the Netherlands. It is important to see why, when and how this migration took place. Currently a lot of problems are appearing in Western European societies connected with those immigrant groups. For my thesis I will try to prove that the Turkish minority in the Netherlands is not integrated, and therefore maybe highly susceptible to influence from their home country. When this group is indeed easily influenced, this can hamper their integration again. It seems like a circle: poor integration and therefore prey to influences telling them not to integrate. Consequently the Dutch people are afraid they can serve as a lobby group for the Turkish politics, and as well for the Turkish Islamists. Also fears are present that the Turkish people eventually create their own Islamic based political party and enter the Dutch political scene. For this reason it is very significant to see who those people are, what their position in Dutch society is and what their political goal is.

First we need to go back to Western Europe, after the Second World War. The European economy was for a large part destroyed after this war, but after the Marshall plan helped the suffering economy it boomed again. The countries needed more workers and the first work migrants came sporadically after the Second World War.<sup>125</sup> The big waves on the other hand did not arrive till the 1960's. Many of the first immigrants came from countries as Italy, Portugal and Spain. After people from those countries, also the first Turks came.

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<sup>125</sup> <http://www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/turken>

Their first recorded arrival was in 1961 in the Netherlands, they were only with 100 people in total. The next year 300, 1963 was good for 1,200 and in 1964 the number rose to 4,300.<sup>126</sup>

In 1964 the Dutch government set up an official agreement with Turkey, like many other countries at that time did. A recruitment centre was equipped in Ankara for selecting Turkish people to work abroad. In the first wave's wake friends and family members followed, with or without working permit; this was not a problem back then: plenty of work was available in the Netherlands. This kind of work migration had a lot in common with the seasonal work migration which was common happening in the ninetieth century.<sup>127</sup>

Just as before most employment possibilities were found in the heavy "nasty" jobs, and the most Turks ended up again in heavy physical labor in the harbor or other industry. The second parallel can be found in the fact that the people who applied for jobs in the Netherlands were from the poorer, overpopulated areas with not many chances for a good job and better economic prospects. The third aspect was the expectations of the Dutch government.<sup>128</sup> The expectation was that the immigrants had come temporarily. In the beginning the Turkish people thought that as well, they saved money for buying a house in Turkey, and did not want to integrate much into the Dutch society. Their return was more important than settling down in an unknown society. This thinking also clarifies why not many guest workers were attending Dutch language courses or made an effort to integrate into the society.

From both parties the expectations were that this situation was temporary. A big economic boom in Western Europe caused the fact that many workers were needed. Huge unemployment numbers in Turkey, uncertain economic prospect existed on the other hand. The young Turkish men who left for Europe were expected to earn good money in Europe, bring it back to Turkey and this was thought to help the economy.

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<sup>126</sup> (2) Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) – Bevolkingstrends – Heerlen, Autumn 2004; p. 10

<sup>127</sup> <http://www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/turken>

<sup>128</sup> (2) CBS; p. 10

Two big differences were important for bringing the situation as it is right now. Because of mass media like telephones, better transportation possibilities the (emotional) distance got smaller, migrant workers asked their family to come over for example. It was easier then for the Turkish to settle in the new country for a longer period. The Dutch employers were happy with the guest workers; the Dutch after the Second World War did not want to do those kinds of jobs the migrants ended up with. Also, in the period between the two World Wars the birthrate had been low in the Netherlands and this assured that not many new work forces entered the labor market in this period. The family reunion process was welcomed; the young people were simply needed to bulk up the work force. From the first people who arrived in 1965-66 only about 15% are still living in the country, but from people who arrived there from 1972-73 almost half of them still live in the Netherlands.<sup>129</sup>

Something to keep in mind as well is the uncertain situation Turkey was in. After 1960, when the first military coup was staged many people lost their jobs. Lots of people from the countryside migrated to the Turkish cities where “immigrants suffered from substandard housing conditions and lack of infrastructure. They constituted a new periphery whose members are often economically disadvantaged, culturally disintegrated, and politically isolated.”<sup>130</sup>

The bad economic situation, connected with the high unemployment rate, was not easy to solve and the people who migrated to the Netherlands realized it would be hard to find a job in Turkey and they preferred to stay. Turkish officials also thought that sending the Turks for work in Europe would be a good idea for solving their own internal economic problems. The money they would send home would help to recover the Turkish economy.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>129</sup> (2) CBS; p.10

<sup>130</sup> Narli, N.

<sup>131</sup> Ülger, M. – Hoe de Turkse overheid integratie tegenwerkt - <http://www.katholieknieuwsblad.nl/actueel/knl731g.htm>

The Turks who migrated to the Netherlands and other European countries were not average. Most of the Turks were between 25 and 39, did not have a good education and were coming from the East of Turkey, frequently from smaller villages. At the start of the Turkish economic crisis many people from the poorer regions in the east had left their region and were looking for a job in the bigger cities. Many of them had found their way to Istanbul already, so the migration to Europe was in fact the second step.<sup>132</sup> After 1974, the government decided not to supply any more working permits. The motive for this stop can directly be explained by the oil crisis, the economy collapsed in Western Europe and not many migrant workers were needed anymore. Most Turks after 1974 obtained a residence permit because of family reunion or marriage. Another big group of Turks arrived after the military coup in 1980, most of them being left wing political refugees. Many Milli Görüş members (this will be focused on later) left at this time Turkey as well.<sup>133</sup> They got asylum in the Netherlands, as well as another group who lives in the Netherlands of Kurdish origin. This latter group had mostly arrived after 1984, because at that time the conflict between the PKK and the Turkish army increased.<sup>134</sup>

Most workforces were needed in the textile industry and harbor. This spread is still visible, still most Turks live where these kinds of industries were concentrated. Most of them are living in the big cities in the west of the country and the industrial areas in the east of the country.<sup>135</sup>

In total about 3.6 million<sup>136</sup> Turks are living in the European Union, of which an estimated of 300,000 in the Netherlands. In the rest of Europe as well the groups are living in the bigger cities, industrial areas. The Turkish government recognizes this large number of people and they have adapted some laws, rules and even special

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<sup>132</sup> <http://www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/turken>

<sup>133</sup> WWR; p. 132

<sup>134</sup> <http://www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/turken>

<sup>135</sup> <http://www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/turken>

<sup>136</sup> <http://www.turkishdailynews.com.tr> – Turks abroad and the Turkish lobby – 16<sup>th</sup> October 2006

institutions to deal with Turkish citizens living abroad. This policy is important because it tells us about the way Turkey thinks about this rather large group of people.

It is hard to find out what kinds of policy the Turkish government adopted. Sources are contradictory sometimes. Mehmet Emin Ates, the chairman of the Turks Islamitisch Culturele Federatie (TICF, Turkish Islamic Cultural Federation) which is connected with the Diyanet, says that until the 1990's the Turkish government did not have a special policy. "It was only after requests from the Dutch Turkish community that the Diyanet in 1982 began sending the first Imams to the Netherlands."<sup>137</sup> They got permission from the Dutch government to do so. An important feature is that, in Turkey, Özal, the earlier mentioned pro-Islamist politician was then in power. The reason for this was that the Turks "wanted to teach children their religion, they needed imams, for example people to do the ritual washing for deceased."<sup>138</sup> Furthermore, the practical laws on topics such as heritages, marriage and conscription needed to be arranged.<sup>139</sup> Ates does not have the opinion that the Turkish government is trying to influence the Turkish people in the Netherlands. "The government stimulates us to assimilate, the real danger are some Turkish radical movements who are against integration."<sup>140</sup>

The opinion of Mr. Haci Karacaer is also important. (Karacaer is the former chairman of the Milli Görüş, more attention to him will be paid in chapter 4.) He shares the opinion that Turkish legislative policy hardly existed till the 1990's. "Already, since the start of migration to Europe, opposition groups started to organize themselves. First they thought in Turkey that this would pass away, but when this turned out not to be true they founded Diyanet in Europe as well, just to give some counterbalance"<sup>141</sup> "The government tells the Dutch Turks to accept Dutch citizenship, and at the same time stay

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<sup>137</sup> Lazrak, A. Lazrak, A. – Hoe ver reikt de lange arm van Rabat en Istanbul? – interview with Muslim leaders in Holland, <http://www.sp.nl/nieuws/tribune/200108/integratie.stm>

<sup>138</sup> Interview with Mustafa Hamurcu

<sup>139</sup> Lazrak, A.

<sup>140</sup> Lazrak, A.

<sup>141</sup> Lazrak, A.

loyal to their father country.”<sup>142</sup> Both men argue that the Diyanet is an important instrument for Turkish policy in the Netherlands. It would be either just to give religious support, or to control the more radical religious groups.

A completely different opinion on how the Turkish government deals with Turkish Dutch immigrants can be seen in Mehmet Ülger’s article. He agrees with Karacaer and Ates that the Turkish government did not start their official policy until the second half of the 1980’s. From that time the total ban on political parties was lifted and the organizations in Europe also became more visible. They have been waiting for signals from Turkey before stepping out of the background. After 1987, many parties were growing, in Turkey as well as in the Netherlands. Turkey finds their citizens abroad important for the following reasons:

- Remittances. Estimations are impossible to make, he admits, but 10 billion D-Mark (about 5 billion Euros) as a number is mentioned. This is the amount of money the Turks transfer in cash to their family in Turkey.
- Investments. Turkey is developing as a major tourist attraction and a lot of that money comes from the, once poor, labor migrants, the European Turks.
- Lobby groups. Turkey wants to develop a strong lobby among the millions of Turks abroad.<sup>143</sup>

For those three reasons Turkey wants to “check, influence and steer the Turkish community.”<sup>144</sup> They obviously use the embassies for that purpose but they also use all kinds of existing movements as well. The Turkish government is also well aware of important developments in the last years: the growing role of religion and the stagnation of integration, the tendency of people to visit mosques more often and feeling more comfortable in their own community.<sup>145</sup> The Turkish government tries to help them with

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<sup>142</sup> Lazrak, A.

<sup>143</sup> Ülger, M. – Hoe de Turkse overheid integratie tegenwerkt - <http://www.katholieknieuwsblad.nl/actueel/kn1731g.htm>

<sup>144</sup> Ülger, M.

<sup>145</sup> Ülger, M.



this deficiency by sending imams and the Diyanet is the instrument for that again. It is “as a commonly known fact”<sup>146</sup> that supporters of all kinds of opposition groups send donations to the Islamist political parties and the Turkish government is not very happy with that.

Also many representatives of the right wing radical fundamentalist groups are represented at the local administration level. Many representatives of the municipal houses are at the same time members of the umbrella organizations. So they are working as a lobby.<sup>147</sup> These are the developments which Ülger tells us are important. More proofs can and will be found for the Turkish people to not feel at ease in Dutch society. They find their comfort in mosque and safeness in their own community. The role of the Diyanet will be studied later as well.

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<sup>146</sup> Ülger, M.

<sup>147</sup> Ülger, M.

### 3.2 The Turkish minority in the Netherlands

After looking at the history of Turkish migration into the Netherlands, the current situation is important. Many reports emerged on the position of Turkish and other minority groups; the so called “allochtonen”.

For the thesis, the results of integration of the Turks have been split into several different parts which will be mentioned later. The Integration report which is written by the Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS, Central Office for Statistics) serves as an example. Every year, since 2004 they have published an integration map of the country. The introduction of this report examines aspects of integration of the “first and second generation allochtonen”.

This expression, though hard to translate, is important. Allochtoon literally means foreigner, but it is made up as the opposite of the word “autochtoon” autochthon, because the other translation for foreigner “buitenlander” had a negative sense in the Dutch language and culture. Recently the word allochtoon has become more common. It is used to describe a group of people who were not born in the Netherlands, or have at least one parent born abroad, but still have the Dutch nationality. The CBS uses the word allochtoon as well, and it is important to mention, as they try to approach the group of immigrants positively.

Following characteristics are identified by the CBS as crucial for successful integration:<sup>148</sup>

- First important aspect is the mastering of the language of the country of residence; this is of course an important factor for entrance to education. Do the Turks have the same results at schools, do they enter university in the same percentage as autochthon people do?
- Work, where do allochtonen work, and what kinds of jobs they have? Are Turks more likely to receive social benefits? Do they get equal chances in the labor

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<sup>148</sup> Centraal Bureau voor de Statistiek (CBS) – Integratiekaart 2006 – Ministry of Justice the Netherlands; p. 3

market? Are they more likely to have lower-educated jobs, or jobs without a contract?

- Criminality, criminal behavior can be seen as a result of disenfranchisement and lack of social ties in that society. People who are left behind are more likely to use illegal methods to obtain success and regards.
- Social relations, do Turks have contact mainly within their own group? With whom do they marry? What kinds of sport clubs and organizations do they attend, mainly Turkish based or rather mixed? Also an important feature is the participation in the cultural field, as well political and social. In what way the Turks organize themselves? <sup>149</sup>

In the Netherlands 46% of the Turks belong to the so called second generation. This means they were born in the Netherlands, but at least one of their parents was born in another country than the Netherlands. <sup>150</sup>

Education is one of the most important, if not the most important key to successful integration. <sup>151</sup>. Some results have found that Turks score worse at the Dutch exit-tests (CITO toets) for primary school, they have a gap of about two and half years when it comes to language, and half a year for counting. <sup>152</sup> An important reason for this big language problem is the following: 43% of Turks never speak Dutch with their children, and another 44% only sometimes do. <sup>153</sup> After primary school only about 25% of the Turks attend HAVO/VWO <sup>154</sup>, the highest educational level in the Netherlands, while for autochthon it is about 50%. About 40% of the Turks did not attend any school or only primary school. However, optimism is needed as differences seem to be heading forward towards less dissimilarity.

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<sup>149</sup> (1) CBS; p. 5

<sup>150</sup> (1) CBS; p. 8

<sup>151</sup> (1) CBS; p. 11

<sup>152</sup> (1) CBS; p. 12

<sup>153</sup> Tubergen, F. van; Kalmijn, M. – *Tweede taalverwerving en taalgebruik onder Turkse and Marokkaanse immigranten in Nederland: investering of gelegenheid?* – Migrantenstudies 2002; p. 161

<sup>154</sup> HAVO: Hoger Algemeen Vormend Onderwijs, higher general secondary education

VWO: Voorbereidend Wetenschappelijk Onderwijs, pre-university education

This of course is caused by the fact the second generation is achieving better results than the first generation did. Since 1995 the intake of university students with a Turkish background has doubled for example, although this is still lower than the autochthon number. (29% to 54 % respectively)<sup>155</sup>

After having a look at this number, the only possible conclusion is that significant differences are visible. Turkish immigrants are doing worse in education than Dutch people; this is obviously causing troubles to find better educated and better paid jobs. "Participation in the labor market is one of the pillars of the integration and emancipation of allochtonen"<sup>156</sup>. Making your own living is an important feature for feeling at ease in your society, but there is another reason as well. Because of having a job the Turks and other allochtonen also get the chance to meet and interact with people who have other backgrounds, so this improves the integration in another way.

When we look at the number of people receiving social benefits, the differences are as well quite significant.<sup>157</sup> About 10% of them get welfare assistance, compared to 2% of autochthon people. In total around 29% of Turks in the Netherlands get some kind of social benefits, most of them receive WAO (Wet op ArbeidsOngeschiktheid, law on inability to work), the benefit which you get if you are unable to work. The CBS mention that this will get better, as the first generation often had hard jobs in the 1960's and therefore have all kinds of health problems. However, the second generation Turks are also depending more on social benefits than others groups. In fact 14% of the Turkish people in the age-group 15 to 25 years depend on social benefits, while 4% of the Dutch people in that age-group do.

Unemployment is another big problem among Turks; 14.9% compared to 5.2% of autochthon people are unemployed. Also when we look at the younger generation the dissimilarity is striking. 23% of Turks are unemployed while 12% of Dutch people in the peer group 15 to 24 years old are.

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<sup>155</sup> (1) CBS; p.11-20

<sup>156</sup> (1) CBS; p.25

<sup>157</sup> all numbers taken from (1) CBS; p. 26-30

Among working people, from all autochthon men 70% work, among the Turkish men this is 50%. Turkish women who have a job make up about 34%, autochthon women about 60%. When we look at where most immigrants work, it seems they are over represented in the cleaning branch and the retail trade. These are lower paid jobs and jobs with less status.<sup>158</sup>

Another noteworthy fact which is typical for the Turks in the Netherlands is that they are over represented in setting up their own small enterprises. With their hairdresser's salons, restaurants, change offices and fast food shops, the community is able to employ many other people from their community.<sup>159</sup> The other migrant groups don't do this as much; it shows the closeness among the Turkish group again.

Examining the statistics for criminality, the Turks are doing much better compared with other allochtonen groups. Nonetheless, 3.6% of Turks have been recorded by the police as a suspect, while autochthon people make up 1.7%. The most remarkable fact is the almost exclusivity of the heroine trade, 85% of the heroine which was found in the Netherlands was transported via Turkey. Roughly all drugs traded in the country are in Turkish hands.<sup>160</sup>

While looking at the numbers for social integration, including among other things marriage, it is striking that 90% of Turkish people get married with another Turk. Of those marriages about 60% of the spouses are coming from Turkey, they come to the Netherlands in the framework of the family-reunion law.<sup>161</sup> The fact that those newcomers don't speak the language and are not familiar with the Dutch culture is not contributing to integration.

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<sup>158</sup> (1) CBS; p.39

<sup>159</sup> <http://www.acbkenniscentrum.nl/turken>

<sup>160</sup> *ibid*

<sup>161</sup> (1) CBS; p. 51-53

Political participation among Turks is high, this has several reasons. The Turks are going to elections more than other immigrant groups; also their trust in politics<sup>162</sup> is larger than other groups.

An important factor of this ratio is the ethnic ties between members of the same immigrant group. The more an ethnic group feels attached to itself, the more its members will participate in the political and social life. For almost all the distinguished parts in this study Turks, compared with other minority groups, have the highest score. The Turks also read mostly Turkish newspapers, watch their own TV channels more often than other immigrants. Also they have the most Turkish organizations. This all assures that they feel connected to their community and want to participate in social life because they trust in democracy and its institutions.<sup>163</sup>

It is a fact that many more Turkish people, rather than immigrants with another background, have found their way to the national political scene and are representing their ideas in national political parties. We can also see this while looking at the Dutch elections held in November 2006.<sup>164</sup> Many Turks can be found in the higher positions on the ballot, in contrast with the other minority groups.

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As pointed out above, from looking at the numbers I drew the conclusion that things are improving. Turkish children are doing better in school than their parents did; they speak better Dutch and are less likely than their parents' generation to depend on social welfare. On the other hand their chances and education and wages are still lower than their autochthon peer group. At the moment, the Turkish people are not well integrated into the society, and the expectations are not very positive. What will the future bring when we discuss the integration of Turks into the Netherlands?

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<sup>162</sup> Instituut voor Migratie en Etnische Studies (IMES, Institute for Migration and Ethnical Studies) – Politieke participatie van etnische minderheden in vier steden – Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2001; p. 18

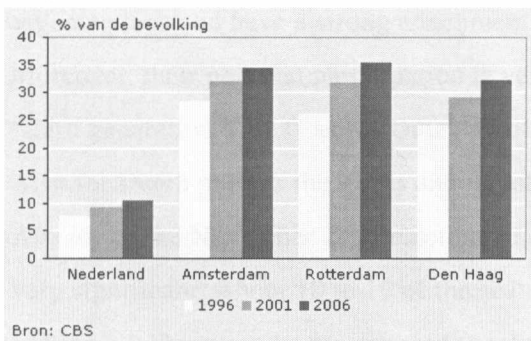
<sup>163</sup> IMES; p. 18

<sup>164</sup> Volkskrant - Overzicht van kandidatenlijsten – 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006

A research on young Dutch Muslims, not specifically for Turks, shows however that young immigrant children are having troubles finding their identity.<sup>165</sup> They feel outsider in Turkey as well as the Netherlands. Young people are sometimes even ashamed of the dreadful situation their parents are living in. Because most of the first generation Muslims are not very religious their children see some explanation in this fact for being not socially successful. The children fall back on the more traditional way of the Islamic religion.<sup>166</sup>

To conclude let's look at the population of the three biggest cities of the Netherlands, The Hague, Amsterdam and Rotterdam. About 30% of their inhabitants have a non-western immigrant background; most of them are Muslim. On average in the country this is 11% of the people. The future will be completely different. When we look at the younger generation of people, the age group of 0 to 20 years old, half of the population in the three biggest cities is made up of non-western allochtonen.<sup>167</sup>

Figure 2: The percentage of the population which are non-Western immigrants

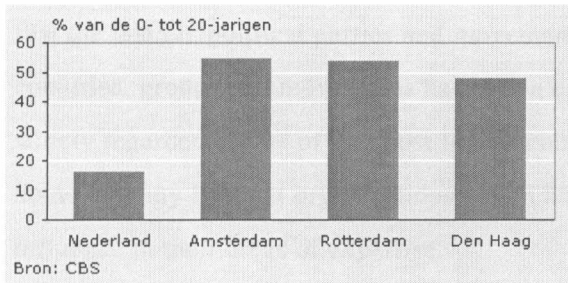


<sup>165</sup> Buijs, F. – *Muslims in Nederland, religieuze en politieke oriëntaties, toenadering of verwijdering* – University of Amsterdam 2004; p.4

<sup>166</sup> *ibid*

<sup>167</sup> Numbers and graphs from [www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl)

Figure 3: The percentage of the 0-20 years old which is non-Western immigrants in the four biggest cities compared to the whole country.



For the future this will mean that the Turkish, and other Muslim minorities, will be more influential in Dutch society. What will be their goals and in what way will they try to shape Dutch society?

The existence of a lot of contact with Turkey is also important. In what way will they try to manipulate these young Turks who are facing many problems in their struggle to integrate into Dutch society? It has been proved in this chapter that they will make up a huge part of the population in the biggest Dutch cities. The Turks are united in many organizations and have a strong attachment to other members of their community. Moreover, their political participation is very high. What can be expected from those “third generation Turks” as the Dutch media describes them?

Also for Dutch politics the Turks and the other Islamic minorities are very significant. Already in the November 2006 elections the Netherlands the “allochtonen factor” was very significant. About 10 to 16 of the seats in the government were elected by the 1.2 million allochtonen who are allowed to take part in the elections.<sup>168</sup>

<sup>168</sup> <http://www.denhaag.pvda.nl/nieuwsbericht/1286>



### 3.3 Turkish organizations and movements in the Netherlands

After looking at the Islamist movement in Turkey it is important to dwell on the fact that the Islamic political parties and movements do not only exist there. Also in other countries, groups and movements have been established. The Netherlands, which is widely regarded as one of the most liberal countries in (at least) the European Union, is home to many Islamist organizations which had been founded and gained substantial influence in their areas of expertise.

Dutch people started to wonder about Islamic people in their country and much is still unknown. Who is creating the organizations, who are their spokesmen and who are they representing?

Probably everyone can recall the Dutch movie maker and columnist Theo van Gogh. He was brutally killed by a Moroccan Islamist on the second of November 2004 after directing the movie *Submission*, in which he presented a negative view of Islam. Many Muslims accuse van Gogh of having anti-Islamic sentiments and denounce his movie as portraying Islam unfairly negative. Among other things, this murder and the never ending media attention on Islam scared people. It caused people to doubt about all aspects of Islam. Who are the people founding these organizations, who are their spokesmen and who are they representing? While working on the thesis I closely followed the Dutch media, a few of the headlines of the last months follows:

- Wilders fears a tsunami of Muslims<sup>169</sup>
- “Who does not adapt, will leave the country”<sup>170</sup>
- Milli Görüş Netherlands is radicalizing very quickly<sup>171</sup>
- Milli Görüş was never after integration<sup>172</sup>
- Fear for Turkish radicalization<sup>173</sup>
- Warning: don't expect some modern Prada-version of Islam in Europe<sup>174</sup>

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<sup>169</sup> Volkskrant – Wilders is bang voor Tsunami van Moslims – 7th October 2006

<sup>170</sup> *ibid*

<sup>171</sup> Benneker, B. – Milli Görüş Nederland radicaliseert snel – 15th May 2006, Elsevier

<sup>172</sup> Wynia, S.

<sup>173</sup> Parool – Vrees voor Turkse radicalisering – 15th May 2006

Like in many other countries a division is visible between the “Dutch people” on one side and “Muslims” on the other side. “The multi-cultural structure of the Netherlands was shaken and the attitudes of the Dutch towards the migrants changed negatively in early 2000s.”<sup>175</sup> Several large Islamic organizations and movements are present in the country and although some of them claim to represent all Muslims, this is naturally impossible. The Netherlands as an immigrant country has a huge variety of immigrants and only a few people and sources are able to make that distinction. The Islamic organizations are working together with the government, for instance as lobby groups, so it essential to know who the people are, who they represent and who is behind them.

As described in the previous part, Islamists were in the 1960’s not allowed to assume power in Turkey. There were several bans and different Islamic parties were outlawed. For this reason many of the persecuted Islamist had escaped abroad. That is one of the reasons the Turkish Islamic parties have so many foreign departments and off shoots.<sup>176</sup> The people who are living in the Netherlands or other European countries had set up their own movements; they are often recognizable by strong orientation towards their mother countries. Also in the 1980’s, many Islamists found their way to the Netherlands. Migrants in the Netherlands can feel very attracted to those movements, as they seem to have a solution to all the problems they are facing in their new country. Most Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands are of rural origin and lowly educated. They have many troubles in an unknown society as the Netherlands is for them. While choosing to go the mosque, they can choose many differently orientated types; they hope to find some support and grip on their lives.<sup>177</sup>

The main question however remains: what kinds of organizations are founded, and what are their goals?

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<sup>174</sup> Ayaan Hirsi Ali,  
[http://www.nu.nl/news/857035/21/Hirsi\\_Ali\\_waarschuwt\\_tegen\\_optimisme\\_over\\_%27Prada-islam%27.html](http://www.nu.nl/news/857035/21/Hirsi_Ali_waarschuwt_tegen_optimisme_over_%27Prada-islam%27.html)

<sup>175</sup> <http://www.turkishweekly.net/comments.php?id=2073>

<sup>176</sup> (1) Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst (BVD) – Politieke Islam in Nederland – May 1998

<sup>177</sup> (1) BVD; p.8

The largest Turkish movement in the Netherlands, the radical Nationalists, is the Milliyetçi Haraket Partisi (MHP, National Movement Party) better known as the Grey Wolves. They have been mentioned shortly discussing Turkish internal politics but in the framework of my thesis there is no space to discuss the MHP more.<sup>178</sup> The second biggest organization in the Milli Görüş, they are the main focus of the next part of my thesis.

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In the Netherlands the mosque is, even more than it was in the countries of origin, a place to meet. Very often a supermarket, hairdresser, bookshop and so on are connected with the mosque. For the immigrants the mosque symbolizes a piece of homeland in the Netherlands.<sup>179</sup> The mosques in the Netherlands tend to be divided along ethnic lines; so the mosques which are owned by the Turkish community are almost only visited by Turks. For this reason, in this thesis I will further focus on the number of mosques and guardian of those mosques in the Netherlands.

In Turkey all official mosques are under control of the Diyanet. The Diyanet is this special institution from the government which, besides the internal control, oversees Muslim religious facilities and education. To repeat the important information about the Diyanet: in Turkey itself they provide the mosques with themes which have to be discussed in the sermons. The Diyanet also coordinates the building of mosques. Together with the Ministry of Education, the institute educates and coordinates the imams, who serve in mosques and teach children and adults in Quran schools. This is not all; for instance religious TV programs belong to the Diyanet. People who work for Diyanet are working for the Turkish state.<sup>180</sup> After 1971, the Diyanet founded a special department for European affairs, as all the migrant workers

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<sup>178</sup> More information can be found in: Ülger, M.; Braam, S. – De eer der Turken – De Groene, December 1995 [http://www.groene.nl/1995/12\\_06/turken.html](http://www.groene.nl/1995/12_06/turken.html)

<sup>179</sup> BVD; p. 5

<sup>180</sup> WWR; p. 98-99

in Europe needed to be supported and controlled. This ministry also sends imams abroad; they are preaching in Dutch mosques.<sup>181</sup>

The Islamitische Stichting Nederland, (ISN, Islamic Foundations Netherlands) is a branch of the Turkish Diyanet. The Dutch division was set up in 1982, to organize the Turkish people and to help them to integrate into Dutch society. Their main goal is to “fulfill a bridging function between the Muslims and the multicultural society”<sup>182</sup>

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The Turkish community is the biggest minority group consisting of 300,000 people<sup>183</sup>, in the Netherlands. Not less than 1125 Turkish organizations, of which at least 356 were Islamic based, are set up in the Netherlands.<sup>184</sup> This is without a doubt a huge number. On top of that 206 Turkish mosques are counted in the country.<sup>185</sup>

What are those movements doing, are they connected with each other? Do they have connection with political parties or religious movement in Turkey? Also, the schools and mosques, in what way are they organized and what are their plans and ideas?

In this thesis it is impossible to mention all groups, but the Milli Görüş is the biggest stream opposing the Diyanet influence in the Netherlands.<sup>186</sup> The diverse Milli Görüş groups are united in the Nederlands Islamitische Federatie (NIF, Dutch Islamic Federation). The NIF has 53 mosques under control, and a growing number of youth groups<sup>187</sup>

The Milli Görüş is the main focus of my thesis, so it will be better discussed in the next chapter. Other institutions are for example based on Kurdish ethnicity, but there is unfortunately no space for this in my thesis.

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<sup>181</sup> (2) Binnenlandse Veiligheidsdienst – *De democratische rechtsorde en Islamitisch onderwijs, buitenlandse inmenging en anti-integrative tendensen* – February 2002; p. 17

<sup>182</sup> [www.diyamet.nl](http://www.diyamet.nl)

<sup>183</sup> Sociaal Cultureel Planbureau – *Moslims in Nederland, Islamitische organisaties in Nederland* – July 2004; p.15

<sup>184</sup> SCP; p. 3

<sup>185</sup> *ibid*

<sup>186</sup> *ibid*

<sup>187</sup> SCP; p. 9

In general the mosques approve keeping some distance towards Dutch society.<sup>188</sup> In the Friday prayer it is not unusual that the believers are incited to isolate themselves from everything which is unclean and sinful, Dutch society being one of those things. Among other reasons, this was a motive why Muslims founded their own schools, in which they can educate their children in an Islamic way. In the framework of Dutch law they can teach the children values and give them religious classes. This had led to increasing suspicion and even distrust among the different communities in the Netherlands. Fear exists for lack of integration and the supposed financial or ideological influence by Turkish radical groups.

To sum up, many organizations, mosques and schools have been founded since the first Turkish immigrants came to the Netherlands in the 1960's. Some of them are Islamic based and watched or even controlled by the Turkish government, in the form of Diyanet.

Education is an important feature, therefore: how do the Turks want their children to get education? In 2006, already 47 Islamic schools<sup>189</sup> existed even though the first one was erected in 1985.<sup>190</sup> One out of ten Islamic families in Rotterdam wants their children to go to an Islamic school, 8,500 children in total, so more schools are needed. Islamic parents are aware of the fact that many children do not achieve the same results as the Dutch children do. In those Islamic schools the discipline is usually much higher, but Dutch politicians have warned that the schools are too extreme.<sup>191</sup> However, because of the growing Muslim population the number of schools is expected to rise. They are required to speak Dutch during the lessons, but schools have the freedom to teach Islamic values.<sup>192</sup>

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<sup>188</sup> (1) BVD; p.12

<sup>189</sup> Weeda, F. – Lachen op school is lichtzinnig – NRC, December 1998

<http://www.nrc.nl/W2/Lab/Profiel/Islam/onderwijs.html>

<sup>190</sup> (2) BVD; p. 12

<sup>191</sup> Weeda, F.

<sup>192</sup> (2) BVD; p. 12

Mr. Bayraktar, himself of Turkish background, from the Rotterdam municipal house said that it makes him sad to see that boys and girls do not require lessons together and that even fathers and mothers are asked to come to school separately in order to discuss the progress of their children.<sup>193</sup> The schools are so popular that also non-Muslims teachers at the schools are obliged to wear a headscarf. Because of all the controversy the Dutch work and school inspections are planning to test and check the openness and tolerance of the schools more regularly. Two years ago one Islamic school had to close down. This school only allowed Moroccan children to attend classes and this is not allowed according to Dutch constitution. This education is very important for the future of Dutch Islamism. What the children get taught at the age of six to twelve is shaping them. Minister Mohammed Rabbae has said "I'm worried that not all Islamic schools are after openness and tolerance, this topic needs to be discussed with the chairmen of the schools"<sup>194</sup>

The fear that education will radicalize children is surely not unfounded, as we have seen that tolerance and progressive ideas are not well visible at the schools. Dutch people are afraid now "Turkey, via Diyanet, tries to get influence in the Dutch Islamic school system. The Diyanet does not want to promote it, but rather tries to stop the existence."<sup>195</sup> This can be explained by the view Diyanet has, religious education is not in their interest as this doesn't fit into the secular politics Turkey has.

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<sup>193</sup> Weeda, F.

<sup>194</sup> Weeda, F.

<sup>195</sup> (2) BVD; p. 16

### 3.4 The Milli Görüş in the Netherlands

In this chapter the focus will be on the Milli Görüş, (MG, National Vision) the largest non governmental Turkish Islamic movement worldwide. The Milli Görüş mixes political and religious interests, and is a very interesting Turkish movement as it was founded in Western Europe and not in Turkey. In the Netherlands the number of members is around 30,000.<sup>196</sup> The European headquarters is in Cologne. It is not exactly clear when the Milli Görüş was founded:

In 1974, Mehmet Sabri Erbakan, the cousin of the former Turkish president, established the movement and became its president.<sup>197</sup> The movement was established after his uncle gave the instructions for it. The initial name was Türkische Union Deutschland. It was renamed in 1994 to the present name: Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş.<sup>198</sup>

Another source argues<sup>199</sup>: The history of Milli Görüş started at the moment the Milli Selamet Partisi (MSP, National Movement Party) was outlawed in 1980 after the military coup. Turkish guest workers in Western Europe decided they would have to organize themselves: officially this was not to protect interests of the MSP but it has a connection with it. However, the link with the MSP, Erbakan and the Turkish Islamist movement is directly demonstrable.

Milli Görüş is called “the radicalized branch of the Turkish Islamists<sup>200</sup>” more than once.

The German branch of Milli Görüş is openly a very big supporter of Erbakan, but the Dutch and German divisions have different views on this issue. This will be explained later. The Dutch Milli Görüş movements are even less likely to admit openly they are in contact with Erbakan and other Turkish Islamist leaders. The reasons for this are the restrictions Turkey made on the foundation of political parties abroad.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>196</sup> (2) BVD; p.19

<sup>197</sup> <http://journalle.de/islamismus/gorus.htm>

<sup>198</sup> *ibid*

<sup>199</sup> (2) BVD; p. 14

<sup>200</sup> Benneker, B.

<sup>201</sup> (2) BVD; p. 14

Another reason can be found in the difficult situation religious parties are facing at the moment. However, they state, the aim of the Milli Görüş is to realize an Islamic based Turkey, while using democratic ways. We have seen these ideas before in Turkey, while examining the RP, FP and SP. “Although Milli Görüş, in public statements, pretends to adhere to the basic principles of Western democracies, abolition of the laicist government system in Turkey and the establishment of an Islamic state and social system are... among its goals.”<sup>202</sup>

The Milli Görüş in the Netherlands is not very likely to totally radicalize, as the new generation is looking for a future in the Netherlands rather than in Turkey. Their main aim is the right to profess their religion and fight for a “political religious individuality within the context of their direct surroundings.”<sup>203</sup>

The Milli Görüş writes the same on their website. They have to realize that Turks in the Netherlands are not leaving anymore, and the future lies here, while preserving the Islamic identity. “The Muslim community in the Netherlands should think about establishment of a Muslim society in the Netherlands.”<sup>204</sup>

The Milli Görüş is never open about the exact names or numbers of their organizations. The German branch of Milli Görüş is accused of lying for years already about the true character of their organization. They are not transparent about their umbrella organizations and their relations with the Turkish Islamist leader Necmettin Erbakan.<sup>205</sup> For the same reason it is also very hard to find out how many mosques are in fact owned by the Milli Görüş in the Netherlands.

Some different sources say the following: Ates: “about 40 mosques are led by Milli Görüş imams and about 150 are under direct influence from the Diyanet.”<sup>206</sup> Milli Görüş

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<sup>202</sup> Vidino, L. Vidino, L. – The Muslim Brotherhood's Conquest of Europe – Winter 2002, Middle East Journal, <http://www.meforum.org/article/687>

<sup>203</sup> (1) BVD; p. 14

<sup>204</sup> [www.mgned.nl](http://www.mgned.nl)

<sup>205</sup> <http://journalle.de/islamismus/gorus.htm>

<sup>206</sup> Lazrak, A.



itself claims to own 30 mosques in only the Northern part of the Netherlands.<sup>207</sup>

Elsevier estimates the number to be about 23 in the Netherlands.<sup>208</sup> The CSP mentions a probable 45 mosques in the country. The Milli Görüş surely has quite a few and in those mosques they are free to express their ideas.

Milli Görüş also founded at least six Islamic schools in the Netherlands; they have been established on initiative of local leaders, because the Milli Görüş does not have their own educational policy.<sup>209</sup> The power struggle between Diyanet and Milli Görüş is clear; both of them are setting up schools.

The Milli Görüş movement in Europe often faces troubles moving between the wishes of their Turkish counterpart and the Western European society they are living in. In the Netherlands the group has a relatively large amount of freedom in contrast to the German faction. The German group has been for suspected for a long time and closely observed by security forces.<sup>210</sup>

In the Netherlands the followers can be divided roughly into two parts: the Southern group and the Northern group. Two small offshoots also exist but they are very small.<sup>211</sup> The Southern group is more closely connected with the head office in Germany and often more traditional in their ideas. The Northern group, headed by Öner Hamurcu since May 2006, is said to be more pioneering in their ideas.<sup>212</sup> The Northern part is also regularly a conversation partner with the government. Their former leader Hacı Karacaer is praised as being a well integrated Muslim and he is said to be able to close the gap between Dutch people and Muslims. The Northern group represents the main stream of Islamism; at least that is the way they want to be seen by media and Dutch citizens.

What are the other things the Milli Görüş is doing in Holland? The aim of the movement is integration in Dutch society while keeping the identity as a Muslim. They

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<sup>207</sup> Lazrak, A.

<sup>208</sup> Benneker, B.

<sup>209</sup> (2) BVD p. 19

<sup>210</sup> Olgun, A.

<sup>211</sup> (1) BVD; p.14

<sup>212</sup> Olgun, A.

set up a lot of organizations and lessons, sport activities and so on for this reason. One example is the women's department, set up in June 1999.

Their four main goals are the same as the Milli Görüş movement in general. Those four goals are uyum (harmony), eşitlik (equality), katılım (participation), üretmek (to produce) in the framework of Dutch society.<sup>213</sup> They argue that it is possible to integrate into Dutch society without losing your own identity, and being Muslim does not have to be an obstacle for taking part in the social order. This view fits in the official Milli Görüş point of view for integration and finding a new way to live in a non-Muslim society.

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In September 2006 another activity of the Milli Görüş appeared in Dutch neighborhoods. Because of the celebration of 25 years, Osdorp (neighborhood in Amsterdam) the "Turkish mosque organization organized a manifestation where the Islamobil officially was presented"<sup>214</sup>. The Islamobil is a mobile information centre where people can ask information about the Islam in an informal way. With this movable vehicle the Milli Görüş hopes to positively influence people, as non Muslims "often associate Islam with Terror and fundamentalism". They want to rectify this prejudice.<sup>215</sup> The Islamobil was already used in Germany, where the "German public reacted positively" and if the responses in the Netherlands are also positive the German texts in the vehicle will be translated into Dutch.<sup>216</sup>

Haci Karacaer, the former chairman of Milli Görüş, is often said to be praised as being a good reformer in the Turkish political scene in the Netherlands. He set up contacts with Jewish and Christian organizations for example.<sup>217</sup>

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<sup>213</sup> <http://www.mgvf.nl>

<sup>214</sup> <http://www.nioweb.nl/nio?waxtrapp=tutrwCsHeSjRhICaCdC>

<sup>215</sup> *ibid*

<sup>216</sup> *ibid*

<sup>217</sup> Parool – Homo antwoordt Moslim – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2004

## **Chapter 4 – Relations between Turkish Islamist and the Netherlands**

### **4.1 The links between the Turkey's Islamists and Milli Görüş**

In this chapter the central part of my thesis will be discussed. The link between the Milli Görüş movement in the Netherlands, the leading Turkish party AKP, and the smaller but more radical Saadet Partisi will be explored. During my research I found many indications and suggestions so I will try to prove that the Milli Görüş and the Turkish Islamists have a strong tie, although this is not admitted by both sides. In an overview I will first try to give all the facts which were found in my thesis so far and then new ones will be added.

First the situation in the Netherlands will be discussed, regarding the Dutch Milli Görüş. Secondly, we will look at the history of Milli Görüş in Turkey and the way Turkish politicians perceive the Milli Görüş right now.

I want to first make clear that the Milli Görüş in the Netherlands has always denied having any ties with any of the political parties headed by Erbakan. The movement does not want to admit their ties with Erbakan because of the fact that he is in jail and banned from political life.<sup>218</sup> Hamurcu does not that deny the clear link with Erbakan, but he mentions Erbakan as the founder. Nowadays he is not the leader anymore, the Milli Görüş members feel sympathy for him but he is an old man and not interesting for them anymore.<sup>219</sup> But facts sometimes show something different from this official statement.

First of all: the name of the Dutch Milli Görüş is a clear link with Erbakan. The name Milli Görüş is taken from the pamphlet, written in 1975 by the former Turkish president.<sup>220</sup> In this little book he describes the perspectives and strategy for the establishment of an Islamic republic in Turkey. In this new Islamic Turkey the stress

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<sup>218</sup> (1) BVD; p.14

<sup>219</sup> Interview Hamurcu

<sup>220</sup> Schroevers, O.L. – Turkije Ja , Turkije neen - Why politicians and citizens disagree on Turkey's admission to the European Union – December 2005 <http://www.militantislammonitor.org/article/id/1359>

has to be on industrialization and education. In this pamphlet he calls the Milli Görüş “the medicine for all diseases”<sup>221</sup> as an ideology.

In the previous chapter it was already mentioned that the nephew of Erbakan is the chairman of Milli Görüş. He founded the party either after direct or indirect instructions from his uncle. Erbakan definitely still has very strong ties with the Milli Görüş movement in Europe. It is stated that the “Former Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan...is still Milli Görüş' undisputed leader, even if his nephew Mehmet Sabri Erbakan is its president.”<sup>222</sup>

Although the Milli Görüş in Turkey itself is not working as a political party, the movement does exist there. The followers are supporting the creation of Islamic parties, as they are striving for the same; for Islamic influence in daily life and politics. The chairman of Saadet Partisi is very clear about the influence Milli Görüş has. “After the military coup in 1980 the Milli Görüş Community formed a new party: Refah Party.”<sup>223</sup> The people who support Milli Görüş' ideas are not united in one single party but many Milli Görüş supporters have been member of the Refah or Fazilet party. At the moment Milli Görüş supporters can be found among SP members. Kutan, the chairman, is linked to the movement.<sup>224</sup>

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In June 1998, a big Milli Görüş meeting was organized in the Amsterdam Arena, about 40,000 people attended. In 2002, another big meeting was organized in Arnhem. Erbakan was the keynote speaker and he provided a glimpse into Milli Görüş' ideology. After a tirade against the evils of integration in the West and U.S. policies, Erbakan declared that after the fall of the wall the West found an enemy in Islam.<sup>225</sup> These kinds

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<sup>221</sup> *ibid*

<sup>222</sup> Vidino, L.

<sup>223</sup> <http://www.milligazete.com.tr> - Kutan: Çare Millî Görüş'te – 11<sup>th</sup> July 2005

<sup>224</sup> <http://www.aksam.org.tr> – Erdoğan'a Milli Görüş desteği – 5th January 2006

<sup>225</sup> Vidino, L.

of statements are of course not helpful for the integration of Turkish Dutch people, which the Milli Görüş claims to have as a goal. The 2006 European Milli Görüş meeting was held in Hasselt, Belgium. The supposed leader Erbakan was speaking to the 20,000 followers by satellite on that day.<sup>226</sup>

After Erdoğan, who can be considered in many ways the successor of Erbakan, came to power he told the Turkish embassy's to Germany and the Netherlands to support the Milli Görüş from now on and not work against them.<sup>227</sup> This is of course caused by the fact that the embassies are working closely together with the Diyanet, and they represent the official Islam. Apparently Erdoğan wants to promote the Milli Görüş ideas, which are said to be more radical.

What happened to the Milli Görüş movement in Turkey after the pamphlet in 1975? The movement was growing, we saw many politicians being attracted to the ideas of Erbakan. After 1980 however, the Islamist parties had a hard time in Turkey. Erbakan decided then to move the centre of their activities to Europe, where "the members of the Milli Görüş had much more freedom than in Turkey."<sup>228</sup> What exactly the Turkish media thinks about the Milli Görüş movement in Western Europe is not clear. They are sure of the fact that the Saadet Partisi has very strong ties with the Milli Görüş movement.<sup>229</sup>

The soft coup in 1997 mentioned above made clear once again that the Islamist parties found themselves in a difficult position. Several parties like MSP, RP and FP were created but were consistently banned. The younger and more progressive part of the movement decided then for a split. A struggle had already been visible for a few years between the yenilikçiler (progressive) and gelenekçiler (conservative) wings. Under the leadership of Erdoğan and Gül the progressive wing of the AKP splintered, while the SP continued as the more conservative wing after the FP. The first word Adalet of the AKP

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<sup>226</sup> Telegraaf – 20.000 mensen op jaarvergadering Milli Görüş – 4<sup>th</sup> June 2006

<sup>227</sup> Wynia, S.

<sup>228</sup> WWR; p. 104

<sup>229</sup> <http://www.saadetfatih.org/detail.asp?categoryId=2&contentId=1146187988156>

refers explicitly to the Adalet Partisi which was popular during the 1960's and 1970's.<sup>230</sup>

After this split in Islamist parties "Erdoğan has taken a slower, steadier path, careful not to rock the establishment too quickly while at the same time floating an occasional trial balloon for social reforms to advance the Islamist agenda."<sup>231</sup> We can see that he did not lose his Islamic roots, as his wife for example comes to public events with her head covered. He also tried to criminalize adultery, but this proposal was not implemented as a law.<sup>232</sup> Next year presidential elections will be held in Turkey and a discussion now is taking place on whether it is possible for the first lady to wear a head scarf.<sup>233</sup> In Turkey the tension between Secularists and Islamists is growing. In November 2006 a march was held against the government. The reason for this was that "Erdoğan, a devout Muslim, has been denying trying to lead the country down a more Islamist path"<sup>234</sup> and slowly implementing all kinds of Islamist laws. Among the protestors were retired army officers. The army can't do much against the AKP, as new laws have been accepted in order to access the EU.<sup>235</sup>

What exactly do the Islamists in Turkey say about the Milli Görüş?

Recai Kutan, the SP chairman, held a speech for the International Youth Forum. It shows quite clearly that he is a big supporter of the Milli Görüş movement. He mentions that the Milli Görüş movement derives from the ideas in the pamphlet written by Erbakan. Currently Turkish politics are divided by leftists and rightists, but this is the wrong way. The Just Order is the right way, "the mentality of Milli Görüş."<sup>236</sup> Thanks to the Milli Görüş the towns became wealthy living places and the Islamic world should learn from the ideas of Milli Görüş, as they represent a success story. The aim of the

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<sup>230</sup> WWR; p. 106

<sup>231</sup> (2) Rubin, M.

<sup>232</sup> *ibid*

<sup>233</sup> <http://www.radikal.com.tr> - Çankaya'da türban Türkiye'yi krize sokar - 13<sup>th</sup> June 2005

<sup>234</sup> Ersoy, E. - Secularist Turks stage anti-government march - 4<sup>th</sup> November 2006

<sup>235</sup> *ibid*

<sup>236</sup> <http://www.esam.org.tr/>

people who are attracted by the Milli Görüş ideas is not to obtain power or money, rather they are doing so because of the willingness of Allah.<sup>237</sup>

The Turkish newspaper Milli Gazette stated that “Milli Görüş is a shield protecting our fellow citizens from assimilation into barbaric Europe”<sup>238</sup> The Milli Gazette is not linked with the Milli Görüş or the Islamists but can be regarded as being on the slightly religious side.

Another link which is obvious between the Milli Görüş and AKP, SP and their predecessor is the religious order Nakşibendi. Milli Görüş derives from the Nakşibendi movement, which was also bringing forth the leaders of the Islamist movement in Turkey.<sup>239</sup>

“Milli Görüş claims to defend the rights of Germany's immigrant Turkish population, giving them a voice in the democratic political arena while preserving their Islamic identity. But Milli Görüş has another agenda. While publicly declaring its interest in democratic debate and a willingness to see Turkish immigrants integrated into European societies, some Milli Görüş leaders have expressed contempt for democracy and Western values”<sup>240</sup>

As afore mentioned the Islamists might use the Milli Görüş to gain money. Since the AKP's electoral success, the economy development in Turkey has been enormous. In the five years before the AKP assumed power, Turkey's currency devalued from around 200,000 lira to just over 1.7 million lira against the dollar. In the first two years of the AKP government, the Turkish currency actually strengthened to 1.5 million lira to the dollar. In January 2005 the new currency was introduced, the lira lost six zeros. This was psychologically important for Turkey, as hyperinflation was the norm for a long time.<sup>241</sup>

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<sup>237</sup> *ibid*

<sup>238</sup> Vidino, L.

<sup>239</sup> WWR; p. 106

<sup>240</sup> Vidino, L.

<sup>241</sup> (1) Rubin, M.

Why was the AKP able to reach such an enormous economic success? Of course policies were changed, but another interesting factor can be seen in the foreign investments. Most of the investments namely came from Islamic countries, Saudi Arabia as the first one. This so called green money (Islamic) assured a better economy and gave people more trust in AKP. The money did not only come from Islamic countries, “other green money operations funded by workers in Germany”<sup>242</sup> gave a great deal of money as well. Turkey’s Islamists were supported by the amount of “between \$2 and \$3 billion”<sup>243</sup> by Islamist holding companies in the years between 1990 and 1996. With this green money the Islamists can take popular measures to gain popularity, but it seems the money does not come officially from Europe anymore.<sup>244</sup> However, most of the money remains in the unofficial economy and can never be traced. This does not exclude that Milli Görüş members might bring money to Turkey.

Another important link between the Milli Görüş in the Netherlands and the Islamist parties is that people can still vote in Turkey.<sup>245</sup> Turkish people living in the Netherlands can vote for the elections in Turkey. Many Turkish people have a dual nationality, which is very important. Turks can vote in both countries, the Dutch politicians try to convince their potential voters but why would the Turkish politicians not do the same? This obviously means they can try to use the Diyanet, Milli Görüş or one of the other movements, groups or parties in the Netherlands to obtain influence. When the Islamists can enlarge their influence on the Turkish Diaspora, this will mean more votes in Turkey.

“Erdoğan tries, as the political heritor from Erbakan, via Diyanet, to directly influence the Turkish communities abroad.”<sup>246</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> *ibid*

<sup>243</sup> (1) Rubin, M.

<sup>244</sup> *ibid*

<sup>245</sup> Email contact with the Turkish Embassy to the Netherlands, November 2006

<sup>246</sup> Schroevers, O.L.



#### 4.2 Last developments of Milli Görüş, under increasing Turkish influence

The Milli Görüş has been watched closely by the German Secret Service. The suspicion in the Netherlands has only grown since the new chairman was elected for Milli Görüş in the North Netherlands.<sup>247</sup> Dutch society is anxious about more radical Islamist influence from Germany and Turkey. As an example I want to mention the choice the Amsterdamse Centrum voor Buitenlanders (ACB, Amsterdam Centre for Foreigners) made. They made the decision to stop any financial support which they provided the Milli Görüş with immediately after the, what they call, “fundamentalist assumption of power.”<sup>248</sup>

May 2006 was a breaking point for the Dutch part of Milli Görüş. In this month the complete management was replaced by people recommended by the German faction. This led to heated discussions in the Netherlands, not only among the Milli Görüş members and supporters, but also among the Dutch citizens. The Dutch media was quite clear about the May 2006 events. “The German fundamentalists completed their assumption of power in the Netherlands by appointing Öner Hamurcu as the new chairman”<sup>249</sup> It is quite clear who is holding the power in the Dutch faction now: the Germans Milli Görüş who is “militant and incredibly conservative.”<sup>250</sup> The reason for the replacement of Karacaer was that he was too progressive. There was “no support for his ideas and Cologne intervened.”<sup>251</sup>

The new chairman, Hamurcu, who had been raised in the Netherlands, does not agree with those opinions. He told the media: “the Germans did not take over our policy, we will continue the same path as we did” and moreover: “we are Dutch Muslims; our biggest effort should be to integrate into Dutch society”.<sup>252</sup> Hamurcu wants to continue

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<sup>247</sup> Olgun, A.

<sup>248</sup> Benneker, B

<sup>249</sup> *ibid*

<sup>250</sup> *ibid*

<sup>251</sup> Olgun, A.

<sup>252</sup> *ibid*

the path of openness and tolerance that his predecessor has started and he got permission from Germany for this.<sup>253</sup> The head quarter is Germany can be compared with the role the Vatican has for the Catholic Church: only ideological ties exist, no juridical ones.<sup>254</sup>

Haci Karacaer, the former chairman of the Milli Görüş, said farewell to the organization in May 2006. Who exactly is this person who is called a “Super Turk”<sup>255</sup> as well as “a wolf in sheep’s clothing?”<sup>256</sup> From Kurdish roots he immigrated to the Netherlands in 1982 and he quickly made a good career. He always states that Muslims in Western Europe have to “emancipate through participation.”<sup>257</sup> The image of the Milli Görüş has changed under his leadership. Karacaer exposed himself to the media very often and with his friendly way of speaking and his knowledge he makes a good impression. “Under his supervision the Milli Görüş became a legitimate conversation partner for the Dutch government.”<sup>258</sup> However, he was representing the movement in the Netherlands and his supporters are not as progressive as he might be. Karacaer called his backing backwards, but still he continued with the struggle for more tolerance and openness in the Dutch society: his keyword was integration.<sup>259</sup> Right after his departure the more traditional German wing took over the leadership in the Northern Dutch branch. The Germans replaced the whole board of the Northern Dutch part.<sup>260</sup> Karacaer agrees that the path he took will be continued by Hamurcu.

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<sup>253</sup> Volkskrant – Radicaal, ik? Kennissen zouden zich rot lachen, 17<sup>th</sup> May 2006

<sup>254</sup> *ibid*

<sup>255</sup> Volkskrant – Milli Görüş is een soort ChristenUnie – 29<sup>th</sup> March 2006

<sup>256</sup> *ibid*

<sup>257</sup> Volkskrant – Karacaer, interview – 18<sup>th</sup> January 2006

<sup>258</sup> Benneker, B.

<sup>259</sup> Olgun, A.

<sup>260</sup> *ibid*

#### 4.3 The role and attitude of the Dutch government

The Dutch government, as said, did not follow the Milli Görüş very closely. This has changed after the new chairman was appointed.<sup>261</sup>

An explanation for the fact that the Netherlands did not check the Milli Görüş as the Germans did can be found partly in the tolerant image of the Dutch. This image is shaped by their historic desire to be open to other cultures in order not to shut off possible trade partners<sup>262</sup> However, after the killing of Theo van Gogh things has changed. Many reports about terror and extreme Islamism were published. The mosques, for their part tried to comfort the Dutch people and government.

The Dutch interpretation of tolerance had effectively casted a blind eye to dangerous developments on it own soil.<sup>263</sup>

Government subsidies are given to the Milli Görüş women's department. In the years 2006 to 2008 an amount of 33,000 Euros will be given.<sup>264</sup> In the Netherlands it is hard to find allochtonen, especially women, for representation in the government. Because the Milli Görüş has a lot of members, they want to try to get their supporters involved in politics. By means of trainings, meetings and internships the aim is to involve these women in the society and political movements.<sup>265</sup>

Milli Görüş also receives money for other projects; the current thing they are working on is an "anti radicalization" project in cooperation with the Dutch government.<sup>266</sup>

In the Netherlands the Islamic elementary schools and high schools receive subsidies<sup>267</sup> as they are regarded as normal Dutch schools. They are special schools, like schools based on Christianity or special learning methods like Montessori. The First Islamic

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<sup>261</sup> Benneker, B.

<sup>262</sup> Schaake, M. – Soul searching for a new Dutch identity - [http://www.turkishpolicy.com/default.asp?show=spr\\_2006\\_Schaake](http://www.turkishpolicy.com/default.asp?show=spr_2006_Schaake)

<sup>263</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>264</sup> <http://nederlandtransparant.nl/download/Bezwaarschrift%20tegen%20afwijziging%20subsidieverzoek%20NT%20130505.pdf>

<sup>265</sup> <http://www.mgvf.nl>

<sup>266</sup> Interview Hamurcu

<sup>267</sup> (2) BVD; p. 14-18

University in Rotterdam however does not receive any money,<sup>268</sup> as they are not recognized as a public school but as a private initiative. The university has a lot of internal problems, which are caused by Turkish interference. The Diyanet does not like the Islamic schools; they prefer to see schools based on “being-Turk” rather than “being-Muslim.”<sup>269</sup> The Dutch government is closely following the Diyanet, they don’t approve of meddling in the Dutch educational system. On the other hand the Internal Security Service sees no signs of subversion in the more Islamic based school established by Milli Görüş; those schools “do not cause troubles for the democratic legal order.”<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>268</sup> (2) BVD; p. 14

<sup>269</sup> (2) BVD; p. 17

<sup>270</sup> (2) BVD; p. 19

#### 4.3.1 The Westermoskee as a case study

To explain the complicated situations which are rising now in the Netherlands I want to use the Westermoskee (Westermosque) in Amsterdam. After years of struggle Karacaer finally got the approval to build a giant mosque in Amsterdam, including 110 houses and several offices and shops in the complex. This “Islamic mini city”<sup>271</sup> was the crown of his work. After 15 years the first stone was finally laid in March 2006.<sup>272</sup> The mosque is a revolutionary one supposed to symbolize the integration of the Turkish community into the Netherlands. The design itself is meant to represent integration as the brick stones are Dutch, but the style is inspired by Aya Sofia in Istanbul. Also this Turkish mosque will be the first one where men and women enter through the same entrance.

Another important feature is the name. It is very exceptional in the Netherlands to have a Dutch name for a mosque. The name is inspired by the Westerkerk (Westerchurch) which was once the biggest Protestant church in the Netherlands.<sup>273</sup>

A short while after Hamurcu took over Karacaer's position the construction of the building stopped.<sup>274</sup> The owner of the building is now calling for an immediate stop of construction, as he fears the fundamentalist influence from Germany as well. The ownership is a complicated matter, both the Woningbouwvereniging Het Oosten (Housing association the East) and Manderen INC are owners. In Manderen INC the Milli Görüş is represented, as well two youth organizations and the Aya Sophia organization. All of those are linked to the Milli Görüş.<sup>275</sup> The city council and Woningbouwvereniging Het Oosten will not accept the new board, as long the Milli Görüş does not change its policy they will not give permission for the mosque to be built.<sup>276</sup>

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<sup>271</sup> Volkskrant – Minaret nog altijd lager dan Westertoren – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006

<sup>272</sup> Benneker, B.

<sup>273</sup> Volkskrant – Minaret nog altijd lager dan Westertoren – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006

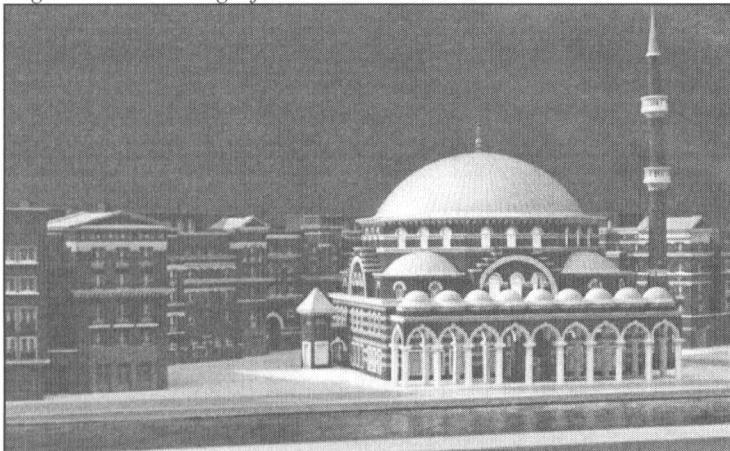
<sup>274</sup> Parool – Bouw Westermoskee ligt stil – 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006

<sup>275</sup> Interview Hamurcu

<sup>276</sup> Parool – Bouw Westermoskee ligt stil – 7<sup>th</sup> October 2006

They argue furthermore that the radical Islamists from Germany finally showed their true face. Now that the mosque has finally begun construction they don't agree anymore with Karacaer's liberal plans.<sup>277</sup> Milli Görüş Netherlands, whose members collected the money for building the mosque, does not agree. They don't like the condition from the Amsterdam city council, according to which the Milli Görüş can not have ties with the mosque anymore.<sup>278</sup> The Milli Görüş tries to negotiate about the conditions at the moment with Het Oosten and the city council. The Milli Görüş members paid for the church and were looking forward to finally be able to visit their long planned mosque. They don't want to accept any mingling from any other authority, neither the requirement that an extern Raad van Toezicht (Council of Supervision) will supervise the mosque.<sup>279</sup>

*Figure 4: Drawing of the Westermoskee in Amsterdam*



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<sup>277</sup> *ibid*

<sup>278</sup> Volkskrant – Minaret nog altijd lager dan Westertoren – 11<sup>th</sup> March 2006

<sup>279</sup> Interview Hamurcu

## Chapter 5 – Islamist politics in the Netherlands

### 5.1 The finding of Islamist political parties in the Netherlands.

Dutch people with a Turkish background have been taking part in the Dutch elections for a long time already. For the elections to the Tweede Kamer (lower house) held in 2006 about ten people were from Turkish origin.<sup>280</sup> 60% of the immigrants usually vote for the left wing parties,<sup>281</sup> and as well most Turkish candidates are candidates for the left wing parties. As this thesis can not cover all political parties in the Netherlands only one party will be discussed.

This year in the elections, for the first time, an Islamic party took part. This new party Islam Democraten (Islamic Democrats) was founded only one year ago and the party appeared for the first time in the municipal elections from The Hague, spring 2006.<sup>282</sup> Their slogan was “for unity in the society” and this was as well the one used for the national elections in November 2006. The party does not use “allochtonen for drawing voters”<sup>283</sup> but the new party selected “all their candidates, especially the Turkish ones..., based on their principles and qualities”<sup>284</sup> From the eight candidates two are Turks, Their main objections on the current Dutch political parties are the fact they neglected the allochtonen for such a long time. From the time the first Muslims came to the Netherlands the relations have not gotten any better, and the Dutch State is the one to blame for that. The ID aims to improve integration and to avoid a split in society.<sup>285</sup> Mr. Arif Potmis, the first man on the list, says that the party is not in any way connected with the Milli Görüş. However, he knows a lot of members of the Milli Görüş and hoped that they will vote for the party.<sup>286</sup> At the elections they only received 4341<sup>287</sup> votes, so we can conclude that this party is not influential at all.

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<sup>280</sup> Volkskrant, 22<sup>nd</sup> of November

<sup>281</sup> <http://www.denhaag.pvda.nl/nieuwsbericht/1286>

<sup>282</sup> [www.islam-democraten.nl](http://www.islam-democraten.nl)

<sup>283</sup> *ibid*

<sup>284</sup> *ibid*

<sup>285</sup> *ibid*

<sup>286</sup> Arif Potmis, in an email

<sup>287</sup> Volkskrant – verkiezingen 2006 – 23rd November 2006

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2006 another political party was presented in the Dutch media. Their name is Partij voor Allochtone Nederlanders (PAN, Party for Dutch allochtonen) and their aim was to take part in the planned elections of 2007. The party did not become an official party as it is not included on the elections program.<sup>288</sup> The elections were earlier as the government fell down. Still the PAN ideas have to be discussed very briefly, as it shows which ideas exist among Dutch people. Hans Hoogerdijk, one of the founders, finds allochtonen very valuable for Dutch society and he does not want them to integrate. They need to be proud of their roots and Dutch people should learn something from their qualities. The party had planned to change its name into Partij voor Alle Nederlanders (PAN, Party for all Dutch)

Dutch people were for a long time unaware of the fact that immigrants make up such a large part of the electorate. Allochtonen represent quite a large percentage of the inhabitants. Karacaer stated that “The realization that immigrants are a power factor is a revelation. It seems to hit hard in parts of The Netherlands.” when he talked about the allochtonen factor in the elections in the Netherlands. It also means that the “presence of immigrants in Dutch politics is of a permanent nature”<sup>289</sup> In the future Muslims will be more influential in Dutch politics. In the first national elections where they took part, possibly the Islam Democraten was not successful because of the poor organization. However, in the future this may change. The Milli Görüş is a well organized group and when they would start to have political ambitions they could be successful. The Milli Görüş leaders are highly educated people and have a lot of work experience in public administration. It is not clear whether Milli Görüş want to start a political wing, or have any ambitions in this direction. The organization finds it important that their members are “full citizens” in their country of residence, and to this feature also belongs going for elections.<sup>290</sup> Questions about political ambitions were a little avoided, but it will for sure not be in the near future Hamurcu said.

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<sup>288</sup> Volkskrant, 22<sup>nd</sup> of March 2006

<sup>289</sup> Schaake, M.

<sup>290</sup> Interview Hamurcu



## **Conclusion**

The main topics in this thesis were Turkish history, with the focus on Islamist political parties. Furthermore the Turkish migration to the Netherlands and the organizations established by Turks in the Netherlands were discussed.

I wanted to show that we can regard the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) as an Islamist party. The AKP, which was established in 2001, won the last elections in Turkey with nearly 35%. They have been the ruling party since 2002. Erdoğan, its prime minister, had been in jail for spreading Islamist ideas. He served as mayor in Istanbul where he had drastic ideas such as separate school busses for boys and girls and a total ban on alcohol. On several occasions later he dissociated himself from those ideas, but I was able to find many proofs and signs that this is more a strategic change than a sincere change of ideology.

I wanted to give evidence that the Turkish people in the Netherlands are badly integrated; through use of statistics this was proved. They have, compared to Dutch people, worse education and lower paid jobs. They are not socially integrated with Dutch people; they still marry very frequently within their own group. This poor integration makes the Turks more likely to be radical in professing their religion, give more importance to their language and own cultural groups as it is their only connection to society. The Turks have founded many organizations and a large part of them are religious based.

I wanted to prove that the Turkish (Islamist) political parties want to gain and keep influence over the Turkish people in the Netherlands. The government does this by means of the Diyanet, the ministry of religious affairs. The Diyanet has one big rival, the Milli Görüş. Milli Görüş is the biggest movement in the Netherlands which mixes religion and social work. As I have shown the Turkish government and Islamic political parties are meddling for example in the educational system in the Netherlands, Milli Görüş affairs and the building of mosques.

I wanted to prove that they are doing so in order to keep the Turkish community close to their mother country. The Islamists use even the Dutch Turks for their own purposes. I think it is clear that the Islamist parties in Turkey, whether the Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (as the progressive wing) or the Saadet Partisi (as the conservative wing) are trying to influence their citizens abroad. Possible they need the money they have or the votes for the elections in Turkey. For the Turkish government it is also important to have a lobby group. I have shown that the Milli Görüş is representing the Turks; they perform as spokesmen for the Turkish community often at the national level. The most recent development is the building of an enormous Milli Görüş mosque complex in the centre of Amsterdam. This construction recently has been called off by the Dutch government out of fear of radical Turkish influence.

To conclude, I could not find direct proofs that the Milli Görüş is serving as a puppet for the Turkish Islamists. However, the direct indirect indications which I was able to find led me to believe that the spiritual and practical connection exists. The Milli Gorus in the Netherland seems to work for itself and the Muslims living there.

The Milli Görüş in the Netherlands speaks openly about integration, projects they work on with the government. On the other hand they still have ties with the more radical faction in Germany and the Islamist Parties in Turkey, who do not support integration. The Milli Görüş attracts a lot of young Turkish second of third generation. They have troubles finding their identity and hope to find some comfort in Islam. Even more than their parents' generation they trust on religion and fall back on heir roots.

I think it is well possible that the Dutch Milli Görüş starts to have an Islamic based political party. This party would be linked with other Muslims, not only the most obvious Turkish Muslims. The Milli Görüş feels attracted to Islamic ideas and has strong, well educated leaders. Because so many badly integrated Muslims live in the Netherlands the Milli Görüş has a good chance to organize itself and obtain a powerful position in the Dutch society.

## Appendix 1 – List of Turkish political parties

List of Turkish political parties, ordered as they have been founded:

	founding	demise	Islamist
• Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi ( <b>CHP</b> , Republican People's Party)	1923	-	
• Serbest Cumhuriyet Firkasi ( <b>SCF</b> , Free Republican Party)	1930	1930	
• Demokrat Parti ( <b>DP</b> , Democratic Party)	1946	1960	X
• Adalet Partisi ( <b>AP</b> , Justice Party)	1962	1980	X
• Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi ( <b>MHP</b> , National Movement Party)	1969	-	
• Milli Nizam Partisi, ( <b>MNP</b> , National Order Party)	1971	1971	X
• Milli Selâmet Partisi ( <b>MSP</b> , National Salvation Party)	1972	1980	X
• Doğru Yol Partisi ( <b>DYP</b> , True Path Party)	1983 (87)	-	
• Anavatan Partisi ( <b>ANAP</b> , Motherland Party)	1983	-	
• Refah Partisi ( <b>RP</b> , Welfare Party)	1983 (87)	1998	X
• Demokratik Sol Parti ( <b>DSP</b> , Democratic Left Party)	1985 (87)	-	
• Fazilet Partisi ( <b>FP</b> , Virtue Party)	1998	2001	X
• Saadet Partisi ( <b>SP</b> , Felicity Party)	2001	-	X
• Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi ( <b>AKP</b> , Justice and Development Party)	2001	-	X

The dates show the year in which the party was established. In those cases where the parties could not run for elections the year in brackets shows the first time they ran for election. The reason for this was either that their leaders were banned from political life or no election was held.

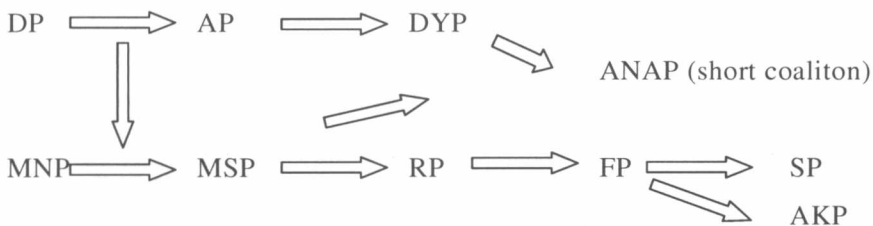
Many more parties were founded but it is impossible to mention them all. I have tried to choose carefully the parties I wanted to discuss. Obviously, the most recent big parties and influential older ones are among them.

A graphical overview of the succeeding parties. The link between DP and AP with the MNP and MSP is different in every source. But I consider them as being connected in

some way. In the 1980's "ANAP welcomed a large group of former MSP members, who probably were attracted to the party because Özal and some of his relatives had belonged to the MSP in the 1970s"<sup>291</sup>

The link with FP and AKP is clear because "the votes and seats for the AKP are compared to those won by the Virtue Party (FP) in 1999"<sup>292</sup>

A schematical overview of the consession line in Turkish politics, regarding Islamist parties.



We can consider the split of FP in 1997 as the split between the yenilikçiler (progressive) and gelenekçiler (conservative) wings. The SP represents the more conservative wing, which openly expresses their ties with Milli Görüş and the wishes for more strict Islamic rules. The AKP is a more mainstream party.

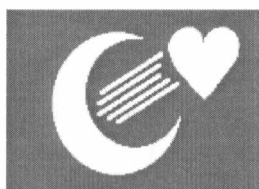
<sup>291</sup> <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/85.htm>

<sup>292</sup> <http://www.ntvmsnbc.com/modules/secim2002/genel.asp>

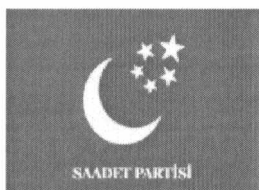
## Appendix 2 – Symbolism in Islamist political movements



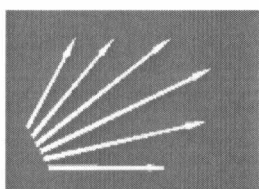
The most known symbol is the crescent and star. Originally used by the Ottoman Empire, but now commonly accepted as symbol for the entire Islamic world. The Ottomans separated for first time the religious flag and the national flag. The national flag was red with crescent facing right, while the religious flag was green. Later, a five-cornered star was added to symbolize the five pillars of Islam.



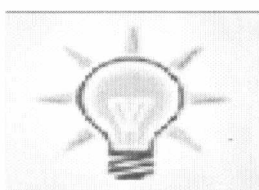
Fazilet Partisi: the crescent is still visible but the stars are replaced by five lines, and a heart. The number 5 represents the 5 pillars of Islam.



The flag of the Saadet Partisi, very clearly symbolizes Islam: five five-cornered stars and the crescent.



Symbol of CHP, they are not an Islamist party, but the counterpart. CHP is at the moment the second biggest party in Turkey and that shows the clash between Islamism and Secularism. The six arrows represent the six pillars of Atatürk's policy.



Symbol of AKP, the light bulb represents a modern but yet religious Turkey. "AKP supporters carry images of their leader, Recep Tayyip Erdogan alongside banners of Kemal Atatürk. The AKP symbol is nonetheless a light-bulb with seven beams, to signify the seven regions of Turkey - simultaneously modernistic and emblematic of the recurring Islamist theme of enlightenment after darkness."<sup>293</sup>

<sup>293</sup> Culiff, P. – The double death of Islamic Fundamentalism - <http://www.culturewars.org.uk/2003-01/fundamentalism.htm>

### **Appendix 3 – Interview with Mustafa Hamurcu**

Interview with Mr. Hamurcu, Amsterdam 3rd of January 2007

After long trying I was finally able to meet Mustafa Hamurcu in Amsterdam. In this city the Milli Görüş has their temporary head quarter. The Hamurcu family is well represented in the Milli Görüş. Mustafa is the spoke man; his twin brother Nurdogan is the secretary. Their older brother Öner is the new chairman since May 2006.

I was warmly welcomed and we spent about one and a half hour together in which Hamurcu explained me all about the Milli Görüş organisation. It was clear to me that he is a good spokesman; he has his story ready to tell. It was hard for me to ask critical questions specifically about my thesis as he kept on going about the structure, history, activities and plans the Milli Görüş has.

I decided to leave it like this, as it was my first meeting with any Milli Görüş member. Although I did research for about half a year on this organisation it was still very unclear what exactly they stand for and do in the Netherlands. For this reason it was a very interesting meeting and I am happy we've met.

In my thesis I would like to summarize the interview into some short version, a lot of the basic information he told me can be found already in the previous parts. Hamurcu confirmed for a great deal the fact and figures I found from several other sources. I would like to give here only the new data and interesting added information.

Information on the Milli Görüş in general:

- The Milli Görüş is an organization which is 100% depending on the contribution the members pay. They don't make any profit and all people work for the Milli Görüş do so on voluntary basis.
- Milli Görüş does not consider itself as a Turkish organisation; in the first place it is based on Islam as identity. This in contrast with the Diyanet, who is mainly Turkish identity based.
- Milli Görüş has organisations founded in the following eleven countries: The Netherlands, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Great Britain, Swiss, Austria, France, Australia, Canada and Italy.

- The Milli Görüş has indeed a very clear link with Erbakan 40 years ago, but not anymore. The third generation realises that their future lies in the Netherlands and not in Turkey. Hamurcu repeats that for the Milli Görüş members being Muslim is more important than being Turk

Information Hamurcu gave about the changing of the whole board. This is currently a hot topic in the Netherlands. I am aware of the fact this was his main point of concern. The media writes very negative on the Milli Görüş and in every opportunity he gets Hamurcu tries to stress the fact that the media is not playing a fair game.

- The new board, 6 members, are for the greatest part people who worked together with Karacaer. Karacaer is the man who is praised for his progressive ideas and his cooperation with the Dutch government.
- Support and cooperation for integration will continue, but the new board also wants to keep the older generation satisfied. Karacaer was too progressive for them, as Hamurcu argues.
- The new Milli Görüş board stresses the fact “well being of the whole humanity” Being a good, complete member of the society you live in, which means different things in Germany, Australia or The Netherlands. This also explains why the Milli Görüş in the Netherlands has a different approach, ideas and leadership than the German branch. Milli Görüş members have to be good Dutch citizens, and keep their Muslim identity.
- The Milli Görüş has in its 40 years of existence never had any problems with justice, never any serious allegation or troubles. Nobody ever found any proofs for sending “Green Money” or support for the Turkish government.
- Hamurcu finds the army the ones in power in nowadays Turkey. As a Muslim he is against the secular republic in Turkey. He did not say it that clear; however, he argues that a First Lady wearing a head scarf should be possible in a Muslim populated country.
- Milli Görüş never gave any voting advice, although the organization thinks it is important to vote. A full citizen should not forget this right and go for every election.

- Hamurcu mentions as Milli Görüş' current projects the donor-project and an anti-extremist project. The donor project means extra attention in the Friday prayer that people can become donor.<sup>294</sup> The Muslim community in the country is not very willing to become donor. The anti-extremist project is held in cooperation with the government, they try to avoid Turkish young man to radicalize. Hamurcu focussed on the fact they the Milli Görüş is asked to do this project, as a proof they are certainly not extremist.

I also talked about with Hamurcu about his ideas on Turkish politics. He finds that the AKP has another strategy than the Fazilet had. They are more careful in their statements and take a slower path, although they are after the same goals. Hamurcu also think that the AKP is still an Islamist party. However, the Milli Görüş is not a follower of any Turkish political party. They feel sympathy for the AKP, as their leaders were the founders of the Milli Görüş movement in Germany and later on in the Netherlands.

He stressed again that Milli Görüş has not any link with Turkish political parties, Islamist or not. In the first place they are a Muslim organization, not a Turkish one.

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<sup>294</sup> In the Netherlands you are not a donor, unless you say you are. Plans exist to change this law, so far it is not like this. A big shortage on donor material is the result.



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- <http://countrystudies.us/turkey/> (website from the federal research division in the USA about Turkey)
- [http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/ottoman\\_fetva.htm](http://www.firstworldwar.com/source/ottoman_fetva.htm)
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- <http://www.saadetpartisi.org.tr/> (website Saadet Partisi)
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(website Saadet Partisi in a neighborhood of Istanbul)

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