

TURKISH RAP IN THE NETHERLANDS:  
Globalization, Diasporic Identity and Cultural Conservatism

**Ph.D. Dissertation**

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

In this dissertation firstly I aim at exploring and interrogating how rap music and hip-hop culture have become significant means of imagination of diasporic identity in the Netherlands among Turks, since the Turkish population has the highest density among immigrants in the Netherlands, similar to Germany, and forms one of the major groups that have non-Dutch origin. In this context, this research explores the ways of expression that hip-hopppers in the Turkish Diaspora follow, as related to national and diasporic identity, everyday perceptions, and political attitudes. Apparently, the main reason for the rising popularity of rap music among Turkish youngsters is “the unexpected and rapid success of the German-Turkish rap group Cartel... [which]...had a considerable impact on the image of German-Turkish popular culture in general and on the hip-hop scene of German-Turks in particular” (Çağlar 1998: 253). Therefore, how Dutch-Turks react to this musical culture, and to discover ethnographically-specific peculiarities of hip-hop culture among Turks in the Netherlands, are the main concerns of this study. Moreover, this project surveys the relations between Turkish rappers in the Netherlands and Islamophobia, and cultural conservatism, including moral and religious understandings toward the host society. In this context, notions of musical, cultural and national identity are interrogated through the analysis of hybridization in the context of the Turkish Diaspora, predominantly in Amsterdam and Rotterdam. Secondly, the main purpose of this study is also to investigate to what degree socio-political differences between Germany and the Netherlands affect developments of the Turkish-speaking rap music scenes in two countries. Here, the basic question is why Germany comes to mind when many people generally think of Turkish-rap music, but the Netherlands does not. To answer this question, I will basically examine to what extent political (particularly as regarding migration policies) and social conditions in the two countries have influenced the development of Turkish-language rap music.

The immigration policies of the Netherlands, practiced since the nineteen-sixties, have apparently changed somewhat in every decade. However, the most dramatic transformations in the beginning of the 2000s were brought about by two tragic incidents: the murder of

politician and writer Pim Fortuyn, who was a controversial figure harshly criticizing Islam and Muslim immigrants in the Netherlands, as well as multicultural policies, until he was killed by an animal rights activist in 2002; and the murder of Theo van Gogh, who was a writer and film-maker, well-known like Fortuyn for his controversial thoughts against Islam, killed by a radical Moroccan Islamist in 2004. However, transformations in immigration policies had begun before those murders. The Dutch government considered in the beginning of the nineteen-eighties that immigrants were in the country to stay. Therefore, it began to follow a new migration policy which was based on the approach of “integrating while retaining one’s own identity” (Beck 1996). This approach, which was implemented until the nineteen-nineties, enables us to explain in which ways youth, especially Turkish, grew up in the host society. In this socio-political sphere, they existed in the society without experiencing any cultural erosion until the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, even though the Dutch government today has begun to develop policies that aim at dominantly promoting the integration of non-Dutch immigrants. Those policies have shifted from multicultural to “integration, [...] focused on achieving national cohesion” in the nineties (Lechner 2008: 144; see also Doornik 1998).

In contrast to the Netherlands, Germany’s exclusionist practices, particularly observable until the end of the nineteen-nineties, were based upon the idea that “[i]mmigrants are not supposed to settle, unless they are of German descent” that “this fundamental stance has its consequences for Germany’s immigration and integration policies” (Doornik 1998: 41). Cultural expressions such as Turkish-language rap music were particularly triggered in reaction to those exclusionist practices, discrimination and rising racist attacks occurring in different parts of Germany. Unlike Germany, it is hard to cite such physical and violent attacks in the Netherlands, at least towards people, only a few against mosques or Muslim schools. While negative reactions toward immigrants apparently began particularly with economic reasons in Germany, they have been triggered in the Netherlands after the especially tragic and violent incidents mentioned above. Contrary to Germany, the Dutch government recognized towards the beginning of 1980 that the majority of immigrants might stay permanently, as mentioned above. Therefore, firstly it accepted that the Netherlands is a country of immigration and then started to apply the laws for integration of migrants into the local culture and to construct a multicultural society. In this context, differentiations between socio-economic and political transformations will be examined in Chapter 4, in order to point out in what sense the Turkish-language rap scenes of both countries differ from each other.

Here, it appears important to keep what Zygmunt Bauman states as regards to strangers in different societies in mind, that “[a]ll societies produce strangers: but each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers, and produces them in its own inimitable way” (Bauman 1997: 46). Simmel (1950) also states that any society produces strangers as a social stereotype. While the words “stranger” and “foreigner” have separate meanings in English, they are inseparable in Turkish. For example, in an article named “Almancı, Yabancı”, the name of German-Turkish rap group Karakan’s song, indeed the term *yabancı* in Turkish is translated into English as “foreigner” by Robins and Morley (1996), which simply refers to a person who comes from another country<sup>1</sup>. The root of the word is *yaban*, one of the meanings of which is “any place which is far away from home”<sup>2</sup>. So, *yabancı* has the same meaning as “foreigner” in this context. However, *yaban* is also a name which is used to describe a person who is culturally different from the majority. For instance, Yakup Kadri Osmanoğlu, Turkish politician and novelist, has a novel called *Yaban* (2009; first published in 1932) which is about a cultural clash between peasants and a former soldier who lost his arm in the World War I. After losing his arm, he settles down in a village in Anatolia to escape from the rest of society, although he was brought up in İstanbul. The peasants call him *yaban* since he is different from them culturally and as regards language use. Hence, they do not see him as belonging to the village. Here, the correct translation of the word *yaban* is not “foreigner”, but “stranger” since it refers to a sort of psychological and cultural estrangement experienced by individuals. In the sense it is used here, *yaban(cı)* is a social type which has commonalities with Simmel’s *stranger*. Simmel (1950: 402) mentions in his prominent article “Stranger” that

The person who comes today and stays tomorrow. He is, so to speak, the *potential* wanderer: although he has not moved on, he has not quite overcome the freedom of coming and going. He is fixed within a particular spatial group, or within a group whose boundaries are similar to spatial boundaries. But his position in this group is determined, essentially, by the fact that he has not belonged to it from the beginning, that he imports qualities into it, which do not and cannot stem from the group itself.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/british/foreigner>.

<sup>2</sup> “Aile ocağından uzak olan yer”

<http://www.tdk.gov.tr/TR/Genel/SozBul.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFFAAF6AA849816B2EF4376734BED947CDE&Kelime=yaban>.

For Simmel, “the stranger [...] is an element of the group itself. His position as a full fledged member involves both being outside it and confronting it” (ibid). At this point, it might be said that a stranger posits himself as an outsider by defining the group as a unity which keeps her/him outside via the fixing of his/her peculiarities and differences from the group. Hence, to be a stranger becomes a visible feeling in a strange land. In this sense, it can be said that differences between immigrant policies applying in Germany and the Netherlands may provide us with particular information concerning how strangers are produced by those societies. In order to indicate such differentiations between both countries through Turkish-language rap music, I will present particular song examples by various rappers from different geographies like Turkey, Germany and the Netherlands, focusing on language use, lyrical structures and music styles.

There is no doubt that European countries underwent some socio-cultural changes under the impact of rapid industrialization. These changes constitute a circle of changes that to some degree every country in the world has experienced. I will attempt to convey some basic socio-economic issues from the term “country of immigration” to “minority rights” through the dissertation. About these changes, Ayhan Kaya, who carried out a detailed research on Turkish rap in Germany, says that “Modernity has resulted in ‘cultural flows in space’ loosening up of social and cultural boundaries, migration, expansion of global culture, cultural melting pots known as ‘global cities’, cultural variety, transculturation, syncretism and new social movements” (Kaya 2001: 38). Clearly, music is also affected by these social changes and provides us with crucial clues about them. Hence, the reason I chose rap music as my main topic is that recently this music has started to be heard almost all over the world, in different languages and with different rhythms. When this music became mainstream, social scientists began to pay attention to it to figure out its socio-economic and cultural background. Moreover, following the rising popularity of hip-hop culture, which has begun to be regarded as one of the most influential cultures, break dance and turntable techniques have started to be taught in some schools for those interested in this musical culture.

In my opinion, music studies, particularly those within cultural studies, are faced with a threat that Terry Eagleton highlights. According to him, “[n]ot all students of culture are blind to the Western narcissism involved in the history of pubic hair while half of the world’s population lacks adequate sanitation and survives on less than two dollars day” (Eagleton 2003: 6). In line with Eagleton’s emphasis on Western narcissism, my dissertation topic of rap and hip-hop culture will not be exaggerated or mystified as if these can change all cultural



fabric. For this reason, while they are approached more seriously than the “history of pubic hair”, they are not considered as more vital than the poverty from which approximately half of the world’s population suffers now. Put simply, in this study rap is considered as a genre of music, while hip-hop is regarded as a culture of the people who come together around this music. As ECD (a Japanese rapper) says, “Hip-hop was a revolution ... because it provided a particular means for youth to express themselves through rhythm and rhyme, sampling and remixing, and battling with one’s skill” (quoted in Condry 2006: 1). Rap as a form of expression and youth are going to be main topics of this dissertation.

In the following section I will specify and describe in detail the field research that reshaped the study and also changed its course. This description will not only include the details of an academic process, but also the impacts of some of my experiences as a researcher on the study.

### **Definition of the Fieldwork in the Netherlands**

Particular branches of cultural studies, especially those concerned with youth cultures, have begun to change theoretically and methodologically because of the significant socio-economic transformations taking place in the world that dramatically affect almost every part of society. With respect to these current approaches in cultural theories, my research aims to study social changes and transformations throughout particular youth musical cultures such as hip-hop. Furthermore, investigation of hip-hop culture along with its musical identity provides my research with a multi-dimensional academic approach, because the research is not merely ethnomusicological, but at the same time covers an array of disciplines including sociology, cultural studies and political science. A discussion of crucial socio-cultural issues, like the impact of globalization on the hip-hop scene, localization, conservatism and listening strategies, together with the different subgenres in Turkish rap like *arabesk*, love rap, etc., will constitute the main structure of my research. Many academic studies have been done related to the Turkish hip-hop scene in Germany, but not on the Turkish scene in the Netherlands. My research is pioneering as one of the first detailed studies of this particular music scene. For my doctoral research, I moved to Amsterdam and lived there for about ten months to interview Turkish rappers living in the Netherlands. In this section, I would like to portray what I experienced during the research and writing process of the dissertation.

This study was completed in four years. In the first year, I reviewed other studies and surveys on the topic. This was the second most tiring and thought-provoking stage of the study after the field research. The lack of any previous study about Turkish rap in the Netherlands was one of the factors complicating this process. During this period, while examining many books and articles on hip-hop, I realized once again that this topic is extremely broad. However, my major challenge was to attempt to get an overview of all these texts (which are not directly related to the Netherlands) in order to establish a framework for the research that I was going to conduct a year later. Because I did not have sufficient knowledge of what I was going to encounter in the field, I tried to examine every study and piece of research that I obtained. During this period, I realized that I was never going to be fully ready for what I would encounter during field research. Although I was attempting to make an ethnographic discovery, I could only partially anticipate what I was going to experience in the Netherlands. For this reason, I tried to get ready for unanticipated possibilities as I prepared for my field research. This was only a year after I fully believed that a researcher or a social scientist should discover what is new by leaving his/her theoretical biases and fictions aside. In my opinion, the exact definition of my field research and what I was going to experience in a foreign country could be “uncertainty”. About this term Bauman states,

Many a feature of contemporary life contributes to the overwhelming feeling of uncertainty: to the view of the future as essentially undecidable, un-controllable and hence frightening, and to the gnawing doubt whether the present contextual constants of action will remain constant long enough to enable reasonable calculation of its effects (Bauman 1997: 50).

As I will discuss in detail in Chapter 3, during my one-week Amsterdam trip before my fieldwork, I realized that I was faced with an uncertain and complicated topic, and that difficult field research along with a theoretical struggle was waiting for me as well. Therefore, the ten months I spent in the field did not merely constitute an academically-oriented process, but also a personal struggle with a foreign culture, language and even with an ethnic group to which I somehow belong, but did not know well.

## **Context of Research**

First of all, there is a necessity to mention that this study is being written within an ethnomusicology program, with an ethnomusicologist as the primary adviser. Actually, I completed my bachelor's and graduate education in the Department of Sociology. My master's thesis topic was also related to music. After writing my master's thesis on clubbing and dance music in Turkey, my interest in the sociology of music increased. For this reason, I chose a dissertation topic that is related to music. I find it crucial to carry out this study in an ethnomusicology program when considering its contributions to my intellectual improvement and my academic experience. However, I think that to assess this study in the context of sociology of music can provide us with more effective discussions since I am not an ethnomusicologist.

I will begin this part by discussing briefly how I became interested in this subject. Even though the sudden increase in the popularity of Turkish rap music can be traced back to the work of Cartel in the mid-90s, my interest in this music started with the first solo album of a Turkish rapper, Ceza [The Punishment] from İstanbul, in 2002. Moreover, especially between 1998 and 2006 (Çağlar 1998; Çınar 1999; Bennett 1999a; Kaya 2001; Solomon 2005a, 2005b, 2006; etc.), a series of new studies across the social sciences and cultural studies revealed a striking interdisciplinary interest in Turkish hip-hop culture. In 2002, a friend and I occasionally came together in each other's homes to listen to music and exchange albums, CDs, DVDs, etc. In 2002, I was a Master's student in the Department of Sociology, studying dance music and clubbing. My friend, who enjoys metal, blues and rock music like me, brought Ceza's album and said, "you should try this... This guy is really good and fast. Furthermore, his lyrics are not so bad." We began to listen to the album on a very good sound system. We could hear every beat, all the samples and voices clearly. Personally, I liked his rapping style, beats, and samples and found his lyrics interesting. However, as an extreme metal fan, needless to say this was not really 'my music' at all. In fact, what was significant in this meeting was that my friend recommended that I study rap music for my doctorate. I had just one year left to earn my Master's degree, and I was planning to begin my doctorate immediately afterwards in the same department, so I needed a subject for the dissertation. To study rap and hip-hop culture in Turkey sounded interesting immediately. In 2003, I submitted this as my dissertation topic to the faculty members, and it was accepted. From 2003 to 2005, as a PhD student in sociology, I focused on Turkish rap in two major cities of

Turkey, namely İstanbul and Ankara. However, in 2004 I met Tom Solomon, who is a professor of ethnomusicology at the University of Bergen and specializes in Turkish rap music. My meeting with him paved the way for a major change in my academic life, and after one year I moved to Norway to write my dissertation on the aforementioned topic in detail.

I have to accept that the preparation process for this research, especially my period of field research conducted in the Netherlands, was not easy for me for various reasons. During the fieldwork the most difficult task for me was to explain to the rappers why I was in the Netherlands. To many of them it sounded so unusual that a student could be in a foreign country in order to understand what kind of rap scene exists among Turkish youngsters. This task became even more difficult once I told them that I had moved to the Netherlands from Norway and went to Norway from Turkey. At first, about half of the people I talked to supposed that I was there to choose rappers for whom I would make albums. Therefore, they usually asked me how I found their songs. They were really curious about my thoughts regarding their recordings. When I told them that I was just a researcher who does not even like rap music, they were really surprised. Instead of evaluating their works and saying whether they are either good or not, I tried to explain to them that I came to the Netherlands only to inquire about the lifestyles of the rappers. Even though I stressed the fact that I was not in the Netherlands to aesthetically evaluate their works, many of them sent or gave me some of their songs, expecting me to evaluate them. Since I am not a rap fan, it was really difficult to express an opinion of their works. Furthermore, some rappers assumed that because I study their music, I must be an expert in this genre. Needless to say, I was in the Netherlands not to write an evaluative text but rather a relatively objective, scientific doctorate dissertation. Addressing this issue, Simon Frith (2004: 19) says that

[m]usic only becomes bad music in an evaluative context, as part of an argument. An evaluative context is one in which an evaluative statement about a song or a record or performer is uttered communicatively, to persuade someone else of its truth, to have an effect on their actions and beliefs.

Regarding my not being a rap fan, I even experienced an unwanted incident with a Turkish rapper from Berlin. In an interview with him, I expressed that I cannot evaluate rap music because I am not fan of it and also because this is not the purpose of my study. Because of this, the rapper became angry and said, “it is so meaningless that someone who does not listen to this music is trying to understand rappers and the culture”. Frith emphasizes that a fan of a particular musical genre has a kind of right to evaluate what s/he listens to, but a researcher or

social scientist should not say anything related to the aesthetic nature of music (Frith 2004). He eloquently explains the situation thus: “I know of no credible rock critic who thinks Eminem makes bad music” (ibid, 26). According to Frith,

... ‘Bad’ is a key word because it suggests that aesthetic and ethical judgments are tied together here: not to like a record is not just a matter of taste; it is also a matter of argument; an argument that matters. My students have always been agreed on this [*sic*]: other people’s musical tastes have a decisive effect on friendships, courtship, love (ibid, 29).

At this point, it is also possible to claim that other people’s musical tastes provide us with significant tips about their lifestyles, political approaches or how they perceive society in general. As Attali (2002: 4) states, music is one of the ways of perceiving the world as more than an object of study. About the individualistic aspect of music, Simon Frith also states that “our feelings about a piece of music are, of course, drawn by the music: we listen, we respond. But we listen on the basis of who we are and what we musically know and expect, and we respond according to who and where and why we’re listening” (Frith 2004: 33). Frith therefore argues that “musical judgments are also ethical judgments”. Moreover, for him, the aesthetics of music “involve a particular mix of individualism and sociability” (ibid).

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

This study is composed of an introduction, six chapters and a conclusion. Chapters 3, 5 and 6 particularly include crucial discussions on the emergence of rap music, its development and spread to different parts of the world, together with specific song examples from different geographies such as Turkey, Germany and the Netherlands in a comparative manner. The main purpose of Chapter 2 is to point out in what manner research methods were used to develop this study. Since I was also personally involved as a temporary part of the Turkish diaspora, it mainly deals with how to solve matters of subjectivity and objectivity.

Chapter 3 explicates some notions that will shape the dissertation, such as globalization, nationalism, diaspora, cultural conservatism, and so on. I believe that the concepts of globalization, diaspora and national identity are unequivocally important in my discussion of the rap scene. I have chosen to include a discussion on conservatism in Chapter

3, since the Netherlands is regarded as a liberal country, considering its policies being practiced in social and cultural life. How this is perceived by the Turkish diaspora is one of the major subjects that I aim to understand from the beginning of this study. I will discuss whether there are any negative reactions or disharmonious attitudes against the host culture in my theoretical discussion using the ethnographic data that I will present in Chapter 7.

Though the topic and the focus of the dissertation did not radically change throughout the study, after completing the field research I made some changes and supplemented the original outline with new parts. In Chapter 4, I will focus on the differentiation between the socio-political origins, organizations and perspectives of Germany and the Netherlands, which are likely reasons behind the differing peculiarities of Turkish rap and hip-hop culture in the two countries. Before entering the field, I did not actually imagine or anticipate the significance of political differentiation between two countries. After a few interviews, I considered that those differentiations could be very useful to understanding Turkish rap in the Netherlands. As I will present in Chapter 4 and 7, I also visited Berlin to observe Turks and to carry out an interview with a famous rapper. My short trip provided me with very useful observation notes for the writing of Chapter 4.

Chapter 5 deals with the history of rap music and describes how to elaborate on locally produced rap music through previous works. Moreover, some technical properties of rap music, such as sampling, are also examined in this chapter. Chapter 6 concerns language, which is a very important issue in rap music studies, dealing with locality and globalization topics. With this in mind, and because of the main issue of the dissertation being Turkish rap, I will deal with the language use and its significance in rap music. Following up on Andy Bennett's argument that researchers need to consider 'the cultural significance of the language in which [lyrics] are sung' (1999a: 82), I deal with issues such as the adaptation of the Turkish language to rapping as a musical/verbal practice, since Dutch-Turkish rappers' differing levels of fluency in Turkish affect their ability to use rap as a means of expression. Another important theme of Chapter 6 is locality, and the analytic focus of the chapter is on demonstrating how Turkish rappers in The Netherlands have localized rap music. In this sense, Chapter 6 sets out to provide us with some examples of Turkish-speaking rap songs and discussions on language to reveal the connection between locality and rap.

Chapter 7 aims at blending the theoretical discussions held in other chapters with ethnographic data on a more concrete ground. This chapter, which was both easy and difficult to write, is aimed at discussing Turkish rap through respondents' views and personal

experiences. It is also aimed at reflecting the ten months that I spent in the Netherlands as a researcher and a Turk in Europe. Some of the twenty-seven conducted in-depth-interviews are included in the discussion in this chapter. Original Turkish versions of the interviews are put as footnotes for the readers who are familiar with the Turkish language. I tried to translate these interviews with great care and accuracy. I believe that none of the intended meaning is lost in translation. I would like to emphasize that this chapter is based on sociological and ethnomusicological discussions rather than an aesthetic discussion of the music performed by Dutch-Turkish rappers.

## Outro

[The] ethnographically imagined possibility of making connections between art and everyday life is relevant to all the social sciences, actually to all ways of making sense of human place (Willis 2000: 6).

Willis states that the connection between art and everyday life concerns all the social sciences. In this context, to understand the social ties of a human being through art provides us with crucial and useful data. To present the “sense of human place” ethnographically through the interviews or the lyrics examined in the dissertation is one of the major goals of this study. In conclusion, I would like to present the lyrics of a song composed by Ruhi Su, a Turkish folk singer and *saz* (traditional string instrument) virtuoso. It is a song about the pains of Turkish immigrants, as also portrayed in many movies produced in the seventies:

*Almanya, Acı Vatan* [Germany the Land of Sorrow] (1977)

Germany is the land of sorrow  
It never smiles at man  
I don't understand why  
Some of them never return<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> Almanya acı vatan  
Adama hiç gülmeyi  
Nedendir bilemedi  
Bazıları gelmeyi

## CHAPTER 2

### METHODOLOGY AND ETHICS

#### 2.1 Data Collection

This research is designed to examine the role of rap music in shaping cultural and diasporic identities of youngsters living in the Netherlands. In order to understand the impact of the popularity of Turkish-language rap on Dutch-Turkish youngsters, I lived in the Netherlands for about ten months, beginning in September 2006. This dissertation firstly draws on interviews with Turkish rappers in the Netherlands. The second form of data comes from ethnographic fieldwork: participant observation including informal comments made by respondents outside of interview contexts. The rappers and the fans I interviewed ranged in age from seventeen to thirty-four. Unlike their counterparts in Germany, it is not easy to reach Dutch-Turkish rappers by using Internet or other sources such as fanzines, magazines, etc. Therefore, I used snowball sampling, which is ... “a method for sampling (or selecting) the cases in a network... [It] begins with one or a few people or cases and spreads out on the basis of links to the initial cases” (Neuman 2006: 225), to reach interviewees, in order to shorten the duration for searching for them throughout the different parts of the Netherlands. During the period that I stayed in the Netherlands, I carried out face-to-face and in-depth interviews with twenty seven Turkish rappers. One of them was a female rapper from Amsterdam. I recorded all interviews with a digital voice recorder and later transcribed them. All interviews were conducted in Turkish and then translated from Turkish to English. Original quotations of rappers in Turkish are also available in the footnotes to the following chapters. In addition to face-to-face interviews, I interviewed two female Turkish rappers from Rotterdam via MSN, because even though I went to Rotterdam a few times to conduct interviews with them, they informed me they did not have time to for an interview during my visit period.

Researchers generally prefer to use qualitative methodological techniques in sociological and ethnographic studies aimed at understanding of both behaviors of “marginalized” groups, such as fans of particular music scenes like rap, extreme metal, techno music etc., and the social dynamics which result in those scenes being “marginal”. Particularly participant observation and in-depth interviews with fans of those musical scenes and musicians are generally accepted as useful methods to investigate the cultural peculiarities of those scenes. Konecki simply puts it that



[b]y qualitative field research we refer to research based mainly on participant observation as the rudimentary research technique and on the unstructured interview as a supporting technique. Such a situation implies a longer stopover for the researcher within the community and his active participation in order to discover the customs and the patterns for interpretation and interaction with the members of a given group as well as the social structure, which binds them together. The researcher builds close relations with the observed individuals. The crucial aspect, from the perspective of such studies, is the access to the life of the group and the acceptance of the researcher within the structure of the group to “share” the reality of the other, and to establish the intersubjectivity with him and to base research on the so called ‘intimate familiarity’ (Konecki 2008: 9).

I mainly preferred to conduct semi-structured and unstructured interviews. My main reason for choosing this method of research is that it provides me with the opportunity to be open to the other subjects while letting me obtain detailed information about my research topic. For this reason, while trying to get responses from the respondents for some particular “formalized” questions related to main topics of the dissertation, such as difficulties in the host country, nationalism or cultural conservatism, I also allowed the framework of my study to expand to take in those issues with answers popping up after those “formalized” questions. The interview techniques mentioned above provided me with an appropriate degree of flexibility. Indeed, I do not think that “formalized” and fixed questions of “structured interviews” could provide the flexibility that I got through interviews conducted with such techniques. Due to the fact that Turkish hip-hop in the Netherlands has not been studied by other researchers before, I think the topic must be addressed from different angles. As the number of interviews increased and I began to conduct regular interviews with some rappers, I started to benefit from both the unstructured interview approach and discussions and conversations that were held in friendly and intimate environments. The unstructured interview technique was very helpful to me for constructing such a friendly atmosphere. This method offers an advantage to the researcher and therefore, “[u]nstructured interviewing is the most widely used method of data collection” across the social sciences. Researchers have chances to “interview people informally during the course of an ordinary day of participant observation” (Bernard 1988: 203). Over time, the conversations that are held informally provide the researcher with absolutely crucial information. As I will discuss in detail in Chapter 7, some views of Turkish rappers about sensitive issues could not be obtained using a “structured interview”. As Bernard states, “...unstructured interviewing can be used for

studying sensitive issues, like sexuality, racial or ethnic prejudice, or ‘hot’ political issues” (1988: 209). However, at this point the other significant issue necessitating discussion is the ethical approaches used. During interviews about such sensitive topics, if respondents were to forget the role of the researcher and start to perceive these interviews as friendly conversations and not remember what they say might be reproduced in a thesis or academic publication, the position of the researcher can become difficult. Though many of the sincerely shared views concerning political, moral or cultural issues may be crucial for the research, the position of the researcher in such an environment may likely prevent him/her from using some information and data. This tension may exhaust the researcher both psychologically and intellectually. In this light, field research is “a profound experience, uncomfortable and sometimes shattering, but richly rewarding as well” (Keesing and Keesing 1971: 12). Though this tension is not usually experienced during the structured interviews, the respondent may sometimes reply to questions to justify his/her identity, which itself may also be the very subject of the scientific research. For instance, as any hip-hopper talks to a researcher, s/he appears to defend the rap culture, but indeed s/he also tries to defend his/her identity, derived from this musical culture in which s/he has a significant affective investment. I observed such attitudes particularly during interviews comprising more than one rapper. Indeed, my research also included focus group discussions and in-depth interviews with professional rappers and others who participate in the Turkish hip-hop scene in Netherlands. These focus group discussions provided a window into how these subjects imagine their identities. However, while due to some ethical issues I did not explicitly draw on data from them in this dissertation, the focus group discussions provided me with important perspectives on, for instance, conservatism and religion.

Most Dutch-Turkish rappers preferred to send me their songs via the Internet. Only MT and Şener-E (who will be mentioned in Chapter 7 in detail) prepared a CD-R compilation for me composed of their songs and albums. Though I succeeded in interviewing pioneer rappers like Şener-E or Osman Han, there were two well-known rappers in the Netherlands whom I could not reach in spite of all my attempts. One of them is DJ Akman from Rotterdam, who performs “love rap” (will be discussed later), and the other is Al-J from Hengelo. Even though I e-mailed both rappers several times and left messages on their Myspace pages, I did not succeed in contacting them. Particular information related to the topic of dissertation I obtained from my interviews will be presented in Chapter 7 in detail.

However, to avoid repetition, there are some respondents with whom I spoke that I will not mention.

During my ten months of fieldwork, I interviewed some rappers more than once, but some of these interviews would better be called friendly, informal meetings, not formal ones. While some interviews – especially those conducted with MT, Erhan, Cey Cey and APO, with whom I developed sustained relationships – were particularly useful, they were tiring in some ways as well. Many of my insights into the Turkish rap scene stem from the days I spent with Dutch-born Erhan, from Amsterdam. At times, MT’s personality and attitude put us at odds. From time to time, he got angry over various discussions of the Turkish rap scene in general, and a few times even demanded that I throw out all my notes on him and not write anything about him in the thesis. After he calmed down, we would again come to an understanding. In addition, the way some rappers kept on postponing interviews was very demoralizing. Some of them explained these delays by saying that they lacked sufficient self-confidence or were not good enough at rapping, or knew too little about hip-hop, and were worried this would come out during the interviews. On such worries, R.L. Gorden states, “The respondent tends to withhold any information which he fears might threaten his self-esteem” (quoted by Madison 2005: 33). In addition, a few rappers asked me to mediate between them and other rappers to resolve their disputes. Sometimes they called me “father” (“baba” in Turkish, which shows a kind of respect, especially if someone has more experience than them) and sometimes “big brother,” because of my age and also because I was an “highly educated person” in their eyes. Hence, they sometimes even treated me as a sort of mediator between them. I should add that this situation made me a respected person in most rappers’ eyes. I should state openly, since we established personal relationships after I interviewed them, that I came to see a few of the rappers as friends or like younger brothers.

It seems unlikely that a researcher can effectively work with broad groups of interviewees by conducting in-depth interviews. If more superficial and practical information is targeted, broader groups may be preferred, but obtaining detailed information could provide the researcher with different ways of considering the issue s/he focuses on. In this context field research “entails a deep immersion into the life of a people. Instead of studying large samples of people, [the researcher] enters as fully as he can into the everyday life of a small group of people” (Keesing and Keesing 1971: 12). Sometimes, sharing everyday life lets the researcher get closer to the topic and the respondents. From time to time, the

unstructured interviews that I conducted with small-scale groups pushed me to think flexibly. Cultural anthropologist Russell Bernard sums up this situation as follows:

You sit down with an informant and hold an interview... Both of you know what you're doing, and there is no shared feeling that you're engaged in pleasant chit-chat. Unstructured interviews are based on a clear plan that you keep constantly in mind, but they are also characterized by a minimum of control over the informant's responses (Bernard 1988: 204).

During these kinds of interviews some common experiences originating from living in the same city or country may lead to the appearance of a friendly atmosphere. At the same time, as a result of thinking about common topics and people with different cultural formations sharing some opinions, a conversation may turn into more of a friendly dialogue than an interview.

## **2.2 Analysis of Data**

In this section, the main academic issue I attempt to point out is how it is possible to be both insider<sup>4</sup> and outsider in a particular given society at the same time. In this process, participant observation was a useful technique which “serves as shorthand for a continuous tacking between the ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ of events: on the one hand grasping the sense of specific occurrences and gestures empathetically, on the other hand stepping back to situate these meanings in wider contexts” (Clifford 2008: 483). As previously stated, I was also part of the Turkish community living in the Netherlands. Therefore, I could not just situate myself as merely an autonomous researcher who attempts to portray the Turkish-language rap scene by using grand theories, but rather aim at understanding this scene and Turkish community via the analysis of observations, collected qualitative data which are “in the form of text, written words, or symbols describing or representing people, actions, and events in social life” (Neuman 2006: 457) and in-depth interviews. Moreover, after completing the fieldwork and during the analysis of data, I tried not to withdraw myself from the field intellectually, which “[...] carries the danger of producing theoretical structures that are irrelevant to the lived experiences of people on the ground and neither grounded in nor

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<sup>4</sup> For discussions on “insider” and “outsider” anthropology see Peirano 1998.

answerable to ethnographic data” (Aull Davis 1999: 193). Instead, I benefited from my lived experiences to examine the Turkish rap scene by using relevant theoretical insights on them.

Needless to say, social scientists “do not merely report what [they] find; [they] create accounts of social life, and in doing so [they] construct versions of the social worlds and the social actors that [they] observed. It is, therefore, inescapable that analysis implies representation” (Coffey and Atkinson 1996: 108). Here, the critical point is how to represent “accounts of social life” experienced by others through the eyes of a researcher who obtains his/her data from fieldwork in order to present an academic text written about those accounts to the reader. A research problem tends to come out after facing accounts of social life, and then over time it “needs to be developed, and may need to be transformed; and eventually its scope must be clarified and delimited, and its internal structure explored” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2003: 160). I significantly experienced the transformation and developing of the research problem when I began to conduct the fieldwork. For instance, while I expected to meet a Turkish-language rap scene in the Netherlands as similar to its counterpart in Germany, I found a totally different scene which forced me to transform my research problem.

When I realized the socio-political and cultural differentiations between Germany and the Netherlands in the first half of the fieldwork, I started to follow the literature about these two countries regarding some particular issues, such as multiculturalism, country of immigration, integration, and so on and so forth. I need to say that I did not write Chapter 4, which is about both countries, in a critical fashion, but rather in a descriptive way since here the main issue is not to discover the advantages or disadvantages of applications of official laws on migrants and cultural codes of local people together, but rather to comprehend those given social structures which might condition in which ways hip-hop scenes in both countries appeared. Therefore, I tried to be descriptive and objective as much as I could during the writing process the chapter.

I predominantly focused on theoretical discussions on rap music in Chapter 5 in order to elaborate on the ethnographical data I obtained during the fieldwork. Even though Chapter 6 was written to present particular song examples from Turkey, Germany and the Netherlands, the previous one was designed to provide much more general discussions to the reader, yet still including a few examples to connect all of that data to Chapter 7. In this context, particularly Chapter 6 might be considered as a kind of bridge between Chapter 5 and 7. Particularly Chapter 4 and 5 make the dissertation a sort of comparative study that is based

upon Germany and the Netherlands, though ethnographical material dominantly came from the Turkish-language rap scene in the Netherlands. However, I tried to benefit from the studies on Germany as well. Let me say that particularly Chapter 6 was in a sense the most difficult one for me to write, due to being mainly constructed on linguistic comparison of rap songs from the German and the Dutch scenes. I had difficult times, because it was hard to illustrate the differentiated linguistic styles which rappers from Turkey, Germany and the Netherlands prefer to use to the reader who may not be able to speak Turkish. In those analyses of the example, I presented particular linguistic definitions and rules used in Turkish in order to hinder any confusion. What I tried to do was not to elaborate on the songs aesthetically, but rather to use them as examples to point out differences among those aforementioned scenes.

After reading prominent theoretical and empirical works on the Turkish rap scene in Germany, I started to focus on merely data that I could obtain from the fieldwork without any theoretical assumptions. It perhaps sounds like a technique of grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss 1967), but it needs to be said that I did not try to reach any fixed theoretical statements. Instead of this, I aimed to present ethnographical data to the readers together with my personal insights on them, which were made up of different theoretical approaches and outcomes. According to Hammersley and Atkinson “theorizing [...] ought to involve an iterative process in which ideas are used to make sense of data, data are used to change our ideas. In other words, there should be movement back and forth between ideas and data” (Hammersley and Atkinson 2003: 159). In this framework, I firstly describe and discuss some issues, such as cultural conservatism or diasporic consciousness, which are very important for this study, and secondly tend to connect them to Chapter 7 through interviews and song samples.

### **2.3 Ethical Discussion of the Research**

... the ethics of conducting research are hardly detachable from the question of values in research (Armbruster 2008: 3).

It is obvious that the most important moment in field research is the encounter between the researcher and the participants (whom s/he regards as objects of study prior to entering the field). Sometimes the intellectual and personal impacts of this encounter can be

quite striking. In my situation, for instance, both my displacement to Norway as a student and my stay in the Netherlands during my fieldwork provided me with some ideas about the experience Turkish people have of being far from “home” or being in the diaspora. In this sense, Peirano states, “the spatial separation between ‘the field’ and ‘home’ leads the authors to examine the fieldworker as an anthropological subject” (Peirano 1998: 113). Every experience leads to interpretation involving objective and subjective components. Even though the researcher endeavors to interpret the obtained data objectively, the challenging aspect of the encounter with the human participants makes this difficult from time to time. Related to this, sociologist Max Weber states:

All interpretation of meaning, like all scientific observation, strives for clarity and verifiable accuracy of insight and comprehension. The basis for certainty in understanding can be either rational, which can be further subdivided into logical and mathematical, or it can be of an emotionally empathic or artistically appreciative quality (Weber 1994: n.p.).

All interpretation, as Weber states, and also keeping in mind what Bauman suggests about uncertainty (as mentioned in the Introduction), involves some complicated human elements. In this respect, I cannot refute the contributions of field research to both my dissertation and my personal experience. It was also very good preparation for my writing process, with challenging and interesting experiences.

Before I begin to discuss methodological perception, prejudice, and bias, I would like to bring in a note from a personal experience. Two years ago, just before the summer, I was polishing a boat for a Turkish friend who lives in Norway. His boat is a completely handmade, classical wooden boat. He warned me about the necessity of sanding the surface before starting to polish it. When I asked him the reason for this, he replied that “if it is repolished before sanding it, the surface becomes rough”. Then, I sanded all the polished surfaces of the boat for hours. While doing this I was thinking about my dissertation, and my field research came to my mind. If I did not get rid of the prejudices and biases likely to appear at the end of each interview before the next meetings, there was a risk that these remaining ideas would affect them. However, I also used to record every anecdote from interviews in order to make connections among them. Nonetheless, using the information I acquired and the connections I made during the first interview, I discovered new positions that I could take while meeting with other rappers. As Madison states, “[p]ositionality is vital because it forces us to acknowledge our own power, privilege, and biases just as we are

denouncing the power structures that surround our subjects” (Madison 2005: 7; see also Abu-Lughod 1991). For the researcher, using possible “biases” or prejudices to increase his/her curiosity about the subject under scrutiny, along with his/her power of analysis, enhances the dynamism of study. Gadamer states, “the fundamental prejudice of the enlightenment is the prejudice against prejudice itself” (quoted in Anderson 1991: 367). The prejudice that is mentioned here is not presupposition. Rather it can only be understood if the researcher, while attempting to take the most objective position possible, uses his/her biases critically and also to drive curiosity. That is to say, what is portrayed here is not the researcher attempting to objectify his/her biases. Gadamer says:

It is not so much our judgments as it is our prejudices that constitute our being. This is a provocative formulation, for I am using it to restore to its rightful place a positive concept of prejudice that was driven out of our linguistic usage by the French and the English Enlightenment. It can be shown that the concept of prejudice did not originally have the meaning we have attached to it. Prejudices are not necessarily unjustified or erroneous, so that they inevitably distort the truth...Prejudices are biases of our openness to the world. They are simply conditions whereby we experience something – whereby what we encounter says something to us (Gadamer 1977: 9).

What Gadamer states can be related to critical ethnography; “what some have called the ‘new ethnography’ ... must not only critique the notion of objectivity, but must also critique the notion of subjectivity as well” (Madison 2005: 8). Hence, the balance that the ethnographer attempts to keep between objectivity and subjectivity becomes crucial to critically elaborate on the main topic of the study (see Atkinson 1990). Therefore, I can say that a balanced and potentially dynamic prejudice that the researcher may have lays out a clear basis for critical ethnography. There is no doubt that fieldwork is both a significant and difficult process for social scientists. Especially the tiredness that is felt during the long course of the fieldwork, complications and obstacles encountered in the field, and the pressure of conducting scientific research, might exhaust the ethnographic researcher. Sometimes the researcher enters the field with his/her prejudices, assumptions and feelings as detached from his/her identity as a scientist. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that s/he feels both enthusiasm and bewilderment when s/he makes discoveries in his/her ethnographic study. In this sense, fieldwork simply shifts



[...] into focus as the actual locus of authorship, the sphere where those crucial discursive encounters between self and other took place, to be ultimately transformed into text ... The construction, the possibilities and the choices [are] laid bare, while the author [shows s/he is] trying for ways to make an honest dialogue out of her complex experience in the field (Armbruster 2008: 7-8).

I also experienced such things during my fieldwork. At times, the relationships that I had developed with some respondents were not only formal, interviewer-respondent relationships, but also close and friendly ones, as well as being formed in order to look “for ways to make an honest dialogue”. Therefore, I had to manage with the risk of regarding the respondents’ personal stories as mere scientific facts. On the other hand, there were also times when I felt pressure because of this. However, thanks to the friendly and close relationships that I developed with the participants, I had an opportunity to collect useful and valuable data that cannot be obtained through traditional interviewing practices. Still, at this point, what had become a concern was my data collection technique, rather than the “scientific” value of the collected data. It is better to keep in mind what Atkinson says, that “when the sociologist produces a text, then he or she is inescapably drawing on a stock of cultural codes and convention” (Atkinson 1990: 11). Knowing that the opinions put forward in a friendly and intimate atmosphere better reflect what has “really” happened than those expressed in a traditionally conducted interview, some ethical problems are brought to my attention. This necessitates consideration of the possible deficiencies of the data and information that is collected through interviews. Madison states that “[t]here will always be ethical dilemmas in every research project” (Madison 2005: 112). I would like to draw the attention of the reader only to a single point, in an effort to avoid any misunderstanding: as discussed above, it is obvious that if I use here the data I collected by engaging in close relationship with my respondents, this will trigger serious ethical discussions. My state of being “in-between” ironically overlaps with the subject of this dissertation. To some extent, I have the real knowledge that academia demands from me. But at the same time, there is some particular collected data and information that I cannot use in an academic study because of the formal and the ethical rules set forth in academia, which I also personally affirm to some extent. Surely, it does not totally mean that this is an attempt to utterly subvert subjectivity, nor to deny objectivity, but instead to manage to represent something ethnographic by coping with the ambiguity between both (Tyler 1986: 136) (see also Clifford 2008; Aull Davies 1999). Kraidy terms this situation “will to knowledge”, which “created perplexity towards my

changing roles as my [informants] perceived me to have become ‘less spontaneous’ and ‘more goal-oriented’.” (Kraidy 1999: 463)

Two years ago, while searching for different methodological approaches to apply in my fieldwork, I came across an article written by anthropologist Karl G. Heider constructing relations between the movie *Rashomon* (1950) by Akira Kurosawa and ethnography. The article suggests a constructionist examination of research, instead of a positivist search for truth versus error, in order to examine the reasons for disagreements between ethnographers, which “often arise because of the particular circumstances of fieldwork or attributes of the ethnographers” (Heider 1988: 73).

The film [Rashomon] is set in 12th-century Japan and concerns the encounter in the forest between a bandit and a samurai and his wife. The mystery of the film comes from four quite different accounts of the same event (a sexual encounter that may be rape, and a death that is either murder or suicide). Each account is clearly self-serving, intended to enhance the nobility of the teller. Each account is presented as a truth at a trial by the bandit, the samurai's wife, the samurai (who, having died, testifies through a spirit medium), and a passing woodcutter who may have been an onlooker (Heider 1988: 74).

Heider links the expression of reality in the movie (through the eyes of the characters) to the expression of reality in ethnography. The ethnographer has to go beyond presenting the reality that s/he encounters, and combine theoretical and methodological approaches with personal observations and experiences. It seems that what lies behind the tension appearing during this process, between ethical rules and academic attitudes, is the desire to present reality with the least possible amount of “disagreement”. Nevertheless, it seems that in the end, portraying realities as a whole will decrease this tension to a minimum. We can draw an analogy between the differentiation among the stories told in *Rashomon* and the different representations of realities by respondents. At this point, both the researcher and the respondents are in the process of interpretation. Reviewing his article, Rhoades explains,

participants (the samurai and his wife, and the bandit) all report somewhat self-serving and contradictory versions of a dramatic incident in testimony before a culturally appropriate forum (an official inquest). Only the ethnographer (the woodcutter) sees most of this event, without getting involved, and his description is presented as being much closer to what ‘really’ happened (Rhoades 1989: 171).

What Rhoades describes above becomes much more meaningful with what Barbaba Tedlock states. According to her, beginning in the 1970s, anthropologists theorizing ethnography began to draw a distinction between participant observation and what Tedlock (1991) would later call “the observation of participation”. There are two distinct activities that actually comprise the basis of ethnographic research. The first, participant observation, implies that the ethnographer participates in the daily routines of people and develops “ongoing relations with” them. All the while, s/he observes what is going on and “...writes down in regular, systematic ways what she observes and learns while participating in the daily rounds of life of others” (Emerson *et al.* 1995: 1). Secondly, “more recently, ethnographers have modified participant observation by undertaking ‘the observation of participation’. During this activity, they reflect on and critically engage with their own participation within the ethnographic frame” (Tedlock 2005: 467). I benefited from both of these techniques during my fieldwork.

Ethically, the researcher should inform members of the social community that s/he will engage in observation of daily routines. For my research, it is a critical point that hip-hopppers, who are my focus group, might act in a different way in accordance with how the researcher introduces him/herself, for example as PhD candidate, professor or journalist, etc. Therefore, it can be useful to continue the discussion with this issue here as well. I think that, as both an experimental and scientific way of understanding people, fieldwork has significant potential to give birth to many possibilities for the researcher. As Rabinow states,

[f]ieldwork is a dialectic between reflection and immediacy. Both are cultural constructs. Our scientific categories help us to recognize, describe, and develop areas of inquiry. But one cannot engage in questioning and redefining twenty-four hours a day. The scientific perspective on the world is too hard to sustain. In the field there is less to fall back on; the world of everyday life changes more rapidly and dramatically than it would at home. There is an accelerated dialectic between the recognition of new experiences and their normalization (Rabinow 1977: 38).

I think the relationship between reflection and immediacy that Rabinow discusses can also be directly related to the applied methods. As he mentions, adjusting to the routines of rapidly changing everyday life and finding the truth or “reality” during this adjusting period pushes the researcher to apply dynamic methods. Rabinow’s concept “ethnography as text” (Rabinow 1986: 256) “would genuinely seek ‘dialogue’ (not a new, but a much-used term) with the researched, aspire to build relationships of trust and reciprocity, and undercut her own

authority by departing from the ‘realist’ forms of writing that had been characteristic of the positivist and ‘modernist’ anthropological tradition” (Armbruster 2008: 7).

Needless to say, this fieldwork and these personal experiences provided me with very useful information and approaches. Related to ethnographic studies in general and reconsidering personal experiences in fieldwork, Joseph Schloss suggests an approach to figuring out the issue of the subjectivity of the researcher, which he defines as “self-ethnography”:

The most productive approach to this issue is for scholars to create a framework in which their particular paths may be interpreted as case studies of individuals from similar backgrounds pursuing similar goals. In other words, reflexivity is not enough: one must generalize from one’s own experience, a pursuit which requires researchers not only to examine their relationships to the phenomena being studied, but also to speculate on the larger social forces to which they themselves are subject, a process... (Schloss 2004: 15).

In this sense, during the course of my field research in the Netherlands, I became a part of the Turkish diaspora. For this reason, I tried to consider the existing “social forces” and the social structure in the Netherlands not only as a researcher, but also as a subject experiencing this process, as Schloss suggests. In this study, I did the ethnographic fieldwork in a country to which I was totally alien. On the other hand, I also shared a few very important commonalities with my respondents, such as nationality, language and culture. While during some interviews I talked to them as a Turk, when it was needed I treated them as a distanced researcher. About issues related to the subject position of the researcher in relation to the research subjects, key terms here are the idea of the “native ethnographer” and the “halfie” as defined by Abu-Lughod (1991) and further explored by Narayan (1993), Kraidy (1999), etc. According to Abu-Lughod, “halfies” are people whose national or cultural identity is mixed by virtue of migration, overseas education, or parentage (Abu-Lughod 1991: 137). Here, what it is important to keep in mind is to collect ethnographic data from formal or informal conversations which were carried out under various circumstances. In this sense, Narayan offers the term “*enactment of hybridity* in our texts; that is, writing that depicts authors as minimally bicultural in terms of belonging simultaneously to the world of engaged scholarship and the world of everyday life” (Narayan 1993: 672; italics in original).

As I will mention in the following chapters, participating in this process together with other Turks, while holding academic responsibility, became emotionally difficult. About this

process Paul Benjamin states that “[p]articipation implies emotional involvement; observation requires detachment. It is a strain to try to sympathize with others and at the same time strive for scientific objectivity” (Benjamin 1953: 441). Fieldwork can be viewed as one of the most challenging aspects of research for social scientists. It is not just an intellectual challenge but also a psychological one that may push the researcher to reconsider his/her subject of study. Even the thinking process on the use of language to communicate with respondents properly is a difficult task that may affect the development of the study. Therefore, it is needless to say that for academics, staying in a small office and writing something about the people living “out there” is a task totally different from conducting fieldwork. In line with this point, Rabinow makes a personal note from his university years, saying “[i]n the graduate anthropology department at the University of Chicago, the world was divided into two categories of people: those who had done fieldwork, and those who had not; the latter were not ‘really’ anthropologists, regardless of what they knew about anthropological topics” (Rabinow 1977: 3). For this reason, it can be said that ethnographic discovery begins in fieldwork, during which what is uncertain, and no longer what is certain, emerges. Because of this, ethnography and anthropology turn into a dynamic search for knowledge.

What is at issue here is not the change from the topic I previously focused on, but rather the fieldwork I conducted in the Netherlands. The challenge here was to face the possibilities of different cultural activities happening among Turks in a European country. Rabinow simply states that: “[a]ll cultural activity is experimental, that fieldwork is a distinctive type of cultural activity, and that it is this activity which defines the discipline” (Rabinow 1977: 5). I also became a part of this cultural activity because of the relationships that I developed with respondents as a researcher and as their friend. Moreover, my ethnic identity, which is also Turkish, made me a direct part of their cultural activity in the Netherlands. In this case, my friendly relationships with Turkish youngsters remind me of a Tony Gatlif movie, *Gadjo Dilo* [“Stupid Non-Gypsy”]. In this film, Stéphane, a young French man, travels to Romania to search for the singer Nora Luca, to whom his father had often listened before his death. While he is wandering around trying to find a safe place to stay, he meets Izidor, who is a gypsy. Izidor takes him to his village. Stéphane lives in the village for several months to reach Nora Luca and meanwhile learns Romanian. Moreover, he collects and records some folk songs from the inhabitants of Gypsy villages. Then, some tragic incidents take place in the village where he first lived, and he therefore decides to abandon the village. At the end of the movie, there is a very striking scene in which Stéphane digs a hole

and after breaking some cassettes (including all his recordings of folk songs) into pieces alongside the notebook he uses for taking notes, he buries them. Afterwards, he dances around the hole while drinking vodka that is actually a ritual practiced by Izidor at the grave of friend of him. I consider that the reason for Stéphane's act is a particular deep emotional tie connecting him to the villagers. At the same time, it may be interpreted in another way: perhaps he sees the folk songs as a kind of cultural item that can be understood only in their own present natural environment. Hence, instead of considering those recordings as ethnographic objects, he buries them all. Metaphorically speaking, I also buried some particular information and data that I collected through various personal relationships during my stay in the Netherlands, even though they are directly related to this research and have the potential to contribute to it. Qualitative researchers are obliged to consider how to enter the "terrain of our subjects in ways that are appropriate, ethical, and effective" (Madison 2005: 22). I always tried to keep in mind what Madison said about appropriate ways. Rather, I tend to see "the initial experience of ethnographic writing" as "constitutional and experimental in the context of a research career [...]" (Marcus 1986: 266).

In fact, when we start to discuss hip-hop through nationalism, diaspora or conservatism, we can obtain a lot of ethnographic materials about this subject. We obtain this information from interviews, Internet sites, song lyrics, and also from fanzines. However, what is important is how to apply the ethnographic study principles to the collected information. Whether there will be a discourse analysis on the collected ethnographic materials after the collection process is over, or whether the collection of the materials will be conducted along with the existing preconceived notions —an example of which could be nationalism or conservatism— is an important methodological difference. It may be easy to label the Turkish hip-hop scene as this or this. However, with an ethnographic discovery as a start point and study purpose, it is important to remember that there will be different examples than this model. Moreover, how individuals characterize themselves or the methods researchers use in describing them seems to present various problems in a youth music scene, which "can never be stable" (Kahn-Harris 2007: 20), as will be mentioned in Chapter 3.

Paul Rabinow published a standard ethnographic study on Morocco. After this study, he wrote another book about a series of encounters with his respondents where he says: "[t]he book is a reconstruction of a set of encounters that occurred while doing fieldwork" (Rabinow 1977: 6). In the same sense, my study is a hybrid mix of my field experiences and thoughts. My encounter with the West as a researcher from Turkey constitutes the base of this study.

Finally, I need to express the point that I coped with the “exhaustion” caused by field research and theoretical discussions with the help of Paul Rabinow’s work.

## CHAPTER 3

### THEORETICAL INSIGHTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION AND LOCALITY

#### 3.1 Prelude to the Phenomenon of Globalization

For research into diasporas in the social sciences, the factors of locality, globalization, nationality and ethnicity normally take up a large part of the theoretical discussion. In order to understand the interrelatedness of a particular musical culture, those sciences mainly focus on encompassing theses of particular sociological concepts. The objective of this chapter is to briefly discuss the definitions of some of the concepts, alongside cultural conservatism, that will shape this thesis. Particularly the concepts of globalization, diaspora and national identity are indisputably important in discussions of hip-hop, “which emerged as a musical and cultural force during the late 1970s in the United States and has followed a global trajectory ever since” (Perulla and Fenn 2003: 19). Therefore, in this chapter, these concepts will be explored along with their unique relationships with each other.

As mentioned in the introductory chapter, I lived in Amsterdam for approximately 10 months to do my fieldwork. The beginning of my stay there was consumed by telling Turkish rappers about the subject of my research via e-mail. In these letters, I first briefly introduced myself, described my study, and then requested face-to-face interviews. For the most part, the rappers’ responses indicated a certain level of confusion, requesting more information about the purpose of my presence in the Netherlands. The most confusing part of my initial message to them seemed to be my official position in Norway and the scholarship I had received from the University of Bergen to research Turkish rap in the Netherlands. After I explained the purpose of my presence in much more detail, most of them accepted my request. However, many of them asked me again, with visible curiosity, the main purpose of my presence in the Netherlands, wondering how it was possible to receive financial support from a foreign state which has nothing to do with Turkish rap. Their questions about my reasons for being in the Netherlands and its connection to Norway were very logical and critical. I believe the possible



answers to their questions may provide us with some clues and insights about globalization, which will be the main topic of this chapter, along with diasporic identity, localization and immigration. As I knew my answers to the rappers would be important, I thought carefully before providing them. Eventually, I decided to make a connection to rap music in my answer, i.e. my attempt to explain the goal of my research and its financial support from Norway (believing that this would make the matter more understandable to them). Naturally, the answers I provided through e-mail were only able to satisfy their initial curiosity. Nonetheless, the interviews still drew surprised looks from the rappers, particularly after they heard my story – the story of a Turkish researcher working on his PhD in Norway on Turkish rap music but at the time doing fieldwork for his research in the Netherlands. Quite naturally, the interview took a different tack after the introductory exchanges, once the interviewees heard my answers. Our conversations often went like so:

**Rapper:** So, you're in Amsterdam to talk to Turkish rappers, and Norway pays you money for this, right? How's this possible, bro?

**Me:** Yes, right.

**Rapper:** You came to Norway from Turkey. You don't live in Norway permanently. You're there just for this research, right?

**Me:** Yes, right

**Rapper:** I can't understand why a Norwegian university supports you to do this research. Why do they want to learn about Turkish rap in the Netherlands?

**Me:** Now, look. Think of a rapper in the Netherlands. He does rap in English and he's pretty good at his stuff. Then an American record company offers him a deal, and he accepts. You see, my situation is quite similar to the rapper's. My subject is written in English and the topic is interesting to people who have the money needed to support this study, so it gets offers from a country outside of Turkey. That's kind of how academia works<sup>5</sup>. Sometimes it gets international support. Actually, this is partly a result of globalization.

I was in the Netherlands to do research into Turks in Europe, or even “New Europe” after transnational migrations. Over the past few decades, people in the West have been faced with a New Europe concerned with “ethnic heterogeneity inserted into a multicultural supratate” (Modood 1997: 1), one which emerged particularly due to transnational migration

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<sup>5</sup> The same topic is mentioned in Rabinow's brilliant work on his fieldwork in Morocco, where he writes, “Why, the villagers asked, should a rich American want to move into a poor rural village and live by himself in a mud house when he could be living in a villa in Sefrou? Why us?” (Rabinow 1977: 77).

patterns. Ethnic heterogeneity and multiculturalism cannot be solely defined in Europe's limited context, but rather must be analyzed prior to this definition in the light of globalization.

I believe that the preceding dialogue, which is fairly representative of ones I had during my research, provides a meaningful opening for the purposes of a discussion of globalization. Similarly, Rowe and Schelling ask a critical question about globalization and the mutual relationships between the West and the East: "How do we come to terms with phenomena such as [a Turkish PhD candidate, working on rap music in the Netherlands, in Norway,] Thai boxing by Moroccan girls in Amsterdam, Asian rap in London, Irish bagels, Chinese tacos ...?" (quoted in Nederveen Pieterse 1995: 53). Moreover, "[i]n step with scholars in many disciplines, attention to globalization as a process, and the use of 'global' as a cultural category, exploded in ethnomusicology during the 1990s and continues to gather steam in the new century" (Turino 2003: 51). Therefore, this chapter will draw the outlines of globalization in order to present rap music's general socio-cultural and economic aspects.

For two decades, social scientists have shown considerable attention to discussions of globalization theories, and "much of this discussion has centered on what at first appeared to be an aspect of the hierarchical nature of imperialism, that is, the increasing hegemony of particular central cultures, the diffusion of American values, consumer goods and lifestyles" (Friedman 1995: 70). However, as Friedman suggests, such discussions have developed "into a more complex understanding of cultural processes that span large regions of the world" (ibid). Such developments in the social sciences, especially in cultural sociology, have enabled us to think of globalization in terms of not just economic understanding, but rather the interrelatedness of culture and economy. As shown in the above dialogue, the outcomes of globalization include the mobility of researchers writing in English, particular cultures from other parts of the world mixing with the host cultures of other countries, and any economic system applying in most parts of the world, etc. The mobility of socioeconomic and cultural artifacts has become an important issue in theoretical discussions of globalization.

In this new era, mobility has seeped into all aspects of life to the extent that – to the rappers' surprise – a researcher from Turkey can take a position in a Northern European country to study a subject that exists in yet a third country. On this jarring array of placement and displacement, Michael Kearney writes: "Globalization entails a shift from two-dimensional Euclidian space with its centers and peripheries and sharp boundaries, to a multidimensional global space with unbounded, often discontinuous and interpenetrating sub-

spaces” (Kearney 1995: 549). As Kearney points out, globalization refers to socioeconomic and cultural patterns which follow particularly discontinuous and unanticipated paths of development. Therefore, especially due to this discontinuity, it does not offer a kind of worldwide homogenization, but rather entails a sort of differentiation, particularly in terms of culture. The equation of globalization with homogenization due to the global spread of particular cultural identities highlights various problematic implications, as it ignores highly varied and complex cultural appearances in different parts of the world. As Arnason states, “it is necessary to bear in mind that globalization is by no means synonymous with homogenization (which is not to say that it does not involve processes of partial homogenization). It should rather be understood as a new framework of differentiation” (Arnason 1990: 224). In order to examine the appearance of this framework, in the following sections I will examine specific features of globalism such as technology, economy and culture. In this sense, Turino uses the term globalism “specifically to refer to the contemporary discourse that indexically equates ‘global’ and ‘globalization’ with free market capitalism and its technologies, ideologies, institutions and products” (Turino 2003: 53). The effort to understand the technology or culture from a global or transnational perspective caused social scientists to explore different questions such as “standardization”. Regarding this Nederveen Pieterse says,

The most common interpretations of globalization are the ideas that the world is becoming more uniform and standardized, through a technological, commercial and cultural synchronization emanating from the West, and that globalization is tied up with modernity ... The former is critical in intent while the latter ambiguous (Nederveen Pieterse 1995: 45).

According to Nederveen Pieterse, globalization is also a kind of process of hybridization. In this framework, first I would like to examine the technological and economic sides of globalization. Second, as Nederveen Pietersen suggests, I will continue with a discussion of the cultural aspect of this process through hybridization.

### **3.2 Technology and Its Outcomes**

In today’s world, technology has impacted all communities and issues in the technocapitalist era (see Kellner n.d.), and has seemingly replaced conventional time-and-

space standards with new ones. On this issue, Castells states that a “technological revolution of historic proportions is transforming the fundamental dimensions of human life: time and space” (Castells 1989: 1)<sup>6</sup>. David Harvey defines this situation using the concept of “time-space compression.” According to him, “[T]he general effect ... is for capitalist modernization to be very much about speed-up and acceleration in the pace of economic processes and, hence, social life” (Harvey 1989: 230). The speeding up of capitalist modernization serves to make the world a much smaller place in order to facilitate production and reproduction conditions for maximal profits. Harvey explains the term “time-space compression” as

processes that so revolutionize the objective qualities of space and time that we are forced to alter, sometimes in quite radical ways, how we represent the world to ourselves... As space appears to shrink to a ‘global village’ of telecommunications and a ‘spaceship earth’ of economic and ecological interdependencies ... and as time horizons shorten to the point where the present is all there is (the world of the schizophrenic) so we have to learn how to cope with an overwhelming sense of compression of our spatial and temporal worlds (Harvey 1989: 240).

Similar to Harvey’s emphasis on speed, Paul Virilio, in *Speed and Politics*, also points to the importance of speed as a significant aspect of modern life. The effects of technology and increasing mobility and their consequences in modern social life are crucial issues for him. Virilio uses the term “dromomatics” to point out and stress the crucial function of speed in history because, according to him, speed has a significant role in the development of certain parts of urban and social life, including warfare, the economy, transportation and communications (Virilio 1986). Virilio’s *dromology* focuses on technological innovations and advancements such as the steam engine which have led to sharp societal socioeconomic transformations. He also emphasizes the effects of speed and accidents on power relations and class structures. His approach is based on the increasing speed of social relations, not in the context of the control, intervention or domination of one class by others, but rather the rapid acceleration of everyday life which over the course of time might cause the alienation of people from their own daily life. Therefore, daily life’s accelerating speed becomes what we

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<sup>6</sup> Castells continues his discussion of both sides of the impact on time and space duality of technological revolution, positive or negative, on the basis of “historical optimism and moralistic pessimism” and says this about technology and relationships with developments in information technology: “The unfolding promise of information technology opens up unlimited horizons of creativity and communication.... simplistic message of technological determinism, be it the liberation of the individual from the constraints of the locale, or the alienation of social life disintegrating in the anonymity of suburban sprawl!” (Castells 1989: 1).

attempt to catch up with. Driving the hard-to-catch-up-with speed of this process are the spread of information via technology and the increasing speed of the comprehension and perception of this information.

Information that may belong anywhere and is in constant motion reaches a global level with the contributions that it retrieves from every point along its journey. Perhaps one of the most significant impacts of communication technologies has been the way information can travel with almost no restrictions (see Urry 2003). Moreover, from this point on not only could information travel, but also people, nations, identities and cultures. Appadurai explains this situation by introducing the term *ethnoscape*, meaning that “the landscape of persons who make up the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guestworkers, and other moving groups and persons constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of and between nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree” (Appadurai 1990: 297; see also 2000). Technology, as mentioned above, plays a prominent role in this discussion, along with the economy, which we will now turn to.

### **3.3 The Economic Side**

Sheila Croucher starts her discussion of the economic interconnectedness of globalism by citing the European Commission’s definition: “the process by which markets and production in different countries are becoming increasingly interdependent due to the dynamics of trade in goods and services and flows of capital and technology” (Croucher 2004: 13). After presenting more recent and similar definitions from other sources and expanding them, she starts to discuss the economic side of globalism by stating: “World trade has expanded rapidly since World War II and has grown at twice the rate of world output since the early 1980s” (ibid, 13). World War II has clearly had very visible and long-term impacts on the socioeconomic and cultural structure of many countries. The war’s long-term effects, similar to what Croucher implies, along with economic changes since the 1980s, are perhaps clarified by anthropologist Thomas Turino:

It is not a coincidence that the discourse of globalism came into academic vogue in the United States during the 1990s, in step with the ‘defeat of communism’ in the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989. During the cold war, Soviet/Chinese communism and American/European/Japanese capitalism were the two leading contenders for creating trans-state social orders (Turino 2003: 54).

While discussing global capitalism, in other words, the globalization of financial and product markets and the internationalization of giant corporations, Fainstein emphasizes that over the past twenty years, all economic structures founded on stable foundations have gained flexibility. These transformations triggered by globalization have also had negative social repercussions. In particular, the so-called economic development of seemingly “successfully” restructured cities has excluded a large proportion of their populations (Fainstein 1996). These developments taking place in a global economy have caused transnational transformations such as migration, multicultural social spheres and giant new corporations. According to Thomas Faist, “Whereas global processes are largely decentred from specific nation-state territories and take place in a world context, transnational processes are anchored in and span two or more nation-states, involving actors from the spheres of both state and civil society” (Faist 2000: 211). With the appearance of “transnational actors,” social scientists have begun to pay attention to those newborn and hybrid identities.

### **3.4 Diasporas and Hybridity**

The new order that followed the end of World War II altered almost all existing value systems and socioeconomic foundations. The war’s end did not simply mark the victory or the loss of certain nations but, beyond that, it accelerated the rise of global capitalism. In a discussion of the transnational progression of global capitalism, Hardt and Negri contend that the notion of the nation-state lost its significance (Hardt and Negri 2000). However, what we have recently witnessed is a quite different situation. While at the beginning some feared the loss of locality and a sense of nation, over time it became clear that notions such as nationalism had in fact strengthened and started a process of transformation. As Habermas states:

In many countries, the return of the nation-state has caused an introverted mood; the theme of Europe has been devalued, the national agenda has taken priority. In our talk-shows, grandfathers and grandchildren hug each other, swelling with feel-good patriotism. The security of undamaged national roots should make a population that’s been pampered by the welfare state “compatible with the future” in the competitive global environment. This rhetoric fits with the current state of global politics which have lost all their inhibitions in Social Darwinistic terms (Habermas 2006).

During times when the power of global capitalism was rising, many different ethnic groups, local cultures, discrete and national identities began to gain significant visibility, especially in Europe. The theme of the Europe that we know has changed due to such different groups and cultures. Therefore, recent discussions of globalization began to involve diverse culture scenes, nations and localities together. The following discussion will explore various critical approaches to the concepts of diaspora and hybridity, which “are also invoked together” (Solomon n.d.) to offer a useful theoretical toolbox to elaborate on rap music, which is practiced widely across the globe among various ethnic groups with different languages.

According to Turino, “We are in the era of transnationalism and global culture” and in this era, the concept of diaspora has become popular among both academic and popular writers. This concept carries importance because it “is perfect since it encompasses the twin concerns of transnational processes abroad and ethnic identity politics at home ... The idea of dispersion of a cultural group from an original homeland to multiple ‘host’ country sites is basic to the concept of diaspora” (Turino 2004: 3-4). Moreover, as William Safran suggests, diasporas “believe that they are not – and perhaps cannot be – fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulted from it” (quoted in *ibid*, 4). This means that they “have relative distinction from the host society” (*ibid*, 6). So here, the significant point is that they have a position in the host society as “other.” Hence, also, it would not be wrong to state that the condition of being “other” strengthens diasporic identity. Diasporas struggling to survive away from their country of origin on foreign soil, due to this exclusion and “othering” begin to both idealize their own national identities with more intensity and develop a strong attachment to them. Therefore, while carrying this overly idealized national identity as well as hybrid identity, diasporas find themselves in a state of mind that in a sense dictates nationlessness. At this point, Turino suggests that “in fact, a diasporic formation that attempts to establish its own territory and state is a case of ‘diasporic nationalism’” (Turino 2004: 7). This situation seemingly derives from the condition of “displacement.” The mood triggered by the condition of “displacement” is one of the key factors which must be analyzed in order to fully comprehend the concept of hybrid identities, that in fact, “all identity formation is emergent and ‘hybrid’ if, by the latter term, we mean inclusive of a variety of elements from different experiences. Diasporic identities, however, are dramatically hybrid because of the multiple (‘home society’, ‘host society’, ‘other diasporic sites’) iconic maps of reality and bases for cultural resources” (*ibid*, 13). Moreover, according to Andreas Huyssen, “Diasporic memory in its traditional sense is by definition cut off, hybrid, displaced, split”

(Huysen 2003: 152). Huysen also explores what the concepts of “diaspora” and “national” actually express:

Diasporas may relate to a distant nation as a lost homeland; they may claim and create new nationhood; they may even speak of a diasporic nation. But however strong a case one may want to make for the structural and empirical affinities between nation and diaspora, we must remember certain basic differences that have not simply vanished. Diaspora, as opposed to nation in the traditional sense, is based on geographic displacement, on migration, and on an absence which may be lamented or celebrated (Huysen 2003: 152).

This struggle among diasporas to maintain national identity in the best way possible could very well be due to pressure from the lack of cultural and historical ties to their host countries. Moreover, they begin to act as extensions of the national identity that exists in their country of origin and become continuations of that ideology. Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal argues that “diaspora is ‘an extension of the nation-state model’ in that it ‘constitutes foreignness within other nations and ethnicities’ and ‘implies a congruence between territory, culture, and identity’” (quoted in Huysen 2003: 150). It may be useful here to note that the term diaspora presents a very complicated and varied sociological formation of the time-space of a particular group of people. As Yasemin Nuhoğlu Soysal states,

Diaspora is the location where this background finds meaning. Diaspora is a past invented for the present, and perpetually laboured into shapes and meanings consistent with the present. As such, it exists not as a lived reality but as part of a broader scheme to insert continuity and coherence into life stories that are presumably broken under the conditions of migrancy and exile (Soysal 2000: 2).

The third cultural place brought into existence by this mood, which is a result of being in exile, as well as the tension and in-between state, is clearly a unique place. During this process, media and technology unequivocally have the biggest impact. Diasporas build new nations within their host countries through constantly following political news, cultural changes and social life in their country of origin, particularly in recent years through satellite broadcasts of home-based TV channels. Turkish immigrants living in the Netherlands, for example, use such broadcasts to stay up-to-date on day-to-day changes and developments in Turkey, while at the same time registering their response. According to Turino, “[N]ewer electronic media have been extremely important in connecting transnational diaspora communities by creating the basis, at least, for a common semiotic environment, ‘signscape,’



and cultural experiences” (Turino 2004: 8). The various means of communication have a very deep impact on all these socio-cultural processes, similar to the one that technology has had on globalization. This “electronic media” issue is primarily concerned with immigration and “guest workers” mainly from places outside Europe such as the Middle East, Far East or India, and generally, it is envisaged with the terms of hybridization or “hyphenated identities” (Modood 1997).

Migration as a sociological issue means the movements of people, generally as a group, from one place, region, or country to another, particularly with the intention of settling permanently in a new location. The reasons for and results of those movements can vary according to the conditions of the places where people choose to settle. A group of people might migrate to a more favorable region in search of better standards of living and conditions. This social process cannot be explained in solely economic terms. The cultural and social adaptation processes of the immigrants in the countries to which they immigrate are often observed in their language and identities (see Chambers 1994; Vedder 2005). It is apparently through transnational immigration movements that floating identities and cultures started to emerge. For example, by 1973, when the recruitment stopped, immigrants who intended to stay in Germany permanently faced a long waiting period. According to Ayhan Kaya,

Contemporary Turkish-origin migrants and their descendants in Germany can no longer be simply considered temporary migrant communities who subscribe to the ‘myth of return’. Rather they became permanent settlers, active social agents and decision-makers constructing a distinct space that combines Germany and Turkey (Kaya 2002: 36).

The most striking point here is that the problems in Germany related to immigration can be seen in the terms “guest worker,” “foreigner,” and “co-citizen,” all of which have found their place in official German discourse. These terms commonly “underline their ‘otherness’ and/or their ‘displacement’ ” (ibid, 37). So the debate on immigration in Germany has automatically started to include concepts such as segregation, exclusion or otherness. Segregation is quite clearly an important feature of cities around the world. Actually, it might be said that the rules for organizing urban space are based on patterns of social differentiation and separation. It is clear that those rules vary in terms of culture and historical backgrounds, and they reveal the principles which arrange public life. Likewise, they also indicate how social groups are connected to each other in the space of the city. Generally, community planning and

development programs provide grants for many purposes, such as eliminating differences among individuals, providing more middle-income housing, preserving existing housing, and improving public services (see EUMC 2008). However, these developmental policies might cause a kind of exclusion of lower classes and migrants and lead to rising racist tendencies. Exclusion, marginalization and discrimination are likely outcomes of the transnational migration processes in Europe. The European Commission has thus been trying to increase the speed and availability of integration facilities for migrants coming from outside Europe. Though ethnic slurs<sup>7</sup> are used to point out racial differences between minorities and majorities, this is not directly a race-related issue in terms of human physical appearance, but rather one concerning ethnicity. One could even state: “In the course of two decades... race became ethnicity, then culture; normative hierarchy and inequality gave way to representation in terms of difference; and heterophobia was in many circles replaced by heterophilia” (Al-Azmeh 1993: 5). What Al-Azmeh says here could be examined in terms of multiculturalism, which will be one of the main topics of Chapter 4.

It is here that we encounter a diaspora that feels very connected to its roots with the help of information networks which allow its members to stay in constant contact with their country of origin in real time<sup>8</sup>. Moreover, this leads to the emergence of both agreements and divided opinions and results in such groups not being as homogenous as they once were. Nonetheless, it also continues to show that on certain key issues – e.g. for Turks in the Netherlands, the resistance to the passage of legislation on recognition of the Armenian genocide in various countries – the diasporas continue to show solidarity. On similar issues, diasporas present an identity similar to the national one: “National memory presents itself as natural, authentic, coherent and homogeneous” (Huysen 2003: 152). The Turkish rap group Cartel can provide an example of this state of being in between diasporic identity and national identity, as seen in both their album covers and in individual group member’s identities. Besides the rappers Karakan (“Blackblood”), Cinai Şebeke (“Da Crime Posse”) and Erci E, who are mentioned in the song “Cartel,” the group also has a German member and a Cuban one. The Turkish flag-like logo on their first album cover, their nationalistic lyrics, and the group’s ethnic diversity present a very pronounced example of this hybridization. Regarding national identity and music, Connell and Gibson say, “Music, alongside national artistic

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<sup>7</sup> Turks are sometimes called “kanak” in Germany, or “kanker Türk” (Cancer Turk) in the Netherlands.

<sup>8</sup> Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robins suggest a contrasting view of the Turkish case (based on their study of British Turks) that “transnational television might actually be working to subvert the diasporic imagination and its imperatives of identification and belonging” (Aksoy and Robins, 1998: 21).

traditions, common religions, ethnic identity and a range of visual symbols (flags, emblems, crests, currency, figureheads), is embedded in the creation of (and constant maintenance of) nationhood” (Connell and Gibson 2003: 118). Alev Çınar suggests that Cartel's version of diasporic identity came to be identified particularly with its song, “Sen Türksün” (You’re a Turk). The song presents the “Turk as the marginalized subject, the ‘foreigner’ who needs to reassert his presence in Germany on his own terms.” The Turk is a part of Germany, the song declared repeatedly: “*Sen Türksün, Almanyalı*” (You’re a Turk, from Germany) (Çınar 1999: 43). Beyond a simple hybridization, this issue is about the appearance of a third identity. According to Bhabha,

the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the ‘third space’ which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom (Bhabha 1990: 211).

However, it should be noted that in order to understand this hybridization process and the subject of the “third space,” the other two parts that make up identity must be properly analyzed. Since with the force of globalization, all solid foundations and identities began to erode, from now on, social science research has to be conducted with an extra-critical touch as well as a sensitive perspective for what is historical. Efforts to understand the local or national from a global or transnational perspective led social scientists to conduct inquiries into issues such as native cultures. Whether we should discuss the native cultures that appeared due to globalization or those visible within this process is one example of the questions arising from such perspectives. Recent discussions of this condition of interrelatedness led to the emergence of another mixed concept called “glocalization,” a sociological term developed by the sociologist Roland Robertson in the 1990s in order to examine particularities and localities in universalizing globality (Robertson 1995). According to Ritzer, the term “can be defined as the interpenetration of the global and the local, resulting in unique outcomes in different geographic areas” (Ritzer 2003: 193). While these “unique outcomes” kept many researchers studying subjects ranging from culture to ethnography, a new cultural pattern was about to appear.

What Tony Mitchell says about locality and global musical idioms might be useful in discussing the hybridization coming out of the Turkish diaspora. Among Turkish youth in the Netherlands, “national ‘vernacular expressive cultures’ are constructed through (rap) music by

means of a hybridization of local and global musical idioms” (Mitchell 1996: 2). As a significant part of popular music, rap is “the way that people think about identity and music is tied to the way they think about places” (Connell and Gibson 2003: 117). Here, another example from a different musical scene could help us understand the hybridization which has taken place in music worldwide:

Orphaned Land is the Israeli band ... [whose] members are all from North African and Middle Eastern backgrounds and at least one of them has been an observant Jew. Both Orphaned Land albums, *Sahara* (Holy, 1994) and *El Norra Alila* (Holy, 1996), have developed a musical syncretism that treats the band’s dual location in Israel and the global Extreme Metal scene not as problematic but as a rich source of musical ideas. Their music is based on a fusion of Death and Doom metal and incorporates a variety of Middle Eastern instruments and musical structures (Kahn-Harris 2002: 144-145).

As this example demonstrates, hybridization takes places not only in rap music but in other genres as well. Orphaned Land is an extreme metal band which sings lyrics in Hebrew as well as English. Their music, produced using Middle Eastern musical instruments and in Hebrew, through synthesizing these elements with extreme metal, represents “a side of Israel that is totally unknown to most Israelis as well as diaspora Jews” as well as “new cultural fusions that force us to question some of our assumptions about Israel and the Middle East” (Kahn-Harris 1999: 20). Generally, “Diaspora involves the spatial dispersion of ethnic groups away from an original homeland so that their location and identities are stretched between points. It has special relevance for those ethnic minority groups, notably Jews or African blacks, who have experienced a forcible removal from their homeland” (Longhurst 2004: 182). Regarding the hybridization of various music genres, Lipsitz’s comments might move our discussion of this issue forward. According to him, “[N]othing seems to travel so easily as a musical riff, drum rhythm and subcultural style...” (quoted in O’Connor 2002: 225). Apparently, in the social sciences, approaches to the hybridization process have evolved from a simple “mixing of cultures” through much more complicated issues (see Solomon, 2006).

At this point, I would like to make a musical note about the hybridization process. About four years ago, British-born Indian Panjabi MC enjoyed great success on the pop and dance music charts with his song “Mundian To Bach Ke<sup>9</sup>.” This song was popular almost all over the world and got played in many discos and clubs. It was also popular in Turkey, where

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<sup>9</sup> “*Mundian To Bach Ke*” (2003, Compagnia Nuove Indye)

it could be frequently heard blasting from the open windows of passing cars and played in popular nightclubs. The most important characteristic of this song, and one closely related to the subject at hand, is that it combines bhangra and hip-hop in its production, with lyrics in Punjabi while sampling the theme from the famous 1980s American TV series “Knight Rider.” Banerji summarizes Bhangra as follows:

Traditional bhangra hails from the North Western Indian state of Punjab, where the majority of the South Asians in this country originate. It is rural folk music which celebrates *bhasaki* (in Punjabi New Year) and the bringing in of the harvest. In keeping with the character of the people, it is vibrant, rhythmic and joyfully hedonistic and the language in which it is sung has been described as ‘the cockney of India’. Amateur bhangra bands began playing to audiences in Britain, initially on *bhasaki*, but increasingly at weddings, birthday parties ... any occasion which demanded a celebratory atmosphere (Banerji 1988: 208).

From the perspective of ethnomusicology, the concept of hybridity is again critical in analyzing the importance of Panjabi MC’s success in combining an old American TV series theme with traditional Bhangra, and at the same time adding elements of rap and house music to this mix. This example is, I think, quite useful in laying out a wide comprehension-discussion area for the discussion of such issues as traditional Indian music played in discotheques or rap music spreading worldwide via globalization.

### **3.5 Nationalism and Locality**

Let me start this section of the chapter by sharing an anecdote from June 2006, during my first visit to Amsterdam for academic purposes. The day I arrived, I decided to kill some time by talking with a few Turks as preliminary research for my study. While sightseeing and trying to find some Turks to talk with, I stumbled onto a Turkish kebab restaurant. Its owner was Mahmut, 45, a man who had lived in the Netherlands for ten years. Before moving there, he had lived in Germany as a worker. Emerging as both conservative and nationalistic, he spoke on a number of topics. Actually, this short anecdote illustrates that as Lipsitz claims, under the globalization process, “local identities and affiliations do not disappear” (Lipsitz 1994: 5).

What first got my attention was a relatively small detail: on his desk, he had an Arabic prayer book and a Turkish translation of the same. He told me he had stopped drinking alcohol some time ago due to his religious beliefs, and he called himself a nationalist. Though he spent our two hours together mostly telling religious stories and sharply criticizing his adopted country, his evident pride and joy was his 14-year-old son, a Dutch national, who wanted to do his military service in Turkey, where such service is compulsory, while the Netherlands pays those who volunteer to do non-compulsory military service. One of his comments about the Dutch government was quite striking: “This is a closet communist country; it gives, but it takes as much as it gives.” About the Alevis (a heterodox Islamic sect; see Shankland 2003; Melikoff 1998), he said, “The Alevis are deviant, and they lack the fear of God. They embrace a belief which you can’t even call a sect. People from Tunceli [a small city in Eastern Anatolia with a high Kurdish-Alevi population] send their children to school to get them educated because they want them to get high government positions. They want everyone to think like them.” Saying that there were Alevis in Amsterdam where he lived and that though there were no visible tensions, there were divisions between groups, he added that recently, mixed Sunni-Alevi sect marriages had begun. He praised the Turkish ultra-nationalist youths, also known as “grey wolves,” living in areas with large Turkish populations as sharp, brave and pious, saying that they defend Turkish culture. He said they had once blocked some leftist groups from trying to force money out of local residents.

About Europeans, Mahmut said “The Europeans have an animal-like community. They don’t have a strong belief in family institutions or culture.” When I asked what he thought of the legality of homosexual marriage in the Netherlands, he replied: “I think homosexuality is disgusting, it’s not even animalistic. In nature, no males do something like this. How can you even go into a hole where germs and shit come out!” (Mainstream Islam shares mainstream Christianity’s disapproval of homosexuality and anal intercourse.) After this harsh, conservative and nationalistic commentary, Mahmut added something quite thought-provoking: “Gavurun ekmeğini yiyen, kılıcını sallar.” A literal translation of this expression, “*One who eats the infidel’s bread also wields its sword,*” unfortunately only scratches the surface of the mindset Mahmut and many other immigrants have adopted in their struggle to survive as the “other” in another’s land. When Rayner says that the “task of cultural conservatism is to explain how the inequalities that the conservative [person] values arise naturally and acquire legitimacy in the practices of his own culture” (Rayner 1986: 457), this may help to explain Mahmut’s remarks. The term cultural conservatism will be explored

further in later sections. I would like to continue this discussion with some reflections by Paul Gilroy, taking these brief anecdotes and particularly Mahmut's last comment as the starting point. According to Gilroy: "There is a sense in which the new varieties of nationalism no longer attempt to be a coherent political ideology. They appear more usually as a set of therapies: tactics in the never-ending struggle for psychological and cultural survival" (quoted in Mitchell 1996: 25). In this quotation, what is most striking is the idea that nationalism acts as a catalyst for psychological and cultural struggle to survive. But by the same token, nationalism is not "a coherent political ideology" in the long run, and in my opinion, Mahmut's last comment gives us a useful clue about this. When they feel left behind, individuals forced by economic circumstances to live in a foreign country, and who face hardships integrating with their adopted culture, use nationalism as a kind of self-therapy. The self-confidence that being pious or ultra-nationalistic brings is like a reflection of their resentment against the community they raise their swords to. National and religious identity, as the outcome and expression of the feeling and condition of in-betweenness among the diasporas, becomes a psychological and cultural survival strategy whose essence is feeling more powerful, drawing its emotional and political strength from the ideals of the country of origin. The Turkish diaspora in particular, which has not severed ties to the country of origin, is fueled by both conditions in its countries of residence and political and cultural developments in the country of origin. In Turkey, both politics and culture were drastically altered by the 1980 coup and the radical transformations that followed. According to Tanıl Bora, the schizophrenic and unstable structure of Turkish nationalism, including feelings of hostility but, ironically at the same time admiration towards the West, grew deeper as a result of the developments of the 1980s and 1990s. While on the one hand a self-confident, extroverted, modern and Western nationalism was developing, on the other ethno-cultural divisions were on the rise, along with ultra-nationalistic and exclusivist tendencies. The rise of the Kurdish issue and the Islamist movement were particularly important factors feeding these tendencies (Bora 1991). Similar to the findings of Ayhan Kaya's research in Berlin, "the presence of Turkish language mass media" in the Netherlands apparently has also been salient (Kaya 2001: 96). Thus we can conclude that these political events and tensions in Turkey have had a direct impact on the Turkish diaspora living in Germany and the Netherlands. According to Ögelman's study of homeland politics among Germany's Turks, political migrants who were born in Turkey (he interviewed 31 political leaders, 29 of them Turkish-born) "continue to control Germany's Turkish associations" and "[t]hese political migrants

take their mobilizing cues from developments in Turkish politics, fueling the division of Germany's Turks along the political fault-lines of their homeland" (Ögelman 2003: 178).

While this thesis was being written in 2007, the nationalist wave triggered by a rash of terrorist attacks in Turkey seemed to sweep over many of the rappers in the Netherlands whom I had kept in touch with. After the Turkish Parliament voted to authorize military intervention in Northern Iraq, these rappers started sending me instant Internet messages supporting the operation or stressing that Turkey is a united nation (*Vatan bölünmez*, or indivisible nation)<sup>10</sup>. There were even messages singing the praises of the "burgundy berets," an elite Turkish Army unit similar to the U.S. Army's green berets.

Here, what Cornelius Castoriadis states, from the starting point that nationalism is an emotional mystification or spiritual connection to the motherland, is quite interesting: "Today's 'Marxists,' who believe they have done away with all of this by simply saying 'nationalism is a mystification' are obviously mystifying themselves. That nationalism is a mystification – this is certain. That a mystification has effects so massively and terribly real, that it proves itself to be much stronger than any 'real' forces ... this is the problem" (Castoriadis 1975: 94). Since the Turkish young people (the topic of this thesis) engaged in rap and hip-hop through which they express how to imagine their national identity are different from their German counterparts, of whom there are several studies (Kaya 2001; Çağlar 1998; Greve 2006), it seems safe to say that nationalism among the diaspora can be seen as a sort of mystification and, as Gilroy says, a psychological and cultural "survival" method (Gilroy 2002). In particular, it is quite instructive to see the difference between the perception of nationalism among German Turks who faced racist attacks such as having their homes burned down during the 1990s (Koopmans and Statham and Giugni and Passy 2005: 3), and their counterparts in the Netherlands, who have not faced comparable attacks.

Integration policies and immigration laws in Germany and the Netherlands,<sup>11</sup> along with the cultural differences between these two countries, could help explain the difference in Turks' experiences there. When I visited a group called the HTİB<sup>12</sup> (*Hollanda Türkiyeli*

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<sup>10</sup> Another example from Germany, via Ayhan Kaya, may make this issue clearer: "During the intervention of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK) into Northern Iraq in the winter of 1996 to prevent the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) from settling in the region, Turkish TV stations organized an international fundraising drive for the TSK" (Kaya, 2001: 75).

<sup>11</sup> In Chapter 4, this issue will be discussed in detail.

<sup>12</sup> The group's name is notable: not "Turkish Workers," but "Workers From Turkey." This name was chosen to reflect the HTİB's membership, which is not just ethnic Turks, but Kurds and Arabs from various parts of Turkey as well, and the group also leans leftward politically. (Informal interview with Turkish immigrant conducted at the HTİB.)



İşçiler Birliği, or Dutch Workers from Turkey Association), one 43-year-old Turkish immigrant who was granted political asylum in the Netherlands 23 years earlier told me this:

Let me tell you why Turkish young people here don't get involved in nationalism or stuff like immigrant rap [unlike their counterparts in Germany]. Because the Dutch state works much smarter than the one in Germany in dealing with integration. Also, the Dutch are sly people. They're two-faced. The Germans tell you right to your face that they don't like you because you're Turkish, they don't sit next to you, they're open about their feelings. But the Dutch aren't like that. They smile to your face, but if you ask for housing or employment, they won't give it to you. It's because of this that Turks experience different things in Germany and the Netherlands. You should pay attention to this.

What he suggests here is that Turkish immigrants distrust Dutch people, especially in social and economic matters. The reasons behind this attitude need to be discussed in terms of social conditions from the very beginning of Turkish immigration to the Netherlands. Erhan (25, an interviewee in Amsterdam) states very similar opinions, which will be presented and discussed in Chapter 4.

The Dutch government's immigration and naturalization policies will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. In the next section, conservatism as a component of nationalism will be examined in a cultural context. The goal of this discussion will be to present the thought process of Turkish rappers living in the Netherlands –a very “liberal” country– as a response to this liberal stimulus. In Chapter 6, the discussion will be furthered by presenting data from interviews as well as samples of various song lyrics. I believe this section will be very useful for preparing a shared ground for understanding specific concepts in this regard.

### **3.6 Cultural Conservatism**

What is status quo? Is there a condition we can call status quo which we can hang onto in a world that has reached today's speed? On the contrary, a conservative person in the modern world is not one who has taken on the responsibility to protect the values of the past; but rather one who is imposing the values that he currently has and lives by on future generations. Conservatism is the state of people who want their sons and daughters to lead lives according to the values that they know. From this perspective, rather than a past system of values based on beliefs, status quo is often a segmented line of values that arranges itself according to the dangers of the “newness” and

“difference” of the future. Horkheimer and Walter Benjamin formulated very painfully in their inquiries into historical materialism how conservatism is caused by fear of the future, not the past. (Baker 2004)<sup>13</sup>.

On the perception of time in the shadow of conservatism, Eagleton states, “Over the dreary decades of post-1970s conservatism, the historical sense has grown increasingly blunted, as it suited those in power that we should be able to imagine no alternative to the present” (Eagleton 2003: 7). As Ulus Baker also states, conservatism is first and foremost an attitude and perspective which originates from the feeling of losing the future morally, politically or culturally. Ahmet Çiğdem argues that the truth of conservatism as a modern, ambivalent concept can be designated as a political doctrine, ideology, or form that penetrates both of them, or as a style of thought a la Mannheim. It is an attitude or a mental state that articulates every kind of doctrine or ideology. Conservatism is a pragmatic style of thought that adapts itself practically to present conditions by abandoning theoretical records of the past if it loses its functionality (Çiğdem 1997).

According to Tanıl Bora, there are three distinct, yet overlapping, components of Turkish right-wing ideology: Nationalism, Conservatism and Islamism. For him, this trio, beyond simply being separate stances, form a complete whole (Bora 1999). Although the “discourse of nationalism is distinctively modern” (Calhoun 1993: 211), over the past two decades Islamism and conservatism started to become parts of this modern ideology and “psychological survival” strategy. Particularly after the November 2004 murder of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, increasingly negative perceptions of Islam in the Netherlands pushed the Turkish community to become more introverted and withdrawn, and this community eventually began to stress their religious rather than national identity. Van Gogh was shot to death and stabbed by Moroccan Mohammed Bouyeri due to anger over his movie *Submission* (written by Dutch-Somali Ayaan Hirsi Ali), which criticizes women's role in Islam. After the murder, Muslims in the Netherlands – especially the Turkish and Moroccan

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<sup>13</sup> “Statüko nedir? Günümüzün süratine erişmiş bir dünyada statüko adını verebileceğimiz, tutunmak için demir atabileceğimiz bir durum var mıdır? Aksine modern dünyadaki haliyle bir muhafazakâr, geçmişin değerlerini korumayı üstlenen biri değil, aksine şu anda kendisinin sahip olduğu, içinde yaşadığı değerleri gelecek kuşaklara dayatan biridir. Oğullarının ve kızlarının kendi bildiği değerlere göre yaşamalarını isteyen birinin halidir muhafazakârlık. Bu açıdan statüko geçmişin akideleştigi bir değerler manzumesi olmaktan çok geleceğin ‘yenilik’ ve ‘başkalık’ tehlikelerine kendini oranlayarak korumaya çalışan, çoğu zaman bölük pörçük bir değerler çizgisidir. Muhafazakârlığın geçmişten değil gelecek korkusundan kaynaklandığını Horkheimer ile Walter Benjamin, tarihsel maddecilik sorgulamalarında oldukça can yakıcı bir şekilde formüle etmişlerdi.” (Translated from Turkish by Banu Demiralp)

diasporas – started feeling the effects of rising Islamophobia among Dutch nationals. Marc Chavannes, Washington correspondent for the Dutch newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, assessed the murder’s significance in this way:

[Question from interviewer] A Dutch friend of mine told me, “I went to bed in Holland but woke up in a completely different country.” Does this capture the prevalent mood in the Netherlands right now?

The van Gogh murder is a little bit like our 9-11. The degree to which the United States had changed after 9-11 was hard to fathom in Europe. Now, this one murder seems to be having a similar effect on my fellow Dutch nationals<sup>14</sup>.

During the ten months that I stayed in Amsterdam, almost every Turkish and Dutch person I spoke with compared the aftershocks and specific changes following the murder to the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks. They pointed to a visible shift in the Dutch perception of the Muslim immigrant population, particularly after this incident, saying that now they were facing discrimination not for being Turkish, but for being Muslim. Thus, my fieldwork indicates that one of the triggers behind the rising piety and Muslim identity that have taken center stage in recent years is this prejudice. Consequently, the turn to religious conservatism and increasing nationalism due to connections to the country of origin among Turks living in the Netherlands can both be visibly observed. In this context, it is critical to emphasize the importance of cultural conservatism. Rayner’s analysis of conservatism’s cultural emphasis shows the clear kinship of cultural conservatism and “new conservatism”:

The cultural conservative understands the institutions and practices of his society as vehicles of expression for the shared experiences of its members... [Cultural conservatives] are concerned to argue that the logical priority of cultural or social objects, like a common tongue, a religion or a rite, is itself a source of authority. This is why they are so hostile to individualism in any of its manifestations (Rayner 1986: 453, 463).

As Ahmet Çiğdem relates, conservatism in Turkey’s historical context transformed from the political to the cultural in the midst of modernism, all the way from the mid 1920s to

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.prospect.org/cs/articles?articleId=8915>, accessed on December 04, 2007.

the present. In fact, this form of conservatism was discussed as the “new conservatism” by Habermas (1989), defined as presenting an attitude of rejection towards the political, economic and social results of modernity without forming a resistance, simply by means of an attitude of renunciation towards cultural and mental consequences (Çiğdem 2003). In this theoretical framework, one cannot call the majority of the population politically conservative in the sense that a large majority of the Dutch Turkish diaspora supports leftist parties, especially the Labor Party (Partij van de Arbeid, which 84% of Turks voted for in the 2006 Dutch municipal elections, according to the Dutch Institute for Migration and Ethnic Studies-IMES;<sup>15</sup> State Secretary of Justice and Turkish-Dutch Nebahat Albayrak is among its members) and the Socialist Party (Socialistische Partij, which got 3% of Turkish votes in 2006). They support the left because the leftist parties generally work for the rights of immigrants, foreigners and workers, and fight racist tendencies. According to Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, “as Turkish communities came to realize their own permanence, Turkish interest groups began to demand more inclusive policies of integration and measures against discrimination and growing racism” (Østergaard-Nielsen 2000). However, looking at the roots of this problem from another angle, the situation changes sharply: during elections in Turkey, Dutch Turkish immigrants often vote for parties on the right of the political spectrum. The most prominent feature of Turkish right-wing parties is resistance to cultural and political change in areas such as gender, the Kurdish issue, religion, etc. Thus, it is important to note that the conservatism of Turks in the Netherlands at hand is a cultural one. A few examples regarding this issue will be presented in Chapter 7.

As I observed, the Turkish-Dutch who had supported left-wing political parties, who turned inward within their own community particularly after the Theo van Gogh murder, in order not to lose their cultural and traditional values, started to become more conservative in a religious sense. As Ulus Baker suggests, conservatism is a parents’ mentality advocating that their children lead their lives according to certain values of the past. But from what point in the past these values should originate is a key point. If we assume that the Turkish guest workers who began to move to the Netherlands in the mid 1960s generally reached middle age before immigration, it becomes clear that the time between these two periods – the culture pre-the Netherlands and the atmosphere in the Netherlands that provoked the community to withdraw – must be discussed. Moreover, in the context of the interviews that I conducted,

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<sup>15</sup> <http://www.imes.uva.nl/publications/documents/HeelsumTillie2006.pdf>, accessed on November 14, 2007.

especially when it comes to subjects such as religion, politics etc., it can be quite surprising to see how the ties to the country of origin remain current.

The subject of cultural conservatism was not the original focus of this study in the context of my interviews with Turkish rappers. However, since I think that some of the questions that were posed during the interviews could shed light on the issue of how Turks perceive the Netherlands – quite a liberal-individualistic country due to legalized soft drugs (weed, hash, herbal ecstasy, magic mushrooms), homosexual marriage, etc. – and its culture. Therefore, I see it fit to briefly discuss them here. For example, while middle-aged individuals in the Netherlands, such as the aforementioned Mahmut, are quite conservative about certain subjects like sexuality, drugs and eclectic life styles deriving from various musical genres, the young population is more flexible when it comes to everyday situations. Nevertheless, what lies beneath this flexibility should be seen as acceptance, not compromise. In short, this situation can be expressed as an acceptance under the forced conditions of having to live together, but not common cultural ground. This situation might be explained by saying that young people are exposed to socialization with Dutch young people due to common schools, entertainment and public spaces, etc.

One of the controversial issues for Turkey and the Turkish diaspora over the past several years has been the Armenian genocide. The Dutch Parliament recognized the genocide in 2004, and it became a hotly debated issue in the November 2006 general elections. After some candidates were removed from Dutch party ballots for not recognizing the genocide, many Turkish voters began to reevaluate their loyalty. Of those who had voted, most of the Turkish rappers I interviewed told me they had cast their ballots for leftist parties, but at the beginning had been undecided due to the genocide issue. Before a candidate from the PvdA (Dutch Labor Party)<sup>16</sup> Erdinç Saçan – a Turk – was removed from the party's ballot, many immigrants were thinking of supporting this party. However, his removal hurt the party's image among Turkish voters. The critical question here is in which context the Armenian issue was being discussed. Were the reactions being shown to this issue in fact attempts toward political conservatism or toward cultural conservatism? This is a very controversial issue that must be dealt with and reviewed very carefully in a historical manner.

From the starting point of how the rap scene gets into contact both with globalization and such sociological formations, another concept that is used to define and comprehend

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<sup>16</sup> [http://www.nisnews.nl/public/280906\\_1.htm](http://www.nisnews.nl/public/280906_1.htm) (in English), <http://arsiv.sabah.com.tr/2006/09/29/siy98.html> (in Turkish), accessed on September 24, 2007.

music cultures that contain many socio-cultural facets, one that is preferable to the concept of subculture, is “scene.” This concept strongly emphasizes the interrelatedness of the music cultures and sociological formations and flexibility. This concept will be the main subject of the next section.

### **3.7 The Concept of Scene**

After World War II, Britain saw the appearance of youth subcultures such as Teddy Boys, mods, skinheads, and rockers, all with subversive, resistant attitudes towards mainstream society. Those subcultures were usually based on music, a phenomenon which the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CSSS) examined deeply in *Resistance Through Rituals* (Hall and Jefferson 1976). The term “subculture” simply refers to a sort of differentiation of those youth cultures from, and deviance in/against, the mainstream culture and “dominant hegemonic institutions” (Bennett and Kahn-Harris 2004: 4, 5) present in any society. Also, the term has particular meanings such as resistance, divergent dress styles, cultural meanings and subversive attitudes. Dick Hebdige suggests what subcultural resistance is about as follows:

The “subcultural response” is neither simply affirmation nor refusal, neither “commercial exploitation” nor “genuine revolt.” It is neither simply resistance against some external order nor straightforward conformity with the parent culture. It is both a declaration of independence, of otherness, of alien intent, a refusal of anonymity, of subordinate status. It is an insubordination. And at the same time it is also a confirmation of the fact of powerlessness, a celebration of impotence subcultures are both a play for attention and a refusal, once attention has been granted, to be read the Book (Hebdige 1979: 35).

Even though the Birmingham School and its studies of youth cultures have significantly impacted cultural and youth culture studies, the term subculture and its connotations such as resistance, the focus on class, and male domination have been criticized by some scholars due to their particular limitations (Weinzierl and Muggleton 2003; Maffesoli 1996; Bennett and Kahn-Harris, 2004; Bennett, 1999). Muggleton and Weinzierl clearly state that it is no longer enough in the twenty-first century to examine youth cultures through an understanding that glorifies “working class youth subcultures ‘heroically’ resisting subordination through ‘semiotic guerrilla warfare’” (Weinzierl and Muggleton 2003: 4). As

Grossberg also states, “subculture theory leaves us with three problematic oppositions: style as artificiality in the face of ideological naturalization, marginality as difference from the center or mainstream, and resistance as a refusal of merely living with contradictions” (Grossberg 1987: 149). Recent complex socioeconomic and cultural developments have started to force social scientists to produce new and much more flexible concepts covering wider ranges in order to reflect the influences of these developments and changes clearly and critically. Especially globalization and discussions of this issue have led researchers to reexamine various old concepts used to describe particular cultures, like the term “subculture”.

As “an alternative perspective and an attempt to move away from the idea of subcultures, the concept of ‘music scene’ was first developed by the suggestion of Will Straw” (Negus 2002: 22). The term “subculture” refers to a particular cultural form that differs from the mainstream culture with its “eccentric” appearance, and specific behavior patterns or lifestyle of the members belonging to that subculture. Generally, subcultures are defined as conjectural/temporary cultures that exist under some specific conditions, namely the ways of life created by an established context and temporary immanent or close ties among members. On this issue, Gramsci warned us that “in studying a structure, it is necessary to distinguish organic movements (relatively permanent) from movements which may be termed ‘conjectural’, and which appear as occasional, immediate, almost accidental” (quoted in Hall and Jefferson (ed.) 1980: 10). The significant issue here is, as Gramsci mentions, that the organic movements that remain relative of the structure that is being studied – Ayhan Kaya uses the Gramscian term “organic intellectual” for the hip-hoppers who produce Turkish rap in Germany – branch off from the other movements, which are temporary or that appear accidentally or periodically. If we adopt this warning to our time, while running into very few organic but relatively permanent movements, we at the same time find some cultural and particularly musical movements that are flexible and relatively temporary, but that are still in constant contact with what is permanent. On this topic, while one could say that rap is a relatively permanent movement, at the same time since it changes very quickly and has begun to add onto its structure many sociological elements on a global level, it needs to be studied and understood using the concept of “scene,” which is more of a flexible concept. According to Kahn-Harris (2003: 88),

Scene is a concept increasingly deployed in academic discussions of popular music culture. The concept is similar to ‘classic’ definitions of subculture in that scenes are generally visible to their members and

cohere around texts that present a transgressive challenge to the dominant symbolic order. Yet the concept is also designed to capture a heterogeneity, opacity, and complexity not present in subcultural theory.

At the most basic level, contrary to the concept of subculture, “Scenes can never be stable; they are in permanent motion” (Kahn-Harris 2007: 20). Obviously, we are witnessing technologically advanced capitalist societies that are becoming more flexible, and more complex, as they are constantly on the threshold of sudden changes. It is quite important that the concept of “scene” – a concept which was developed to study the interactions of the cultural movements that appear within these conditions with the market, mainstream culture and the existing cultural climate of the world – is equipped to present the flexibility to provide answers to the questions that Grossberg raises. However, another danger that appears is due to the open-endedness and flexibility of the concept, the possibility that a researcher may romanticize some cultures or have high expectations with artificially-produced hopes. Thus it would be most appropriate to enter into discussions of these cultures with the full knowledge of not only the potentials but also possible limitations of a music scene.

Since the concept of scene has a flexible study area that is open to change, it is particularly useful for this thesis, whose subject is immigration, hybridization, diaspora and displacement. “Scenes ... are ‘territorializing machine’ that are productive of particular kinds of relationship to geographic location. Scenes ‘mobilize’ people in peculiar ways, based on migrancy, pilgrimage and diaspora, creating new ways of belonging” (Kahn-Harris 2007: 20). Globalization of culture has led researchers to elaborate on displacement more deeply in terms of flexibility and hybridity. However, concerning this point, Anthony D. Smith warns us regarding the term “Global Culture”:

Can we speak of ‘culture’ in the singular? If by ‘culture’ is meant a collective mode of life, or a repertoire of beliefs, styles, values and symbols, then we can only speak of *cultures*, never just culture: for a collective mode of life, or a repertoire of beliefs, etc., presupposes different modes and repertoires in a universe of modes and repertoires (Smith 1990: 171).

In this framework, it is particularly important to present this flexibility through a concept in order to understand musical movements that have been hybridized and fed by different



musical and cultural additions in a different geographical location, and at the same time that affected their motherland. The reason for this is that being a hybrid is a new formation, a new language and way of expression beyond simply having a homogenous form and being “in-between.” Bhabha quotes Bakhtin on this subject:

The... hybrid is not only double-voiced and double-accented... but is also double-linguaged; for in it there are not only (and not even so much) two individual consciousnesses, two epochs... that come together and consciously fight it out on the territory of the utterance... It is the collision between differing points of view on the word that are embedded in their forms... such unconscious hybrids have been at the same time profoundly productive historically: they are pregnant with potential for new world views, with new ‘internal forms’ for perceiving the world in words (Bhabha 1998: 33).

The social forum where the conditions of the existence of hybrid identity – a new formation as well as a condition that allows for the perception of differing world views and lifestyles from a unique perspective – can be observed is the immigrant population. Bagley says the following about the concepts that are used to study the relationship between hybridization and the “other”: “The relationship between immigrants and the native population has been variously categorized by social scientists: acculturation, accommodation, adaptation, adjustment, assimilation, absorption, amalgamation, fusion, and integration are some of the terms used” (Bagley 1971: 18). Individuals who live away from their country of origin and are exposed to a new life and a new culture have in their lives certain cultural, religious and social aspects which they try to preserve. During the process of perceiving and expressing these aspects, while being withdrawn, these individuals also experience perception of themselves and the aspects which they maintain through the “other.” In short, they attempt to express themselves through both the identity of the “other” which they have created within themselves, and the condition of being the “other” in the “native population.” About being the “*other*,” Ayhan Kaya briefly notes: “The genesis of the human mind develops in a dialogical sense, not in a monological sense. We can construct our identities only if we are able to experience other’s reactions to our attitudes and behaviour. Unless we are defined by others, we cannot represent ourselves” (Kaya 2001: 41). The representation of the “other” also refers to some basic notions of particular nation-states in terms of specific socio-cultural and economic conditions dominant in any country. According to Martin Stokes,

In particular, we identify the figure of the migrant outsider, the cultural construction of an inner alterity in the context of national

identity, an exotic and threatening ‘other’ existing within the cultural or political boundaries of the state, the obsessive portrayal of powerlessness and alienation, and the play on gender construction in societies which see themselves as too traditional to be fully properly modernized (Stokes 1992a: 214).

Explicitly, due to globalization, the transnationalization of different parts of cultures from various parts of the globe has emerged from Amsterdam to Auckland since the 1970s. Rap music is just one of those diverse cultures which has had a deep impact on different social groups in many countries. In the next chapter, the Netherlands and Germany will be examined in terms of multiculturalism and immigration policies. By the end of Chapters Two and Three, theoretical and conceptual explanations of this thesis will be completed, leading to an exploration of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands and hip-hop music in subsequent chapters.

### **3.8    Outro**

George Lipsitz says the following about the music scenes which are born in various world locales, spread globally, and gain great commercial success:

Music that originally emerged from concrete historical experiences in places with clearly identifiable geographic boundaries now circulates as an interchangeable commodity marketed to consumers all over the globe. Recordings by indigenous Australians entertain audiences in North America... Rap music from inner-city ghettos in the U.S.A. attracts the allegiance of teenagers from Amsterdam to Auckland (Lipsitz 1994: 4).

In this context, I would like to conclude the chapter by quoting from the lyrics of “Fortress Europe,” a song by the Asian Dub Foundation, a group of self-described “21st century MIDI [Musical Instrument Digital Interface] warriors.” Their distinctive sound, says their official website, is a “combination of hard ragga-jungle rhythms, indo-dub basslines, searing sitar-inspired guitars and ‘traditional’ sounds gleaned from their parents’ record collections, shot through with fast-chat conscious lyrics<sup>17</sup>.” The lyrics below, “We’re the children of globalization,” as well as the above statements, bring a dynamic perspective to the discussion of globalization and localization vis-a-vis technology. The group, whose musical

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.asiandubfoundation.com/#/bio/>, accessed on February 04, 2007.

genre embraces an internationally influential cultural and political movement, is blended with characteristics passed down from their families. With this original aura due to this condition of interrelatedness, the group has also managed to win international fame. In this context, the way they describe their fan base on their official website seems to carry significance: “culturally diverse ‘outernational’ fanbase.” From their song “Fortress Europe”:

Keep bangin’ on the wall  
Keep bangin’ on the wall  
Of Fortress Europe!

.....

We got a right know the situation  
We’re the children of globalization  
No borders only true connection  
Light the fuse of the insurrection  
This generation has no nation  
Grass roots pressure the only solution <sup>18</sup>

As for the subject matter and theme of “Fortress Europe,” Habermas provides valuable insights into Europe’s new social era:

The burning cars in the banlieues of Paris, the local terror of inconspicuous youths in English immigrant neighborhoods and the violence at the Rütli School in Berlin have taught us that simply policing the Fortress of Europe is no real answer to these problems. The children of former immigrants, and their children’s children, have long been part of our society (Habermas 2006).

The concepts discussed above, especially globalization and diasporic identity, will form the theoretical formation of Chapter 7, which concerns Turkish rap in the Netherlands. As Habermas suggests, migrants in Europe have long been part of many societies. How they react to the socio-cultural order of those societies, specifically for Turks in the Netherlands, will be one of the main issues in Chapter 7 in the light of the concept of cultural conservatism discussed above. The children of immigrants, as the song says, are the children of globalization, and with rap music they “keep bangin’ on the wall.”

To segue to the next chapter, which will be about differences in migrant policy between Germany and the Netherlands, I would like to present a quotation from Turino:

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<sup>18</sup> *Time Freeze 1995 / 2007 - The Best Of*: France/EMI.

To understand the communities in specific sites, the legal policies (immigration laws, citizenship policy, religious tolerance) and informal attitudes (racism, chauvinism, appreciation of cultural diversity) in the host country must be examined to comprehend the dialectics of marginalization and internally generated separatism. Official policies and attitudes change over time – e.g., from the melting pot to the celebration of multiculturalism in the United States – and so must also be studied in relation to specific historical moments (Turino 2004: 6).

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **COMPARING THE NETHERLANDS AND GERMANY: MULTICULTURAL VS. MONIST MODEL**

In Fall 2006, before commencing my fieldwork in the Netherlands, I did not foresee that it would be necessary to examine any socio-cultural and political differences or dissimilarities between the Netherlands and Germany in my dissertation. However, needless to say every discovery in fieldwork is an ‘ethnographic discovery’ in and of itself, which often necessitates supplementing the dissertation with new parts during the data analysis process. At the earliest stages of this research project my focus was on how Turkish immigrants construct their national identity through hip-hop culture. Nevertheless, during the course of my fieldwork I observed that hip-hop culture in the Netherlands is relatively undeveloped compared with that of Germany. Afterwards, I started to think about the reasons that this music culture has not developed and is not as popular in the Netherlands as it is in Germany. In my interviews with Turkish rappers, I got similar information. In fact, at the earliest stages of my fieldwork, this situation drew a pessimistic picture. However, in the course of time I realized that this differentiation could enrich my discussion. With this belief, I have decided to focus on the differentiation between socio-political orientations, organizations and perspectives of each country as the major factors behind the differing significance of Turkish rap and hip-hop culture in the Netherlands and Germany. Also, an examination of some administrative issues and practices in both the Netherlands and Germany is an appropriate starting point for finding out the origins of their differences in migration policies.

It would not be wrong to claim that formation conditions of music genres are socio-economic, historical and political. This is also the case for rap music and hip-hop. Murray Forman criticizes representations of the perceived hip-hop nation merely “as a historical construct rather than a geo-cultural amalgamation of personages and practices that are spatially dispersed” (Forman 2000: 65). To describe rap music as a form of expression that is regionally differentiated and divided within itself rather than a homogenous genre seems meaningful to understand the distinctions between Turkish immigrants in Germany and the Netherlands. The Dutch-born Erhan (26, Amsterdam), who was the editor of a Turkey-based

webzine and is also an active rap listener, answered my question of why rap has developed less in the Netherlands than in Germany in the following way:

**Erhan:** Germany's Turkish immigrant population is larger than the Dutch's. Turkish immigrants in Germany have been integrated into the host culture more than the Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. Furthermore, they know how to organize and unite more than Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands. The Dutch are different from the Germans.

**Me:** What do you mean by this differentiation?

**Erhan:** I mean their attitudes towards foreigners. The German are not two-faced. If they do not like Turks, they can easily say this. Also in Germany, Turkish people live in ghettos. In the Netherlands Turks and the Dutch live together. Therefore, the situation in the Netherlands is different from that in Germany<sup>19</sup> (Personal interview).

It seems difficult to use Erhan's opinions about the Netherlands, in which tolerance and liberal values are commonly claimed to have a long history (see discussion below), in making scientific claims. Nevertheless, I think that if we use his ideas in understanding the socio-cultural and political structure of a multicultural and liberal society, our discussion can be enriched. Here, Erhan implies that cultural and political differences between these two countries and also the attitudes of the host society towards foreigners have led the Turkish rap scene in the Netherlands to remain less developed than that of Germany. I have heard similar over-generalized analyses from almost all the respondents, as well as people who are of European descent living in the Netherlands. One of the interesting remarks that I heard during a personal conversation with a 43-year-old Turkish immigrant who had been in the Netherlands for 25 years was that the Dutch are cunning and money-loving people because their ancestors were pirates in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. He also explained the marketing of sex and drugs in the Netherlands in terms of the country's history of colonizing and piracy (personal interview). The significant point in Erhan's comment is that German people do not hesitate to display their negative attitudes towards foreigners whereas the Dutch do. Therefore, rappers

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<sup>19</sup> **Erhan:** Almanya'daki Türk nüfusu buradakinden fazla. Oradaki Türk göçmenler oranın kültürüne buradakilerden daha iyi entegre olmuşlar. Bir de, nasıl organize olunur nasıl bir araya gelinir Hollandalı Türklerden daha iyi biliyorlar. Hollandalılar Almanlardan da farklı.

**Tunca:** Bu farklılıkla neyi kastediyorsun?

**Erhan:** Yani yabancılara olan tutumlarından. Almanlar bi kere ikiyüzlü değil. Eğer Türklerden hoşlanmadılarsa bunu hemencecik söylüyorlar. Ayrıca Almanya'da Türkler gettolarda yaşıyor. Burada Türklerle Hollandalılar beraber yaşıyor. O yüzden buradaki durum Almanya'dan farklı.

in the Netherlands do not feel they are threatened directly by their host society. Various studies have directly examined the existing differences between the immigration policies of Germany and the Netherlands (see de Wit and Koopmans 2005: 50). Put simply, while Germany does not conceive itself as a country of immigration, the Netherlands has declared itself to be one. Apparently, multicultural policies and their ideology work to both compartmentalize different cultural identities of immigrants and at the same time maintain the integration of the immigrants into the Dutch society. These policies particularly refer to the approach based upon the idea of “integrating while retaining one’s own identity”, practiced particularly until the Dutch government acknowledged that the Netherlands “had become an immigration country” at the beginning of the eighties (Beck 1996: 260; see also Doornik 2005).

Racist and nationalist modes of exclusion in Germany between the two world wars influenced the history of the whole world. A comparison of the rigid, “individually ethnic and collectively monist model” and exclusive immigration policies of Germany and the more “individually civic and collectively pluralist” models of other European countries (especially Britain and the Netherlands) (de Wit and Koopmans 2005: 50) have been the subjects of much social scientific inquiry. For example, Ayhan Kaya states that in the 1960s and early 1970s, with the Foreigners Law, the German state “established a system of ‘institutional discrimination’, through which temporary workers could be recruited, controlled and sent away, ‘as the interests of capital dictated’ ” (Kaya 1998: 28). On the one hand, it seems that Germany’s ‘monist’ model has caused fear among Turkish migrants that their culture is being eroded. On the other hand, Germany’s lack of interest in integrating its “guest workers” into German society, and the resulting ghettoization of them (i.e., in communities like Kreuzberg) has historically actually resulted in their being able to maintain their culture. If we consider the fact that Turkish immigrants have been subjected to social exclusion and have had to deal with direct racist attacks in their everyday life, then their lack of connection to German society, compounding isolation, and the reasons behind the fact that they have not established German identity become much more understandable. German journalist and ethnomusicologist Martin Greve explains this by saying, “It is clear that immigrants’ experiences with broad discrimination, exclusion and obvious xenophobia have prevented immigrants from constructing German identity” (Greve 2006: 71). There is no doubt that “[d]iscrimination presents a threat to group identity, making people increasingly turn toward the minority ingroup” (Verkuyten and Yıldız 2007: 1449). In this context, it could be better to

mention in which conditions Turkish rap music appeared in Germany and to what extent violent attacks against foreigners took place in that period. According to German-Turkish politician, Faruk Şen, “in 1992, there were 2.584 aggressions of foreigners which resulted in the deaths of 17 persons in the Federal Republic of Germany. This was an increase of more than 65% as compared to the previous year” (Şen 1994: 3).

If we remember that before the murder of Theo van Gogh Turkish immigrants did not experience serious and visible discrimination in the Netherlands (this will be also discussed in more detail in Chapter 7 with some examples and also the opinions of rappers), then it would not be wrong to state that feelings of ‘fear’ and ‘anger’ were less influential in the identity construction of the Turkish minority in the Netherlands in comparison with Germany. I think that although there is not perfect harmony between the host culture and that of the Turkish minority in the Netherlands (which would be impossible), Turkish migrants in the Netherlands have not experienced living conditions as difficult as those for Turks in Germany. To be a “stranger” in Germany appears to differ from being a stranger in the Netherlands because of social and political differentiations which will be presented in more detail in the following section. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Zygmunt Bauman states that every society constructs its own stranger (Bauman 1997: 46). During my fieldwork in the Netherlands I also felt like a stranger while developing social relationships with both the Turks and the Dutch. In fact, feeling like a stranger for a Turkish person living in Europe seems like a never-ending spiritual state. Reflecting on this feeling makes me remember the Western films that I used to watch when I was a child. A cowboy who visits the town as a stranger goes towards the bar. He pushes its swinging door open with his hands. He falters for a moment at the door. At that moment all the people at the bar turn their faces to him. This scene might describe what I experienced and felt most of the time as a Turk in the Netherlands and Norway. When I go to a bar, most eyes turn to me and seem to ask, “Who is this stranger?” In this part, by premising on Bauman’s claim mentioned in Chapter 1, I shall try to take a closer look at how the Netherlands and Germany as two countries with large Turkish populations create their own ‘strangers’. Obviously, cultural and political factors that play important roles in the creation process of these ‘strangers’ can give us some clues about the reasons why hip-hop culture has developed relatively less in the Netherlands than it has in Germany. It appears that the main difference between the Netherlands and Germany is the inclusive multicultural policies underpinning the socio-cultural structure of Dutch society. It is very obvious that multiculturalism as a controversial issue has become pivotal in the



migration literature of both countries, particularly after some tragic incidents which occurred recently in the Netherlands. Especially, the murders of populist politician Pim Fortuyn, known for his statement “Islam is a backward religion” (Ghorashi 2003; Vasta 2007: 714), and film-maker Theo van Gogh have changed the nature of discussions on multiculturalism. According to Iranian social scientist Halleh Ghorashi, Fortuyn’s

political discourse - an extension of the discourses from the 1990s - changed the Netherlands to a country where the dichotomies between the Dutch and the migrants have become greater than ever before and where any kind of fear or shortcoming is translated into hatred towards Islam and migrants from Islamic countries by the Dutch and vice versa (Ghorashi 2003).

Particularly, during that period, we could observe to what degree the Dutch society has begun to change through the rise of controversial, far-right politician Geert Wilders, known for his anti-Islamic views, and his Freedom Party. This issue will be discussed in chapter 7 in detail.

The nation state has transformed individuals into citizens, and so, new identities and subtypes have recently appeared. The new agent is now regarded as a citizen but not an autonomous individual. The citizen has been placed in a web constituted by rights and duties. The position of the individual in society has been changed and s/he has begun to be accepted as a citizen to whom rights and duties are sources of the legitimate power of the state. The Dutch publicist and professor, Paul Scheffer<sup>20</sup>, states that the 20th century is characterized by efforts to diminish social injustice; everybody should be a valued citizen, having the same rights. These efforts mainly flourished because of the fear of social disorder/tumult/riots (Scheffer 2000). The organization of power is constructed predominantly in the sense of rights and duties. On the other hand, such organization offers only a limited, negative definition of those rights: indeed, citizens are allowed to speak only in terms of their limitations. Security of rights is based on not exceeding them. If the rights are exceeded, the state might use its physical and legal power to subordinate them (see Mann 1986). The exercise of sovereignty by the nation state and the practice of democracy is being challenged in contemporary politics due to globalization (see Hardt and Negri 2000). According to Shaw, “the nation-state form has been universalized, most ‘nation-states’ are no longer autonomous

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<sup>20</sup> The original text of Scheffer is in Dutch. Here, I would like to thank my friend Esther Koopmanschap for her help and translation of the original text to English. I also used the translation facility of Google to be sure of the meaning.

states in the classic sense” (Shaw 1997: 500). Particularly, political implications of global changes have become much more visible in the policies of the nation-state regarding immigrants. Apparently, there is a kind of interdependence and mutual articulation between the nation state and global changes. According to Jean Tillie,

Since the events of ‘9/11’ the debate in most European countries on multicultural democracy has intensified. Key words in this debate are terrorism, violence, Islam, democratic values and commitment to democratic institutions. In the Netherlands the fall of the twin towers resulted in an extensive public discussion on the political integration of immigrants (2004: 529; see also Cesari 2007).

In the next section, multiculturalism as an ideology, as a policy, and as practice will be discussed in more detail.

#### **4.1 Discussion of Multiculturalism**

In Fall 2005 I moved to Bergen, Norway to write my dissertation. I made my accommodation arrangements before moving to the country. I spent two years in Fantoft Studentboliger, about which I did not have very much information before moving to the country. In the course of time I learned that Fantoft Studentboliger is generally known as a kind of “ghetto” in Bergen because its residents have different cultural and ethnic backgrounds and also because it is, relatively speaking, an uncomfortable and unclean place. Each floor and shared kitchens smell differently. When students start to interact with other students of the same ethnic background, small groups start to appear. These groups have minimum interaction with other groups and differ from each other with their unique characteristics, thus becoming, of sorts, a representation of a multicultural perspective. At the weekend parties in the corridors and shared kitchens of the buildings, these groups socialize with each other. In such an atmosphere, characterized by drinking and an indistinct music coming from kitchens, students develop somewhat “superficial” relationships with other students from various ethnic communities.

The distinctive characteristic of Fantoft Studentboliger is that Norwegian students - despite their large population - do not usually socialize with non-Norwegian students. Their distance from other residents gives the impression that they prefer to observe them and are

content with some superficial information about their culture and customs. Sometimes some of the students (especially non-Europeans such as Indians, Africans, Koreans and so on and so forth) share their local foods with other students. However, while I have yet to see Europeans organize such events, students from other places would often arrange events where they cooked their local foods and dressed up in their traditional costumes. This indicates that their culture is faced with a risk of “exotification”. Ian Chambers describes this risk by implying that the third world was “out there” for Europe, but nowadays it is “in there” (Chambers 1994: 2). In our day we can much more easily notice that different religions, languages, cultures and also lifestyles co-exist all around the world. About this issue, Chambers simply puts it that

When the Third World is no longer maintained at a distance ‘out there’ but begins to appear ‘in here’, when the encounter between diverse cultures, histories, religions and languages no longer occurs along the peripheries, in the ‘contact zones’ [...], but emerges at the centre of our daily lives, in the cities and cultures of the so-called ‘advanced’, or ‘First’, world then we can perhaps begin to talk of a significant interruption in the preceding sense of our lives, languages and cultures (Chambers 1994: 2).

“The encounter between diverse cultures” in Fantoft Studentboliger enables us to figure out what a differentiated world we live in, while smells of foods from different geographies might still bother us or be unfamiliar.

It is a well-known fact that the French Revolution paved the way for the idea of the nation-state which has as its source national identities based both in language and culture and retaining homogenous structures (based on these national identities). Dissolving of the sub-identities within a national identity was accepted as indispensable for the maintenance of the nation-state. Nevertheless, with the restructuring and emancipation processes of colonies, with the advancement of industrial capitalism, and also with the outcome of the world wars, nations have encountered different cultures, minorities and ethnic groups. Therefore, the terms ‘majority’ and ‘minority’ have acquired more critical meanings than in the past and each European country has had to specify its own way of treating different cultures according to its socio-political structure. In this context, there is a necessity to ask whether minorities are shown a tolerance that implies hierarchy, or whether cultural, political and social hierarchies between minorities and majorities are actually removed. Recently, discussions of such issues are generally linked to multiculturalism. Theoretically, multicultural policies offer possibilities to minorities not to be assimilated socio-culturally, but rather to exist in the host

society as ethno-culturally diverse, contributing to unity by keeping the particularity of their cultures.

The term ‘multiculturalism’ was introduced into social sciences literature as an –ism or as paradigm in the late 1960s and early 1970s in Canada (Wieviorka 1998: 881). As Charles Taylor states, multiculturalism can only be possible if each culture can participate in social life by being shown equal respect, rather than by merely showing tolerance towards others and by recognition of others (Taylor 1994). Also, Cornell and Murphy clearly state that “[i]ndeed ‘recognition’ understood as a form of tolerance for and even interest in minority cultures can easily mask continued cultural hierarchization associated with Eurocentrism” (2002: 422). On this point, the well-known Norwegian anthropologist Thomas Hylland Eriksen’s discussion of this issue can be useful. He uses the term “the paradox of multiculturalism” to point out the contradiction between the tendencies to both separate out and assimilate difference (Eriksen 2002: 145; see also Kaya 1998). In the following quote, Thomas Hylland Eriksen implies something similar to what Taylor, Cornell and Murphy state: “The state may be accused of injustice both if it promotes equality and if it promotes difference” (Eriksen 2002: 144). To “tolerate” cultural differences, or different smells spreading from the Fantoft kitchens, or to be able to stand these smells, is not the same as understanding the cultures in which their originating meals belong. Therefore, every reaction to different smells is at the same time a reaction to different cultures. This situation stems from the social distance from diverse cultures that are regarded as ‘others.’ Obviously, no society composed of a single and pure culture exists. In this sense, every society is multicultural. Nevertheless, the picture that appears as a result of attributing the status of minority to diverse cultures superficially serves to constitute them as ‘others’. Multiculturalism, when taken as an ideology assuming that different ethnic groups can live in harmony together, might present an ‘ideal.’ Yet, this perspective always includes the risk of disregarding existing socio-cultural matters among diverse cultures. Besides, the dilemma of ‘respect’ versus ‘tolerance’<sup>21</sup> also appears to be a critical issue within this ideology. As an alternative solution to the problem of racism and xenophobia, the threats of this ideology should be examined. Nira Yuval-Davis simply states that “[a]lthough multiculturalism is generally hailed by its promoters as a major anti-racist strategy, it has been criticised from the Left for ignoring questions of power relations, accepting as representative of minorities people in class and power positions very different from those of the majority members of that

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<sup>21</sup> Amy Gutmann ed. 1992: foreword by Gutmann.

community...” (Yuval-Davis 1997: 200). In this sense, tolerance may lead to overlooking “power relations”, as Yuval-Davis discusses. The minorities seem to demand something beyond the neutralization of diversities through the promotion of tolerance, but rather “[m]inority cultures do not want the nod of acceptance under the guise of tolerance for what the master sees as their established, stabilized differences. Nor are they necessarily demanding recognition in the sense that they should be received as having a legitimate, legible place in the majority culture” (Cornell and Murphy 2002: 422). In this framework the concept of multiculturalism, as briefly mentioned, first began to be discussed in Canada after 1965 when it was proposed by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism to be applied as a policy whereby Canada would be not a melting pot for cultural and ethnic minorities, but rather a sort of mosaic (Wieviorka 1998: 884). Here, the term “mosaic” simply refers to a sort of cultural harmony in the country. However, to define such a harmony in terms of both tolerance and “‘recognition’ understood as a form of tolerance” as mentioned above (Taylor 2002: 422), appears problematic due to its connotation of hierarchy. Slavoj Žižek goes further in this discussion. He briefly states, “The ideal form of ideology of this global capitalism is multiculturalism”. According to him, multiculturalism is the attitude that “treats each local culture the way the colonizer treats colonized people” and “multiculturalist respect for the Other’s specificity is the very form of asserting one’s own superiority”. He continues as follows:

Multi-culturalism involves patronizing Eurocentrist distance and/or respect for local cultures without roots in one’s own particular culture. In other words, multiculturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a ‘racism with a distance’—it ‘respects’ the Other’s identity, conceiving the Other as a self-enclosed ‘authentic’ community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance rendered possible by his privileged universal position. Multiculturalism is a racism which empties its own position of all positive content (the multiculturalist is not a direct racist, he doesn’t oppose to the Other the *particular* values of his own culture), but nonetheless retains this position as the privileged *empty point of universality* from which one is able to appreciate (and depreciate) properly other particular cultures—the multiculturalist respect for the Other’s specificity is the very form of asserting one’s own superiority (Žižek 1997).

I would like to continue the discussion on racism and multiculturalism with a controversial anecdote. The Dutch-Turkish rap group Arka Sokak played at the cultural festival ‘Turkey Express’ sponsored by the municipality of Utrecht on 11th of June 2006. The research group

‘Turkish Extreme Right-Wing’ (“Onderzoeksgroep ‘Turks Extreem-Rechts’” in Dutch<sup>22</sup>), which is a political community that focuses on individuals or communities showing Turkish radical right-wing or very nationalistic behavior, did not find the Dutch-Turkish band Arka Sokak fitting in a festival that focused on the integration of the Turkish community into the city of Utrecht. According to Haffmans’ article (2006) published in the anti-fascist magazine *Alert*, the song ‘Türk (Turkish), Kürt (Kurdish)’ very aggressively brings the Turkish-Kurdish issue in Turkey to attention. The essay presents an excerpt from the song which is ‘Do you know how a frenzied dog ends up; one at a time they will be caught and will get a bullet in their head. Our soldiers will eradicate you, the Turkish people detests you’ (Haffmans 2006: 28). According to Erkan Coşkunsu from Arka Sokak, some people who heard the presence of the group in the festival sent a letter to *Alert* to show their reactions against it due to the mentioned song “Türk, Kürt”. As a reply to the letter to Turkey Express, the Research Group received a response from the organizers of the festival that they did not expect such a text like ‘Turks-Kurds’. They stated through producer of the festival Aart van Bolhuis: “Regarding the text ‘Türk, Kürt’, it seems that the content of the song does not fit our festival (...). We informed the band about our worries” (ibid). The festival was held on the behalf of the multicultural socio-cultural sphere of the Netherlands. The central issue in multiculturalism is to hold ethnic identity as a basis for educational and other policy decisions, as will be presented with examples from the Netherlands. In this sense, different ethnic groups might be opposed to each other due to empowered ethnic or religious identities. Therefore, by premising on Žižek’s views it may be said that multicultural policies through reification of “otherness” increase the threat of subtle racism. In her study of the rap scene in the Netherlands, Mir Wermuth argues that multiculturalism “assumes that different ethnic groups can live peacefully together”. Then, she claims, “I find this view of multiculturalism too optimistic and individualistic” (Wermuth 2001: 160). We conclude that the view of Žižek accepting multiculturalism as “racism” and also the claim of Wermuth that it is “too optimistic” are reflected in Erhan’s words, which imply these threats of multiculturalism. Regarding this issue, what Erkan Coşkunsu says in the interview about Kurds might be useful in understanding how different ethnic groups become polarized under the circumstances formed by multicultural policies:

The city we lived in, there are so many Kurds. Some colleagues of mine are also Kurdish [...] When it is broadcast on the news on TV

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<sup>22</sup> I would like to thank Esther Koopmanschap for her great helps for translating Dutch texts into English.

that [a Turkish] soldier dies as martyr, it may be generally said “I fucked Kurds”, they inevitably become polarized or feel like being excluded. According to Dutch people, we are all foreigners (allochtoon) here. No-one cares about if you are right or left-wing, Kurdish or Alevi<sup>23</sup>.

The rapper explicitly attempts to justify the pejorative phrase he said about Kurds by using emotional reasons such as the death of a soldier. He seems to have an intention to portray himself as also a “victim”, that all immigrants are foreigners in the eyes of Dutch people, as he claims above. However, his attitude toward Kurds reflects in which sense he compartmentalizes himself with a nationalist reflex. According to Eric Krebbers, who writes in the anti-racist organization “De Fabel van de illegal” (Fable of Illegal)

[...] it is by now “politically correct” in the Netherlands to be against multiculturalism. Every day politicians and opinion leaders are bashing “the completely failed multicultural society”, as they call it. The current Right criticism on the multicultural society always contains hardly-hidden racism against immigrants, refugees and Islam (Krebbers 2005).

In this sense, what the rapper implies with a pejorative phrase and what Krebbers explicitly states is that multiculturalism has become a controversial issued due to its role in the rise of racism. Because of this, and also because of the multicultural policies of the Netherlands, the opinions of Erhan and other rappers will not be disregarded in our discussion.

The Netherlands has been one of the most socially controversial European countries in recent decades since “[b]y the middle of the twentieth century [...] the Netherlands had pretty much caught up with the world, and since then things often happened earlier than elsewhere: tolerance of recreational drugs and pornography; acceptance of gay rights, multiculturalism, euthanasia, and so on” (Buruma 2006: 11) as also discussed in the previous chapter. A few of these developments which happened earlier than elsewhere are still very controversial issues for many European countries. Another issue here is that Dutch people faced great geographical difficulties in building their country. Even Junius Henri Browne says, “Nature is

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<sup>23</sup> Bizim benim kaldığım şehirde çok Kürtler var. Benim çalıştığım iş arkadaşları da Kürt. Şimdi biraz evvel dediğim gibi bir olay olduğu zaman, bir şehit verildiği zaman, haberlere bakıldığı zaman genellikle affedersin “siktiğimin Kürtleri” dendiği zaman ister istemez bunlar kutuplaşıyor veya dışlanıyor kendi çapımızda. Hollandalılara göre hepimiz burada “allochtoon” yabancıyız. Senin kimliğine bakmıyor ki bu sağcı mı solcu mu, Kürt mü Alevi mi. Bakmıyorlar.

responsible for the planet, but man created Holland...” (Browne 1872). To be a pioneer in the socio-cultural policies mentioned above, together with such a success gained against nature, “[...] led to an air of satisfaction, even smugness, as self-congratulatory notion of living in the finest, freest, most progressive, most decent, most perfectly evolved playground of multicultural utopianism” (Buruma 2006: 11). In this point, it might be useful to be reminded of Erhan’s comment comparing German and Dutch people regarding the latter’s hesitation to display negative attitudes towards foreigners. In the context of what Buruma says, it could be suggested that, indeed, Dutch people do not hesitate to display their negative attitudes, but instead it is a sort of feeling of superiority toward foreigners, as Slavoj Žižek also suggests about multiculturalist respect above. This can be just one part of the discussion on multiculturalism. The Netherlands, along with Britain, has generally been portrayed as a successful example of a multicultural society in discussions on migration, integration and minority because of its liberal policies. In the next part, I will look in detail at the reasons behind the differentiation of Germany from the Netherlands up to the 2000s with respect to its citizenship policies, the integration process for its immigrants and multiculturalism.

#### **4.2 The Netherlands, Multiculturalism and Migration Policies**

In this part, in order to compare the Netherlands with Germany, I will carry out the discussion throughout the public policy and legal framework related to various ethnic groups in Dutch society. I would like to begin by presenting general information about Turks, the largest ethnic minority groups in the country, in the Netherlands. Afterward, the discussion will be enriched with specific details.

As discussed in Chapter 3, world trade has begun to expand rapidly since World War II (Croucher 2004: 13). Lechner states the Netherlands experienced the first globalization process in the middle of seventeenth century and “after World War II [it] experienced a new wave of globalization” (Lechner 2008: 39). Since a labor shortage occurred due to rapid expansion of trade and production, workers from different countries began to come to the country as solution to the problem. According to Ellie Vasta “[a]s a result of these complex and sustained shift to assimilationism in the Netherlands inflows, the Netherlands has moved from a fairly high level of ethnic homogeneity to a remarkable degree of diversity” (Vasta 2007: 715-716). The first Turkish immigrants arrived in the Netherlands in 1964. Recently, the Turks have been the largest ethnic minority group in the Netherlands. In brief, an



overview of the four largest non-western native groups in the Netherlands is shown in the table below:

	<b>Total</b>	<b>Moroccans</b>	<b>Turks</b>	<b>Antilleans</b>	<b>Surinamese</b>	<b>Other</b>
N	1,739,365	329,634	368,718	129,590	333,478	578,215
%	100	19	21.2	7.4	19.2	33.2

CBS Statline 2007 ([www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl))

The issue of immigration is not really new for the Netherlands, but it should be noted that the Netherlands has experienced large-scale immigration only since World War Two (see Lechner 2008). Three categories of immigrants and their reasons for immigration can be distinguished as below:

- Immigrants from the colonies: the Dutch East Indies (including the Moluccan Islands), Surinam, the Dutch Antilles (Curaçao, Bonaire, et cetera), and Aruba;
- Foreign workers and their families from Mediterranean countries (Turkey, Morocco, Greece, Italy, Yugoslavia, Portugal and Spain);

and

- Refugees and asylum-seekers from many countries with political unrest (particularly from the former Yugoslavia, Somalia, Iraq and Iran) (Eldering 1997: 332)<sup>24</sup>.

Although various ethnic groups, mentioned above, emerged at the end of World War II, the Netherlands, known as a country of minorities, had already suffered from Protestant-Catholic tension for a long period. Even “the Eighty Years’ War of Independence can be perceived as a religious war” (Andeweg and Irwin 2002: 18) between Catholics and Protestants. Indeed,

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<sup>24</sup> Ramón Grosfoguel and Eric Mielants also distinguish three immigrant groups in the Netherlands: 1) Immigrants; 2) colonial immigrants; and 3) colonial/racial subjects of empire. ‘Immigrants’ are those who, at the time of migration, are incorporated or perceived as part of the ‘white majority’ by the host population inside the metropolises. They frequently experience upward social mobility in the first or second generation. ‘Colonial/racial subjects of empire’ are those groups that have a long, direct colonial history with the metropole in which they live. The hegemonic racist discourses and dominant racial/ethnic hierarchy of metropolitan centers are frequently constructed in opposition to these colonial/racial populations (Grosfoguel and Mielants 2006: 180).

these past attempts of the Netherlands to face minority problems and to solve them politically has provided it with a different perspective on contemporary problems. The Dutch state has much experience with diverse religious and ethnic groups existing in the country. In a stable and peaceful way, the Netherlands tried to solve possible clashes among those groups. In brief,

The peacefulness and stability of Dutch politics actually constitute a major achievement because, historically, there have been three potential threats to stable government in the Netherlands: *Minorities* [the Catholics, Protestants, Geremormoord (Reformed Dutch Churches), Dutch Reformed], *Two Cleavages*, which means both religion and social class play an important role in the Dutch society, *Pillarization*, segmentation of Dutch society into religious subcultures [mainly based upon Catholics and Protestants] (Andeweg and Irwin 2002: 17).

In this context, “the Dutch pillarised variant” becomes much more important, since it seems to form a background of multiculturalism that “allows for relatively great recognition of cultural difference and grants religious identities much visibility in public life” (Saharso 2007: 527). According to Vasta, the Minority Policy applied to non-Dutch ethnic groups in the 1980s referred to a sort of a welfare policy, which “can be seen as seen as a continuation of some aspects of pillarization, which generously funded new ethnic and religious minority communities for their own places of worship and media, and certain types of educational provision, on the same basis as pre-existing parallel institutional arrangements” (Vasta 2007: 716). In this sense, it seems possible to talk about the presence of segregated groups in the Netherlands in accordance with religious background and belief systems. It means that historical changes of social and political life in the country have developed based upon religions instead of ethnic groups. Thus, many scholars (Uitermark *et al.* 2005; Lechner 2008; Doomernik 2005) discuss the history of pillarization in the Netherlands in order to elaborate multicultural policies practiced especially until the end of the nineties. Bryan Turner is the one of those scholars who discusses the historical background of Dutch policies upon multiculturalism. According to him,

While the revolt of the Netherlands (1565-1589) gave rise to a nationalistic, urban, patrician culture, which continued to flourish into the eighteenth century, the democratic elements of this patrician regime were eventually limited by the commercial character of Dutch capitalism, by the rapid decline of Dutch economic dominance in the

eighteenth century, and the social ossification of regents. Although Amsterdam and Rotterdam retained their open, cosmopolitan character, industrialization was late to develop in the Netherlands as a whole. The Dutch Revolt was probably also limited in its political horizons by a strong Protestant commitment to authority and hierarchy. Thus in contemporary Dutch the notion of *burgerschap* (citizenship) still carries the connotation, not only of civic duties but also of a narrow-minded, middle-class world-view (Turner 1990: 205, italics in original).

The story of the Netherlands on labor immigrants “has three parts covering three decades” since the sixties (ibid, 150), and every generation has apparently been experiencing these shifts in politics since the beginning. In this sense, there are both differences and similarities between first-generation Turkish labor immigrants who came to the Netherlands in the 1960s and the second generation with respect to their perceptions and reception by the Dutch. Firstly, it can be useful to define what “first-generation” and “second-generation” mean. Kappelhof defines them as follows,

In the Netherlands a distinction is made between first and second-generation ethnic minority. First generation ethnic minority is persons of an ethnic minority where both they and also at least one of their parents have been born abroad (e.g. Morocco). Second-generation ethnic minority are persons born in the Netherlands, but at least one of the parents is born abroad (Kappelhof 2007: 183).

It seems that ‘first-generation’ and ‘second-generation’ immigrants that were regarded as temporary have different perceptions of and receptions in their host country because of current politics. In the sixties, “the tolerance of other cultures, often barely understood, that spread with new waves of immigration, was sometimes just that – tolerance – and sometimes sheer indifference, bred by a lack of confidence in values and institutions that needed to be defended” (Buruma 2006: 34). Dutch people and the government considered that they would all return to their countries after contributing to the economy sufficiently and rebuilding the country. Therefore, the host country did not consider any problem of migration and “often barely understood” non-Western cultures, besides the lack of interest in how to deal with such cultures, particularly Islam. In this context, Andre Krouwel, a Dutch political scientist states,

Ever since the 1960s, the subsequent Dutch governments took an approach toward minorities by which they assumed that these people were temporary workers, would stay here a limited period of time, and

would go back to their country of origin. They always denied the Netherlands was an immigration country. And therefore they [encouraged policies] that people were [to be] educated in their own language and culture...so very much a multicultural agenda (quoted in Baker 2004).

However, at the end of seventies, the Dutch government has shifted its policies on guest workers who seemed not temporary anymore, but required the government to make particular policies in order to participate in the host society with equal rights. This means that immigrants could conserve their own language and culture under the protection of the government. It seems that practicing of such policies was the beginning of multiculturalism in the Netherlands. Moreover, the experience of pillarized structure of the Dutch society has kept the government from acting through assimilationist policies (see Penninx 1996). In this sense, I think that the main reason lying behind the comparatively peaceful environment of the Netherlands for foreigners is that the Netherlands, unlike Germany, had conceived of itself as a country of immigration. Because the Dutch state like Germany saw immigrants as temporary until the beginning of the 1980s<sup>25</sup>, it did not conceive itself as an immigration country in a sense up to that date. On the other hand,

[t]oward the beginning of 1980s, a turning point was reached. For the first time, the government acknowledged that the idea of temporariness was, for most immigrants, unrealistic. It began to be recognized that the majority of the immigrants would stay in the country permanently. In 1983, the government issued a report in which the outline of a new policy was formulated. It was at this point that the concept of ‘integration with the preservation of identity’ (*integratie met behoud van identiteit*) was introduced (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 147).

Until the sixties, societies like Germany, France, Britain and the Netherlands “were relatively *homogeneous* in ethnic terms during their period of national formation ... These societies had no internal problem of aboriginality. The question of citizenship was less complicated therefore by questions of ethnic minorities, ethnic pluralism and cultural melting pots”, according to Turner (1990: 213, italics in original). In fact, most of the European

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<sup>25</sup> Even in those years, “the city of Rotterdam undertook several attempts to disperse immigrants so as to prevent social unrest resulting from — sometimes xenophobic — responses on the part of the native residents” (Uitermark *et al.* 2005: 626).

countries have turned into countries of immigration since World War II. According to Martiniello,

Europe is and will remain a continent of immigration. Migrants come from all over the world, following new patterns of migration. Some of them settle and culturally adapt to their new environment, whilst simultaneously enriching the local culture and the variety of ethno-cultural identities. Therefore Europe is, like any human society, *de facto* multicultural, a culturally diversified society in which many collective identities co-exist (Martiniello 2001: 60).

In the 1990s, immigrants who permanently stayed in Germany and the Netherlands proved that Europe was a center of immigration. Similar to Germany, “[t]he Netherlands has never wanted to become an immigration country [...] Immigration was and is considered to be undesirable and has at best been accepted as an unavoidable consequence of the colonial past, the recruitment of labor in the 1960s, or international treaties with regard to refugees” (Amersfoort *et al.* 1994: 134). In the 1990s, in the Netherlands, “a new discourse emerged in which members of ethnic minorities were less considered as cultural/religious groups and more as individuals. While it was still conceded that minorities should have the opportunity to foster their own (cultural and religious) institutions, more stress was put on integration” (Uitermark *et al.* 2005: 627). Here, the main issue is differences between people within any given nation or culture and how to deal with probable conflicts occurring due to such differences. To elaborate on such differences is an academic or intellectual matter, but to deal with conflicts is a political one. Apparently, like many European societies, “Dutch society is [also] founded on the principle of ‘differences’ just as much as on the idea of ‘commonness’, which helps to explain the present stance towards recent newcomers, and has been conducive to formulating the idea of a Dutch multi-cultural society” (Doomernik 1998: 62). As discussed before, the Dutch approach to labor immigration policy started in the 1960s and was similar to that of Germany: labor immigrants were seen as temporary migrants and future repatriates. Because of this, integration policies and the immigration policies of the 1960s and the 1970s were not long-term oriented. However, as a result of the 1973 oil crisis the recruitment of foreign workers stopped in the Netherlands, since it “[...] had created a crisis in the Dutch economy. There were no longer enough jobs for the guest workers from Turkey or Morocco ... The result was widespread unemployment, dependence on the welfare state, petty crime, and a vicious circle of social discrimination and sporadic violence” (Buruma

2006: 20). Therefore, in 1983 the Dutch government<sup>26</sup> officially stated that the Netherlands was a multicultural society and proposed a “two-track minorities policy, aiming at the integration as well as the preservation of cultural identity” (Eldering 1997: 334). Ian Buruma quotes Geert Mak, a prominent Dutch historian, that “learning to live with large numbers of immigrants is ‘going to be a difficult and painful process,’ and people will just ‘have to get used to it’” (Buruma 2007: 239). The reasoning behind this approach is generally based upon criminality among migrants and Islam, which is considered to be opposed to Western values, such as freedom of speech or homosexual rights. To cope with a possible clash between religious groups in the Netherlands, “pillarization is a model that came into being in the early twentieth century in which each religious or ethnic group was granted a sort of ‘subsidized autonomy’: services were funded by the state but managed by ethnic groups” (Uitermark *et al.* 2005: 627). Therefore, even though Islam has been seen as one of the major political issues in the Netherlands, since 1985, for example, as a part of multiculturalist policy “there [has been] a publicly subsidised Dutch Muslim Broadcasting Service, and since 1994 a Hindu one too. Since 1988 Islamic and Hindu primary schools have been founded and there are currently around 40 Islamic primary schools” (Vink 2007: 341) in the country. Hence, while immigrants were granted basic rights to live according to their own cultural backgrounds, at the same time, they were expected to integrate into the host society (ibid, 147). Even “the introduction in 1985 of local voting rights for non-national immigrants after five years of residence was a direct result of the new minorities policy and put the Netherlands on the map as one of the most ‘immigrant-friendly’ countries of Europe” (Vink 2007: 340; see also Tillie 2004). Therefore, the Netherlands, where the cultural and political rights of the immigrants are promoted and protected has, in general, unlike Germany, not been associated with violent incidents and exclusionary politics against immigrants. Andeweg and Irwin make some important points about this, saying,

Dutch politics does not often feature on the frontpages of foreign newspapers or on CNN. This lack of attention has little to do with the country’s small size: many countries that are much smaller are almost daily in the news, such as Israel. The real reason is that Dutch politics usually lack the drama, conflicts and violence from which headlines are made (Andeweg and Irwin 2002: 17).

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<sup>26</sup> “In its 1983 Minorities Memorandum, the Dutch government recognised that ‘in many ways our country has been given a different face after the Second World War ...Therefore conditions must be created by the minorities policy to realize the equivalence and equal opportunities of all residents’” (Vink 2007: 340).

However, as mentioned above, this situation has dramatically changed in the aftermath of the Theo van Gogh murder in 2004. Though in the Netherlands racist backlashes ending in death were not as common as in Germany, mosques and Muslim schools were attacked and burned down in the immediate aftermath of the van Gogh murder. As it will be discussed in Chapter 5, almost all the respondent rappers mentioned that they were never subjected to any racist attack or violence. But this situation is different from that in Germany. Some Turkish immigrants in Germany, and even some German people, underlined that some neighborhoods are not safe for foreigners and too dangerous to walk in at some specific times. Despite the presence of quite a few ethnic minorities in the Netherlands, as Andeweg and Irwin (2002) imply, violence does not take place against these ethnic minority groups. According to Scheffer, the Dutch people simply believed that immigrants would just fit into their vision of a multicultural society. In Dutch society, city life is basically characterized with anonymity rather than stigmatization, and the negotiation among habitants for social order is initially preferred instead of punishment or force. However, this does not seem to work with all cultures anymore (Scheffer 2000). This situation has apparently paved the way to the changing of the migration strategy of the Dutch state. In her research on the changing migration strategy of the Netherlands, Nermin Aydemir<sup>27</sup> says,

In the 60s and 70s, these migrants were regarded as temporary. They were seen as guest workers. The Dutch supported multiculturalism not only because they were tolerant to these groups, but also their history made them more essentialist in cultural terms. The state welcomed these cultural differences. It allowed the cultural practices and establishment of religious and cultural facilities. In the 80s and 90s, there was awareness that these migrants were becoming permanent habitants of the country. But this situation did not lead to a radical change in the attitudes of the Dutch. Questioning the existence of the migrants was still a taboo in these years. Anti-migrant discourses used to be criticized heavily (Aydemir 2006).

However, with multiculturalist policies in the Netherlands, ‘guest workers’ were now called ‘ethnic minorities,’ ‘cultural minorities,’ or ‘ethnic groups,’ and later ‘allochthonous’ (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 148). In this framework, it can be stated that the Netherlands during the colonial period and the post-war periods had become one of the first countries that built a

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<sup>27</sup> Nermin Aydemir is the Netherlands’ representative in *the International Strategic Research Organization* (ISRO). She is currently doing research on the Turkish minority in the Netherlands.

multicultural society. Dutch people who have endeavored to advance their country by struggling with natural difficulties use a very well-known adage, “God made the world but the Dutch made Holland” (Andeweg and Irwin 2002: 1). Moreover, during the post-war years, the Dutch rebuilt the country after German occupation. Shattered cultural and political structures were rebuilt, and with improved policies they gained both stability and dynamism and the country developed a well-balanced political structure (ibid). Another result of World War II for the Dutch was that during World War II, 71% percent of the Jews in the Netherlands were killed in concentration camps. The policies followed by the Dutch State regarding those killings have long-term social impacts in the collective memory and effects on the immigration issue somehow (Buruma 2007). Hence, while “criminality in certain immigrant areas was becoming a serious problem [...], it was not [...] permissible for newspaper reporters to mention the ethnic background of criminals ... When a number of Social Democrats tried to raise the matter inside their party, the PVDA, they were told to switch the subject” (Buruma 2007: 52). A former PVDA leader, Felix Rottenberg defines such a situation in terms of “feelings of guilt of the postwar generation” which “had a huge influence on politically correct thinking” (Buruma 2007: 52).

Funda Mijde, the Turkish-Dutch actress, frankly points out the changes regarding the perception of migrants in the Netherlands after particular incidents, by saying that “In 2000 I was called a ‘filthy Turk.’ After 2001, and the rise of Pim Fortuyn, it was ‘filthy foreigner [*allochtoon*].’ After Hirsi Ali<sup>28</sup>, it was ‘filthy Muslim’” (Buruma 2006: 175). According to Paul Scheffer, it seems that social rank and class have become less important in society recently through these integration efforts. For that reason, it is interesting to observe that people seem to be indifferent to the division in the society which has become recently visible and the appearance of an ethnic underclass (Scheffer 2000). The main factor in the emergence of a negative perception of multiculturalism, i.e. the tension between the Muslim and Western worlds, will be discussed in the following section.

I would like to finish this section by presenting some quotes from the interview with Osmanhan (Amsterdam), which might serve well to illustrate general views of Dutch-Turkish rappers on being a foreigner and on multiculturalism in the Netherlands. Especially the second quotation can provide an overview of how the politics of multiculturalism in the Netherlands are played out:

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<sup>28</sup> She implies the period after the movie *Submission* by Theo van Gogh.



**Osmanhan:** I don't have a problem with being far away from home. Nobody is putting me down and I wouldn't let them. I don't want to go into the bullshit about we're 2nd class etc. This is such cliché. I would laugh at those who make it a topic<sup>29</sup>.

**Me:** What if the Dutch government makes the Ramadan official holiday for Turks?

**Osmanhan:** Actually, it's working on it. But think about it from their perspective. There are a lot of people from different ethnic backgrounds. If they start granting all holidays, then our lives will be spent with vacation days. These are difficult topics. We have a mosque here, we should be thankful. For example, how many churches do we have in Turkey, when were these built, do they get governmental support? No. We organized ourselves well here. We've achieved some things<sup>30</sup>.

### 4.3 The Netherlands in the Aftermath of the Theo van Gogh Murder

*A Dutch female:* "In general I like [multiculturalism] a lot . . . it's taught me an awful lot so far, as I was sort of saying earlier on, that I like it a lot and that you get to know other people, get to accept and value them. What annoys me at times is that I find that mainly there's . . . certain groups, often Muslims, who very much show an intolerance towards other cultures and that annoys me and I also think sometimes I worry about it (Excerpt from the study conducted by Verkuyten 2004: 65-66).

The Theo van Gogh murder put the issues of immigration and multiculturalism once again at the forefront of public debate and has become a landmark in Dutch discussions on immigration and multiculturalism. The murderer was Muhammad Bouyeri, a Dutch-born 27-year-old of Moroccan descent who appeared to an integrated citizen and studied computer science. After his mother died, however, he changed his attitude and turned to radical Islam. These facts about Muhammad Bouyeri necessitate discussing some political groups as well. The issue of minorities (because of the two major Islamic groups, Turks and Moroccans) being granted the right to establish their own institutions, including schools and places of worship, has been opened to debate in the aftermath of this murder. Freedom of religion has a

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<sup>29</sup> "Beni kimse ezmiyor da ezdirmem de. abi gurbet biz 2. sınıfız da ben o ayaklara girmek istemiyorum. Klişeleşti çıkartana da gülerim yani".

<sup>30</sup> ... Öyle bir çalışmaları var. Ama onların açısından düşün burada etnik kökeni olan bir sürü şey var yani. Herkese bir tatil günü yapsa hayatımız tatille geçer. Onlar zor meseleler. Bizim burada camimiz varsa şükretmemiz lazım. Türkiye'de mesela kaç kilise var, hangi zamanda yapıldı bunlar, maddi destek veriliyor mu devlet tarafından hayır. Biz burada iyi toplanmışız birleşmişiz bir şeyler yapmışız yani.

long history in the Netherlands (see Lechner 2008: 103-137). “The Dutch Constitution of 1983 stipulates that all religious denominations are equally valued although this principle of equality actually dates back to the liberal constitution of 1848...” (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 145). Because of that, promoting religious tolerance is fundamental here. Nevertheless, the van Gogh murder has put the issue of tolerance at the forefront. Since the tragic incident, almost all discussions on multiculturalism have seemingly been put forward in terms of the issues of Islam and Muslims in the Netherlands. Particularly, rights for women and homosexuals comprise the center of those discussions questioning conflicts between Islam and the host society. Actually, “[a] cultural line of critique [against multiculturalism] goes back to 1991 when Frits Bolkestein, then leader of the liberal party VVD, publicly questioned the compatibility between Islamic and Western values” (Vink 2007: 338). Indeed, until the Dutch state considered itself as a country of immigration, it did not take Islam into account in conducting the migration policies or organizing a social sphere composed of various ethnic groups. Apparently, “[...] the layers of society supporting Islam are for the most part worker migrants and their descendants” (Schiffauer 2007: 68). Therefore, Islam has usually been evaluated as related to the issue of migrants who “are newcomers to Europe who assumed their position at the bottom of the professional ladder and slowly worked their way up over generations. Thus Islam is not only the other religion per se, it was also often the religion of the worker, of the *underclass*, the outsider, and the ghetto-dweller” (ibid, 68). Even though “[u]ntil the end of the 1970s, the government and the society considered the presence of Muslims a temporary phenomenon” (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 144), what raised many other issues around Islam and triggered the process of turning Islam into an “issue” was the Rushdie affair. Following the publication of *The Satanic Verses*, which was taken to be blasphemous throughout the Muslim world, “on February 14, 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran pronounced a *fatwa* (religious sentence) on Teheran radio, sentencing to death Rushdie and all involved in the publication of his book “who were aware of its content,” and promising heaven and martyrdom to all who would die in implementing the sentence” (Chakravorty 1995: 2216). A new debate on Islam, democracy and ‘freedom of speech’ erupted after the *fatwa*. Islam was no longer seen only as a religion but also as a major political issue necessitating discussion in its different aspects. At the same time, the large Muslim population in Europe made this issue controversial. Many people have begun ask “[c]an Islam be combined with democratic values such as freedom of speech and the equality of men and women?” (Tillie 2004: 529) I think every answer likely to be given to this question carries its own political risk. Some surveys show that in the last decade the Dutch

people's attitudes towards immigrants have changed in a negative sense. According to Paul Vedder, the Dutch are increasingly impatient with the integration process of non-Western immigrants into the host society (Vedder 1995: 397). What he states in the article, dated 1995, seems consistent with Frits Bolkestein's concerns about Islam. This is especially because in the Netherlands Islam has increasingly acquired a negative image and the idea that it is one of the major impediments to integration has started to dominate in the public domain. Besides,

Islam has become the 'negative other' and symbolic for problems related to ethnic minorities and immigration. Leading politicians have publicly described Islam as a 'backward religion' that seriously threatens Dutch society, have defined Muslims as a 'fifth column,' and have argued for the need for a 'cold war' against Islam. According to some commentators, there is an ongoing Dutch-Muslim cultural war (Verkuyten and Yıldız 2007: 1449).

In addition, the Dutch who advocate that immigrants must learn the Dutch language have negative attitudes towards immigrants who insist on speaking their own languages and distance themselves from Dutch language and culture. This situation has caused a feeling of fear even among politicians. According to Paul Vedder "this is accompanied by an explicit expression of fear by members of parliament and other politicians who are afraid of a lack of control in respect of the growing influence of Islamic educational, political, and religious practices and a growing Islamic population (by now five percent of the population)" (Vedder 2005: 398). About 5.5% of the Dutch population of 16,5 million are Muslim and about 11% of the total population are immigrants<sup>31</sup>. Therefore, integration of Muslims into the host culture and their adjustment to everyday life of the host society has been placed high on the political agenda of the Dutch state. In fact,

A decade ago, the Dutch government accepted the advice of a paper by Van der Zwan and Entzinger (1994) that the social problems provoked by immigration could be solved by assisting migrants to integrate into Dutch society. The policy known as inburgering ('citizenising') was to assist in this process by providing Dutch language courses as well as courses on Dutch society and culture (Hagendoorn *et al.* 2003: 1).

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<sup>31</sup> <http://statline.cbs.nl/>

To clarify these points, I shall talk about the naturalization test. Here, the Somalian-born Member of Parliament Ayaan Hirsi Ali is a critical political figure. What is the role of Ali's Party in immigration policies? Both Ayaan Hirsi Ali<sup>32</sup> and her conservative-liberal party (Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD), "People's Party for Freedom and Democracy" in English) support restrictive immigration policies. As a consequence of their efforts, the Netherlands introduced a naturalization application. The main aim of this naturalization test is to ensure that applicants who want to acquire a valid residence permit will be comfortable with the country's liberal social mores and also to test their desire and sincerity in integration into the liberal culture of the host society. According to this test, applicants are firstly expected to speak and understand the Dutch language. Afterward, depending on their grades, the applicants' possible ties or tolerance toward the liberal culture of the host country are assessed. For instance, they are asked to view a video containing scenes of kissing homosexuals and topless women to introduce them to the country's lifestyles (see Vink 2007). About this test Gregory Crouch says:

Watch a film clip of an attractive woman sunbathing topless and try not to be shocked. 'People do not make a fuss about nudity', the narrator explains. That lesson, about the Netherlands's nude beaches, is followed by another: Homosexuals have the same rights here as heterosexuals do, including the chance to marry. Just to make sure everyone gets the message, two men are shown kissing in a meadow. The scenes are brief parts of a two-hour film the Dutch government has compiled to help potential immigrants, many of them from Islamic countries, meet the demands of a new entrance examination that went into effect Wednesday. In the exam, the candidates must prove they can speak some Dutch and are at least aware of the Netherlands's liberal values, even if they do not agree with all of them.<sup>33</sup>

Let me present the explanation of the test by IND "Immigratie en Naturalisatiedienst" (Immigration and Naturalisation Department):

### **What is the naturalisation test all about?<sup>34</sup>**

To become a Dutch citizen, foreign nationals must pass the so-called naturalisation test. The test checks if the candidate Dutch citizen has sufficient knowledge of Dutch society and the Dutch language.

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<sup>32</sup> Also, the writer of a controversial memoir about Islam, *Infidel* (2007). Strikingly, in her personal website, it is written that "tolerance of intolerance is cowardice", which refers to the critique of the tolerance for the Muslim community in the Netherlands.

<sup>33</sup> <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/03/16/news/dutch-5852942.php>.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.ind.nl/en/inbedrijf/nederlanderworden/wattoetstdenaturalisatietoets.asp>.

## **Part 1: Dutch society**

The naturalisation test comprises two parts. The first part consists of multiple-choice questions about Dutch society and the constitution, discussing subjects like:

- Work and income: finding work, social security, financial matters
- Housing: insurances, rent, waste
- Health: symptoms, medication, insurance
- Transport: public transport, traffic laws & highway code, means of transport
- Form of government: political parties, elections, constitution
- Other: shopping, mail, leisure, children.

Part 1 of the test costs €90

## **Part 2: The Dutch language**

After passing part 1, foreign nationals can take part 2 of the test. The second part tests their knowledge of the Dutch language. Their spoken or written Dutch does not need to be perfect. All they must be able to do is express themselves in Dutch so that others can understand what they are saying or writing. For instance, they must be able to discuss the weather with a neighbour or write a note to their insurance company. Part 2 of the test costs €165.

### **Not everybody needs to take the test**

People who are in the possession of any of the following do not need to take the naturalisation test:

- A state examination diploma in Dutch as a Second Language
- An Integration Certificate (issued under the Integration of Newcomers Act or Wet Inburgering Nieuwkomers), of at least level 2 for all Dutch language sections.
- A diploma issued by a government-approved Dutch-language educational institute, higher than primary education.

People with a mental or physical disability also qualify for full or partial dispensation from taking the test.

### **After the test**

A certificate is awarded to everyone who passes the test. When applying for naturalisation, foreign nationals must include this certificate with their application. The council will decide if the foreign national also meets the other conditions for naturalisation. If the foreign national fails the test, part 1 and sections of part 2 may be retaken after six months.

This test was instituted by Dutch politician Rita Verdonk, who served recently as Minister of Immigration and Integration, and is targeted at potential immigrants from countries like Turkey and Morocco with large Muslim populations. Every person who wants to migrate into the Netherlands has to pass this exam, except for those who come from the

USA, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and Switzerland, who are only obliged to take the language exam. Besides, the Islamophobia that has emerged since the 1980s has drastically grown, made immigrants isolate themselves from the rest of society, and hence created a strong awareness of Muslim identity. According to Tillie,

Frequently one could (and can) observe statements like ‘Islam is an inferior religion’, ‘immigrants are a danger for democracy’ and ‘the construction of mosques is a provocation of Western norms and values’ (Tillie 2004: 523).

Such statements apparently have pushed immigrants with Muslim identity to enforce their religious identities rather than strengthening ethnic ones. It seems that they have got a kind of fear of losing their religious identity under such evaluations of Islam. Hence, in recent years, most of the Turkish migrants have started to link their identity more strongly with Islam and to believe that it is the source of all the discrimination against them, “[s]ince most Turks consider Islam to be the centre of their culture, the institutionalization of this religion deserves special attention” (Amersfoort and Doomernik 2003: 183). In “Islamophobia: A Challenge for Us”, a 1997 publication by the UK-based NGO the Runnymede Trust, the condition is characterized in terms of eight features:

1. Islam is seen as a monolithic bloc, static and unresponsive to change.
2. Islam is seen as separate and “other”. It does not have values in common with other cultures, is not affected by them and does not influence them.
3. Islam is seen as inferior to the West. It is seen as barbaric, irrational, primitive, and sexist.
4. Islam is seen as violent, aggressive, threatening, supportive of terrorism, and engaged in a clash of civilizations.
5. Islam is seen as a political ideology, used for political or military advantage.
6. Criticisms made of 'the West' by Islam are rejected out of hand.
7. Hostility towards Islam is used to justify discriminatory practices towards Muslims and exclusion of Muslims from mainstream society.
8. Anti-Muslim hostility is seen as natural and normal.

(EUMC 2006b: 61)

As I outlined in Chapter 3, the killing of van Gogh in 2004 because of his film *Submission* and the arrest of a Dutch-Moroccan Muslim after his murder have exacerbated the already tense relationship between the Muslim community and the Dutch. This tense relationship can be observed through changes occurring in immigration policies. As Gregory Crouch says, “The Netherlands now has some of the strictest immigration policies in Europe, drafted in part during a period of rising tension after the killing in 2004 of Theo van Gogh, a filmmaker who with Hirsi Ali made a movie critical of the treatment of women in some Islamic cultures” (The New York Times, March 17, 2006)<sup>35</sup>. For example, in recent years, the Dutch government has increased age and income requirements for certain groups of immigrants (especially for Turks and Moroccans) to stop people who want to migrate to the country through arranged marriages. About changes in immigration policies de Wit and Koopmans say:

The requirements for foreigners and their descendants to attain the Dutch nationality have become less and less restrictive over the past few decades. However, this trend has been partly reversed with so-called ‘citizenship courses’ (inburgeringscursussen) that were introduced in 1998 and the introduction of the new Dutch Nationality Law of 2003, which includes a formal ‘naturalization test’ (de Wit and Koopmans 2005: 54).

While writing this chapter, I talked to Turkish-Dutch rap fan Erhan using Microsoft MSN about how he views the naturalization test. He briefly said that this test is necessary to understand the real intentions of people who want to migrate into the Netherlands. According to Erhan, some persons attempt to migrate into the country through arranged marriages or as refugees. However, at the same time he admitted that he has some doubts about this test because he did not know what the questions were about. This doubt also arose in a university in the Netherlands but in a different context. After warnings by the Minister of Education, the University of Eindhoven announced that it would no longer accept Iranian students. In a petition against the rejection of Iranian students it is stated,

Ministers Plasterk (Education), and Verhagen (Foreign Affairs) have asked the Dutch Universities to exercise “vigilance”, and “great reservation” in admitting Iranian students. As a result, the University of Twente announced that it would no longer admit Iranians (students and staff members), and the Eindhoven University of Technology tends to consult the General Intelligence and Security Service for an admission clearance, a permission which the Service, in principle,

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.iht.com/articles/2006/03/16/news/dutch-5852942.ph>.

cannot issue. There are cases known in which the Eindhoven University has denied admission of PhD students, merely because of their nationality. Fortunately, not all universities participate in this madness; The Delft University of Technology and the University of Groningen do not exclude Iranians on a structural basis<sup>36</sup>.

Though this event seems political, it obviously reflects growing Islamphobia and negative attitude changes of the Dutch against foreigners. Hence, we understand that the aforementioned immigration policies and laws, and also attitudes towards foreigners, have all been influenced by international politics. In this context, the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) surveyed face-to-face 23,500 immigrants and ethnic minority group members in all twenty-seven EU member states during 2008. In April 2009, FRA “released results of the first ever EU-wide survey on immigrant and ethnic minority groups’ experiences of discrimination and racist crime. The survey reveals that discrimination, harassment and racially motivated violence are far more widespread than recorded in official statistics”<sup>37</sup>. According to the results, while 78% of Turkish immigrants experienced assault and threat, 92% of them experienced serious harassment in the past 12 months. According to result of the survey, those racist crimes were all unreported (EU-MIDIS 2009: 11).

I would like to finish this section with a short personal anecdote. During the two years I stayed in Norway, though as a foreigner I was not subjected to “direct” discrimination, as I mentioned earlier, I was often confronted with “eyes”. During my first year in Norway I worked as a bartender in Kvarteret, the student culture center. Though I worked there only one day, this was a striking experience for me. While filling drink orders, a Norwegian customer came close to the service bar and asked his friends loudly “Who this terrorist was”. Even though the tone of his voice showed that he was just joking, this did not decrease the degree of “seriousness” of his joke. Some people around him tried to explain to him by using body language that his joke was not so “nice”. A close Swedish friend of mine also said that his joke was not pleasant. By telling this short anecdote, I, as a “non-Westerner” intend to indicate the necessity of thinking about the reasons behind the drastically growing prejudices against foreigners and immigrants. It seems that there is not any difference between this “joke” and the warning of the Dutch Education Minister. As the saying goes: “Many a true word is spoken in jest.” Every policy and warning includes prejudice, truth and uneasiness to a degree, and the idea of “foreigner” is constructed in this political environment.

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<sup>36</sup> <http://www.campaigniran.org/casmii/index.php?q=node/3863>.

<sup>37</sup> [http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/home/home\\_en.htm](http://fra.europa.eu/fraWebsite/home/home_en.htm).



#### 4.4 Germany and the Issue of “Guest Workers”

Racism and xenophobia occurring in Germany were serious threats until the end of World War II, and Germany still experiences intermittent racist attacks on foreigners. It might be said that these tragic events have paved the way for the emergence of Turkish rap as a reaction to racism. But it should be noted that the emergence of a musical scene cannot be reduced to a merely political issue. On the other hand, the socio-political atmosphere of Germany as one of the influential factors in the production process of rap music seems worthy of examination. Germany experienced a wave of racist and xenophobic violence, particularly in the 1990s. For instance, “in May 1993 ... a Turkish woman and four of her children died in an arson attack on their family home in Solingen. Four skinheads were found guilty of the attack and were sentenced to prison terms of up to fifteen years” (Koopmans *et al.* 2005: 3). In the aftermath of this tragic event in 1995, *Cartel* released an album that accelerated the development of rap music among Turkish immigrants as a means of voicing their frustration towards racism. Though we accept such events as the main sources of development in the rap music, we cannot and should not overlook the negative impacts of everyday life practices of Germany on Turkish migrants. Robins and Morley make some important points about this issue, saying

When you get on the metro early in the morning, at half six, when everybody is going to work the carriage is jam-packed with Germans. You get in as a foreign type, and some whispering will start up. Maybe there is an empty seat, if the guy next to it moves a bit there will be a space to sit down, but instead he will spread out (Robins and Morley 1996: 249).

What Robins and Morley state above appears similar to what I presented as an example to illustrate how I feel when entering a bar, as mentioned above: Who is this stranger? Moreover, what they say is a good example what Erhan said related to the comparison of Dutch and German societies.

The other critical aspect of this issue is how a foreigner is psychologically influenced by those events s/he is faced with in everyday life. It is not unexpected that an individual who is aware of his/her status as a foreigner in a bar, on the train, underground railway, or at the market, and who also has to deal with his/her feeling of social exclusion, distances him/herself from the host society. In the course of time, these exclusive practices that are

experienced both in political and social domains cause the emergence of a community isolated from the rest of society. As Erhan mentions above, in the course of time the distance between the Turkish migrants and the Germans has become one of the major dynamics triggering the emergence and development of Turkish rap as a form of expression, and also a form of resistance against social exclusion. Besides, despite the presence of bands and musicians rapping in English, the general demarcation of Turkish rap in Germany in terms of language has constrained this genre to develop and expand in a particular community. At the same time, this situation has paved the way for the emergence of a third hybrid identity or a ‘third chair’, as female rapper Aziza-A from Berlin terms it. About youth hip-hop culture in Germany, Ayhan Kaya quotes Aziza-A: “I attempt to erase the question ‘are we Turkish or German?’ and announce that we are multi-kulti and cosmopolitan. I want to show that we are no more sitting between the two chairs, we have got a ‘third chair’ between those two chairs ...” Kaya suggests that this can be defined as the state of ‘in-betweenness’, and on this point, Aziza-A presents a new picture of the transnational youth (Kaya 2001: 202). These ‘strangers’ or ‘aliens’ are the ‘guest workers’ (*Gastarbeiter*) who feel equally stuck in “nearness” and “distance”. Ayhan Kaya, as a significant figure in these discussions, presents us with a denouncement that occurred in the German news magazine *Der Spiegel*. In the 14 April 1997 issue of this prominent liberal weekly magazine, the ‘foreigners’ in the country were denounced as ‘dangerously alien’ and as “the cause of the failure of ‘multicultural society’ in Germany” (Kaya 2001: 58).

Though I will discuss this in detail in Chapter 5, I will briefly touch upon some details here about my short trip to Berlin and my impressions of the heavily Turkish Kreuzberg. During the period that I stayed in the Netherlands I did not see any neighborhood of any city or municipality bearing resemblance to Kreuzberg (I visited Amsterdam, Rotterdam, Den Haag, Eindhoven, Woerden, Tilburg, and others). When you see the Turkish sign *Kreuzberg Merkezi*<sup>38</sup> (Kreuzberg Center) at its entrance, you feel that you are in a completely different district. You see advertisements, announcements and concert bills written in Turkish. Most of the people walking down the street speak Turkish; in restaurants Turkish food is served. You feel like you are in Turkey. Though in the Netherlands there are also neighborhoods where the vast majority of the residents are of Turkish descent, there the Dutch and the Turkish immigrants live together at least to some extent. In the Netherlands one is not likely to encounter a neighborhood like Kreuzberg that is excluded and stigmatized as a ghetto.

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<sup>38</sup> On the other side of the sign, the German word is written “Kreuzberg Zentrum”.

Ayhan Kaya states that Kreuzberg has been defined as a working-class district since the mid-17<sup>th</sup> century and because of Germany's former "exclusionist" policies this area turned into a kind of "Turkish ethnic enclave," which has "provided immigrants, guestworkers (Gastarbeiter) and asylum-seekers with shelter" (Kaya 2001: 88). This new situation has led to the construction of a social space where the Germans do not feel safe or secure. A German musician's words about this district may reflect the feelings of the German majority about Kreuzberg to a degree. While reading an online journal on avant-garde and metal bands, an interview with a German musician caught my attention. In this interview with the guitarist of The Vision Bleak, which is a gothic/thrash metal band, Markus Stock says the following about Kreuzberg: "Yeah well, I personally love traveling. For example I love to go to Prague, but being in the streets there at night is sometimes dangerous...and then again, Berlin seems quite a safe town! Well, depends on the part of the city, in Kreuzberg, for example, you shouldn't be in the wrong streets at night!"<sup>39</sup>

It can be said that the major reason for German people's feeling of insecurity in Kreuzberg is that Germany's 'exclusionist' practices have forced Turkish immigrants to construct an isolated Turkish community and a cultural-political space for themselves. The particular reason for these exclusionist policies of the state is that "Germany's 'foreigner policy' (*Ausländerpolitik*), was until recently strongly shaped by an ethno-cultural notion of national identity and citizenship" (Koopmans and Statham 2001: 73). Ayhan Kaya divides Germany's *Ausländerpolitik* into three stages: "The main concern of the first stage of the *Ausländerpolitik* between 1965-1973 was economic considerations. The second stage of the law was shaped by concerns of increasing social problems and political tensions" (Kaya 1998: 28). The third stage began with the Christian Democratic Party (CDU). In this stage, the government

restricted the entry of further immigrants, spouses and dependent children of immigrants by applying new quotas... [Moreover] the government encouraged repatriation with a decree between October 30, 1983 and June 30, 1984 by offering premiums of DM 10,500 plus DM 1,500 per dependent child if they left the country immediately (Kaya 1998: 29).

We see here that during the 1980s and 1990s, Germany's *Ausländerpolitik* was actually put into practice to encourage guest workers to return to their home countries by giving them cash

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<sup>39</sup> Avantgarde Metal Magazine, 2008. Vol.2, p. 5 (website: <http://www.avantgarde-metal.com/content/index.php>; accessed on September 25, 2008) Available as pdf format with 103 pages.

payments and setting up bilingual schools<sup>40</sup> in their home countries to help German-speaking migrant children re-adjust to life “back home” (see Kaya 1998). However, the German state “changed its citizenship legislation in important ways over the course of the 1990s. In 2000, it introduced a form of jus soli acquisition of German nationality for children of migrants born in the country and thereby departed radically from the ethnic conception of the German nation prevailing until then” (Koopmans 2005: 6). Up to that time, according to Hermann Korte, “[...] politicians and political administrators are unable to or unwilling to accept the failure of the *Gastarbeiter* (Guest worker) policy” (Korte 1987: 164).

It is obvious that Germany’s highlighting of “the ethno-cultural notion of citizenship” has created a distance between minorities and the German society and politics. Because the Netherlands has attempted to build both multicultural governmental policies and ideology in contrast to those of Germany, it might be accepted politically and socially among the pluralists of Europe. At this point, multicultural policies should be examined critically. While states actively discouraged structural integration of immigrants into society (as in Germany until recently; see Kaya 1998), there were still multicultural projects running parallel to the state, and even using state resources, whose goals were to increase inter-cultural understanding, etc. Here, it might also be relevant that Çağlar states, despite the oppositional and marginal qualities attributed to Turkish hip-hop, that institutions sponsored by the German state were actually involved in providing infrastructure for and popularizing rap among German Turks. This occurred while the German state was actively making it difficult for Turks to become naturalized German citizens (Çağlar 1998).

As mentioned above, despite its large immigrant population, Germany is unwilling to conceive of itself as a country of immigration. The issue of immigration does not only have to do with the cultural or social integration of foreigners, but is mostly also about political processes directly related to the citizenship applications it receives as a host country. The major question arising after Germany reformed its citizenship laws in 2000 is whether the nation-state would give up its socio-economically exclusive politics and adopt a more inclusive policy or not. Put simply, it can be said that while the Dutch approach to foreigners is characterized by practices of multiculturalist policies, in Germany there is still a situation of relative exclusion despite the flexibility in citizenship laws after 2000. Still, as of January 1, 2000, there was some change in Germany’s minority and migration politics – they started to

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<sup>40</sup> “The schools are called *Alman Anadolu Lisesi* (German Anatolian High School) where the medium of education is German. These schools are formed under the joint Cultural Treaty signed between Turkish and German government in 1984” (Kaya 1998: 30).

be premised on more inclusive policies than before. What lies behind the emergence of this new approach are the difficulties and problems that Turkish migrants have faced in integration and citizenship processes, and also the explicit discontent with these troubles throughout the country. To solve these problems and ensure immigrants' cultural and political rights, the parties on the left side of German politics, with their new measures and also with their reformed policies, made some suggestions. The differentiation between the approaches of the left-wing and right-wing parties started to surface again. This growing demarcation between the two parties increased the support of Turkish immigrants for the left, both in Germany and the Netherlands, in general and local elections. I will look in detail at the political tendencies of Turkish rappers in the Netherlands in Chapter 5 but we must simply note that the tension in the political arena in Germany has been manifested in multiculturalism discussions. Conceptual discussions of the term of multiculturalism have seriously impacted multicultural politics in countries including Germany. About this political process in Germany, Schaefer *et al.* say:

Germany became more aware of multiculturalism as a societal phenomenon. Mainly led by parts of the Green Party and the Left, politicians celebrated the so-called *Multi-Kulti*<sup>41</sup> Gesellschaft, as a means in itself and argued specifically for co-existence rather than integration. But this philosophy of co-existence failed to address the need by migrants to integrate themselves in German society and fuelled criticism by right-wing parties. The Greens and the SPD<sup>42</sup> have since distanced themselves from the term and Katja Husen, the Greens' women spokesperson said in 2004 in an interview with *Der Spiegel*: 'we don't use the term Multi-Kulti anymore. It sounds like a playful concept, but integration is no 'game' (Schaefer *et al.* 2005: 10).

It seems that multiculturalism has not played an active role in Germany's politics and social life, since it is still possible to mention recent attacks on foreigners and xenophobia (see Hestermann 2003). For example, a Turkish education center in Dortmund province of Germany was attacked by Molotov cocktails in February 2010<sup>43</sup>. It is obvious that these discussions started later in Germany than in the Netherlands. The main source of the issue is that people of Turkish origin were excluded from their citizenship rights in Germany (see

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<sup>41</sup> Multi-Kulti is a German phrase for multiculturalism and its abbreviated use also has colloquial, uncomplicated connotations.

<sup>42</sup> The Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)

<sup>43</sup> <http://arsiv.ntvmsnbc.com/news/474778.asp>.

Hestermann 2003). Because of that, multiculturalism as a cultural process launched some serious discussions. Related to this issue, Ayhan Kaya says,

[s]ocial differentiation, segregation, institutional racism, discrimination and class differences are reduced to, and legitimized in culturalisation of differences. Thus, actual multiculturalism in both Germany and Europe happens to represent a form of integration of cultural diversity into a system of structural inequalities (Kaya 2001: 109).

Kaya also claims that various multicultural platforms in Berlin actually in a way “sharpen the process of ‘othering the other’ in the imagery of self, or in other words, leads to a form of ethnic ‘exotification’” (Kaya 2001: 109). This “exotification” causes some problems in the integration process and also makes it difficult for diverse cultures to live side by side. Ayhan Kaya also discusses Gündüz Vassaf’s approach to the definition of Turkish immigrants as cultural groups in Germany. According to Kaya, Vassaf “refuses some conceptualizations which are attributed to the children of Turkish migrants in Europe especially by the Turkish ‘experts’- concepts like ‘in-betweenness,’ ‘lost generation’ and ‘split identities’. Rejecting the treatment of migrants’ children as problematic, he rightly claims that those children have developed their own cultural space” (Kaya 2001: 37). I think it can be suggested that one of the reasons lying behind the development of rap music in Germany is that an original and “authentic” culture has been created as a reaction against Germany’s cultural and social minority policies. What Doomernik says below might be useful to finish this section regarding the conditions of Turks in Germany:

As far as integration in general terms is concerned, we find that many Turks, among them many born and bred in Germany, find themselves in an ambivalent position, not knowing where they belong and where their future could or should lie. The German immigration policies are one factor causing this as are, at least partly echoing the government’s reluctance to legally integrate foreigners, xenophobic tendencies present in the German population (Doomernik 1998: 58).

#### **4.5 Differences between Migration Policies of Germany and the Netherlands**

In my country of origin, Turkey, the minority issue is also a sensitive and complicated one. In Turkey, where different ethnic and religious groups co-exist, the state’s and also the

individuals' approaches to the minority issue reveal their ideological and political perspectives. The tendency to accept minorities or diverse ethnic groups either as 'others', or as 'one of us' if they are granted citizenship rights, indicates how this issue is approached too simply. Though this will be detailed with personal experiences in Chapter 5, I shall touch upon some crucial points here. Kurds form the second largest ethnic group in Turkey. Though Kurds and Turks have equal citizenship rights, Kurds intermittently suffer from discrimination in the public domain. It is a striking example that despite the prohibited use of the Kurdish letters X, W, and Q (which do not exist in the Turkish alphabet) in names, some of the companies and TV channels which have names in English or other European languages continue to use these letters. Regarding this issue, the views of some rappers (for example Erkan [30] from *Arka Sokak*) can be useful for bringing another dimension to our discussion. Some rappers see Kurds living in Turkey as merely Turks or Turkish citizens but not as a different ethnic group who might have the right to use their own names. As mentioned, this issue will be discussed in detail in Chapter 7.

The reform of Germany's citizenship has enabled immigrants to participate in the political arena by empowering them. In this context,

We may situate the Netherlands clearly on the pluralist side of the continuum. In Germany, issues of cultural group rights and equality have so far not played an important role in the political debate. This is likely to change now that German migrants will increasingly hold the German nationality, which will give them a stronger basis to claim equal treatment and group rights in the cultural realm (de Wit *et al.* 2005: 60).

Also, "Germany and the Netherlands serve as contrasting examples of political opportunity structures for the participation of newcomers and minorities" (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001: 261). This change in favor of immigrants is related to the reform of the German citizenship law. If immigrants are granted their citizenship rights during the integration process, many political problems can be solved. Afterward, the main problem is to deal with cultural issues in order to form not a culturally monolithic country, but rather a pluralist one for keeping diversities together. Pluralism aims to create a sort of society where diverse cultures co-exist in harmony with mutual respect and equal opportunity to promote their aspirations, without risk of being dissolved or eliminated. What is critical here is that the state is convinced of the idea that the host culture is always a priori in harmony with diverse cultures. Many nation-states that seem

not to have the goal of creating a culturally homogeneous society, such as the Netherlands and Canada, attempt to adopt policies aimed at reducing the prejudices among these diverse ethnic groups to a minimum by placing harmony between diverse groups high on their agenda<sup>44</sup>.

Germany's immigration policies and "monolithic" perspective dominated the political agenda up to the 2000s because of the changes in the country before and after the war. The tragic events that happened as a result of exclusive policies have driven the country to change politically. Contrary to these exclusive policies, Østergaard-Nielsen quotes Doormerik to emphasize the situation in the Netherlands: "The Dutch people's more generous funding of and inclusive dialogue with migrant organizations make for more open and participatory networks of such organizations. By contrast, a unitary and more exclusive political system in Germany means little public participations by those same organizations" (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001: 264). However, at the moment, it is still difficult to say that the Dutch and the Dutch government are open to entering into an inclusive dialogue with the migrant organizations. By this I mean that the naturalization test that has begun to be applied to newcomers, as mentioned, has brought about a new era for immigrants. Similar to this situation, a naturalization test was released by the German government. The German state of Baden-Württemberg enacted an admission test for non-Western immigrants in 2006. This test consisted of questions about a person's views on homosexuality, women's rights or Muslims' opinions on Israel. It has also been called the "Muslim Test" because of the questions are clearly targeted at Muslim applicants. In this test the questions include:

'Some people accuse the Jews of being responsible for all that's bad in the world...What do you think of such accusations?' and 'Your daughter applies for a job in Germany but she gets a negative response. Later you find out that a black woman from Somalia got the job instead. What do you do?' are used to determine whether applicants should be further interviewed. Should subsequent behavior of these citizens demonstrate that they lied on the test, the state reserves the right to withdraw their citizenship<sup>45</sup>.

The common point of these tests enacted in Britain, Germany and the Netherlands is that they all reflect growing Islamophobia and Islamophobic discrimination. It is evident that Islam has begun to be seen as a cultural and political obstacle by these states. This situation,

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<sup>44</sup> Nevertheless, as aforementioned, the tensions between the Western and Muslim worlds surfaced again with the novel *The Satanic Verses* authored by Salman Rushdie. Ergo, cultural and political pluralism has always been subjected to kinds of social and political tests.

<sup>45</sup> <http://www.spiegel.de/international/0,1518,397482,00.html>.



especially in the Netherlands, does not refer to a hierarchy among religions. Even though it seems that a sort of cultural hierarchy has already been established as a consequence of some tragic events like Rushdie affair, the murder of Theo van Gogh, 9/11, and so on, beyond this fact, the return of equal respect for every religion has led to the emergence of an equality principle in the Netherlands:

An important aspect of the equality principle is that the Dutch system does not apply the principle of religious recognition and registration, as is true in Belgium and Germany. Thus, there are no denominations in the Netherlands that formally have more privileges than do others. Equality means equal treatment in similar situations (Sunier and van Kuijeren 2002: 145).

I shall take a closer look at some issues concerning a clash between the Muslim and Western worlds and the issue of equal respect for every religion and sect. It might be better to start the discussion with a brief presentation of the religious structure in Turkey. In Turkey, most Muslims are Sunni, which is the largest denomination of Islam. On the other hand, ‘Anatolian Alevis’, incorporating ‘heterodox’ beliefs, constitute an important group of adherents of another belief system and cultural community comprising almost ten percent of Turkey’s population. The Turkish state, through The Ministry of Religious Affairs, claims that it always protects the secular political system and religious freedom by keeping its equal distance from every religion existing in the country. However, despite its provision of Sunni mosques, the state has still not provided Alevi prayerhouses (see Shankland 2003; Melikoff 1998; Kaya 1998). The official discourse communicated to the public is that Alevism is not different from Islam. Yet, Alevism constitutes a unique belief system that can be regarded as an example of folk Islam. In my opinion, the most distinctive characteristic of folk Islam is its eclectic structure. It incorporates many cultural patterns from the past up to the present times into its fabric, and creates a new formation by mixing them. While in Turkey the orthodox Sunni Islam and Sunnism attempt to portray Alevism as a branch of Islam, these groups tend to regard it as a “deviance” or a cultural belief – something outside religion. In brief, the Alevism that is discussed under the topic of freedom of religion is interpreted as culturally different by Sunni Turks. This is similar to the stance in the Netherlands or that in other European countries where the principle of religious freedom is officially accepted, but where religions are culturally interpreted in different ways. I would like to present another example from Turkey. In 1990, Turan Dursun, a prominent atheist and scholar of Islam and Islam in Turkey, was murdered by an illegal terrorist organization called *İslami Hareket Örgütü*

(Islamic Movement Organization) in İstanbul, due to his works radically criticizing Islam and Islamic culture. The assassination of Dursun might be elaborated as different to the Van Gogh case, since Turkey is comprised of a large Muslim population. To Buruma, “[t]here are links to political violence in Turkey, to do with militant nationalism or the Kurdish problem, but not so much with revolutionary Islam. That appears to be more a Moroccan problem” (Buruma 2006: 22). Here, it should not be forgotten that Turkey is (officially) a secular country. Therefore, the murder of Dursun was also a striking political issue for the country. In this point, we can evaluate the murder as a mere criminal issue or a matter of religion. Here, the question we need to pose is whether the murder of Van Gogh was an issue of criminality and religion or the result of multicultural policies practiced in the Netherlands. Until the beginning of the 2000s, Islam was not a controversial issue in the Netherlands. To connect such tragic issues just with multicultural policies may prevent us from elaborating on other issues, such as criminality deriving from socio-economic reasons or religious interpretations which have visible impacts on communities.

The other differentiation between Germany and the Netherlands is that in Germany the integration process of Turkish-German immigrants is quite a bit slower and more restricted than that of the Netherlands. This situation again indicates the fact that Germany did not conceive of itself as a country of immigration until the 2000s, as discussed above. About this issue, de Witt and Koopmans suggest the following:

The Turks who live in the Netherlands very often address their rights and integration in the Netherlands (31.3%), whereas similar claims play a much smaller role in Germany (11.5%). The Dutch open citizenship regime thus has affected the political orientations of Turkish migrants and has invited them to see themselves as part of Dutch society and formulate demands pertaining to their integration and rights in that society (de Witt and Koopmans 2005: 68).

As Østergaard-Nielsen states, “Dutch authorities have actively sought to facilitate the political participation of non-citizens since the mid-1980s” (2001: 272). The liberal political structure of the Netherlands gives immigrants with at least four years of legal residence in the country the right to vote in local elections. The Dutch state attaches importance to the political integration of both citizens and non-citizens. In Germany, a relatively smaller number of Turkish migrants hold German passports than those holding Dutch passports in the Netherlands. However, this number is expected to increase following the new citizenship laws

that were applied as of January 1, 2000. However, according to research conducted in the Netherlands, “[t]he best researched of the Middle East populations in the Netherlands are the Turks. We know that almost 50 per cent of persons born in Turkey are Dutch citizens and roughly 70 per cent of their children hold a Dutch passport” (Amersfoort and Doornik 2003: 177).

It is remarkable that a person who has legal residence for four years is granted the right to vote in local elections even if s/he is not a citizen. If a local election is held to decide how a region is organized and this is something different from the general election that is held for a nation’s primary legislative body, an inhabitant who lives in a region is granted the right to vote, hence to politically exist in this region. Therefore, an individual who is excluded from his/her full citizenship rights for a period leaves his/her status as foreigner in the period of local elections and both culturally and politically become to a degree a part of the majority. How a state regards an individual without citizenship, or a migrant to that country for whatever reason, may reflect the socio-cultural and political structure in that country. Even the terms that are chosen to define “foreigner” are an important issue, I believe. For instance,

While in Dutch political discourse, migrants tend to be referred to as ‘minorities’ subject to ‘minority policies,’ Germany labels them (in view of the restrictive citizenship regime not inaccurately) as ‘foreigners’, whose presence is regulated by ‘*Ausländerpolitik*’. This already suggests that in Germany migrants are not regarded as part of the national community and therefore have a weak basis for claiming cultural group rights. For instance, religious schools can be officially recognized in Germany and claim public funding, although they cannot claim the full equality with public schools that exists in the Netherlands (de Witt and Koopmans 2005: 58).

On this point, we can say that immigrants in Germany exist culturally and religiously as ‘outsiders’ because, as mentioned, they “are not regarded as part of the national community”. One of the results of their status as outsiders is the feeling of anger towards their host society. In Turkish rap music in Germany this anger is tangibly felt. By giving Turkish names to their shops or restaurants, or using some images and signs from Turkey, Turkish migrants both in Germany and the Netherlands, though they live in culturally and politically different environments, express that they ultimately wish to return home and never stop remembering their social environments there. This is a part of their struggle for existence in the Stranger Lands. In an interview Østergaard-Nielsen conducted, one elderly Turkish-Dutch

worker commented, “We used to say that we are in ‘Gurbet’ [place away from home], but we are no longer in ‘Gurbet’- Turkey is here” (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001: 265). In this case, I believe it is an important point that seeing ‘Gurbet’ as Turkey may slow down the integration process of immigrants, since it implies that they make their living conditions resemble those of Turkey with respect to some of its cultural and social characteristics. Because immigrants to these modern and industrialized countries are mostly “low-qualified” workers from rural areas of Turkey, their integration process seems more difficult than that of middle-class, educated Turks. Regarding the education of immigrants, Eldering provides us with the following information:

A representative survey among ethnic minorities in 1994 showed a high illiteracy rate among Moroccans and Turks in the Netherlands. About half of the Moroccan men and 61 percent of the Moroccan women interviewed have had no education (either in Morocco or in the Netherlands). Although the percentages of illiterates among Turkish men and women are lower (20 and 38) than among the Moroccans, they are substantially higher than among the Surinamese men and women (11 and 15) (Eldering 1997: 338).

At this point, it seems that Turkish migrants coming from Turkey’s more traditional and religious rural areas had some difficulties in adapting to changes they faced after the mid-1980s. About the social structure of immigrants in the Netherlands Eldering says that,

Turkey has never been colonized by a European nation. Formally, Turkey is a secular state with a strict division between religion and state. Kemal Atatürk and his followers abolished the Islamic family law and introduced a family law according to the Swiss model in the 1920s; they also established a Western school system. Many Turks in the Netherlands, however, originate from the more traditional provinces of Central Anatolia and the Black Sea. The Netherlands and Turkey entered an agreement for the recruitment of guest workers in 1964 (Eldering 1997: 333).

The other similarity that has emerged in recent times between Germany and the Netherlands is the growing negative attitude toward both Muslims and multiculturalism because of a view of Islam and multicultural policies as obstacles to integration and social cohesion, as mentioned above. The Dutch people advocating multicultural politics until the end of the 1980s started to become increasingly negative about Islam. As Verkuyten and Yıldız state,

Dutch society and the majority group have become rejecting and assimilative in their orientation toward ethnic and cultural diversity. In public debates, multiculturalism has been described as a drama and a failure, and assimilation has been proposed, and increasingly accepted, as the only viable option for a stable and cohesive Dutch society (Verkuyten and Yıldız 2007: 1449).

For Paul Scheffer, the writer of “The Multicultural Drama”, the Netherlands has for years denied being an immigration country and therefore we have not developed to an ‘integration nation’. Murder in the name of honor, like that occurring in Turkey, does not fit the Dutch society. Therefore the Dutch society also has to adapt its system of laws and policy to include issues that play a role in the cultures that immigrate to the Netherlands. Integration while simply keeping one’s own identity is not possible (Scheffer 2000).

In closing this section, I would like to mention that, especially in European countries, post-war immigration accelerating since the 1960s has become a debatable issue in the social sciences. This issue, which was discussed for a period with respect to its socio-cultural and economic “outcomes”, turned into a political discussion in the 1990s, especially in countries with a Muslim-minority population. One of the factors lying behind this change is the Salman Rushdie affair as one of the dramatic instances of Islamophobia. This affair in Great Britain was one of “the most spectacular examples of multicultural conflict that have recently occupied public consciousness” (Benhabib 2006: 51). The question arising with this affair is how to define the boundaries of citizens’ rights in order to maintain the stability of a multicultural social system.

In closing, I would like to say that I do not want to give the impression in the discussion in this chapter that just because of political differences between the Netherlands and Germany, the Turkish rap scene in the Netherlands bears no similarity to its counterpart in Germany in terms of the nationalistic themes in the lyrics or their way of using rap in constructing national identity. My main aim is to discuss possible socio-political reasons behind the differences between the two scenes. I think that to pose particular questions about policies like multiculturalism or citizenship laws may provide us with some clues to understand the differences between these musical scenes. In the following chapter, the other two important issues that are directly related to the main subject of this thesis will be examined: music and language.

## CHAPTER 5

### THEORETICAL INQUIRY INTO HISTORY AND AUTHENTICITY OF RAP MUSIC

#### 5.1 Brief History of Rap Music

Greil Marcus simply and perfectly explains what many ethnomusicologists, sociologists or cultural studies researchers tend to study, saying that “Music seeks to change life; life goes on; the music is left behind; that is what is left to talk about” (Marcus 1989: 3). Rap is not an ordinary musical genre due to its components, which offer a complicated combination of music and speech. Therefore, this chapter aims at elaborating on rap music as a verbal art and as a musical style in its technical and aesthetic aspects, regarding what has been left to talk about this genre from its origins in the 1970s until today.

Firstly, I would like to present a short anecdote from the discussion between Terry Eagleton and Pierre Bourdieu that took place in the London Contemporary Arts Institute in 1991. Eagleton poses a question concerning the interrelatedness of symbolic capital, art-aesthetic and new cultural codes. The main purpose of this question is to elaborate on new cultural codes in the light of Bourdieu’s concept of “symbolic power”. Bourdieu begins his answer with a comment about the over-estimation of the significance of new cultural codes, and in order to illustrate his point, he proposes an example about rap music as a relatively new cultural code. He says,

You mystify people when you say ‘Look, rap is great.’ The question is: does this music really change the structure of the culture? I think it is fine to say that rap is great, and in a sense it is better than being ethnocentric and to suggest that such music has no value; but in fact it is a manner of being ethnocentric when you forget what remains the dominant form, and that you still can’t realize symbolic profits from rap, in the main social games (Bourdieu and Eagleton 1997: 274).

Bourdieu claims that when it is said “Look! Rap is great”, the real question that should be posed is whether this music can really change the cultural structure of a society. Moreover, he

states that when we stress how this musical genre is somehow great, this may raise another question about a kind of mystification of rap. Bourdieu has no objection to considering rap as a great cultural code or music. In this sense, “rap can be seen as rebel music as much as commercial machine or as educational tool” (Huq 2006: 110). Bourdieu even suggests that it would be better to say that rap is great than to consider it as a valueless art form or approaching it from a perspective of ethnocentrism. However, he underlines that to exaggerate the extent of change and overestimate its cultural efficacy includes both political and scientific risks.

First of all, it is important to note the distinction often made between the more general term *hip-hop* and the more specific term *rap*. ‘Rap’ is a term generally used to refer to a particular genre or style of music usually composed of the two significant elements of rapping and DJing. For Tricia Rose, “Rap music is a black cultural expression that prioritizes black voices from the margins of urban America [...] It began in the mid-1970s in the South Bronx in New York City as a part of hip hop, an African-American and Afro-Caribbean youth culture composed of graffiti, breakdancing, and rap music” (Rose 1994: 2). Along with rapping, hip-hop, as the name of this music culture which “combines elements of speech and song, of dance and display, to call into being through performance new identities” (ibid, 21), includes also the two visual artistic aspects of graffiti and break dancing, which are also bodily feeling and experience. Since the late seventies, graffiti art as a way of expression has been an important feature of hip-hop as its main visual aesthetic dimension. This divergent and alternative artistic form is not simply utilized to spray the walls of buildings, public transportation vehicles or subways, but is rather a reinterpretation of city images and a subversive reaction to mainstream culture. The hip-hoppers who live on the outskirts of the city and who are often not very visible in everyday life become visible in the cultural and political sphere through the graffiti art that they leave on the city's public arenas, i.e. the walls of buildings. The term “hip-hop music” can also be used to refer to a kind of music without rapping, but with beats and sampling. Moreover, hip-hop explicitly has the potential to bring youth together across race, gender, and socio-economic boundaries. DJ Kool Herc says,

People talk about the four hip-hop elements: DJing, B-Boying [popularly known as breakdancing], MCing, and Graffiti. I think that there are far more than those: the way you walk, the way you talk, the way you look, the way you communicate...Hip-hop is the voice of this generation. Even if you didn't grow up in the Bronx in the '70s, hip-hop is there for you. It has become a powerful force. Hip-hop

binds all of these people, all of these nationalities, all over the world together (Chang 2005: xi).

Put simply, as Krims quotes from *KRS-One*, “rap is something you do, Hip-Hop is something you live” (Krims 2000: 10). According to Hebdige, the introduction of South Bronx-originated rap music to the world could be traced back to the late 60s. (Hebdige 2003: 188-189; see also Rose 1994). In less than twenty years, “[...] rap music has grown from the local performance practices of a Bronx subculture to a multi-billion-dollar industry which mediates a music made and heard around the world” (Walser 1995: 193). Even local performance practices in the different parts of the global have begun to shape the majority of studies and discussions on hip hop in the social sciences. The power of hip hop culture, which is to bind people from different nationalities around a musical community together with local contributions, has made this form of expression the subject of academic research in several fields, including ethnomusicology, sociology, cultural studies, etc. The globalized nature of hip-hop has led Walser to claim that “[t]here is no single ‘local’ to be studied; audiences are diverse and linked by mass mediation” (ibid, 194). Even between seemingly homogeneous localities we might witness significant differentiations, for example diasporic Turks in Germany and the Netherlands, as I will discuss later through the dissertation.

Rapper’s Delight (1979) by the Sugar Hill Gang is generally credited as the first recorded rap song to appear on the national charts in the USA. By this time, rap had already been making its rounds for five years as an “underground offshoot of disco.” Some prefer to call rap by its other name hip-hop, as it implies not only the music but also a combination of a “look, an attitude, and a lifestyle” (Davis 1996: 274). In fact, both of the terms, i.e. rap and hip-hop, are sometimes used interchangeably. Rap music has proved to be one of the most unique and controversial music genres of the 1990s. According to Negus, “rap has been created as a self conscious business activity as well as a cultural form and aesthetic practice” (Negus 1999: 489).

## **5.2 Theoretical Insights on Hip-Hop**

As Ramsey claims, “[h]ip-hop culture is virtually everywhere: television, radio, film, magazines, art galleries, and in ‘underground’ culture. It has even surfaced in congressional hearings. And even where hip-hop culture is not found, its absence may also be understood as



a reaction against it” (Ramsey 2003: 164). Therefore, many social scientists and researchers (Rose 1994; Bennett 1999a; Toop 1999; Krims 2000; Forman 2002; Mitchell 2002; Maxwell 2003; Solomon 2005b and others) pay attention to the fact of hip-hop being everywhere, virtually or physically. This music and culture have been described recently as “[...] locally rooted but globally resourced youth *strategies*” (Pilkington 2004: 119). Apparently, “the accelerated transnational movements of people, capital, commodities, and information” (Stokes 2004: 48) have paved the way of music making in the diasporas in the different parts of the world. In this context, Slobin draws attention to the deterritorialization in a global world throughout musical scenes. Hence, he investigates particularities of local projects in which the musicians and listeners formed sort of micro-musical scenes (Slobin 1993). In this context, I largely agree with the statement also discussed previously, that under the globalization process, “local identities and affiliations do not disappear” (Lipsitz 1994: 5). As mentioned in Chapter 3, the term “ethnoscape” introduced by Appadurai (1990: 297), provides us with the scope and potential to continue the discussion on globalization without excluding local identities and cultures. Gradually, over the last decade’s music and cultural studies, there has been a tendency to discover local musical cultures. Local is basically not ‘fixed’ but a “contested territory” “that is crossed by different forms of collective life and the competing sensibilities that the latter bring to bear on the interpretation and social realization of a particular place” (Bennett 2000: 53). For instance, the use of local languages and traditional musical forms in rap music have caused the emergence of various hybrids and particular original forms, such as *arabesk* rap, which will be discussed later. On this issue, Androutsopoulos and Scholz write: “As with previous music cultures, such as heavy metal and punk rock, the global reception of rap music led to its being productively used in new social environments. As a result, ‘local’ rap with native lyrics can be found in many parts of the world, including most, if not all, European countries” (Androutsopoulos and Scholz 2003: 463). Therefore, I think the basic question for this study is: how does the diasporic community (Turks in the Netherlands) use rap music, a globally circulating musical genre, to negotiate and perform identities that articulate their relationships with many different places, minimally three: their “adopted country” (the Netherlands), the “homeland” (Turkey), and the worldwide “hip hop nation.” All of these places are imagined through expressive cultural practices that are themselves globally circulating and locally re-imagined. According to Connell and Gibson (2003: 185), “Rap culture bridged the gap between the displaced Turkish diaspora community and the ‘imaginary homeland’, constituting and creating ‘an imaginary journey

back home””. In this sense, it can be simply stated that Turkish rap is also a transnational movement including those concepts and discussion aforementioned above.

Becoming objects of consumption, as Attali (2002) emphasizes, music and musician have emerged as relatively “vague”. This is a successful strategy of capitalism, developed especially after the Second World War, and a sort of breaking point for the world. Particularly, from the end of the war to the end of the Cold War, the world political scene witnessed very remarkable changes and developments. Even though the world seems to have become one polarized and globalized order by the end of Cold War, it still has significant socio-economic and cultural localizations. Locality ideologies have begun to appear in many authentic cultures, even on street corners. Recently, one is likely to observe a tendency among people to depict how much local cultures from distant geographies are interesting or authentic. Moreover, “authenticity” has recently become a term which is used to express to what degree any distant culture, in differentiation from others, is perceived as intact or original. In Turkish, at the official Internet website of the Turkish Language Association [Türk Dil Kurumu in Turkish (TDK)]<sup>46</sup> “authenticity”, noted for its French origin, has just one brief definition, which is “that which keeps its own inherent peculiarities” (“Eskiden beri mevcut olan özelliklerini taşıyan”<sup>47</sup> in Turkish) Indeed, in everyday linguistic use, people use “authentic” (pronounced as “otantik” in Turkish) to point out something original, unchanged, old, traditional, etc. These uses seem to have some similarities with the meanings of the word in English. Peter Kivy lists five meanings for “authentic” according to the Oxford English Dictionary below:

1. Of authority, authoritative. (Possessing original or inherent authority.)
2. Original, firsthand, prototypical. (Opposed to copied)
3. Really proceeding from its reputed source or author: of undisputed origin, genuine. (Opposed to counterfeit, forged.)
4. Belonging to himself, own, proper.
5. Acting of itself, self-originated, automatic [...] (Kivy 1995: 3).

“Authenticity”, according to sociologist David Grazian, generally refers to “the ability of a place or event to conform to an idealized representation of reality: that is, to a set of expectations regarding how such a thing ought to look, sound, and feel”. He goes further to define the term and says “[I]ike other kinds of stereotypes, images of authenticity are

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<sup>46</sup> Founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1932.

<sup>47</sup><http://tdk.gov.tr/TR/Genel/SozBul.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFFAAF6AA849816B2EF4376734BED947CDE&Kelimelime=otantik>.

idealized representations of reality...” (Grazian 2003: 10, 12). Two definitions of the word can provide us useful insights to elaborate on Turkish-language rap music among Dutch-Turks: “Representation of reality” and “really proceeding from its reputed source or author: of undisputed origin, genuine”. For example, some Dutch-Turkish rappers claim to make “gangsta rap” in order to draw attention to difficulties occurring in the country, though they can hardly admit that there are real ghetto lives or tough living conditions where they live. For many rappers, to perform this genre is so cool or much more “original” and “creative” than to write lyrics of xenophobia, *gurbet* (to be in foreign land), *sıla* (missing homeland), so on so forth. Turkish rap obviously gets these stylistic origins from issues deriving from hard life conditions in Germany as well as from the discourse of the US-centred, but global hip hop nation. Many Dutch-Turkish rappers do not tend to follow the same paths as their counterparts in Germany, but instead prefer to represent their own idealized reality, since *gurbet* have become old-fashioned for them.

To stay loyal to “authenticity” seems to require some specific attitudes from musicians. For example, it is possible to talk about some requirements for anarcho-punk which are to be counter-capitalists and ‘internalization’ of the core values of ‘personal integrity, honesty and individualism’ ” (Gosling 2004: 174). Also, about authenticity in the Turkish-language rap scene in İstanbul, Solomon says,

Discourses of authenticity in the Istanbul hip-hop community do not focus on ‘street credibility’ of people in terms of their socio-economic background. The rappers and DJs in this community are generally not poor people or members of socially marginalized minority groups such as Kurds, Roma, or Muslim refugees from the Balkan wars of the 1990s, but are largely middle-class ethnic Turks, university-educated, often with good jobs. Most seem to have come to rap through an interest in technology and computers, and part of the appeal of rap seems to be that it is music they can make on their PCs at home (Solomon 2005a: 8).

As will be examined in Chapter 7, many Dutch-Turkish rappers stated that it is so “cliché” or “old-fashioned” to perform songs which are nationalistic or which concern difficulties in the host country, as aforementioned. What those rappers stated might provide us with tips showing how to be or not to be “authentic” Dutch-Turkish rappers. Therefore, reasons behind mentioning “tough” life conditions in the Netherlands or attempting to resemble a “gangsta rapper will be discussed.”

It is a well-known fact that as an important element of hip hop culture, rap expresses the experiences and conditions of African-Americans who are faced with marginalization, racial stereotyping and stigmatization while trying to survive in “violent ghetto conditions.” In this cultural framework, rap is used as a tool by the voiceless and the oppressed for expression and for protest against oppression, as well as providing an alternate style and identity to those who have been marginalized. Therefore, rap is not only a music genre but also a forceful form of “cultural identity” (Kellner 1999). In this point, the peculiarity of this music is that it does not help to construct a form of cultural identity just for Afro-American people in USA, but rather it offers a significant potential to youths over the whole globe. According to Negus, “[l]ike reggae, rap is a music that was originally connected to the particular experiences of black people but which has also become a global beat” (Negus 1996: 109). Here, what DJ Kool Herc says can be useful: “[...] even if you didn’t grow up in the Bronx in the ‘70s, hip-hop is there for you” (Chang 2005: xi). What the problematic point for this study is, is how Turkish-language rap music uses particular subjects or narratives such as ghetto life, inequality, exclusion, etc. to create a kind of authenticity embodied through daily life and the lyrics of rap songs. It might not be wrong to state, “[r]ap is a musical form that is often seen as embodying authenticity. The self-image of the music often stresses the need for this” (Huq 2006: 113). In general, hip hop culture articulates the difficult realities of ghetto life and socio-political attitudes of a black youth population in urban settings that follow occurrences ranging from poverty, police violence and “racial genocide” to “class and gender relations” (Keyes 1996: 224). Maxwell argues that white middle-class Australian Hip Hoppers see their lives as sufficiently comparable to “a member of an ethnic minority in Sydney [...] that of the oppressed African American to allow an intersubjective identification”. In this sense, hip hoppers construct a kind of ideology which is not based upon race or class, but rather “a more generalized notion of ‘otherness’ or marginalization around which a desire to ‘be’ Hip Hop constellate; racial or ethnic otherness might then be considered a special case of a more general sense of otherness, the specificity of which might take any number of forms” (Maxwell 2003: 46). Also, Chang makes a comparison of blues and hip hop and determines that hip-hop culture arose from lack of work, just like blues culture developed under oppressive circumstances and under the conditions of forced labor: “If blues culture had developed under the conditions of oppressive, forced labour, hip-hop would arise from the conditions of no work” (Chang 2005: 13). I believe that the most significant point here is that deprivation and poverty are the driving socio-economic factors leading to the emergence of the rap genre. For instance, similar to French hip hop, which “is synonymous with *banlieue*

music” (Huq 2006: 118), *arabesk*, which inspires many Turkish rappers in the Netherlands to perform rap music, was actually born due to bloom in socio-economic difficulties experienced by migrants who had begun to come to big cities from rural areas during the 1950s. The Modernization project in Turkey is generally evaluated as a monist and top-to-down project that promoted the opposition between the ordinary people and the elite, dividing and defining the ruled and ruling, dominant and dominated. After 1950, this project accelerated, the cultural revival showed itself in each area and in each part of the society (Özbek 2003: 163). The rapid changes in social life brought identity problems, and the tension between traditional and modern was felt deeply in all fields of the culture. Thus while Turkish people had to bear the traumatic consequences of it, hybrid cultural forms that both resisted the implementations of this project and also articulated themselves to it, like *arabesk* music, emerged (ibid, 41). Since many ways of expression are formed within these conditions, the ways in which current rappers utilize the conditions for expression and how they reflect them in their lyrics is, in my opinion, very significant. Connell and Gibson state, “Since reggae, hip hop has been probably the most widespread transnational urban soundtrack, reflected in its intense territoriality and focus on ‘ghetto’ as a real and mythical space” (2003: 182). Ghetto life seemingly correlates to settlements where Afro-American people predominantly live with serious difficulties. According to Levent Soysal, “[...] ghetto is an essential element of hiphop’s semi-mystical origin story” (Soysal 2004: 65). Here, the question can be posed whether “ghettocentric” (Davis 1996: 276) lyrics, written by Turkish rappers in the Netherlands (where there is comparatively little poverty or unemployment) about non-existent ghettos like those in South Bronx, and in so-called “gangsta rap”, style could provide some insight to us on this matter. Andy Bennett quotes from a German-language rapper about the popularity of US-style ‘gangsta rap’ in Frankfurt:

There are people who don’t understand a word of English, but they like the music so they pretend that they understand what they’re listening to and I personally have a problem with that. For a lot of people, the commercial side of it, the image and the clothes are more important than the music and I find that ridiculous. They pretend to be ‘gangsta’ rappers from the USA and yet we’ve got enough social problems here which need to be addressed (Bennett 2000: 148).

What the rapper says has similarities in general with the Turkish-language rap scene in the Netherlands. It seems that there are different reasons behind the embodying of non-existent

ghetto lives in the Netherlands. One of them is, as will be shown in the Chapter 7 in detail, that some rappers tend to make such music not to draw attention to their “hard life conditions”, but rather to get a kind of popularity by presenting stories differentiated from those of predominantly German-Turkish rap groups from the 1990s, whose stories in their lyrics were generally about being in exile, nationalism, exclusion, etc. Another reason is to show an ironic reaction to “love rap”, which is a controversial subgenre in rap music that many Dutch-Turkish rappers and fans do not want to accept the existence of. Indeed, “Love rap” articulates its musical ground with *arabesk* music. Therefore, many rappers use the term interchangeably with *arabesk* rap as well. This subgenre particularly acquired its name due to the lyrics and melodies used in the songs. This is the fact that *arabesk*<sup>48</sup> rap is also widespread among Turkish rappers in the Netherlands. *Arabesk* is a music genre which is “linked with the culture of the *gecekondular* (shantytowns), literally the ‘night settlements’ ” (Stokes 1989: 27). Amsterdam has not been merely the place where different cultures, ethnic groups and traditions have come together geographically; it also constitutes a space where the processes of contestation of local cultures, positioning, resistance, and appropriation created by the particular processes of globalization can be clearly observed. In this sense, Amsterdam might be accepted as a global city while localities are combined with each other: in particular, such combinatory forms as *arabesk*/love rap, as an Afro-American music, with Turkish language. In his article regarding “imagining place in Turkish rap music” Thomas Solomon examines the song, “İstanbul”, of a local rap group, Nefret, in terms of representation of the place and the construction of identity in terms of place (Solomon 2005a). The song “Amsterdam” by Dutch-Turkish rapper Şener-E, which might provide useful data to discuss issues such as ideas about morality, representations of Amsterdam as a place, and diasporic consciousness, will be examined in this context and in detail in Chapter 7. Here, it needs to be emphasized that *arabesk* songs and their lyrics have not been generally evaluated as an individualistic phenomenon, but rather have been discussed as a kind of mirror of sociological issues (see Özbek 1991; Stokes 1989). However, love rap as a lyrically deformed version of *arabesk* seems to reflect emotional matters of isolated individuals, as will also be discussed in Chapter 7.

Even though each scene has its own peculiarities, in the Introduction chapter of their edited book, *Music Scenes* (2004), Peterson and Bennett define three types of scenes. These are

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<sup>48</sup> This word, *arabesque*, has in English become a musical term within this genre (Stokes 1992). This musical genre will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

[...] local scene, corresponds most closely with the original notion of a scene as clustered around a specific geographic focus [...] translocal scene, refers to widely scattered local scenes drawn into regular communication around a distinctive form of music and lifestyle [...] virtual scene, is newly emergent formation in which people scattered across great physical spaces create the sense of scene via fanzines and, increasingly through the Internet (Peterson and Bennett 2004: 6).

While initial academic works on local music scenes generally focus on specific urban location “with particularized local sensibilities of the city and the state, [...] much recent work on local music scenes is less concerned with ‘organic’ relationships between music and the cultural history of the locale than with the ways in which emergent scenes use music appropriated via global flows and networks to construct narratives of the local” (ibid, 7). Such academic works generally elaborate not just “local dialect, dress and history”, but also “forms of local knowledge, that are often used as strategies of resistance to local circumstances” (ibid). Translocal scenes refer to a sort of interaction of local scenes in distant places that “while they are local, they are also connected with groups of kindred spirits many miles away” (ibid, 8). Peterson and Bennett present “the music festival” as an example of translocal scenes. Virtual scenes refer to connected music scenes which come together via the Internet. They share fanzines, albums and other media by using technology. In this context, Thomas Solomon argues that Turkish hip hop “seems to have aspects of all three of the types of music scenes Peterson and Bennett identify” (Solomon 2009: 316). Nevertheless, for the Turkish-language rap scene in the Netherlands, it is hard to claim that all three of the types of music scenes could in fact be found. It seems to be somehow not tightly connected to other rap scenes in different geographies, such as Germany or Turkey, but rather it is a relatively closed network in itself, even though of course there are some exceptional rappers such as MT, who featured with very popular Belgium-born, Turkish, female singer, Hadise also in the Eurovision Contest 2009; or Al-J, who worked together with successful Turkish rapper, Ceza, from İstanbul. Nevertheless, it is still not possible to mention any international Turkish-language rap music festival or event that has taken place in the Netherlands so far. Virtually, it can be emphasized that there are some rappers who have contact with their counterparts in different countries. In this context, although Turkish rap music in the Netherlands is a transnational movement in a sense, it seems also to have particularities of local and virtual scenes in general. However, when we look at German-Turkish rappers, it may be said that they do have very active interaction and collaboration with their counterparts in Turkey, such as the collaboration between Ceza and Killa Hakan (who will be emphasized in the next

chapter as related to the language use in rap music with examples from Dutch-Turkish scene). Moreover, it is possible to talk about music festivals and carnivals in Germany in which Turkish rap groups are also actively involved (Kaya 2001: 93).

For researchers concentrated on rap music, rhythms, timbres or beats which compose the big part of the music, together with language use, the context of lyrics, and rhymes have become very important to explore this genre, because “[a]mong the many genres of popular music exported from the United States to the rest of the world, rap is unique: perhaps no other genre is as highly dependent on language.” (Manabe 2006:1; see also Walser 1995; Potter 1995). In terms of what Manabe clearly states, rap music is also a kind of challenge with language, besides producing rhythms, beats and samples in harmony with the words. Therefore, rapping is about not just the content of the text (the “dictionary” meaning of the words), it is about play with the sounds of the words and requires a degree of linguistic ability. One of the MCs of Scha Dara Parr, three member Japanese hip hop group, Bose, states, “The grammar can make your raps sound too simple, if you’re not careful” (quoted in Manabe 2006: 5). So, it is quite possible to meet more non-standard grammar in many rap songs. For example, “Japanese rappers have felt the need to rhyme, partly because rhymes are a prominent feature in the American rap that they originally used as models” (Manabe 2006: 8). Rapping in different vernaculars requires or forms its own rules to produce harmony between music and lyrics, particularly rhyme, which offers listeners a dynamic and particular listening act. To follow standard or basic rules for producing rhyme may not be sufficient for such an act. According to Japanese rapper, Nanorunamonai of Origami “You can rhyme using words without those standard endings. It may not be grammatically correct, but it results in a more poetic script...” (quoted in Manabe 2006: 8). This approach seems to be valid for almost all local languages. Here, if we go back to the Turkish-speaking rap scene:

*Kanake* is an offensive word used in Germany, especially by the right wing, for immigrants and foreigners. This term has been re-signified in a positive way by German Turks, such that “[t]here is a parallelism between the use of *nigga* instead of the racist word ‘nigger’ by the blacks in the USA and the use of *Kan-Ak*, or *Kanak*, instead of the offensive word *Kanake* by the Turks” (Kaya 2001: 189). Feridun Zaimoğlu is an important writer in contemporary German literature and popular culture, who is “[...] making an active contribution towards redefining German culture and society as multicultural” (Hestermann 2003: 349) together with other German-Turk writers, such as Zafer Şenocak, Alev Tekinay, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, so on so forth. Moreover, he is “one of the founders of a politico-



cultural movement of Turkish migrants of the second and third generation, called Kanak-Attak. The members of Kanak-Attak fight against all forms of racism and discrimination in Germany” (Hestermann 2003: 359). In his first book *Kanak Sprak* (1995) and in the follow-up *Koppstoff: Kanaka Sprak vom Rande der Gesellschaft* (1998; translated into Turkish in 2000), he changes German’s patterns, syntax, vocabulary by combining it with immigrants’ hybrid languages to create a kind of street language called Kanak Sprak, which is “a creole language spoken and written by the working-class German-Turkish youth” (Kaya 2001: 216; see also Hestermann 2003). “Kanak sprak should, in fact, be written as ‘kanake sprache’ in German, but this [alternative spelling] is the way the Turkish youngsters vernacularise it like many other examples” (ibid, 150). It seems that German-Turkish youth have “a peculiar language of their own. They speak a creole language. It is a mix of Turkish, German and American-English” (Kaya 2001: 147). However, it is hard to mention such a language spoken and written among Dutch-Turkish rappers, even though between each other sometimes they use some specific Dutch words when they cannot find the suitable words in Turkish. Generally, in rap songs, they do not tend to push the borders of the language they speak, but instead prefer to follow basic patterns. This issue will be discussed in detail in the following chapter by presenting rap song examples. In a case study on hip hop and rap music in Europe, written as part of a larger study on the cultural value of music in the European Union, Marie-Agnès Beau, who was the manager of the French Music Bureau in London and has co-produced some African, Arabic, rap and ragga artists since the 80s<sup>49</sup>, clearly states,

to be able to rap and compete with their friends or enemies, kids need to speak and write well, learn more vocabulary, find new rhymes and feel so comfortable with words that playing with them becomes the best game; Literature teachers are the most excited with this new attitude bringing up a cultural consciousness. As a social and identity movement, it helps to go back to regional dialects or even to create new languages (Beau 1999).

According to Robert Walser (1995), rap music is an important musical genre not just because of the use of language in lyrics, but also due to beats, timbres and melodies which create the moods. Therefore, to study lyrics together with music makes studies much more effective. Hence, Walser examines Public Enemy’s “Fight the Power” in terms of rhyming in the lyrics, the musical structure of the song and the use of sampling. According to Tricia

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<sup>49</sup> <http://www.musicbank.co.uk/resources/speaker-biographies/marie-agnes-beau-manager-french-music-bureau-london>.

Rose, “Rap music techniques, particularly the use of sampling technology, involve the repetition and reconfiguration of rhythmic elements in ways that illustrate a heightened attention to rhythmic patterns and movement between such patterns via breaks and points of musical rupture” (Rose 1995: 48). Sampling is one of the most important creative practices of rap music production, as will be discussed in the following section.

### 5.3 Sampling: The Hallmark of Rap Music

Nothing seems to travel so easily as a musical riff, drum rhythm and subcultural style; and in the process to mutate into a musical hybrid that could be an *underground* globalisation of a kind quite different [...] from that imagined by transnational corporations and the World Bank (O’Connor 2002: 225, italics in the original).

As discussed above, since rap is an unconventional music genre, the manner in which particular techniques (such as sampling<sup>50</sup>) are used in producing it becomes an important issue. Although the general conception about the production process is that only a few technical devices are needed, in fact each production stage is separately significant to the process. This process is very complicated and consists of sampling and beat production, construction of loops of sounds, “and then build[ing] in critical moments, where the established rhythm is manipulated and suspended” (Rose 1994: 67). According to Tricia Rose, “rap music relies on the loop, on the circularity of rhythm and on the ‘cut’ or the ‘break beat’ that systematically ruptures equilibrium” (Rose 1994: 70).

To put it simply, rap is a kind of verbal<sup>51</sup> art. According to Andy Bennett, “Rap is a narrative form of vocal delivery in which rhyming lyrics are spoken or ‘rapped’ in a rhythmic patois over a continuous backbeat” (Bennett 2000: 134). Different from other genres, the musical poetics of rap music are not generally based upon the use of conventional instruments such as the guitar, violin, flute, etc., but rather on the use of different techniques including MCing, turntablism and sampling. Adam Krims basically conceives of musical poetics together with lyrics as crucial parts of rap music and stresses its social functions. Krims also addresses the combination of music and language by definitions of the aspects of rap

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<sup>50</sup> This no longer has to do merely with rap music as it once did, due to the emergence of new and different musical genres which also benefit from sampling very often.

<sup>51</sup> In an early discussion of verbal art, folklorist and anthropologist William Bascom quotes the Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary definition of “verbal”: “Expressed in words, whether spoken or written, but commonly in spoken words; hence, by confusion, spoken; oral; not written; as, a verbal contract” (Bascom 1955: 246).

production and reception. According to him, “[t]he rhythmic styles of MCing, or ‘flows,’ are among the central aspects of rap production and reception, and any discussion of rap genres that takes musical poetics seriously demands a vocabulary of flow” (Krims 2000: 48). Krims uses three terms to point out the differentiation among styles of flows and MCing in rap music. One style he mentions is “‘sung’ rhythmic style, referring to rhythms and rhymes equivalent (or parallel) to those of much sung pop or rock musics” (Krims 2000: 50). The other two rhythmic styles he suggests are “percussion-effusive” and “speech-effusive.” Percussion-effusive differs from speech-effusive, because the “MC is using her/his mouth as a percussion instrument” (Krims 2000: 50). By contrast, “speech-effusive styles ... tend to feature enunciation and delivery closer to those of spoken language, with little sense often projected of any underlying metric pulse” (Krims 2000: 51). The association between these styles “would then pair off the more ‘musical’...manners of MCing against those closer to ‘natural’ speech. (Krims 2000: 52). David Toop implies something similar to Krims’ explanation about “sung rhythmic style” and association of this style with “effusive styles”, stating, “[t]hough few rappers (thankfully) attempt to sing, rap has matured into a form of speech delivery as lyrical speech” (Toop 2001: 50). Hence, Toop appears to portray rap music in a different way from the way it is discussed in “lyric-dominated hip-hop scholarship”, which is also criticized by Schloss (Schloss 2004: 63). Apparently, in his work, Schloss mainly focuses on musical and aesthetic features in various styles of hip hop music and the producers of this music using various reproduction methods like sampling, turntablism, making beats, and so forth. The works of Krims and Schloss complement each other with discussions based on musicological and ethnographic analyses. Concerning reproduction methods and rap music, Tricia Rose suggests that “[a]lthough rap music is shaped by and articulated through advanced reproduction equipment, its stylistic priorities are not merely by-products of such equipment” (Rose 1995: 53). As was stated by the three scholars above, rap music cannot be explained merely in relation to lyrical, verbal and musical formations, but rather it necessitates being explored with a method utilizing all these concepts.

One of the most critical matters in rap music, the origin of which can be traced back to the DJ’s who were dubbing in Jamaica in the 1960s, is the sampling technique. Sampling can be defined as the use of certain parts of existing sound recordings (of music, speech, or other sound sources), either largely unchanged through direct quotation or in substantially transformed form by manipulation of them through electronic means. Some views of sampling involve the idea that music pieces can be used without any copyright payment, since

in fact they cannot be owned by anyone, as music is a shared product. Moreover, this technique is quite a useful tool in identifying the differences between rappers both in application and in understanding of the samples used. Sampling “rather than being the result of musical deprivation, is an aesthetic choice consistent with the history and values of the hip-hop community” (Schloss 2004: 21). Further, “it was [DJ Kool] Herc who saw the possibilities of mixing his own formulas through remixing prerecorded sound” (Baker 1991: 218). As mentioned above, Kraftwerk has “been highly influential, perhaps most obviously in their inspiration of various dance musics from electro to techno” (Gilbert and Pearson 1999: 120). The German ‘robot act’ Kraftwerk (ibid, 120) has been crucial for both hip hop and electronic music. While comparing hip hop and techno music, Sicko emphasizes some technical similarities between these two genres. He finds them similar particularly in the way that they present a new musical understanding. However, he also underlines that hip hop reaches a larger group of people than techno does:

Techno is an expression of complicated, paradoxical, and delicately balanced ideas that can’t always be communicated to the masses. Like hip-hop, it represents a new way to experience, perform, and distribute music. Hip-hop was originally an interwoven culture of rapping, spinning, break dancing, and graffiti art. The latter three of these four components were jettisoned during hip-hop’s commercial ascension—an example of what is now happening to techno. The obvious difference is that hip-hop, for better or worse, found massive attention and success as it developed under the American microscope (Sicko 1999: 22).

Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force sampled Kraftwerk’s famous song “Trans Europe Express” ironically for the song called “Planet Rock”. Therefore,

[t]he legacy of *Kraftwerk*’s sound can be neatly traced to many more recent forms of electronic music. The group’s direct influence on New York *Afrika Bambaataa and the Soulsonic Force* and producer Arthur Baker, for example, resulted in Bambaataa’s 1982 record “*Planet Rock*”, which exploded onto the dance scene and helped to define the genre “electro” (short for “electronic funk”), changing forever the way hip-hop would be produced (Sicko 1999: 24; see also Porter 2003: 18).

Needless to say, almost every kind of musical genre, even those that seem mutually exclusive like rap and rock, inevitably affect each other. For instance, in 1986, well-known hip hop band Run DMC remade hard rock band Aerosmith’s song “Walk this Way” and performed

with members of the band. This musical event was actually a kind of beginning for rap-rock fusions. However, even two years before this rap-rock collaboration, there was another interesting cooperation that took place in the hip hop and rock scene. John Lydon (a.k.a Johnny Rotten), the former lead vocalist of well-known British punk band the Sex Pistols, and Afrika Bambaataa, pioneer hip hop DJ, worked together and produced the song “World Destruction” (World Destruction/Time Zone Serial, Restless Records: 1984). However, this collaboration was not as successful in bringing people’s attention to the rise of rap-rock fusion as “Walk This Way” would be. In my opinion, these two musical events were crucial for triggering a new era in the development of popular music scenes.

Based on Sicko’s comparison of techno and hip hop, it can be said that rap music “communicates to the masses”. The major reason for this is that rap as a verbal art provides the listener and musician with an opportunity to communicate with the masses through language. This can be possible particularly through the lyrics. “The word *lyrics* ... refer[s] both to the subject matter and the written construction of the song” (ya Salaam 1995: 305). The original expression of these lyrics by a rapper is called ‘style’, which “refers both to the tonal quality in a rapper’s vocals and to the level of originality in presentation and delivery” (ibid.). The harmonious togetherness of style and lyrics can be possible with ‘flow’, which “describes a rapper’s sense of rhythm and timing... Rap lyrics are delivered in a rhythmic cadence, not simply recited or melodically half-sung. The quality of the rhythmic delivery is what defines flow” (ya Salaam 1995: 305). Moreover, as Tricia Rose points out, hip hop is also seen as one of several types of oral traditions by some social scientists and observers. According to her,

Some analysts see hip hop as a quintessentially postmodern practice, and others view it as a present-day successor to premodern oral traditions. Some celebrate its critique of consumer capitalism, and others condemn it for its complicity with commercialism. To one enthusiastic group of critics, hip-hop combines elements of speech and song, of dance and display, to call into being through performance new identities and subject positions (Rose 1994: 21).

Sampling, though it may be one of most important components of rap music, is also controversial. Although this complex and significant component concerns researchers for reasons ranging from ethical principles to musical techniques, it is a subject often ignored by rappers themselves. In this context, “[r]ap ... is more marginalised within and oppositional to the industry than is rock; its use of samplers has also been more directly challenging to legal

definitions of intellectual property, at times aiming polemically to explode the concentrations of power and ownership in the industry” (Porcello 1991: 70). In his article, Thomas Porcello presents different approaches of audio engineers as related to sampling and ethical issues. Based on the interviews he conducted with audio engineers, Porcello states, “[i]f there is one point of agreement among engineers in the debate about the ethics of sampling, it is that sampling from pre-recorded materials is at the least unethical and, at worst, is outright theft” (Porcello 1991: 71). In contrast to this view, “the rap musicians involved, as well as many of their producers, feel that taking a short excerpt from James Brown, for example, and inserting it in a new track constitutes fair use because the original work is given new meaning through the act of being placed in a new context” (Porcello 1991: 72). As we see, when it is defined simply as the act of taking a portion from a song and re-using it elsewhere, either as it is or by digitally manipulating it, sampling seems to present quite a controversial subject for discussion. According to Tricia Rose, “[s]ampling is not the only method of narrative reformulation and resistance. Mixes of the old and the new, or ‘versioning’, as it is referred to by Dick Hebdige in *Cut’n’Mix*, is at the heart of all African-American and Caribbean musics: [Hebdige states that] ‘The original version takes on a new life and a new meaning in a fresh context’” (Rose 1994: 90). I think what Hebdige says about how the original takes on a new life and new meaning is an important point for understanding the importance of sampling. Also, to re-produce, in other words, to re-use what already exists by changing it, by giving it a new meaning, may give us clues about the relationship between music and socio-economic conditions. By sampling, many rap music artists/producers turn songs that do not necessarily belong to their culture into their own by giving them new meanings and by incorporating different beats into these pieces.

From a musical or artistic perspective, sampling can be regarded as the deconstruction of the original. It is generally accepted within research on youth and music culture that Levi Strauss’s concept of *bricolage* is quite a useful descriptive tool. This refers to “the re-ordering and re-contextualisation of objects to communicate fresh meanings, within a total system of significances, which already includes prior and sedimented meanings attached to the objects used” (Hall and Jefferson 1980: 177). Charlie Chaplin’s movies may be meaningful in understanding the concept of “bricolage” in this context. Chaplin, with his acts and impostures, does not only occupy our world, but also actively and creatively transforms our confusing reality. He practically uses all the objects around him for his benefit. In *The Vagabond*, an upturned barrel becomes a table and a chequered shirt becomes a tablecloth

with its sleeves transformed into napkins. In *The Kid*, the coverlet is converted into an impressive house robe with its hole. In *The Gold Rush*, while eating laces like spaghetti by twirling them, Chaplin sucks on his nails as if they are the bone of a kind of animal. By twisting reality out of its standard form, transforming objects, and turning all conventions, rules and standards upside down, Charlie Chaplin resists all direct meanings and expressions. In the same sense of offering and creating something new by transforming objects of everyday life, sampling is a “beauty” of hip hop culture.

The idea of sampling can also be opened up to discussion through post-modern perspectives. Schloss says the following about this subject: “All academic writings that have attempted to discuss the beauty of hip hop sampling have done so within a presumed aesthetic ... as ‘an example of postmodern pastiche’, with all its attendant theoretical implications: juxtaposition of disparate aesthetic systems, blank parody, fragmentation, lack of historicity, and so forth” (Schloss 2004: 65). What necessitates questioning here is what is sampled. Clearly, “[s]ampling – digital recording and manipulation of sound that forms the foundation of hip-hop production – requires source material. In order to sample, there must be something to sample from” (ibid, 79).

The change in socio-economic conditions after the end of the Cold War in the late 1980s triggered a change in the point of view of the social sciences. Social scientists began to understand cultural scenes not simply as they appear at a given time but rather through their historical backgrounds, and started to analyze the ever-changing sociological conditions with post-modern theories, approaches that emphasize culture and subjectivity. Related to this point, Keyes puts a note on sampling by stating the following: “By the late 1980s, scholars who were specifically intrigued by rap Djs’ abilities at reconstructing old tunes into newer ones via digital sampling began placing rap at the center of postmodern criticism” (Keyes 1996: 224). Furthermore, particularly at the beginning of the 1990s, the music world witnessed very significant progress in sampling technology, e.g. the move from analog techniques to the use of computer-based digital sampling technology. Apparently, digital sampling began to be used in rap music due to the reduced cost of production and spread of computer technology. Relatively easy access to musical technologies “turns consumers into producers, tapping consumer memories of parts of old songs and redeploying them into the present. It employs advanced technology to reconstruct the human voice, and features robot-like movements and mechanical vocals that simulate machines” (Lipsitz 1994: 37). Even

though these technical advances and their widespread use turned the music consumers into producers of sorts, this new trend also brought about new discussions on this topic.

Over time, rap started to be mass-produced with the help of easily accessible technology. Many of my respondents in the Netherlands mentioned that there are more MCs than active listeners in the Turkish rap scene. Rappers who attempt to directly move to the production of music before listening actively to other sub-genres of rap or different music styles begin to resemble each other in their art. Groups that do not show interest in different genres and subgenres within rap music get stuck on the use of MCs. Their production is based on the same genres, so it seems that they do not aim at achieving a sort of “artistic” progress. What the 24-year-old Turkish rapper APO from Rotterdam says about this is quite interesting: “Bro, you see what the problem is? At this time, there are more MCs than listeners here!”<sup>52</sup> When viewed from a cultural point of view, the increase in music production does not present any problem. In fact, this situation is a preferable one as it leads to more music production, even though this increase in music production is due to an increase in MCs who themselves are not relatively active listeners. It means that many of them do not show any interest in other rap styles besides general information about this music such as historical formation, socio-cultural background, etc.

With sampling techniques, rap turns into a music genre with almost limitless melodic or rhythmic possibilities. The rap musician or beatmaker creates his/her music, benefiting from many music genres and selecting the most appropriate sample according to the mood that s/he would like to create for the audience. Africa Bambaataa says, “Hip-hop itself is colorless; it’s taken from all different types of music that make the beat and that funk; it’s what you put on top as your lyrics that make it for black people, white people or universal” (quoted in Porter 2003: 16). The desired goal is achieved by appropriate rapping to the beat and the sampling of the piece. The process of song production as discussed here is, in a sense, not as complex or difficult to comprehend as it is in the Western classical music genre. Regarding this, Tricia Rose says, “unlike the complexity of Western classical music, which is primarily represented in its melodic and harmonic structures, the complexity of rap music, like many Afrodiasporic musics, is in the rhythmic and percussive density and organization” (Rose 1994: 65). Here, Rose implies that rap music is not less complex than Western classical music, but it is as complex, but in a different way – in terms of rhythm.

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<sup>52</sup> Abi! Sorunu görüyor musun! Burada dinleyiciden fazla MC var.



Rappers differ in their opinions when it comes to the subject of sampling. While some use whole songs as a sample, others believe that this is wrong and state that only a few seconds should be taken from the original song and this segment should be manipulated, or musically recontextualized in the new piece such that it is no longer recognizable. Schloss, who has studied this subject in detail, states that sampling needs to be an ethical concept and says that this aspect is disregarded by many hip hoppers. He also states that the practice of “digging in the crates” that most musicians used to follow in the past is disappearing. This process involved going to big record warehouses, second-hand dealers or to the homes of those who were trying to get rid of their records, in order to find rare records. He defines this practice as follows: “... Digging in the crates - searching for rare records... evoking images of a devoted collector spending hours sorting through milk crates full of records in used record stores, garages, and thrift shops, the term carries with it a sense of valor and symbolizes an unending quest for the next record” (Schloss 2004: 79). Only one of the almost thirty rappers whom I interviewed in the Netherlands emphasized and explained the importance of the “digging the crates” tradition. According to Schloss, there are four particular terms used in the hip hop scene to describe the elements of sampling. In simple terms, Schloss describes these elements of sampling the following way:

Biting “is a term that is used throughout the hip-hop world, and it refers pejoratively to the appropriation of intellectual material from other hip-hop artists ... “Flipping” refers to creatively and substantially altering material in any way. This term tends to be limited to the producing community, although one can also “flip” lyrics, by, for instance, taking a common phrase and using it ironically ... “Chopping”, as its name suggests, refers to altering a sampled phrase by dividing it into smaller segments and reconfiguring them in a different order. “Looping”, by contrast, refers to sampling a longer phrase (one or more measures) and repeating it with little or no alteration (Schloss 2004: 106).

Apparently, rap captures a more dynamic sound with this technique, which seems to include a complex application process. It means that it is not merely a “cut’n’ mix” procedure, but produces an original melody or rhythm by manipulating already produced musical pieces. About this technique, a Dutch-Turkish rapper from Rotterdam, Şaperon (aged-18) says,

I add something to it [sample]. Otherwise, it is going to have not so much authenticity. Of course, you can play an original sample from a [song]

already, but if you add something to it; it is going to be your own style something like that. It becomes your own [original] work<sup>53</sup>.

What he states simply refers to achieving originality and creating his own style by the use of sampling. In general, many rappers in the Netherlands are aware of the importance of this technique even though some of them, as they stated, have no highly developed ability to use computer software to create “original” samples. Similar to what Şaperon says, Kolika (aged-24) from Amsterdam states,

I [rarely] used samples, but I usually make my own melodies. Sometimes, when I hear a beautiful sample or music in a song, I cut its four or five seconds and convert into a totally different piece of [music] and then produce a beat.

Here, the critical point is that both rappers have a significant similarity, which is to have a good ability to use PC and software to produce samples and beats. Moreover, as they stated in the interviews, both rappers are really critical about *arabesk* rap songs in which whole songs are dominantly used by rappers without contributing anything “original” or creative”. In the next chapter, the issue of language use and Turkish rap music will be examined with detailed examples.

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<sup>53</sup> Yanına küçük ufak tefek şeyler eklerim yani. Yoksa pek orijinalliği kalmaz. Tabii zaten orijinal sample bir yerden çalarsın tabii ama bir şey eklediğinde senin tarzın gibi bir şey oluyor. Senin yaptığın eser oluyor.

## CHAPTER 6

### LOCALITY AND TURKISH RAP MUSIC IN DIFFERENT GEOGRAPHIES

#### 6.1 Personal Insight

I would like to begin to discuss the issue by sharing some observations from my adolescent years in the late eighties that have deeply affected me. Particularly the three genres, namely Heavy Metal, Hip Hop and Acid House, were popular among teenagers in those years. The beginnings of the nineties were the years when those musical genres often caused cultural polarizations among their fans (for instance, metal fans vs. rap fans, acid house fans vs. metal fans, and so on and so forth). While in secondary school we often experienced such cultural polarizations in different ways such as fights between fans, unfinished quarrels in the break time of classes, etc. This polarization influenced various aspects of my teenage life in Turkey, like those of many of teenagers. In those years, teenagers strongly used these musical styles to construct their identities and to shape their lifestyles or appearances, such as the ways they dressed. Fans of Acid Music were called “acider” (‘asitçi’ in Turkish) and could be spotted by the smiley face stickers or logos on their schoolbags or t-shirts. It is important to note that these fans were usually from middle or upper-middle class families. An individual who wore black t-shirts with skull illustrations or other classic logos of rock or Heavy Metal bands was called a “metalhead” (‘metalci’ in Turkish). Metalheads were overwhelmingly members of middle class families. Meanwhile, hip hop teenagers were generally dancing in the parks or roads. Their notable characteristic was the baseball hats that they wore backwards on their heads. Hip hoppers were mostly from working or low-middle class families. These “childish” but relatively “harmless” polarizations among teenagers were used even by illustrated humor magazines such as *Gir Gir*, *Hibir*. Recently, these divisions do not seem as visible and sharp as they were in the nineties. However, divisions and consequent polarizations still exist among the youth in terms of socio-economic class, lifestyle or musical likes and dislikes. I took the metalheads’ side in this cultural and musical polarization throughout my elementary and high school years. In those years, I believed that hip hop and techno music should not have been classified as music. For me, they were simply either word play or dehumanized music produced only by computers

and other electronic devices. In contrast to rap and techno music, heavy metal was the real, guitar-based music produced usually by three or four guys who worked together in a studio without need for computerization or a sampler. Nevertheless, I have over time come to realize that the electronic music and rap music that arose during the 1980s have very interesting musical positions compared to rock, metal or jazz. Sociologically, it can be said that the main motive lying behind the appearance of those youth cultures and musical identities in Turkey was the fact that political power, wielded by the military following the coup d'état in 1980, was delivered back to a civilian government under Turgut Özal in 1984, which produced economic and social policies widely based upon orientation to global policies and the free market. Especially with the development of the free market in Turkey, various commodities, cultural products and life styles started to be transferred to social life and some particular cultural products and associated styles originating in the USA and Europe became trendy, particularly among the youth. It is apparent that due to technological developments that have taken place in communication and transportation, almost every kind of music can now easily spread throughout the world. Thus, all these changes and developments have necessitated discussions on particular music scenes, both generally through locality and “moving groups”, or through the term “ethnoscape”, introduced by Appadurai (1990; see also 2000) as mentioned in Chapter 3.

Globalization, also discussed in detail earlier, refers essentially to the dissolution of links between space, culture and society. In this process, it is now hard to emphasize strict ties or territorial boundaries between culture and place which have been “deterritorialized” by globalization. However, it might also be mistaken to consider that the local level has lost its significance in such a process. According to Deleuze and Guattari, “[c]ivilized modern societies are defined by processes of decoding and deterritorialization. But *what they deterritorialize with one hand, they reterritorialize with the other*” (Deleuze and Guattari 1990: 257; italics in original). This simply means that deterritorialization, as a consequence of globalization (Kearney 1995), refers not just to dissolution of the connection between space and culture and of territorial boundaries, but also localization, transnational relations or reterritorialization of those which are not located in a particular site anymore. Cultural flows between global and local have become mutually effective in this sense (Appadurai 2000). That is to say, any community in various geographies would benefit from particular cultural products, such as hip hop, as a way to connect both with the globe and their own local boundaries, including visible strategies regarding their own consumption and production. In this sense, cultural globalization does not refer to homogenization of cultures, but rather to the

connections between local and global in terms of compression of time and space. According to this, “[...] one of the effects of the process of globalization has been to make us aware that the world itself is a locality, a singular place” (Featherstone 1997: 92) in which exchanges of cultural products globally are constantly increasing.

Nevertheless, what is striking here, and requires awareness, is that cultural globalization is a concept which could be understood more effectively through deterritorialization, which is “the loss of the ‘natural’ relation of culture to geographical and social territories”, as Tomlinson states (quoted in el-Ojeili and Hayden 2006: 134). In this process, new identities emerge or are eroded locally in terms of the encounter between West and East in a positive or negative manner. For instance, Dutch rappers tend to use hip hop as a way to connect with the globalized “hip hop nation”, while localizing it with their own musical, cultural and linguistic contributions, such as oriental music or ethnic perceptions, whether intensively connected with other scenes or not. According to Andy Bennett (1999a: 82), as also briefly mentioned in the Introduction,

[i]f much has been written about the cultural significance of popular music lyrics, rather less attention has been focused upon the cultural significance of the language in which they are sung. This is perhaps unsurprising when one considers that most studies of popular music lyrics have been carried out by English-speaking theorists who have restricted themselves to assessing the impact of English-language pop songs in the English speaking world.

It would not be a mistake to say that “rapping” is the most important element of hip hop culture. Rapping, which makes up a large part of the musical aspect of this culture, historically “was reminiscent of the Jamaican tradition of dancehall ‘toasting’, whereby the MC would chant out complex, self-aggrandizing or politically-charged lyrics over instrumental sections of popular reggae hits” (Porter 2003: 12). From a sociological point of view, when we think of the social conditions into which hip hop was born, we can understand why rapping is so important for this culture. In fact, “rap began as a party music, but with the 1982 release of Grandmaster Flash and The Furious Five’s ‘The Message’, the first rap to deliver a coherent narrative fired by injustice, the scope broadened in both subject matter and variations in vocal texture” (Toop 2001: 50; see also Krims 2000). After the “relative decline of the party-rap”<sup>54</sup> (Krims 2000: 55), the black population, particularly the youth who were

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<sup>54</sup> It refers to “optimistic tones and faster, often more dance-oriented beats”. Also, “the topics of party-rap lyrics can vary greatly, but they are generally consistent with analogous genres in popular music, that is, those that focus semantically on celebration, pleasure, and humor” (Krims 2000: 56-57).

forced to live isolated in the difficult conditions of the ghettos, tried to express their reactions and anger in their beat-based lyrics instead of staying silent. From the outset, this genre did not stay isolated within a particular site, but rather it began to spread across the globe, whether through physical transportation of cultural products – as in the case with US soldiers and German Turks discussed below, or transmission by broadcast or Internet. Simply, it has become locally produced music in various geographies in the world. Subgenres (such as Oriental hip hop in our context), musical peculiarities, or the traditions of different geographies have also started to take their places in these discussions in relation to locality and diasporic consciousness. Therefore, in this chapter I will particularly focus on localization of rap music in the Dutch-Turkish case through detailed analysis of songs, in terms of technical aspects such as lyrics (rhyming, word stress/accent, linguistic detail, etc.) and music (adaptation of Turkish musical instruments and forms [*uzun hava* etc.], how the different samples used are put together to make the tracks, etc.). Also, I will examine the songs by Killa Hakan (from Germany, Berlin) recording with Ceza (from Turkey, İstanbul), and Arka Sokak (from the Netherlands, Hengelo) in order to illustrate how Turkish rappers adapt the Turkish language, with its particular characteristics in local melodies, rhythm, stress, rhyming, cadences, etc., to the rap idiom.

In the following section, I will analyze some aspects of the text and musical setting of the song *Deprem* (“Earthquake”) by the Dutch-Turkish rapper Şener-E from Amsterdam, a representative example of Oriental hip hop in the Turkish-speaking rap scene in the mid-nineties, in order to address the local particularities and diasporic consciousness that are expressed in a rap song. With this song whose lyrics indicate in what ways and how diaspora is connected to the homeland, Şener-E, as a member of the Turkish diaspora in the Netherlands, shows with his relatively political and nationalistic words that it is not possible to stay indifferent towards changes or incidents occurring in Turkey. In the discussion of his song, I will also show how he adopts the rap idiom to voice local concerns and deal with locally relevant topics, in this case the solidarity of Turks in the diaspora with those in Turkey affected by the earthquake.

## **6.2 Rap Music and Diasporic Consciousness**

In Chapter 4, I examined the differences between Germany and the Netherlands in order to draw attention to socio-political conditions which have been influential on the

appearance and the development of rap music in both countries. Depending on my observations, I can say that few rappers in the Netherlands seem to have significant commercial success or to succeed in attracting the attention of the media as Islamic Force or Cartel have in Germany. Thus, Germany usually comes to mind first when the issue is Turkish-speaking rap music together with diasporic consciousness and local identity. In general, the labour migration to Europe that is “mainly a post war phenomenon...” has led to the appearance of ethnic groups away from their homeland constructing “a modern diasporic cultural identity which leans on both inheritance and politics” (Kaya 2001: 79). As aforementioned, Germany is the homeland of Turkish rap and has particular socio-political particularities which have been effective in the appearance of the genre (see Elflein 1998; Diessel 2001; Kaya 2001). The story of Turkish rap began “in the late 1980s in the transnational meeting of two mobile groups of people: African-American soldiers stationed in Germany during the waning days of the Cold War and the period immediately after its end, and second-generation Turks in Germany, the children of economic migrants” (Solomon 2009: 307). The first recorded rap song in Turkish, *Bir Yabancı'nın Hayatı* (‘The Life of a Foreigner/Stranger’) by the Nuremberg crew King Size Terror, was released in 1991. According to Elflein, “[b]ecause of its strong emphasis on words, this new form of articulation and communication within dance music gave immigrant youngsters a way of discussing what it meant to be a German ‘stranger’ or ‘foreigner’” (1998: 257). In this context, it appears that rap music, particularly made by people living outside their homeland, involves notions of nationality and diasporic identities to some extent, such as Turkish rap in Germany or the Netherlands. For example, due to the “brutal attacks on foreigners and their belongings” during the years of xenophobia (1992/1993) (ibid, 258), rap music became a kind of political tool which was used by migrant young people against racism and far-right political ideologies. On the other hand, contrast to Germany, it is not possible to mention a significant amount of systematic brutal, violent attacks against people or explicit xenophobia on the foreigners in the Netherlands so far. This can be considered as the main reason why hip hop culture among Dutch-Turks is less developed in comparison with its counterpart in Germany. Thus, unlike Germany, the Turkish-speaking rap scene of the Netherlands has gained its own particularities not from a violent social environment but contrarily from a much more peaceful and multicultural one.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the significance of the music group Cartel cannot be denied in the process of rap music becoming widespread in Turkey in 1995 (see Çınar 1999;

Soysal 2001; Diessel 2001). Turkish lyrics, the Turkish musical idioms they use and also the nationalistic components their songs involve gave it a different sound in the particular time that the group came into existence. Cartel and rap music even started to be mentioned and discussed together with far-right and nationalism. Even though group members felt uncomfortable with being adopted by the grey wolves (a Turkish extreme nationalist group) during their first visit to Turkey, the aforementioned relationship to nationalism alongside “Turkishness in their lyrics” (see Çağlar 1998) actually marked the beginning of a very important era which refers to the rise of Turkish-speaking rap music. Even though we see many different subgenres in rap music, Oriental hip-hop, as a particular subgenre which was very popular among Turks especially until the end of nineties, may offer us some particularities of Turkish-speaking rap. Regarding this, Andy Bennett states, “[u]sing rhythms and melodies learned or sampled from such cassettes, traditional Turkish musical styles have been fused with African-American rap styles to produce a distinctive variation of the rap sound” (Bennett 2000: 145). What Bennett briefly states here refers to Oriental hip hop, which is “musically [...] a combination of hip-hop beats enriched by reminiscences of ragamuffin, samples of Turkish folk or Pop Muzik and mostly Turkish raps” (Elflein 1998: 263). Although, “Cartel’s use of the label ‘Oriental’ and the political language of hip-hop brought a heightened discussion of the Turkish minority into the media” (Diessel 2001: 176), “the group Islamic Force (now KanAK) is commonly recognized as the spark that started Oriental hip-hop” (Diessel 2001: 169). Boe B. from Islamic Force says the following about their original genre,

We do it in Germany, originating from Turkey and using an American black style of music and Turkish melodies [...] The boy comes home and listens to hip hop. The[n] his father comes along saying: “Come on boy, we go shopping”, enters the car and listens to Turkish music. And then he acquires our record and gets both styles in one (Elflein 1998: 263).

A member of Islamic Force states, “Hey, it is the most difficult thing to rap in Turkish, because, first of all, the Oriental melody is not easy to match with the hard rap. Then you have to pack a crazy amount of words in there, in order to get a good flow” (quoted in Diessel 2001: 173). Although the rapper states there are some difficulties in performing Oriental hip-hop, as different “styles in one” it provides mixed feelings to a Turkish audience, composed of being bonded to a global hip-hop scene and being part of a Turkish diaspora,. There are also some good examples of Oriental hip-hop from the Netherlands. For example, the song



titled “Deprem” (“Earthquake”) by Dutch-Turkish rapper Şener-E, draws attention to the synthesis of Turkish musical idioms, melodies and language with diasporic consciousness among Dutch-Turkish rappers. This song apparently follows the precedent set by Cartel in the mid-1990s for the “Oriental rap music” in which Turkish folk music samples are used. Moreover, similar to Cartel, we find evocations of nationalism and expressing the point of view of the diasporic subject who is concerned with events within Turkey, even if s/he does not live there. The song was never commercially released, but only available as free download on the Internet since ca. 2000 via file-sharing networks and various Turkish rap-oriented websites.

On August 17, 1999 at 3:02 AM, an earthquake of magnitude Md 7.4, which was one of the most devastating earthquakes of the twentieth century in terms of the number of casualties and huge damage, occurred in the Kocaeli area in Northwest Turkey, which has a population of 20 million inhabitants. The estimated death toll is as high as 40,000. Şener-E’s song is about this major disaster. The song includes some sampled voice of the leader of Nationalist Movement Party, (“Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi” in Turkish), which is a far-right political party known generally for its ultra-nationalist youth wing grey wolves (“Bozkurtlar” in Turkish). In the sampled voice, Devlet Bahçeli, the party leader, harshly criticizes the government and blames it for the damage. As Androutsopoulos and Scholz state, “certain sorts of sampled material, such as political speech and mass media coverage, can be used as ‘a straightforward way to signal political awareness’” (Androutsopoulos and Scholz 2003: 470). This means that sampling of a far-right politician’s speech in the song becomes a political issue that needs to be explored together with the lyrics as a whole. As will be shown, the lyrics include nationalistic idioms and emotional reactions against such a disaster. Moreover, this song also points out “[...] how the musicians hybridize the genre of rap music with Turkish folk music, using Turkish musical instruments and Turkish melodies in songs with rapping and hip-hop style beats” (Solomon 2007). The song starts off with a melody played with *bağlama* (traditional lute instrument) repeated a few times and then a synthesizer, the preset of which is a human voice playing somewhat a sad melody. During the song DJ-style scratching<sup>55</sup> is used, here apparently produced by computer. The sample used in the song seems likely to belong to the Middle Anatolian region, particularly the city of Kırşehir,

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<sup>55</sup> One of the four elements of hip-hop is turntablism as mentioned before. Scratching is a technique used by DJs or turntablists which refers to manipulation of pre-recorded music in order to produce distinctive sounds or rhythms. DJs move a vinyl record back and forth on a turntable with various speeds in accordance with what kind of sounds they want to produce. In this technique, crossfader function is also used in order to manipulate different sources on two different turntables.

traditional songs (“türkü”). According to Hüseyin Yükrük, who is a professional musician, *bağlama* teacher and specialized academically on traditional folk music, it sounds as though the *bağlama* and *balaban* (a kind of wind instrument<sup>56</sup> from Azerbaijan; it is known also as *duduk* in Armenian) were newly recorded in the studio especially for this song, and then used in the same way as any sample taken from a previously existing recording (personal interview). The *makam* (mode in traditional Turkish art and folk musics) followed through the sample is *kürdi makam* (similar to the phrygian mode in European music)<sup>57</sup>. *Makam*<sup>58</sup> can be defined as a kind of modal rule governing composition and improvisation. It refers to specific scales and certain rules for creating melody within them (see Feldman 1996). There is a looped motif played on the synthesizer during certain parts of the song. Its preset sounds like a human voice or even a small chorus of voices, singing long notes on the vowel *aaa*. The melody is relatively simple and memorable. Another melody of an improvisatory character, similar to the folk music performance style *uzun hava* (which can be literally translated as “long air”) is played on the *balaban/duduk*. Songs in *uzun hava* style “are rhythmically free songs with broad, descending melodic lines, rich in ornaments. Long, pulsated notes are often inserted, notably at the beginning and end of the melody.”<sup>59</sup> An *uzun hava* can be in a specific *makam* (mode, scale, specific melody patterns) but without being bound within a specific meter. For example, the *uzun hava* (non-metrical) style in which the *balaban/duduk* plays recalls the style of vocal laments (*ağıt*) from Eastern Anatolia. The use of this style in this song thus evokes a lament (*ağıt*) specifically for those who died in the quake, and more generally for Turkey as a whole in its suffering, as seen from the diasporic subject position Şener-E occupies in the Netherlands, his “adopted country”. This is underscored by the way the *ağıt*-sounding music accompanies the sampled snippets from newscasts describing the extent of the disaster<sup>60</sup>, for instance “The number of dead rose to 17,997, the number of wounded reported as 42,442.”

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<sup>56</sup> There are a number of instruments of this type in eastern Anatolia/southwest Caucasus with different names such as *mey*, *duduk*, *balaban*, etc.

<sup>57</sup> The Phrygian mode refers to the particular sequence of intervals that make the scale, equivalent to playing E-F-G-A-B-C-D-E on the white keys of the piano (starting and stopping the scale on E, rather than, for example, on C).

<sup>58</sup> “The Turkish modal system is based on the term *makam*, which might be usefully described as composition rules. Today *makams* consist of scales comprising defined tetrachords (*dörtlü*) and pentachords (*beşli*) governed by explicit rules concerning predominant melodic direction (*seyir*: ‘path’)” (Source: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/44912>)

<sup>59</sup> Source: <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/44912>

<sup>60</sup> Thanks to Thomas Solomon for his suggestions. The language here draws on a personal communication from him (26 April 2010).

There are different ways to tune *bağlama*. According to Yükrük, for this song the *bağlama* was tuned according to the chord order called “Karadüzen [Black order] or Bozuk düzen [irregular order]”. Tuning starts at the bottom string of *bağlama*. According to song which the musician wants to play, a particular reference note is selected. *Karadüzen* order is simply shown below:

### KARADÜZEN CHORD ORDER<sup>61</sup>

<b>G (NEUTRAL)</b>		<b>TOP STRING</b>
<b>D (NEUTRAL)</b>		<b>MIDDLE STRING</b>
<b>A (NEUTRAL)</b>		<b>LOWER STRING</b>

The lyrics and their translations of the song are below:

#### Deprem

Türkiye'm benim vatanım Türkiye  
 Yedi bitirdi seni şu batasıca deprem  
 Hangi can dayanır bu acıya bu felakete  
 Kanım, canım feda sana Türkiye  
 Ne gelir ki benim elimden gurbet ellerden  
 İçim parçalanır seni bu hallerde görmekten  
 O güzelim sokaklar döndü toz bulutlarına  
 Bir yanda ana bir yanda baba ağlar evladına  
 Herteraf leş çürük dökük

#### The Earthquake

My Turkey, my country Turkey  
 This damned earthquake it ruined you  
 Who can stand such pain and disaster?  
 I give my life for you, Turkey  
 What else I can do from distant lands!  
 I suffer to see you in such situations  
 Those beautiful streets become dust clouds  
 A mother and a father cry for their son  
 Everywhere is rotten, ruined, destroyed

<sup>61</sup> <http://www.kapadokyamuzik.com/tirengelirdemo/akord.htm>.

Bizim Türk milletinin acısı yine büyük	The pain of our Turkish nation is deep again
Her şeye rağmen ayaktaız yine	But we are strong no matter what
Kim yıkabilir Türkiye'yi deprem olsa bile	Not even an earthquake can defeat Turkey
[Male voice:] "Bütün herşeye rağmen biz afet bölgelerindeki yurttaşlarımızla ilgili gelişmeleri, onların son durumlarını merak ediyoruz."	Despite all events we are concerned about the latest developments and situations of our citizens in the disaster areas.
[Devlet Bahçeli's (The Chairman of Nationalist Movement Party) voice:]  "Kontrolsüzlüğün hesaplarını elbet bir bir soracaz."	"We will bring all of you to account one by one."
[Female TV speaker:] "Yuriçi ve yurtdışından vatandaşlar adeta yarış içersinde, güçleri ölçüsünde kampanyamıza katılıyorlar."	Turkish citizens from home and abroad join the [aid] campaign as if they are in a contest.
[Devlet Bahçeli:] "Türkiye zor günler geçiriyor."	Turkey has hard times
[Female speaker:] "Can Afacan Öğrenci Yurdu'nda deprezede öğrencilere yer ayrıldığı belirtildi."	"Rooms were reserved in Can Afacan Student Dormitory for earthquake student victims."
[Devlet Bahçeli:] Türk milleti güçlüdür, Türk devleti güçlüdür"	"The Turkish nation is strong, the Turkish state is powerful".
[Rap:] Acımız kederimiz dağlardan yüce	Our pain, our sorrow is so deep
O güzelim vatanımız her şeyden önce	Our beautiful homeland comes first
Onca yaralı ölü yuvalar sömürüldü	The dead and wounded people were exploited
Bu duyguyu taşımak ne kadar kötü	How bad to carry such a feeling
Kim verecek bunca milletin hesabını	Who will explain it to the nation?
Anasız babasız kalan çocukların	Motherless fatherless children left behind

Hayatını kim geri verecek	Who will give their life back?
Kim teselli edecek	Who will cheer them up?
Allahtan umut kesilmez	Don't give up hope in God
Bu bir gerçek	This is the truth
Sabır teselli ver Allahım benim Türkiyeme	My God, give patience to my Turkey
Türk milletine, kardeşlerime, bacılarıma, abilerime, aileme, Türkiyeme.	To Turkish nation, to my brother, my sister, my brother, my family, my Turkey.
[Female TV speaker:] "Ölenlerin sayısı 17,997'ye yükseldi, yaralı sayısı 42,442 olarak açıldı."	"The number of dead rose to 17,997, the number of wounded reported as 42,442."
[Female Voice:] Meclis kurulunda deprem felaketinde Hayatını kaybedenler için bir dakikalık saygı duruşunda bulunuldu.	In the parliament, one minute homage was paid for people who lost their life.
[Devlet Bahçeli:] "Yaşanan acıların ıstırapların hesabı sorulacaktır."	"It will be brought to account for the pain and the suffering."
[Female TV speaker:] "Tarihinin en büyük felaketlerinden birini yaşayan Türkiye'ye yurtdışında bulunan vatandaşlarımızın da yardımını sürüyor."	"The aid to Turkey by our citizens abroad has been continuing."
[Devlet Bahçeli:] "Türk milleti büyük bir afetle karşı karşıyadır Kim olursa olsun şurda bir gedik açmak isteyen varsa bunu başaramayacaklardır. Yanındayız arkasındayız Türk devleti güçlüdür."	"It will be brought to account for the pain and the suffering. The Turkish nation faces a disaster. Whoever are willing to dig a crevice here, All will fail. We support, we defend The Turkish state is strong."

It was already mentioned that it is possible to consider Şener-E's lyrics and samples used in the song together with diasporic consciousness and political awareness. Therefore the task is to focus on such samples as critically as possible and to evaluate as closely as possible the issue of diaspora. Based on the samples aforementioned, we can state that there was a clear identification between the Turkish diaspora and the homeland. Therefore, we can elucidate

the difference between older recordings and the recent ones in the relative disappearance of that connection, which seems to be replaced with far more personal issues, difficulties taking place in the host country and others. The lyrics of the song simply address how Şener-E imagines the geography of his “homeland” from the position of an immigrant, or Dutch-Turk. In the song, he describes urban areas devastated by the quake, and its toll on the people there that he feels kinship with through the verse “My God, give patience to my Turkey/ To Turkish nation, to my brother, my sister, my brother, my family, my Turkey”. When we look at the nineties, we see another rap song by the same rapper - “Amsterdam”, released in 1998-1999 (Şener-E was not quite sure about the exact year of the song), which is also about the Turkish diaspora. The song will be examined in Chapter 7 in detail.

In the following section, I will concentrate on the use of language, particularly on rhyming, word stress and grammar, in Turkish-speaking rap music. Even though it is not possible to say that the two examples analyzed below are Oriental hip-hop, they are still important in drawing the attention of the reader to the visible differentiations between local scenes, such as German-Turkish, Turkish and Dutch-Turkish rap, through linguistic differences.

### **6.2.1 The Use of Language: Examples from Turkish Rap Scenes**

Maxwell enumerates two elements of hip-hop: “the words and the music. Together, they are Hip Hop” (Maxwell 2003: 181). Word stress, flowing and rhyming are of great importance in rapping to gain a dynamic song structure. Needless to say, it is not possible to detach music from lyrics and rhyming (Walser 1995). Accordingly, a regular rap song, as a whole, generally offers a complex combination of music and words together. Rap constructing itself both on music and language also attempts to offer alternative means of expression, including using of abbreviations, slang, strong metaphors, and especially rhymes. These alternative uses of language tend to reflect a certain level of flexibility that mirrors the conditions of street life. For example, according to Prévós, rappers in France claim that they experience, “like many of their American counterparts”, similar confinement “in these unforgiving urban environments”. Therefore, they produce their own language that they call “the language of ghetto” which is “the mixture of all types of neologism, new words, slang expressions, and off-color words” (Prévós 1998: 69). In this sense, the linguistic strategies

that rappers prefer to follow seem to reflect their lives where they inhabit and are directly connected to how rappers perceive socio-economic conditions.

Rap, generally accepted as a “verbal art”, adds a different dimension to the relationship between language and music. In this sense, rap as a form of music differs from other genres. One of the main reasons lying behind this differentiation is the importance of language for rap music. Therefore, this fact warns us to be much more careful and critical about this issue. The use of language comprises a big part of rap music because the organization of lyrics predominantly works as if it is an instrument based on a well-balanced combination of human voice, words and rhythm. For example, well-organized words and harmonious rhymes without instrumental composition, beats and rhythm, or ‘a cappella’, may sound like an aesthetically well-composed song in rap music. As indicated above, rap music offers various and alternative means of expression and perception via words fitting particularly well with musical structure. On the one hand “[w]hatever the role played by samples and breakbeats, for much of hip-hop’s core audience, it is without question the rhymes that come first” (Potter 1995: 81). Maxwell quotes the definition of hip-hop by an Australian rapper, “*fat beats, dope rhymes*” (Maxwell 2003: 181; italics in original). Flow, integration of the rhymes and rhythms, is also very important in rap music and as Krims mentioned “[...] musical poetics demands a vocabulary of flow” (Krims 2000: 48). In general, it is possible to elaborate the importance of rhyming, word stress and flow in rap music through specific examples from the Turkish-speaking rap scene. Furthermore, with particular comparisons among examples from local scenes such as the German-Turkish or Dutch-Turkish rap scenes, we are also able to detect musical or linguistic differentiations among them. Before such analysis, it is better to continue with an example from contemporary Turkish poetry to examine how rhyming works in general. The striking feature of contemporary Turkish poetry is the complex use of rhyme, rhythm and internal rhyme. Many “innovative” poets do not prefer to use the syllabic verse with traditional rhyming methods, but rather tend to present poems with irregular syllable counts per line and with internal rhyming that adds a pure sound dimension to the word play. According to Talât Halman, an expert on Turkish literature:

Among innovative poets who preferred subtle internal changes in poetry rather than sweeping formal, aesthetic, or substantive transformation were Özdemir Asaf, Salâh Bırsel, Necati Cumalı, and Nahit Ulvi Akgün—all masters of the fanciful use of the language and of refined sensibilities with deep psychological insights and occasional flashes of humor and satire (Halman 2007: 94).





The other points necessitating discussion in order to grasp the relationship between rap and language are assonance and word stress. For example, in his analysis of the hit song “Fight the Power” by Public Enemy, Robert Walser states, “[r]hyme, assonance, and precise rhythmic placement keep Chuck D sounding smooth and coherent, even as the rhythms of his speech are in constant tension with the beat” (Walser 1995: 204). What he basically focuses on is the usage of language forming a song composed with harmony through not just words and but also music.

The well-known rappers and those who have had significant commercial success in the Turkish-speaking rap scene such as Ceza, Sagopa Kajmer (both from İstanbul) or Killa Hakan (from Germany) usually appear to use the language without paying attention to the regular grammar or word stress rules. “Turkish can be briefly characterized as an agglutinative language (exclusively suffixing) with prepositions [...]” (Erguvanlı 1979: 7). For example, in Ceza’s verses below, there is a line that is “İşler hepsi birbirinden zor / ve karşılığıysa az” (All of the works are more difficult than each/ and returns are insufficient [though]). In the first sentence, -in suffix would be appended to the end of “işler” (works) to modify the meaning into “işler-in” (of works]. The word “hepsi” (all) derives from the word “hep”<sup>63</sup>. Grammatically correct use of this noun clause would be “işler-in hep-s-i”. Two vowels rarely come together in Turkish, except under certain conditions. Therefore, when appending a suffix beginning with a vowel into a word that ends with a vowel, “y, s, ş, n”, buffer consonants, are inserted. The underlined “s” is a buffer consonant. Also, “iş-ler” (works) is actually a plural word. The suffix -ler, added after the noun, forms plural. In the next line “karşılığıysa” (payment or return) is in single form. Grammatically correct use would be “karşılık-lar-ıysa”<sup>64</sup> az” (returns are few). Word-stress plays a crucial role in Turkish. There are many pairs of words the meanings of which may change according to the stressed syllable. Stress in Turkish language is usually on the last syllable or on the first syllable in numerous exceptional situations. Pronouncing each syllable with equal emphasis is not usually done. This provides speech with a sort of rising and falling cadence. These ups and downs are provided by some syllables that are stressed much more strongly than the others, which means that stress appears as a rise in pitch on the stressed syllable alone. In Turkish words, syllables in the middle are generally unstressed. Besides, the single-syllable words are not usually stressed. As will be seen below, Ceza and Killa Hakan change such technical rules to gain the

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<sup>63</sup><http://tdk.gov.tr/TR/Genel/SozBul.aspx?F6E10F8892433CFFAAF6AA849816B2EF4376734BED947CDE&Kelimelime=hepsi> (Turkish Language Association’s official website)

<sup>64</sup> Referring to *of which Works*.

flow of their songs. The stylistic coherence in the order of words, syntax and the word-stress generally provide listeners with a strong feeling of rhyme and flow in the lyrics. Those rappers change the rule that monosyllabic words are not usually stressed in order to produce effective flow. With well-produced stress, each verse seems to be connected to each other in harmony. Needless to say, Ceza and Killa Hakan occupy exceptional positions in the Turkish-speaking rap scene. While Killa Hakan has drawn the attention of his audiences with his distinctive rapping style since Islamic Force's<sup>65</sup> album *Mesaj* came out in 1997, Ceza has become the one of the most famous rappers in Turkey with his "flex style", which refers to a very fast and aggressive rapping. In 2009 Ceza and Killa Hakan released a joint album titled *Bomba Plak*. In this section, I will compare one of the tracks from this album by Ceza and Killa Hakan, "Üzerimizde Gözler" ["They watch us"; *Eyes on Us* literally translated], with a song by a Dutch-Turkish group. The former track starts off two synthesized melodies which are looped during the song. The longer one, which constructs the structure of the song melodically, sounds similar to a synth tone generally used in trance music. The BPM (beats per minute) of the song is around 94 and the percussive beat, consisting of powerful and techno-ish snare drums together with the aggressive rapping style of both rappers somehow provide the song with a dark atmosphere.

In the excerpt below, short, meaningful sentences are divided with slashes. To show rhymes and word-stress, the regular rule of dividing a word into its component syllables is not followed in order to indicate rhymes which are underlined. While the capital letters on each rhyme denote rhyming syllables consisting of more than one letter, small ones are used to show one-letter syllabic rhymes. To indicate stressed syllables which are particular to rappers and that would normally be unstressed in spoken Turkish, a stress mark (ˈ) is used in bold syllables. The italicized syllables show stresses that would regularly be stressed in spoken Turkish, and also those which are stressed by the rapper as well.

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<sup>65</sup> It "was founded in 1986 by the self-initiatives of *Boe-B* (male Turkish) and the manager Yüksel. Besides *Boe-B*, there are three more members: *Killa Hakan* (male Turkish), DJ *Derezon* (male German mother and Spanish father), and *Nelie* (female, German mother and Albanian father)" (Kaya 2001: 188; italics in original).

“Üzerimizde Gözler,” verses by Ceza (excerpt)<sup>66</sup>

Peki, tamam ben h-az-1-r-ım / bugünü *zaten* elle k-az-1-d-ım

Akın-tı-day-ım él-leri-m b-o-ş / y-ó-k bir saray-ım

(Without break, continuous rapping) F  
İşler hepsi birbirinden zor / ve karşılığıysa áz

Cezayla **Kıl**-la **é**-mír verdi / **dúr**-ma kalem **dúr**-ma y-áz F (Strong word stress)

“Üzerimizde Gözler,” verses by Killa Hakan<sup>67</sup>

Az bir zaman değil rap koşturdu-k / rap et-tik

Ama yinede her-kes kö-tü yol dedi / hér- y-ér-de hek-tik

Kaç kere di-zd-ik düzdü-k yıktı-lar / yeniden yap çab-a har-ca

Baktığımız ayna-lar kimi zaman par-ça par-ça

In the first two lines of Ceza (hazırım, kazıdım, akıntıdayım, yok bir sarayım), the rapper seems to use sort of “homonymic slippage” via use of “internal rhymes” (Potter 1995: 82). The meanings of the words are in sequence: I am ready, I challenged, I am in flow, I have no palace. According to Potter, “[a]ll the characteristic rhetorical strategies of hip-hop

<sup>66</sup> “Eyes on Us,” verses by Ceza

All right! I am ready/ I reached to the present with my hands  
I am in flow, my hands are empty/ and I have no palace  
Every work is more difficult than the next/ yet the returns are few  
Ceza and Killa gave the order/ Don’t stop the pencil. Keep writing.

<sup>67</sup> Verses by Killa Hakan

Not for a short time, we’ve been fighting for rap /we did rap  
Everyone said it’s a bad way though/ We were not alone [anyway]  
How many times we built, made, but they wiped out/ Try out and do it again and again  
The mirrors we look at fall to pieces sometimes

Signifyin(g)—metonymy, metaphor, and homophonic slippage—work together here to establish multiple and overlapping streams of association, which everywhere undermine the merely *denotative* with broad and brash de/re-formations of *connotative*” (ibid: italics in original). In his example, Potter points out the signification of the word “nigger” by using verses by Big Daddy Kane: “The breaker, the taker, money maker, never a faker”. Similarly, Ceza uses such sequence in accordance with the linguistic formation of Turkish. By “I have no palace”, he argues that despite his commercial success and fame as a rapper, he does not possess a fortune or property which would be inconsistent with his status as an “underground rapper” in the Turkish rap scene. Also, Killa Hakan, in the third line, seems to use similar way, which might be good example of alliteration and consonance, to signify a challenge to other rappers: **dizdik, düzdük , yıktılar, yeniden yap çaba harca**. Here, we can see also a good example of assonance: **yap çaba harca**. Meanings in sequence are: We did, we made, they wiped out, again and again try and try. The sounds of the words in sequence are connected to each other through assonance and consonance; the “meaning” of the rap becomes as much about the sounds of the words as about their literal, “dictionary” meaning. Moreover, both rappers apparently change and develop the rhyming and word-stress rules generally applied by constructing their own rapping style. For instance, in Ceza’s verses the word “hazırım” would be stressed on the second syllable (that is underlined) in normal speech, but Ceza stresses the last syllable in his rap because it falls on a stressed beat in the music. Regardless of the number of suffixes, as mentioned above, the stress in Turkish language falls on the final syllable of a word with some exceptions. One group of exceptions is the unaccented suffixes. “Suffixes that are part of the auxiliary (with certain exceptions) are unaccented” such as personal endings (Underhill 1979: 186). For instance, when personal ending [-*(y)Im* → I or -*y(Iz)* → We] is used, stress falls on the last syllable of the predicate: *yorgúnum* (I am tired), *hastásınız* (You are sick) etc. (ibid, 34). In the same way, the word *hazırım* is stressed on the last syllable of the predicate in normal usage, but Ceza stresses the last syllable in his rap because it falls on a stressed beat in the music. The other rule is that single-syllable words are not usually stressed, but Killa Hakan stresses, for example, the single syllable word *her* in his rap to produce effective flow. While changing some rules, Ceza and Killa Hakan follow regular stress rules. As tense *-di*, part of the predicate, is accented normally and Killa Hakan also stresses it on the last syllable in his song: **dizdik**. In Turkish, possessive suffixes are accented: *evimiz* (my house), *elim* (my hand), etc. In the same way in his song Ceza stresses the possessive ending of the word *sarayım* (my palace) not pronouncing it as *saráyım* which means “I am a palace.” The other point is that in Turkish

“every word has exactly one main stress” (Inkelas and Orgun 2003: 140). But in his rap Ceza stresses both syllables of the word *durma* (Don’t stop). In Turkish *dur* means stop and the suffix *-ma* makes it negative.

Even though it is not necessary to connect one verse to the next one with a common meaning, those rappers usually manage to provide a kind of semantic coherence through the order of words and the rhythmic articulation of syllables. Another point in the coherence of those verses is that the meaning of each string is made up of short sentences which actually complement each other. Short sentences spoken with different stress patterns, with the effective use of voice, make eight or sixteen-beat measures much more fluid, and provide them with stylistic unity. Rhyme, flow and word stress or in rap music are necessary elements of the song. The order of rhyme, the lyrics written by effective word stress, and flexible rhyming in accordance with the timbre form the peculiarities of the song. Ceza’s rapping is closer to “percussion-effusive” style as described by Krims (2000: 50-51), since while he packs a lot of syllables into each line, it is still easy to hear specific syllables articulated exactly on stressed beats. On the other hand, Killa Hakan’s style can clearly be classified as “speech-effusive.” (Krims 2000: 51) His rapping is much closer to spoken language and often seems out-of-sync with the beat. Listening to his rapping, it can sometimes seem like there is not a close relation at all between the rhythm of his rapping and the rhythm of the beat. But, he typically puts the last syllable of each line (usually the rhyming syllables) on stressed beats at the ends of musical lines, so while in the middle of his lines the rap seems out of sync with the beat, by the end of the line he seems to have come back in sync with it<sup>68</sup>.

Here, it is not wrong to say that rappers present a relatively original use of vernacular to gain smooth flow and rhyme. On the contrary, however, when we come to look at the stress and word-order of Dutch-Turkish rappers’ lyrics, we can detect that they tend to follow the rule that stress is on the final syllables. Lyrics often lack well-ordered sentences, and are said without any stylistic features tying them together coherently. Rather they have tendency to say them as a single sentence, which makes the listener feel like that each is not connected to the next one. It usually causes a song to become somewhat monotonous, in a literal sense. One of the most crucial reasons lying behind this is the relative difficulty that the Turkish youth face in mastering the Turkish language and sometimes the Dutch language<sup>69</sup>. Considering how rap music necessitates a strong command of the language, this issue in the

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<sup>68</sup> Thanks to my supervisor Thomas Solomon for clarifying these analytic points. The language here draws on a personal communication from him (22 March 2010).

<sup>69</sup> This issue will be discussed in the Chapter 7 in more detail and with excerpts from interviews.

Netherlands calls for a more critical discussion regarding language and perception. Close observation and the interviews I conducted allowed me to confirm that Dutch-Turkish youth face difficulties regarding the command of the Turkish language and also in terms of being the “other” in the host society. These factors make the subject of language much more important. Put simply, many rappers tend to use Turkish language in everyday conversations with Dutch mixed into it. In other words, many of them use a kind of hybrid language which is comprised of both Turkish and Dutch. However, they insist on rapping in Turkish, which they try to keep, in a sense, as ‘pure’ as possible. They generally choose particular subjects related to Turkishness in their songs to reflect their ethnic identity, and thus it appears that rap music constructs a sort of Turkishness constituted with “pure” language. However, about the preference for language used in lyrics, there are still divergent thoughts among rappers which will be addressed in the next chapter. Even though it will be discussed in the following chapter, it should be stated that the significance of this issue can be grasped better if we take the situation of Turkish youth in the Netherlands into consideration. Many of them expressed the point that they do not generally prefer to listen to non-Turkish rap music, because, for them, the first thing which makes rap special is the meanings and common means of expression that they find in the music. Rap music reflects the absence of massive adaptation and integration in Dutch-Turkish youngsters of the Netherlands. Without a perfect command of both Turkish and Dutch, they tend to say something about their inner voice that is created by in-betweenness. I would like to continue discussion with an example from the Turkish-speaking rap scene from the Netherlands. In the example from Dutch-Turkish rap group, Arka Sokak, below, I notate the rhyming pattern with an alphabetical letter. Each line with rhymes consisting of same or similar syllables is notated with the same letter. In the case of lines not rhyming with previous line, I notate them with a different letter. Small letters refer to rhymes with just one letter. Rhyming syllables are underlined during the song. The rapper dominantly uses rhymes at line ends by performing a sing-song rapping style. Therefore, in contrast to Ceza and Killa Hakan’s song including internal rhyming, rhymes are predominantly intensified at the end of lines. Words in italics refer to the stress used by the rapper. A stress mark (‘) is used in bold syllables when the rapper changes the regular rule in spoken Turkish:

## Patlamaya Hazır Olan Dünya(excerpt)

A  
11 Eylül dünyada görüntü de $\dot{g}$ işti  
A  
Müslüman kelimesi terora eş edildi

b b  
Beyaz çarşafın üstünde siyah bir leke  
b  
İnsan olarak soruyorum bu nara niye  
C  
İnsanoğlu insan olmalı öldürmemeli

C  
Karıncayı öldürmek günah bunu bilmeli

d  
Allah beyin vermiş bunu yanlış kullanma  
d  
Her doğanın hakkıdır dünyada yaşamaya

E  
Her şeyi böyle siyah beyaz görmek yanlış

E  
İnsan öldüren bugüne kadar ne kazanmış!

Mevlana demiş “ne olursan ol yine gel”

Müslüman Yahudi Hıristiyan el ele

F  
Ama bunu gerçekleştirmek herhalde çok zor

F  
Savaş başlamış bile insana kór

g G  
Cehenneme yolcuyuz bunun bilincindeyiz

G  
Uyanın uyanın! Gerçekleri görmeliyiz.

## The World That is Ready to Explode

9/11's changed the world image

Muslim word has been considered to be equal to terror

A black stain on the white linen

As a human I ask why this cry

Human being should be human, shouldn't kill

It is a sin even to kill an ant you should know this

Don't use the brain God gave you wrong

Every newborn has right to live in this world

To see everything so black and white is wrong

What have the killers gained so far?

Mevlana says “Come as whoever you are”

Muslim, Jewish, Christian are hand in hand

But it is possibly very difficult to have it

The war has already begun, it screws human up

We're going to go to Hell, we are aware of it

Wake up, wake up! We should see the truths.

The song starts with the war sound effects such as explosions, cannons, etc. together with sampled human voice sounds such as call to the prayer and church bell looped during

the song, through which the beat-maker might aim at developing a soundscape referring to the clash between Islam and Christianity since the lyrics are based upon recent political issues such as “Islamic terror”. A dark synthesized melody is looped throughout the song. After half a minute, rapping starts with a lower rhythmic articulation than the beat. While the synthesized melody and looped church bell cause a relatively dark sphere to appear, the rapping style of MC sounds aggressive, monotonous and less smooth than Ceza’s or Killa Hakan’s rapping. It seems that Dutch-Turkish rapper does not adapt his voice “smoothly” into the lyrics and beats except at the chorus. Here, it might be useful to benefit from Walser’s (1995) evaluation, mentioned above, on Chuck D’s rapping style in the hit song *Fight the Power*. While the rapping of Ceza and Killa Hakan draw on the same stylistic features that are smooth and coherent in terms of rhyming and the rhythms of their speech, Arka Sokak does not pull this off to the same degree. In this sense, when we look at the rhyme-schemes of all three rappers, the Dutch-Turkish song above seems to have words that are relatively less smooth and coherent. Also, it is hard to state, in Walser’s words, that “the rhythms of his speech are in constant tension with the beat” (Walser 1995: 204).

Dutch-Turkish rappers dominantly follow some very regular and simple rhyming rules applied generally in traditional Turkish poetry, (like that of the *âşık*lar - minstrels - referred to later in the chapter, as opposed to the modern poetry discussed above, like the example from Özdemir Asaf), as well as in old school-style rhyming from the USA. Furthermore, the rapper makes some linguistic mistakes in a few verses, yet not on purpose, like “Müslüman kelimesi *terora* eş edildi” and “Her doğanın hakkıdır *dünyada yaşamaya*”. It seems that there is a pronunciation mistake in the word *terora*, the rapper pronounces like this seemingly not to adapt the word into beats, which therefore makes it sound (from a prescriptive, not a descriptive, grammatico-lexical standpoint) like a linguistic mistake. The correct usage would be *teröre*. Another misuse in the second example verse is grammatical. Again, it does not sound like this misuse is preferred to adapt the words into the rhythm structure, but rather the rapper tries to gain quite a simple rhymed word, *yaşamay[a]*, with the last word of the previous verse, which is *kullanm[a]*. The verse in which *yaşamaya* is used is “Her doğanın hakkıdır dünyada yaşamaya”. The correct Turkish would be *yaşamak* [to live]). However, this grammatical misuse in the track does not sound so appropriate musically to audiences, but on the contrary makes first language-user listeners<sup>70</sup> and/or readers feel that he does not do it

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<sup>70</sup> I asked ten native speakers to listen to the song without informing them about the issues of this section or my opinion of the use of language in the rapping. In causal social events or gatherings, I just played the song and asked them what they thought of it. They generally stated, “it is quite irritating”.



on purpose, due to incoherence in the use of words. Here, I would like to draw the reader's attention to Russell Potter's important discussion (1995) on vernacular and rap music. He gives very important examples to point out linguistic slippage or "vernacular strategy". For instance, in the example of Ice Cube's song, we notice some words such as "supa nigga" or "killa", which are indeed not "correct" usage of the English words (1995: 78). However, Afro-American rappers carry out such "deformations" in the lyrics or everyday life language on streets on purpose, to construct a sort of resistance-space via language. What I want to do by giving examples from the Dutch-Turkish rap scene here is not to point out misuse of grammar and words, but rather, I think, a basic problem derived from the incomplete command of the language. Obviously, it is not such an easy task to explain academically or objectively such mistakes and matters to a non-Turkish reader. To make the matter much clearer, let me compare such grammatical (mis)uses with the aforementioned verses by Killa Hakan, which are *rap koşturduk* and *rap ettik*. In fact, there are no such uses in Turkish. The first verse literally means, "we made rap run" and the second one "we did rap". However, when we look at the whole structure of the track and flow, it sounds accurate and provides internal rhyming and dynamism in the song. Moreover, in Turkish, there are words such as *koşturduk* and *ettik*. The word *ettik* might be considered as similar to the word "to do". Without any object or noun, it may have no meaning. However, the words *koşturduk* and *ettik* together simply mean that "we did what we could do". Killa Hakan, by artfully "deforming" the regular and customary use of the words, constructs an alternative meaning that is "we did struggle by using rap". But, in the second example, which sounds like incorrect, "uneducated" use of words and grammar, it is hard to see a similar deliberate re-formation of, or artistry with, words.

Ceza and Killa Hakan have had tremendous impact on the Turkish-speaking rap scene. If we remember that this scene first arose in Germany in the 1980s, Turkish rap grew first among second-generation German-Turks who generally have both a good command of Turkish, and have had difficulties in Germany, as mentioned in Chapter 4. Over time, rap gained widespread acceptance in Turkey and the Netherlands by the late 1990s. In both Germany and the Netherlands, Turkish rappers use music to reflect their own personal thoughts and the difficulties they experience in the host countries. However, linguistic differences and "brutal" attacks taking place in Germany seem to have paved the way for the appearance of much more "developed" or "hard core" (see Maxwell 2003) rap scene.

Ayhan Kaya sees the rapper as “an intellectual storyteller” (2001: 181). In the next part of the chapter, I will elaborate on the relationship between rap and storytelling as well as old Turkish traditions such as *âşıklar* (minstrels) in terms of various theoretical approaches and interpretations.

## 6.2.2 Rapping, Storytelling, Turkish Culture and *Âşıklar* “Minstrels”

In the article by Mitchell and Pennycook (2009) about localized hip-hop and aboriginal people in Australia, a local rapper, Wire MC, points out the link between “the traditional and modern in another way, through his notion of hip-hop as ‘the modern day corroboree<sup>71</sup>’: Hip-hop brings people together in new ways, to tell stories, to sing and dance but ‘It’s still the same corroboree, still singing and dancing and telling the same stories about the immediate environment’ “ (Mitchell and Pennycook 2009: 26). In this sense, we can consider hip-hop as a mode of oral storytelling. Storytelling together with minstrels is a very old Turkish tradition, however recently it is hardly possible to encounter this tradition, because it has almost disappeared. In short, storytelling refers to reflection of the culture of sharing and experience, as Walter Benjamin suggests (Benjamin 1973).

In short, “rapping itself denotes a vocal performance in which a rapper uses spoken or semi-spoken declamations, usually in rhyming couplets. The ‘rap’ is revolutionary: rather than a singing or instrumental performance, in this genre the rap is the emotional focal point of the presentation” (Ramsey 2003: 165). Therefore, rapping turns into a form of storytelling, as well as a mutual battleground for rappers where they unload their problems and anger, rather than remaining only a prewritten or spontaneously read narrative. The cross-talking of rappers with music, i.e. battling, or dueling, sometimes reminds me the old *âşık* (minstrel) tradition of Anatolia. However, those “modern *âşık*”s are tougher and angrier. *Bağlama*, the stringed Anatolian instrument, is dominantly used in Turkish traditional songs, as used also in Şener-E’s song mentioned above. Similar to minstrels, he shares his feelings concerning the earthquake in Turkey and to show reactions toward established economical and political structures in the homeland. He may not necessarily locate himself in *aşık*’s

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<sup>71</sup> “The word **corroboree** is used fairly widely across Indigenous communities in Australia to refer to events or meetings (as opposed to ceremonies) which typically include songs, dances and other social and cultural activities. Like a number of such terms, it is a word that has been appropriated into English and then reappropriated by Aboriginal communities. There is a further reappropriation of the term in Wire MC’s use here.” (Mitchell and Pennycook 2009: 41)

tradition in this sense, but from his song one is likely to consider how a diasporic subject elaborates on what goes on in the homeland. He also illuminates other Dutch-Turks about the issue in a way. Minstrels in Anatolia have developed their own attitudes towards socio-political and cultural phenomena which might affect their personal lives under particular circumstances, for instance rural areas separated, for all practical purposes, from cities. They share thoughts and feelings with people who also have similar experiences with them. Many minstrels, though they are ordinary people with musical and linguistic abilities, have become well-known among people living at some geographical distance to the hometowns of the *âşiks*. Rap music, with its peculiarities such as composing and performing oral poetry powered by an Afro-American musical tradition, also seems to provide individuals opportunity to share their own thoughts and feelings, besides providing the chance to be known by people who are far away from them. In this context, Şener-E says,

[t]here's no free [independent] music as much as rap is. Definitely not! At least not from me, bro. You can mention everything in rap. If someone wants to swear, s/he can. Whether anyone listens or not, [...] you can share everything you have got in your mind via rap. Some people have known me and my emotions and feelings [thankfully] with rap. Rap addresses so many things, bro<sup>72</sup>.

The *Âşık* tradition in Anatolia mostly conveys a feeling of liberty and independence, since the music and lyrics might circle easily in various geographies without meeting with harsh political obstacles, though there are still some exceptions such as Pir Sultan Abdal, a controversial *Alevi* minstrel and poet executed by the Ottoman government in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. *Âşık* tradition and oral poetry seem to be assigned significance by rappers that mobilize them as meaningful constructs in order to express their own perceptions of social life with their own distinctive styles and strategies. In order to explain my point more clearly, it is also important to mention that the stories told in these battles or in the lyrics have a place in Anatolian culture. The views of İlhan Başgöz, professor of Turkish folklore studies, on this Anatolian tradition will shed light on this matter:

After the fifteenth century, that is, after minstrels appeared in this society, a new branch of literature sprang up, that of the folk stories (*halk hikayeleri*) born of a mixture of rhyme and prose... The same

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<sup>72</sup> Rap müziği kadar hür bir müzik tarzı var mı! Kesinlikle yok, abi! Benim gözümde yok. Her şeyden bahsedebilirsin abi. Küfretmek isteyen yapar, kimisi dinler kimisi dinlemez [...] Varını yoğunu dönebilirsin rapte. Bazı kişiler raple tanıdı beni ya, duygularımı hislerimi. Rap çok şey anlatıyor abi.

minstrel sings them in folksong fashion, accompanying himself on the *saz* [long-necked lute], which hangs from his shoulder. When the minstrel with his instrument steps into the midst of his audience, it is like the performance of a one-man stage play. The storytelling minstrel is actor, musician, reciter, and poet in one. The minstrel has a technique, customs, and a tradition of his own (1952: 331-332; see also Erdener 1987).

The traditions and techniques that the *âşık* has developed for himself may actually be applied to every rap musician. Just as the subject variety in rap lyrics is directly related to everyday life, the improvised reactions to these variations are related to the musician's technique and habits. Also, improvised "freestyle"<sup>73</sup> between two rappers on a stage, where they engage in a verbal battle, is a tradition that is also often seen in Anatolia. Tricia Rose says the following about rap's storytelling aspect: "Rap music is a form of rhymed storytelling accompanied by highly rhythmic, electronically based music" (1994: 2). In the Turkish *âşıklık* tradition, particularly in certain geographic regions, a style of expression exists that is founded on certain principles involving at least two *âşıks* who challenge each other with words and in music<sup>74</sup>, as well as audience participation called *atışma* (in English, literally "throwing at each other") (Artun 1997; see also Erdener 1987). Ayhan Kaya, who is well known for his study of the Turkish rap scene in Germany and who was the first researcher comparing rappers with minstrels (*âşıklar*), offers the following explanation about this subject:

The rapper is an intellectual storyteller who has counsel for his/her audience and who wishes to mobilize his/her local community against the power of the hegemonic and/or coercive group. The rapper also reminds us of what we are already inclined to forget, i.e., the 'communicability of experience' which is destined to decrease (Kaya 2001: 181).

Regarding what Kaya states above, it might be said that rap music has not only offered a chance to Dutch-Turks potentially to become well-known "modern minstrels" in the popular music scene, but it has also allowed them to create a particular music style in which many

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<sup>73</sup> "Freestyle rap is an improvisational form of rapping, performed with few or no previously composed lyrics, which is said to reflect a direct mapping of the mental state and performing situation of the artist. It is non-scripted, non-rehearsed, uncut, and the rawest form of hip-hop. Artists will often refer to places and objects in their immediate setting" ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freestyle\\_battle#Battles](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freestyle_battle#Battles)).

<sup>74</sup> Each *âşık* plays the Turkish traditional string instrument called *saz*, made from wood and having a long neck.

issues could be expressed by storytellers. This storytelling's and rap's cultural composition come into view as a verbal-musical expression. Rappers who use live performances or albums to reach their listeners, who are interested in the stories they compose based on the rules of their worlds or other means of communications, have earned themselves a very important place in the popular culture scene — even though it may have taken some time. Although rap has undergone many transformations over time, such as a period of division, differentiation and polarization of the aggressive, subversive and at the same time 'sexist' rap music, it still has a particular authenticity within its genre. Tricia Rose summarizes rap music's past in the following statement:

The rappers who could fix the crowd's attention had impressive verbal dexterity and performance skills. They spoke with authority, conviction, confidence, and power, shouting playful ditties reminiscent of 1950s black radio DJs. The most frequent style of rap was a variation on the toast, a boastful, bragging, form of oral storytelling that was sometimes explicitly political and often aggressive, violent, and sexist in context (Rose 2006: 221-222).

Over the past forty years we have experienced “certain phases of the transformation of popular music as moments crucial to [the artists'] development as thinkers critical of society” (Portis 1985: 23). These phases may reflect and follow socio-political and economic changes occurring all around the world. From party rap to gangsta rap, the appearance of every musical genre and subgenre provide us with various clues for a socio-political understanding of those phases.

Rap, constructing itself both in music and language, attempts to offer an alternative means of expression and perception. For instance, some examples of alternative ways of using language include abbreviations, slang, strong metaphors, and especially rhymes (see Potter 1995). These alternative uses of language reflect a certain level of flexibility that mirrors the conditions of street life and the necessities that one acquires to survive there. How they reflect this is directly connected both to how rappers perceive life and to the reasons behind this perception level. The examples I examined above offer us also an understanding of how rappers from different geographies use language with different strategies. In this chapter, the basic point I have illustrated via the examples above is that of how the diasporic community, namely Dutch-Turks, use rap to articulate their relationships with the “adopted country”, the “homeland”, and the world-wide “hip-hop nation”, as also mentioned in the previous chapter. These locally re-imagined places simply appear to be “based on the forms of local knowledge

underpinning [Dutch rapper's] everyday lives" (Bennett 2000: 55). Rap helps Dutch-Turkish rappers to distance themselves from the pressures of everyday life in the host-society and to relocate themselves "[...] by constructing *idealized* versions of national culture based upon an imagined past" (ibid, 62; italics in original). As analyzed in the song "Deprem", the Dutch-Turkish rapper emphasizes to what degree he perceives the Turkish nation and the state as strong by referring to a far-right politician's words. However, both Dutch-Turkish rappers I mentioned above were older-than-thirty, Dutch-born individuals. Their connections to "homeland" apparently are based upon much more visible diasporic consciousness even though, as will be discussed in the next chapter, many younger rappers have much more distinctive musical positions than their older counterparts. Many of those young rappers have stopped mentioning their connections or longing for "the homeland", but instead make a new kind of locally produced rap music in which lyrics focus much less on connections to Turkey, but rather predominantly on self-issues.

Another issue I want to mention briefly before closing the chapter is that despite Germany's geographical distance from Turkey, it is possible to mention developed and sustained relations in the "hip-hop nation" between these two countries. Such relations have cohered with emphases by rappers on lives both in the homeland and in Germany. On the contrary, even though the Dutch-rappers mentioned above are at almost the same age, with similar experiences in the "adopted country", it is hard to mention such developed and sustained relations between each other in the "hip-hop" nation. Rather they seem to be isolated from each other in this context. In this sense, it might be said that in the Netherlands, there is a locally produced rap music which has been compartmentalized in accordance with its "peaceful" and multicultural socio-cultural sphere.

## CHAPTER 7

### TURKISH RAP IN THE NETHERLANDS

#### 7.1 Preface

As discussed in previous chapters, the making of rap music in different vernaculars has a direct connection to the voice of various minorities in different parts of the world as a divergent mode of musical expression. Hip-hop culture achieves its goal of uniting multitudes of cultures and crafting a mix of global and local. Since the early 1980s, hip-hop culture – meaning the whole musical culture, including rap, graffiti, breakdancing, “specific codes of dress, hairstyles, footwear, and dance, as well as ways of walking and talking” (Wermuth 2001: 149) – in various diasporas has been a focus for research by social scientists such as sociologists, ethnomusicologists, social anthropologists, and cultural studies researchers. Thus, in this chapter I want to concentrate on rap music and hip-hop among young Turkish people living in the Netherlands in terms of the above sociological perspectives. The starting point in choosing this subject was, first of all, the need for work specifically on Turkish rap in the Netherlands, as the topic has been largely neglected, despite the existence of a large body of research on Turkish rap in Germany. The significance of discussing socioeconomic factors underlying the emergence of youth cultures was mainly realized after World War II. Then, the analysis of the relationship between cultural diversification and social mobility, along with dynamism among youth cultures, has become more important for the social sciences. When they began to be examined in terms of their direct or indirect relationship with the market, aesthetic values, and adult cultures, rather than being regarded as “rebellion” or ones resisting social control mechanisms, sophisticated, emerging social networks started to become one of the main topics of the social sciences. “Youth” refers to “a wide chronological scale – young people of both sexes in the 12-35 range (or even 10 to 30 in some countries)” (Nilan and Feixa 2006: 1). On the other hand, Bucholtz argues that the youth category “in some situations may be based on one’s social circumstances rather than chronological age or cultural position” (Bucholtz 2002: 526). Though the term “youth” is commonly defined on the basis of age, which is seen as an appropriate theoretical compromise tool, the term also includes cultural diversification and dynamism. For instance, hip-hop as a youth culture is

getting more attention in the social sciences, partially in response to this differentiation from society to society. Simply, it can be stated that youth “itself must be understood within a larger social framework, as a category constructed by ideological labor” (Walser 1993: xvi). In this framework, this study’s focus on various perception modes and the use of rap music among Turkish young people in different ways make this subject much more critical – that is to say, it is not possible to talk about a homogeneous Turkish hip-hop culture in the Netherlands in general. Moreover, based on different studies on various rap scenes (Prévos 1998; Soysal 1999; Bennett 1999a; Maxwell 2003; Solomon 2005a; Manabe 2006; so on so forth), we can reach the conclusion that rap and its perceptions constitute significant variety from society to society, and from culture to culture. Thus, one can speak of a Turkish rap scene in which different styles of expression are shown rather than a homogeneous scene. Furthermore, it will be shown in the following sections that the remarks of each interviewee on Turkish rap and their different perceptions of Turkish rap are also striking.

As stated in previous chapters, by the time of the appearance of Cartel in Germany in the mid 1990s, many young Turkish people had begun to pay closer and deeper attention to the rap scene than before due to the use of Turkish language and themes in the lyrics related to the experiences of Turks in Europe. Since the early 1990s, as Çağlar states, the rap or hip-hop groups’ “forms of cultural expressions which are identified as ‘hybrid’ or ‘creolized’ [...] receive considerable attention in media as well as in the scholarly discourses on German-Turkish youth” (Çağlar 1998: 244). In the mid-1990s, Cartel’s popularity was rising in Turkey and I was a student at the sociology department in the meantime. Much like many other Turks, I had also started to think about this relatively new musical genre and culture both for Turkey and in general. The historical background behind reactionary Turkish-speaking rap music is that, after German reunification, the state had to deal with the huge costs of the reconstruction of East Germany and therefore, the unemployment rate began to increase. Such economical difficulties “coinciding with German reunification” caused “a strong increase in acts of violence towards immigrants” (Doomernik 1998: 43). And as Cartel made its musical presence felt, people from both Turkey and Germany were discussing racist attacks against and killings of (see Kaya 2001) Turkish immigrants, especially those in Germany. Therefore, Cartel’s reactionary and nationalistic<sup>75</sup> attitudes against those attacks through rap attracted considerable attention from many different parts of society. These reactions and answers are still being discussed and questioned by many social scientists in various contexts. Back then,

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<sup>75</sup> Ayhan Kaya characterizes Cartel’s nationalism as “playful cultural nationalism” (Kaya 2001: 184).



in parts of Europe with large Turkish populations, such as Germany and the Netherlands, two different kinds of reactionary trends among rap groups and rappers surfaced. One stood as an anti-racist barricade against the rising neo-Nazi movement, for instance Islamic Force from Germany, while the other responded to this situation through a synthesis of Turkish nationalism and Islamism (for example, Germany's Sert Müslümanlar, or "Tough Muslims") (see Solomon 2006).

The main focus of this study is rap, though I have also been a devotee of extreme/heavy metal since 1990, as some of the personal anecdotes in the previous chapter made clear. I mention this because many people, knowing my interest in metal, both academically and musically, have asked why I didn't choose that instead as my dissertation subject. Yet I think there is a much more critical question concerning the topic of this study and my interest in metal music: Why has the subject of the relative dearth of rock/metal bands founded by Turks in Germany along with fans been neglected by scholars?<sup>76</sup> Elflein briefly answers this question from a musical point of view that "[s]ince no music education was necessary to perform [rap music], it was accessible to young Turks [in Germany], who seldom learned musical instruments such as guitar, drums or piano. Further, the Dj-style of hip-hop and sampling technology opened up the possibilities of connecting and mixing different music materials" (Elflein 1998: 262). The situation in the Netherlands is also the same as in Germany: that most of rappers to whom I talked to have no interest in playing any instrument even though they were economically capable of affording to have, learn and train to play musical instruments.

Heavy metal or punk rock, as Androutsopoulos and Scholz present them (2003), have generally stayed relatively marginal among young Turkish people in both Turkey and abroad. In Amsterdam there were two rock/metal bars that I frequented: Rock Planet and The Cave. Interestingly, the owners of both bars defined themselves as "ethnically Turkish", yet Christian by faith<sup>77</sup>. Even more intriguingly, both of them came to the Netherlands from the same city in Turkey – Mardin, in Southeastern Anatolia. I had short conversations with bartenders at both bars and also had a friendly talk with the owner of The Cave. Both bartenders told me that I was the first visitor from Turkey to ever visit the bars. Bearing in

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<sup>76</sup> We should note, however, the well-known death metal band Necrophagist (formed in 1992), founded by Muhammed Suiçmez, a German-Turk. But it should be considered a highly technical extreme metal band rather than a migrant Turkish band. There is another German band, Rumble Militia (formed in 1985), which stresses anti-Nazism in its lyrics, and which has a guitarist of Turkish origin.

<sup>77</sup> Actually, both of them are Assyrian (a religious and ethnic group from North Mesopotamia), but the owner of the Cave preferred to call himself Turkish though I asked him twice from which ethnical group he is.

mind that the bartender of The Cave is of Turkish origin, the situation becomes much more interesting. In contrast to the marginality of hard rock or heavy metal, even though fourteen years have passed since Cartel emerged, the rise of Turkish rap is still apparently continuing in Turkey. Especially due to studies and research on Germany, this subject has stayed academically popular and so far remained current. Compared to the numerous studies on Turkish rap in Germany, the Netherlands, another important European country in terms of its Turkish population, remains neglected. Thus, this study and especially the current chapter will be about Turkish rap in the Netherlands. As mentioned in detail in chapter 4, The Dutch-Turkish case differs significantly from the German-Turkish one in terms of state policy toward immigrants and socio-economics. Therefore, I find it important to see if and how the political/socio-economic differences between the two cases correlate to differences in developments in the cultural sphere (e.g. Turkish rap in the diaspora).

Alongside studying the social sphere of the Turkish diaspora and image of their identity through hip-hop, and the use of rap music to express the various problems and difficult experiences they live through, I also became part of this diaspora and a sort of “stranger” in the Netherlands. Indeed, in light of certain specific experiences I had during my ten months of fieldwork, I could say that sometimes I really felt like a “stranger” or sometimes perhaps even an “alien.” So one could say that even before moving to Amsterdam to do the research, I considered the very important issue of whether my very presence in that country was being questioned during the fieldwork. Shortly after arriving in Amsterdam, I struck up friendships with a number of young Turkish people. In our daily conversations, I tried to learn something about the everyday lives of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands in general. Speaking one day with a young non-rapper Dutch-Turk (aged 23) from Amsterdam, he told me simply: “If you run into trouble, like physical attacks at the hand of others – for instance Dutch, Moroccans or someone else – just yell at them ‘*siktir git*’ (fuck off). Believe me, that’s enough to scare them off.” When I asked him why he said this, his answer can be summed up in this way: Especially in the 1970s and 1980s, Turks faced many difficulties integrating into Dutch culture. As most did not speak good Dutch and so were unable to express themselves well, when they encountered certain problems, they tended to respond with fighting and violence. Some of them even stabbed or shot people. As a result, many non-Turks came to fear them. This bit of history might give us with some clues about Dutch prejudices about immigrants, especially Turks. My personal experiences also shed some light onto prejudice and distrust of foreigners. I normally tried to make use of my daily experiences

in the Netherlands during the fieldwork in order to understand and think critically as a social scientist. First of all, during the fieldwork, I was not merely a researcher carrying out a study of Turks, but also a Turk and a foreigner in the eyes of the Dutch. One incident demonstrates this vividly: One night, with four friends of mine from Sweden and Germany, I went to a bar where the DJ was mostly playing electronic/techno music. After finding a space for four people, I went to buy a drink. At the bar there was a woman sitting and drinking, apparently Dutch, with her bag hanging on her chair. After she saw me approaching the bar, she took her bag off the chair and put it on her lap. Then, when she saw me leaving the bar to rejoin my friends, she hung the bag back on the chair. This incident was a striking for me in terms of seeing the attitudes of Dutch people. Similar examples will be presented in the next section to connect the ethnographic materials and personal experiences to our main subject of Turkish rappers and the integration process in the Netherlands.

## **7.2 The Beginning of a Long Run of Fieldwork**

When I arrived in Amsterdam for the second time to conduct fieldwork in September 2006, the memories of my first visit were still very clear, fresh and noticeable. At the same time, I believed my fieldwork would likely be difficult due to the complicated social conditions of Dutch-Turks, which I had started to consider with the help of theoretical preparation during my first year of studying for a PhD. After the first interview, which I conducted on my third day there, I felt much more certain about the difficulties I would face. Actually, before moving to the Netherlands, an exhausting yearlong application process for a residence permit had given me some idea of these problems.

I reached my first interviewee, MT, with the help of Arka Sokak founding member Erkan from Hengelo, with whom I had been in contact with via the Internet before moving to the Netherlands. I learned that MT (he chose the stage name both because it sounds like the English word “empty”, and for its resonance with his given Turkish name, Murat) studied Sound Engineering at the School of Audio Engineering (SEA) in Amsterdam in 2002. After graduating in 2004, he founded MT Recordz, and released his first solo album *Yeraltı Kanıyor* (“The Underground is Bleeding”) that February. To date, he has made more than ten underground albums. The interview with the 26-year-old rapper from Amsterdam lasted almost an hour but over the next ten months of my stay, I had a few more chances to talk to him. I could not get MT’s personal contact information from Arka Sokak, as apparently he did

not want to share it, but instead got the address of his personal webpage, which includes forums for his fans and links to his production company. I posted a message on one forum explaining my reasons for moving to the Netherlands, along with a request to interview him and rappers he would likely know. MT's reply, however, was full of suspicion. In the message, he asked me very aggressively who had sent me to the Netherlands and who was supporting me financially. Moreover, he commented that some rappers from Turkey had attempted to sabotage his work. Before deleting both his message and mine from the forum, he gave me his e-mail address and suggested that we could discuss the matter privately. A few days after this exchange, we had our first face-to-face meeting. Based on this first experience and also the results and impressions from our one-hour meeting, I realized that I had a difficult year ahead of me. At the beginning of the interview, MT claimed that:

I wrote a song called “Şeytanların Cenneti<sup>78</sup>” [Demons' Paradise] about here [Amsterdam]. I think if you listen to that song, you don't need to interview anyone else. You can even invite other rappers to my studio for an interview. Besides, you could easily see their real personalities in the studio, because once you asked them to rap, they wouldn't be able to. Plus they're all supposedly freestylers, but they write the lyrics at home and then come to the studio and do freestyle [rapping that is spontaneously improvised during performance]. I have to say that I'm really good at doing freestyle<sup>79</sup>.

I struggled not to be negatively influenced by such a pretentious and generalizing statement by MT at the beginning of this study. Nevertheless, such a statement coming from a highly qualified, trained musician was doubtless very thought-provoking. The statements of MT above in a sense imply a kind of patronizing of other rappers in the Netherlands. Some of his evaluations, such as on freestyle rapping, reflect his aesthetic judgment against those who, according to MT, should not be seen as even “real” MCs, but “wack” even though they pretend to be good at what they perform. He challenges other rappers with free style rapping, because he considers that this technique necessitates a good command of language and ability of fast-thinking. Therefore, MT, who moved to Amsterdam when he was sixteen, clearly

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<sup>78</sup> The song will be discussed in detail below.

<sup>79</sup> “ ‘Şeytanların Cenneti’ diye bir parça yazdım buraya. Bence sen o şarkıyı dinlesen kimseyle görüşmene gerek kalmaz. Rapçileri stüdyoya çağır burada görüş. Bir de stüdyoda gerçek yüzlerini görüyorsun. Çünkü rap yap dediğin zaman onlar yapamıyor herif. Bir de hepsi free style'cı abi bunların, hepsi evde yazıyor, sonra gelip free style yapıyor. Ben free style'da harbi iyiyim”

criticizes Dutch-Turkish rappers dominantly born and raised in the Netherlands due to their linguistic skills. I found this statement very important. Indeed, such statements above, and previous studies on the Netherlands and Germany, pushed me to focus on the differences between both countries in order to elaborate on the Dutch-Turkish rap scene.

In the next section, I will draw historical and contemporary picture of Turkish-speaking rap music via information I gathered from different rappers.

### **7.3 Turkish Rap in the Netherlands: The Past and the Present**

All the rappers I interviewed regard Şener-E (34, Dutch-born, Amsterdam) as the first musician rapping in Turkish and a seminal figure of the Turkish rap scene in the Netherlands. But from a chronological standpoint, the first Turkish artist rapping in Dutch, not in Turkish, is Yüksel Özince, or Yukkigie B, from Amsterdam-Oost (Amsterdam-East). In 1997, he recorded a hit song “What nou?” (What’s up?). Yukkigie-B<sup>80</sup> was one of the pioneering Turkish rappers, but since he rapped in Dutch, not Turkish, it is better to categorize him also under the Dutch rap scene. The interview with Şener-E took around three hours and was very friendly. He lives in Amsterdam-Noord (Amsterdam-North) and works for airport security. Like most Turkish rappers living both in Turkey and the Netherlands, his enthusiasm for rap music came through the group Cartel. As an amateur musician, he said that the software he uses to make beats and record songs is the first edition of Magic Music Production. Here’s a brief summary of the birth of Turkish rap in the Netherlands in Şener-E’s words:

Actually, I’ve been listening to hip-hop since childhood, but I became much more eager to make this music after Cartel. I was into hip-hop anyway and some year, hmmm ‘95-96 something like that, we had nothing to make this music with. We had just audiocassettes. We pushed the button and recorded our voices and then from one cassette to another one, copying the voice and then adding beats, etc. It was terrible, but we were eager to do something. I started from that. Back then, nobody was doing rap except Yukkigie-B, but he was rapping in Dutch, not Turkish. There was also Sinan a.k.a Easy T, but he was also rapping in Dutch. After that, he started to write lyrics in Turkish. Before I met him, my first hit song here was “Amsterdam.” It was in ‘98 or ‘99. Also, we did a song called “Ölülerin Şehri Amsterdam” [Amsterdam: City of the Dead] in 2004. We did this with Sinan, Mista Killa and Maniacs sometimes coming to Amsterdam. Also there was another rapper called Panther Girl with us. Yet, my first song was “Amsterdam.” I made it and put it on the Internet. Later it become really popular because of

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<sup>80</sup> Although I tried to reach him, unfortunately I was unable to get his contact information.

Napster and really exploded. So I kept on making songs. In those days though we didn't have a studio or good instruments, we could make something listenable<sup>81</sup>.

From 1998 through 2000 Şener-E and Easy-T recorded some new songs together in a professional studio on a boat called "The Boat Studio." Şener-E also paints himself along with Easy-T as pioneers of Turkish rap in the Netherlands. In 2000, Easy-T, Şener-E and Killa Face<sup>82</sup> founded a new rap band and called it LisanZ. Easy-T lives in Utrecht, and the other members live in Amsterdam. Before Mista Killa joined the band, it was called "Lyrical Assassins." Mista Killa (recently known as Osman Han) told his story and the band's as below:

I was born in Turkey in 1980. Because of my father, we all moved to the Netherlands. Turkish rap started with Cartel in '95. Actually, until '95 I was listening to rap music on the radio and TV. I liked it, but not so much back then. With Cartel, it exploded. And then I memorized all of Cartel's lyrics since I really loved it. After Cartel, I got much more interested. I started to survey and listen to foreign rappers. I started to write lyrics in '98-99. Back then, they were really simple, extremely simple. I had already started [to write lyrics]. And then I contacted Şener-E. He told me that if I wanted, let's work together. I said of course, because I didn't know how to make music [meaning beats and sampling]. You should begin to learn how to do it at an early age. We came together under the name Lyrical Assassins. There were three of us: Şener, Sinan and me. So I met Şener in 1999 and in 2000, we founded Lyrical Assassins<sup>83</sup>.

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<sup>81</sup> Aslında ben ufaklıktan beri hip hop'u dinlerdim ama Cartel'den sonra tamamen artık patladı bu heves. Hip hop hevesi zaten vardı ve sene kaçtı ya 1996 mıydı 95-96'larda falan tabii ki elimizde hiçbir şey yok. Teyp kasetleri record'a basıyorsun çekiyorsun sesini ondan sonra teypten öbür teybe çekiyorsun, üzerine beat falan koyuyorsun. Çok berbat bir şeydi ama yine de heves. Oradan başladım. O zamanlarda Hollanda'da Türkçe rap yapan Yuki-B'den başka yoktu. Hollandaca yapıyordu. Sinan vardı o da Hollandaca yapıyordu. Easy T. Türkçe falan da yazmış, başladı o senelerde. Ta eskilerden Sinan. Onunla tanışmadan evvel benim burada ilk çıkış parçam "Amsterdam" idi. Sene 98'mi 99'mu. "Gerçi Ölülerin şehri Amsterdam" diye bir parça yapmıştık 2003'de. Onu şöyle yaptık işte Sinan'la, Mista Killa ile Maniacs var Amsterdam'ı gelir bazen işte. Bir de Panter Kız vardı. İlk parça normal "Amsterdam"dı. Sample olarak şey yaptım ben onu Amsterdam vay be o parça aslında onu öylesine yaptım internete attım. Ondan sonra Napster'dan aldı başını gitti. Ondan sonra koptu. Artık yavaş yavaş diğer parçalarla devam etmeye başladım. O zaman ne stüdyo vardı ne doğru dürüst aletimiz vardı. Ama yine de dinletebilecek bir şeyler yapıyorduk.

<sup>82</sup> This is the former professional name of Mista Killa. Later, he started going by "Osman Han."

<sup>83</sup> Ben 1980 Ankara doğumluyum. Babam buraya geldi çalışmak için... 95'de Cartel'le başladı bu olay. 95'e kadar dinlerdim ama televizyonlarda radyolarda. Hitap ederdi ama öyle aşırı değildi o zamanlar. 95'de Cartel bir patlama yaptı. Ondan sonra ben Cartel'in sözlerini a'dan z'ye ezberledim kafamda. Çünkü o kadar hoşuma gitti ki. Zamanının çok güzel bir albümü, 95'de çok güzel bir albüm. O zamandan sonra ben daha çok ilgilenmeye başladım. Yabancı rapçileri araştırmaya başladım, dinlemeye başladım kendi çapımda. 98-99'da söz yazmaya başladım. O sıralar çok basitti yani aşırı basitti. Yeni başlamıştım. Böyle Şener'le iletişime geçtik tanıştık. Bana dedi ki istiyorsan beraber çalışalım, dedim amenna. Çünkü ben müzik yapmasını bilmiyorum. O işe de erken başlaman lazım sonradan başlayamazsın. Beraber çalışalım dedi. Dedim amenna neden olmasın... Lyrical Assassins adı altında kuruldu o zaman grup. Üçümüz Sinan, ben, Şener.

The statements of both rappers above show us the importance and the effect of Cartel on Dutch-Turks. The first song by Şener-E, “Amsterdam” in the Oriental Rap style predominant on Cartel’s album, is directly about particular issues regarding to what Turks experience in the host country. In this sense, chronologically, semiotically and musically, it reflects particular similarities with Cartel. Şener’s song will be examined in the following sections.

In the Netherlands, there are just a few well-known rappers in the various parts of the country. Many rappers mentioned Şener-E, Osman Han (better known as Mista Killa), and MT as successful, important figures. MT is especially well known in Turkey as well, and he still actively makes beats professionally and produces rap, R&B and hip-hop. On the Turkish rap scene in the Netherlands and Şener-E, MT said:

Şener-E is the one of a few people making rap in the Netherlands. Since I came from Turkey to here, my slang is different. Also, because of growing up on the street, I have a different culture. My Turkish is different; I mean it’s not proper. I worked together with Şener-E. I mean, I produced his beats. He helped me a lot in terms of the use of technical stuff. I had no money or technical equipment. He was working with LisanZ, but he hid this from me. I suggested him to invite other rappers [Easy T, Mista Killa] [to my studio] so that we could put together another band under a different name. I said let’s become one, because if we don’t support each other and unite, it won’t work. Of course, they know many people here. I had just arrived from Turkey. My Turkish is different<sup>84</sup>.

MT’s account is significant in how he stresses differences in Turkish usage and cultural differences among young people living in the Netherlands. The command of Turkish among Turks born or raised in the Netherlands is generally poorer than those who were born or raised in Turkey. Moreover, significant differences also tend to occur between these two groups in terms of their perception of both Turkish culture and the Netherlands. For instance, Beatbox Sefa (21), who has been living in the Netherlands for 5 years, explains this distinction as follows:

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<sup>84</sup> Şener E, burada bu işi ilk yapanlardan birisidir. ... Ben Türkiye’den geldiğim için argom farklı, sokakta yetiştiğim için farklı kültür aldım. Türkçem farklı, düzgün demiyorum. Bazı olaylar, mesela, ne bileyim bizde şey derler hani “her sakallıyı baban zannetme” diye deyim vardır. Onu desen burada birine seni döver. Anlamaz çünkü onda kapasite... Öğrenmemiş, bilmiyor o kelimeyi. Onlarla da böyle oldu. Şener’e çalıştım. Çalıştım derken beatlerini ben yaptım. Bana alet anlamında çok yardımcı oldu. Param yoktu, aletim yoktu. LisanZ ile çalışıyordu ama benden saklıyordu. Ben de dedim onları da çağır, başka isimle başka bir grup kuralım. Birlik olalım dedim. Çünkü destek ve birlik olmazsa bu iş olmaz. Tabii onların burada çok çevresi var. Biz tabi yeni gelmişiz Türkiye’den. Tabii Türkçemiz farklı.

We grew up in Turkey and conversed with Turkish people. Because everybody is a Turk, everybody knows each other's origin. Nevertheless, those who were born here do not learn family culture. Why do they not have it? This guy was born here...He does not know family culture. As I said, you know Turkish people. You were also born and grew up in Turkey. In Turkey even if you are in a market to buy something, you can easily start a conversation. It might be a small talk but you enjoy this chat. It is not the same here<sup>85</sup>.

What Sefa states above illustrates a cultural distinction between Turkish-born and Dutch-born rappers. During the interview, he stressed to which degree he experienced difficulties with Turks regarding to socialization and the use of language in particular. Even, he repeatedly stated how much he felt comfortable speaking with me because I was born in Turkey like him. Indeed, the linguistic and social differentiations between both groups of rappers also look similar to the discussions on "gastarbeiter" (guest workers) in Germany who are generally also considered differently from Turks in Turkey socially and linguistically in general (see Morley and Robinson 1996). During the interview Sefa also stated that he preferred getting friendships from Turkey rather than a Turk who was born and grew up in the Netherlands. I think Sefa's words clearly reflect the existing distinction between Turkish-born rappers who grew up in Turkey and their peers in the Netherlands. Nevertheless, Sefa's explanation also shows that the other reason underlying behind the in-betweenness of Turks in the Netherlands is cultural differentiation. Hence, he had little contact with Dutch society, because he could not speak Dutch. Therefore, he had to be socialized with Turks. In this sense, another point drawing our attention is what he said about the lack of small talks at the market. He explicitly compared Turkey with the Netherlands in terms of his everyday life former experiences in Turkey, nostalgically constructed and with a kind of diasporic consciousness.

What another rapper, Melek/Şeytan<sup>86</sup> (30) (Angel/Devil), who was actively interested in rap music until mid-2000, told me diverged radically from the general understanding of Turkish rappers in a thought-provoking way, as it lays out a critical basis for understanding differences between Turkish rappers in terms of various interests and the ways Turkish

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<sup>85</sup> Biz Türkiye'de büyüdük, Türk insanıyla muhabbet ettik. Buradakiler veya herkes Türk olduğu için herkes birbirinin kökünü biliyor. Ama buradakiler aile kültürünü alamıyor. Neden alamıyor. Bu herif burada doğuyor... Dediğim gibi yani muhabbet konusunda da Türk insanını bilirsin, Türkiye'deki insanı bilirsin, sende Türkiye'de doğup büyümüş bir insansın. Orada en ufak yani böyle bir markete girdiğin anda bile ufak bir şey almak istediğinde bile bayağı bir muhabbet olur. Boş muhabbet de olabilir. Ama o muhabbetten zevk alırsın. Burada öyle değil.

<sup>86</sup> Shaytān or Shaitan.



identity and language migrates from culture to culture. Melek/Şeytan, a graduate of Amsterdam University's Sociology Department, was the most highly educated Turkish rapper I interviewed. He recently began pursuing a doctorate in history, and is doing a critical study of the Armenian Question (1915), a very controversial issue for Turks. Also, he has good command of both English and Dutch. He stopped making rap music in 2003, but he talked about the 1990s all the way to the present. He briefly explained the reason for choosing his nickname like this:

Why do I go by Melek/Şeytan? Years ago, I was interested in the philosophy of Zoroaster. I was impressed with the division between good and evil inside of humans – angels and demons inside of people, something like that. Also, I was impressed with Manichean philosophy. Also, because, my nickname is in Arabic, Moroccan friends of mine could also understand what it means<sup>87</sup>.

Since he was the only rapper with such a high education comparative to the rest of the rappers to whom I talked, it is hard to claim sociologically that highly educated rappers might present quite different opinions on some issues, such as nationalism or local culture from less educated ones. However, it is better to claim that he had much more critical and analytical thoughts of rap than the other rappers, as a sociologist and PhD candidate in the history department. It is still interesting to note how a highly educated young person draws a different picture of rap music from the rest of the rappers to whom I talked. Moreover, it needs to be stated that he was the only rapper who did not begin to be interested in rap music via listening to Cartel or any Turkish-speaking rapper or band. Particularly, he said something striking about how he saw Turkish culture and hip-hop when he began to rap mostly in English:

I had no contact with Turkish rappers. Actually, the first Turkish rapper I met was just a listener. Turkish culture was so alien to me. For me, this culture was the culture of my mother and father. That Turkish rapper knew some people from the Turkish rap scene. With his help, I met also a few of them<sup>88</sup> [...] Rap, for us, was the antithesis of nationalism. All my friends were from different ethnic groups.

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<sup>87</sup> Adım neden Melek/Şeytan? O zamanlar Zerdüşt felsefesi ile ilgileniyordum. İnsanın içindeki iyi/kötü ayrımı meselesinden etkilenmişim. İnsanın içindeki melek ve şeytan filan. Maniheizt felsefesinden etkilenmişim. Arapça olduğundan da buradaki Faslı arkadaşlar da anlıyordu.

<sup>88</sup> Türkçe rapçilerle hiç ilişkim yoktu. İlk tanıştığım Türk rapçi ki aslında sadece dinleyiciydi. Türk kültürü bana yabancıydı. Bu kültür annemin ve babamın kültürüydü benim için. bu Türk rap dinleyici Türk rap sahnesinden insanları tanıyordu. Onun sayesinde ben de bazı Türk rapçilerle tanıştım.

Nationalism or racism never existed between us. How would a culture made by Afro-Americans be racist! We were anti-racists<sup>89</sup>.

As understood from above, hip-hop has particular political interventions and subversive culture for him. He was the only rapper who sees hip-hop as a transnational political music referring to resistance against racism or extreme nationalism. Hence, during the interview, he focused on the political peculiarities of rap music and its use to create a sort of transnational identity along with critical and subversive attitudes. His approach to rap in this way reminds us of the rap band from Germany, Islamic Force, which has lyrics about German-Turks “who are subject to institutional racism, harassment, arson attacks and discrimination” (Kaya 2001: 193). Ayhan Kaya defines Islamic Force’s rapping style as “universalist political rap” (ibid, 188). According to Andy Bennett, “[c]entrality of rap and hip hop within local strategies of resistance to issues such as racism and racial exclusion is not limited to Germany but can also be seen in a range of other European contexts” (Bennett 2000: 144). While the rapper insisted on that hip hop is a political, anti-racist and subversive musical culture, at the same time he condemned some rappers for dwelling on superficial matters. On this issue, he said, “We listened to both East/West Coast [U.S. rap] as long as they were serious. We didn’t like superficial rap. Storytelling was important for me”<sup>90</sup>. The storytelling and *âşık* tradition was discussed in the previous chapter. One could characterize the interview I did with Melek/Şeytan as a sort of mutual exchange between two social scientists on hip hop culture. His approach to rap music provided divergent evaluations of the music, including both aesthetic and sociological aspects, with very useful information delineating the differences between Dutch-Turkish rappers. Regarding his professional position and hip hop, he said:

Since I am a social scientist, I was able to regard historical development of hip hop and to foresee its future in the Netherlands and Europe. Therefore, I did not feel like being involved in [hip hop]<sup>91</sup>.

It is clear that for political reasons, he gave up being occupied with hip hop culture. During the interview, he portrayed Turkish rap as fairly nationalistic, conservative and incapable of

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<sup>89</sup> Rap bizim için milliyetçiliğin anti-teziydi. Arkadaşlarım hep farklı etnik gruplardandı. Aramızda kesinlikle milliyetçilik ya da ırkçılık yoktu. Amerikan zencilerinin geliştirdiği bir kültür nasıl ırkçı olabilir!!! Anti-ırkçılardık.

<sup>90</sup> East/West Coast hepsini dinlerdik. Yeter ki dolu dolu olsun. Yüzeysel olanı sevmezdik. *Storytelling* önemliydi benim için.

<sup>91</sup> Sosyal bilimci olduğumdan dolayı önünde sonunda Hollanda’da ya da Avrupa’da rap’in tarihsel gelişimini ve nereye gittiğini görebiliyordum. O nedenle o gittiği yere geleceğe kendimi dâhil görmüyordum.

producing something creative. Moreover, as a highly educated and well-integrated individual, he sees Turkish rap music as useless in constructing a sort of diasporic identity or making a national shield. In short, while there are no easy answers on the effects of education on the perception of rap music, there are a few clues to its positive impact on, for instance, the integration process, as will be discussed below.

Another rapper with a significant critical mindset is Erhan, a high school graduate and onetime editor of a very important webzine, *hiphoplife.net*. He also presented crucial views on how to improve Turkish rap, especially musically and artistically. He harshly criticized MCs who, in his view, offer shallow lyrics and unoriginal beats and sampling. He even claimed that many rappers use this music as a method to pick up girls. He said, “Honestly, many rappers make this music to show off to girls... So the girls assume that they’re good musicians, make good rap, etc”<sup>92</sup>. When I asked him what he expects from Dutch-Turkish rappers lyrically, for instance, should they deal with the problems Turks face here?, he replied,

No, no... they should tell about quite different matters, much deeper issues. Everybody knows the problems here. They should tell me about deep issues, like much more political ones [...] I don’t want to listen to rap songs which still mention the same problems we experienced about ten years ago like [to suffer to live here], etc. We don’t suffer much anymore at least not as they exaggerated. We have social rights here<sup>93</sup>.

At this point, it seems that Dutch-Turkish rap music fans also do not have any interest in *gurbet* rap, but rather in moving beyond the model initially provided by Cartel. Differently from Melek/Şeytan, Erhan is still into rap music and an active listener. He listens to almost every kind of rap subgenre from hardcore to avant-garde. During my stay in the Netherlands, we had a sustained friendship and shared thoughts about many important issues. What I observed about him is that he is a Turk who is really well-integrated into Dutch society. He even sometimes showed unwillingness to visit Turkey due to given socio-cultural conditions

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<sup>92</sup> “Valla karı kız için birçoğu hava atmak için... İşte karı kız güzel sanıyor, iyi rap yapıyor sanıyorlar.”

<sup>93</sup> Hayır hayır, bambaşka sıkıntıları, daha derin konuları anlatsın bana. Buradaki sıkıntıları herkes biliyor. Daha derin konuları anlatsın, daha politik ağırlıklı olsun [...]İstemiyorum yani. 10 senedir aynı sıkıntıları duyuyoruz aynı rap şarkılarında yani. Ezildik, cart curt. Yok, fazla ezilmiyoruz. Abarttıkları kadar değil yani. Sosyal haklarımız var.

such as conservatism, the bearing of weapons or political attitudes, etc. In here, we saw two different respondents in terms of education and listening strategies. Even though they have differentiations, what is common for both is how to consider rap music. The two rappers do not feel like “being torn between two cultures” or languages (Çağlar 1998: 245), but on the contrary they have been integrated into the host culture. In this sense, the issues of music and language generally come into play when transnational immigrants engage with hip hop between locality, diasporic consciousness and hybridity. In the next section, we will move to the issue of language, one of the most important and exacerbating factors in the distance between the two societies. According to Dutch-Turkish rapper Osman Han, discussions about the process of integration are particularly based on “issues such as command of the Dutch language,” along with the way indigenous people see the traditional ideas of non-Westerners. The harmonious and effective conduct of daily life depends heavily on the use and mastery of the language of the host country. Knowing the host country’s language is a priority for the integration process. Likewise, in performing rap music, language is very significant. We can observe the situation of feeling torn especially in the language they use, which is mixed with many Dutch words and spoken in an accent different from that of Turks living in Turkey. Moreover, since their parents were usually born and raised in small Turkish villages, many rappers tend to have the rural accent of those villages. In addition, their command of Dutch is not good enough to rap in Dutch. This situation stems from the fact that they do not tend to spend their time with or have close friendships with the indigenous population.

#### **7.4 Turkish Rappers and the Use of Language**

I would like to start this section with another fieldwork anecdote to draw a picture of the social environment where I lived for ten months. One day, I went to the post office, which was close to my flat and also in a neighborhood (Kinker Street) with large Turkish and Moroccan populations, to pick up a package from Turkey. There are dozens of Turkish restaurants and shops in the neighborhood, and someone could even live there without speaking a word of Dutch. Most Dutch people can also speak English well, so one can use English to socialize. During the course of my fieldwork, I was unable to pick up Dutch, since it is a very difficult language. In my interviews with rappers, we both spoke Turkish, while I used English to communicate with non-Turks in daily life. At the post office, I addressed the postman behind the counter in English, but he replied in Dutch. I told him that I could not

speaking Dutch. However, he insisted on speaking Dutch, using a kind of pedantic tone of voice. Then I repeated that I didn't understand Dutch. In the end, he said sardonically, "If you live here, you have to learn how to speak Dutch." I told him I was only in the Netherlands temporarily and would leave in the near future. Nonetheless, he started to speak Dutch with me again. It took about fifteen minutes just to pick up the package. I could tell from his pronunciation and the words he used that his English was good. As I was leaving the post office, he said sarcastically, in Dutch, "Have a nice day." I think, this experience points out that to what degree the language is one of the important issues in the integration process. At the post office, the Dutch official did not show any tolerance toward me regarding my inability to speak the local language, though we could communicate in English perfectly. Actually, it is so rare to find Dutch people who cannot speak English since [...] "English is required as a second language in Dutch high schools; the Dutch government has considered making English the principal language of Dutch universities [...]" (Krimm 2000: 158). However, the communication through another second language is not the issue here, but integration of an immigrant into the host society. The officer did not accept my temporary presence in the Netherlands as an "excuse", but rather he reflected his opinions regarding immigrants who could not speak the native language. His behavior made me feel like I was just a "scapegoat".

As Gijsberts suggested (2004), the integration process is strongly connected with issues such as the command of Dutch and the effective use of language in order to express one's thoughts and understand the culture of the host society. Although many Turkish rappers claim they have sufficient command of Dutch to express themselves, they still consider that command insufficient to rap in Dutch. Thus, with such exceptions as Reverb (rapping in Dutch), Mista Brown (rapping in English), Hayat (recently rapping in English), Önder (a.k.a. Murda Turk<sup>94</sup>; rapping in Dutch), they predominantly tend to rap in Turkish. At the same time, a few of them stress the importance of speaking the language of the host country in order for foreigners to integrate with the host society. One of this group is Osman Han, a Dutch-Turkish rapper, who moved from Turkey to Amsterdam with his parents after finishing junior high school. He stated something significant about the process of integration and the use of language in the Netherlands:

Let me explain to you what integration is like. This can be achieved by efforts from both sides. For instance, if I move to this country I

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<sup>94</sup> It means Killer Turkish.

have some responsibilities to meet for integration, and the state also has certain responsibilities concerning my integration. My [first] responsibility is to learn the mother tongue used here; I have to do this. If I settle down in this country, speaking Dutch is a must, not a luxury. Besides, even if I don't internalize its original culture, I need to know what it is. I should even know Christmas, blah blah. You have to be knowledgeable about Dutch holidays. [For example] If everywhere is closed, you should tell yourself that they're celebrating something about Jesus Christ [i.e. Christmas]. How can the state integrate you into society? By sending you to school. I think it's good for us that the state requires that we do this<sup>95</sup>.

This might be seen as a positive interpretation of the integration process. However, whether integration is merely the adaptation of a group of people to everyday practices in the host society or a sort of process playing a crucial role in developing personalities is another dimension of this discussion. Perhaps it is not reasonable to expect a Turk to act just like a Dutch person, but at the same time, it might be difficult to explain why Turks who migrated to the Netherlands in the 1960s are still trying to hold onto particular socio-cultural values without any change and to act very conservatively in some cases. In this sense, integration can be interpreted as a kind of adaptation to the social life and contribution to the political life of the host country, besides the reevaluation of old values in a positive, constitutive way. Many Dutch-Turkish young people believe Dutch government policy has recently moved away from the ideology of assimilation towards integration. In this respect, Dutch-Turkish young people feel like a minority in the host country due to Dutch policies and cultural differences. For instance, what Melek/Şeytan said can shed light on young people's attitudes: "I had sympathy with the rap music performed by Algerians in France. I thought that they were the minority in France, like us. That's why we had sympathy with French rap<sup>96</sup>." The connections between Algerians living in France might also reflect the situation of feeling torn and otherness in the Netherlands. During the integration process, various policies under the umbrella of multiculturalism might cause migrants to feel like the "other" in the host country, and resistance of this feeling might bring out a sort of resistance through music, attitudes or

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<sup>95</sup> Sana şöyle anlatayım entegre iki taraf açısından olabilir. Mesela ben bu ülkeye gelirim benim bazı sorumluluklarım vardır entegre olabilmek için, devletin bana karşı bir sorumluluğu vardır beni entegre edebilmek için. Benim sorumluluğum nedir, ben buranın dilini kavramak zorundayım, mecburum. Ben bu ülkede yaşıyorsam benim Hollandacayı konuşmam şart, lüks değil, şart. Onun yanı sıra buranın kültürünü benimsemesem de bilmem lazım. Christmas olsun cart olsun bilmem lazım. Adamın bayramını bileceksin. Diyeceksin bugün niye kapalı bugün isanın şeyini kutluyorlar. Devlet seni nasıl entegre edecek seni okula gönderecek. Mecbur tutması çok güzel bir şey bence.

<sup>96</sup> Fransa'da Cezayirlielerin yaptığı rap'e sempati duydum. Onlar da azınlıktı biz de azınlıktık. Dolayısıyla bir yakınlık duyduk Fransız rap'ine.

politics. Şaperon (17), a Dutch-born rapper who feels torn and believes in having two identities, said the following:

I've experienced this [having two identities]. For example, I saw that the Turkish and Dutch people aren't close to each other here. Turks make up 90 percent of the population in the neighborhood we live in. We don't live very close to Dutch people. We know nothing about their culture. I said that we've lived here for 40 years, but as Dutch Turks, not just Turks. We're Dutch-Turks or Turks living in this Netherlands.<sup>97</sup>

What Şaperon states regarding not knowing anything about the host culture implies either a sort of indifference to it or being compartmentalized culturally by the host society as well. To consider Turkish immigrants as Dutch-Turks or just Turks living in the Netherlands reflects how he considers those who got just legal permit for residence in or citizenship of a country, instead of being actively part of the host culture. Therefore, integration through both language and cultural adaptation appears to be slowed down with such patterns of thought. What Osman Han says above, "This can be achieved by efforts from both sides" becomes much more meaningful here. However, many rappers claim that both Turkish and Dutch societies stay indifferent to each other in this sense. On the one hand, while Şaperon clearly points to the visible distance between the host culture and Turks, these words also reflect that hybridity, meaning a sort of in-betweenness and multiplicity of the origin culture with the host culture. As Stuart Hall says:

There are people who belong to more than one world, speak more than one language (literally and metaphorically), inhabit more than one identity, have more than one home, who have learned to negotiate and translate between two cultures, and who, because they are irrevocably the product of several interlocking histories and cultures, have learned to live with, and indeed to speak from, difference. They speak from the 'in-between' of different cultures, always unsettling the assumptions of one culture from the perspective of another, and thus finding ways of being both the same as and at the same time different from the others amongst whom they live (Hall 1995: 206).

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<sup>97</sup> Ben yaşadım. Türklerle Hollandalılar fazla içice değil. Bura mesela yüzde 90 Türk. Biz Hollandalılarla içice yaşamıyoruz. Onların kültüründen bir şey bilmiyoruz. 40 senedir burada yaşıyoruz diyorum ama 40 senedir burada yaşıyoruz ama bir Hollandalı Türk olarak. Ama bir Türk değil. Bir Hollandalı Türküz biz. Ya da bu Hollanda'da yaşayan Türkler.

In this sense, Şaperon and many Dutch-Turkish rappers, simultaneously represent dual identities which are constructed both legally and also socio-culturally. However, here, “speaking more than one language” does not mean acknowledgment of the culture of the host society, as Şaperon clearly states above. Therefore, integration through merely knowing the mother tongue of the host country might be interfered with by superficial knowledge or acquired biases. As we may understand from what he simply states, the language remains simply a tool to communicate in daily life without having contact culturally with the host society. His statement “we know nothing about their culture”, I think, does not refer to in-betweenness, but rather referring much more to isolation or exclusion.

The state of feeling torn, experienced especially in language, generates a distance from cultural and social life. But keeping distance from cultural areas in the host country deepens the situation of feeling torn which is also experienced through language. This is a noticeable vicious circle. Among the respondents, Reverb (20, Hengelo) is the only rapper performing in Dutch. One of Reverb’s distinctive characteristics is his honesty and clear-headedness about the integration process. Reverb clearly states that he does not see the Netherlands as a foreign land. After stating that Turkey is a foreign land for him, he said the following about language and the Netherlands:

So many things about rap attracted me. I’m not sure. It was both its rhythm and the opportunities it offered me to work with or I’m not sure...I [learned] from examples how it was used. The most important moment is the moment when I compose, the moment when I make the beat. At the moment I rap on the beat, I feel free. That moment, no one can interfere or tell me what to do. Because I use the beat and language that I choose. That moment, since no one can interfere, I feel very comfortable. It gives me a feeling of liberty. I rap in Dutch. I could rap in Turkish, but I don’t. Well, I live in the Netherlands. When I met MT, I used to do rap in English. I tried to write [lyrics] in languages I know. But then I met Murat. Afterwards, I realized that Murat can rap in Turkish very well, and I thought it was unnecessary for two rappers to do the same thing, and then I chose to rap in Dutch. Anyway, I was born and raised in the Netherlands. I thought that if a Turk could rap in Dutch, it would be great. My Dutch is excellent<sup>98</sup>.

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<sup>98</sup> Rapin abi o kadar şeyi çekti ki. Bilmiyorum hem ritmi hem duygusu hem yapabileceğim imkanları ya bilmiyorum örneklerden gördüm ne yaptıklarını nasıl kullandıklarını. Benim için en önemli olan yazdığım an, beat yaptığım an, onun üstüne okuduğum an rahatım. O an kimse bana karışmıyor, kimse bir şey de diyemiyor. Çünkü o an beat ve ben ve ben ve istediğim, hissettiğim lafları kullanıyorum. O an birisi bana karışmadığı için acayip rahat hissediyorum. Özgürlük hissi veriyor. Hollandaca yapıyorum. Türkçe yapabiliyorum ama yapmıyorum. Ya Hollanda’da yaşıyorum. Hollandaca yapıyorum. Türkçe yapabiliyorum ama yapmıyorum. Ya Hollanda’da yaşıyorum. Murat’la görüştüğüm an İngilizce de yazıyordum ediyordum. Bildiğim dillerde yazmaya



As will be presented in the following sections, Reverb's reflections on Dutch society appear relatively more open minded than many respondents. He raps in Dutch and regards the host culture not according to his Turkishness but from an identity of Dutch-Turkish. Hence, as he states, he feels also the state of liberty while rapping in Dutch. Therefore, Reverb becomes a distinctive figure in terms of language and the perception of the integration process, because he prefers to rap in Dutch as a Turk. Since he prefers to rap in Dutch, he simply aims at constructing a sort of bridge between two cultures with this attempt.

In the previous chapter, I presented some examples from German-Turkish and Turkish rappers' songs in order to emphasize their differences. Here another point that I want to focus on is that clear linguistic differences between Turkey-raised rappers and Dutch-raised rappers also exist. Therefore, what MT states, "My slang is different [...] My Turkish is different" is an important and true statement regarding those differences, even in daily life. Dutch-born Turks, who are largely from families migrating from rural areas in Anatolia and who grow up predominantly in immigrant communities, have a different kind of dialect of Turkish. Moreover, during the interviews many of them tended to search for the proper words in Turkish even though they knew them in Dutch. In such intervals of searching for the words at interviews, they stated to feel uncomfortable for forgetting Turkish words or the language. Indeed, we can especially observe linguistic differences through rappers' song lyrics. Based on his study on German-Turkish youth in Berlin, Ayhan Kaya states that the language of the youth "reflects a mixture of their Turkishness, Germanness and cosmopolitan identity" (Kaya 2001: 173). In this sense, Dutch-Turkish youth also use a language mixed of Dutch and Turkish in their daily lives. However, their attention to keep rap songs written purely in Turkish reflects their stress on Turkishness constructed through rap songs. When we look at rap songs made by those rappers, it is hard to meet even one Dutch word, though they often use Dutch words in daily life or during the interviews. While some respondents explain preferring to rap in Dutch as the lack of self-confidence due to poor command of Dutch, the rest of them stress both their Turkishness and to what degree Turkish-speaking rap music is important for them to express their feelings and thoughts.

Here, a short anecdote may be illuminating to understand linguistic differences between Dutch-raised and Turkey-raised people: At the beginning of my research, I told

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çalışıyordum. Ama Murat'la tanıştık. Sonra gördüm ama murat Türkçeyi yapınca çok iyi yapınca niye iki kişi şey yapsın, ben de Hollandacayı yapayım. Zaten Hollanda'da büyümüş doğmuşum. Burada da bu iş yapılırsa bir Türk tarafından çok iyi olur dedim. Benim Hollandacam çok iyi.

people why I was in the Netherlands and asked them to introduce me to other Turks so I could form a social network. This went faster than I expected since my landlord was a Turkish migrant. I heard that Turks hung out at a café/bar close to my flat and during my first month there, I visited this café on the weekends. While spending time there, one of the most striking things was how Turks complimented my command of Turkish. I was surprised, because no one in Turkey had ever said such a thing. People told me they could tell I hadn't been born or raised in the Netherlands or hadn't lived there for long. One 35-year-old Turkish man even surprised me by saying that such linguistic skill could help in being successful with the local Turkish women. Most Turkish migrants who have been in the Netherlands for long periods of time envy the linguistic mastery of visitors from Turkey, he said, because most migrated from rural areas and are largely uneducated so their Turkish is "rough." This situation points out to the influence of language among Turks in the Netherlands. However, it is better to formulate such a "rough" use of language with concepts like 'hybridity', or 'cross-over' instead of to pathologize as "being torn between two cultures" (Çağlar 1998: 245). Thus, the issue of rap music is generally discussed as related to both hybridity and diasporic identity. Simply put, these young people have connections not only with readily available global youth cultures like rap, but also diasporic connections with their parents' homeland. In his doctoral dissertation on Turkish migrant youth in Berlin, Levent Soysal asks, "How do we make sense of the dispositions of migrant youth when they speak to us in rap and graffiti from the public stages of Berlin?" (Soysal 1999: 132). Here, the significant point is that first generation Turks in both Germany and the Netherlands might not have spoken like their children, the second generation migrant youths. As discussed in Chapter 4, in the beginning, both countries saw the first generation as temporary visitors<sup>99</sup>. The second generation Turkish young people have a significant difference from their first generation predecessors, namely the ability to speak Dutch fluently. On this issue, a Turkish rapper (18) from Rotterdam, Şaperon, said:

I was born and grew up in the Netherlands, so I can express myself and understand things I'm told in Dutch, but my father can't. He migrated from Turkey. He came here when he was 13 years old. It's a totally different culture. He tried to understand it by himself, I mean

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<sup>99</sup> "They were simply unable to speak to us in any kind of cultural entity like music, unlike future generations. Can the inner voices of the first generation connect with the subalternity that is 'a relational rather than ontological identity - that is, a contingent, and over determined, identity (or identities.)'"? (Beverley 1999: 6) As Beverley quotes from Richard Rodriguez's novel *Hunger for Memory*, "I'm still keeping secret what I think no-one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets" (ibid).

the Dutch culture. Anyway, it was difficult to come here when he was 13 years old<sup>100</sup>.

Although he says that he can express himself in Dutch, Şaperon also stated:

As for me, I completely feel like I belong to Turkish rap. Actually, I tried to rap in Dutch too, but it didn't work. I've been able to express what I think in my own vernacular. When I have the chance to rap in my mother tongue, why would I rap in a different language!<sup>101</sup>

However, even though many rappers use Dutch to communicate in daily life or at schools, as for linguistic ability, some of the Dutch-born Turkish rappers said that they are unable to write lyrics in Dutch as they want to reflect their thoughts and feelings as much as they can in Turkish. Thus, many Turkish rappers apparently turn their back on Dutch-speaking audiences by choosing to predominantly write lyrics in Turkish. Hence, the Turkish rap scene might be defined as a musical scene which is semi-isolated from Dutch society and the popular music scene. However, in Germany, there are some well-known German-Turkish rappers in the popular music scene who dominantly make rap in German or mixing Turkish and German, such as Kool Savaş,<sup>102</sup> Summer Cem<sup>103</sup> or Eko Fresh,<sup>104</sup> who released his work from different record companies such as BMG Ariola München GmbH. While German people I met in Norway during two years and those who knew that I was carrying out a study on the Turkish-speaking rap scene, stated that they had heard something about the three German-Turkish rappers<sup>105</sup> mentioned above, Dutch people to whom I talked to said that they had no any idea to what degree the Turkish rap music scene is developed in the Netherlands. However, at the same time it should be stated that there are some famous Dutch-Moroccan rappers who make rap in Dutch (see Gazzah 2008).

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<sup>100</sup> Ben mesela burada doğdum burada büyüdüm ben sözümü anlatabilirim, denileni anlarım ama benim babam onu anlamaz. Türkiye'den geldi. Buraya 13 yaşında geldi. Farklı bir kültür. Kendi anlamaya çalıştı yani Hollandaca kültürü, onu çözmeye çalıştı. Zor yani. O yaşta 13 yaşında buraya gelip burada büyümek.

<sup>101</sup> Kendimi tamamen Türkçe rape ait hissediyorum. Çünkü ben Hollandaca rap de denedim ama olmuyor. İstedigimi daha çok kendi dilimde öne getirdim. hani kendi dilimde rap varken başka dilde niye yapayım.

<sup>102</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kool\\_Savas\\_discography](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kool_Savas_discography).

<sup>103</sup> He is a solo rapper cooperating with other German-Turkish rappers, whose official Myspace page has 2216435 hits by visitors until March 2010 (<http://www.myspace.com/summercem>). MT's Myspace page, the most famous Dutch-Turkish rapper in both Turkey and the Netherlands, has 326535 hits until the same date (<http://www.myspace.com/beyazkin>).

<sup>104</sup> For the long list of his discography see <http://www.discogs.com/artist/Eko+Fresh>.

<sup>105</sup> A few of them even know Killa Hakan though he raps in Turkish.

The next section will explore the issue of integration, followed by a discussion of the role of religion in the Netherlands and the murder of Theo van Gogh, in order to present the importance of these two critical subjects vis-a-vis integration.

### **7.5 Turkish Rappers and the Process of Integration into Dutch Society and “Gurbet” Rap**

Although my previous fieldwork led in different directions due to reasons explored in Chapter 4, the main subject of the study remains how young Turkish people consider their national identity through hip hop culture, especially and predominantly rap music. In this context, the significance of the fieldwork in social sciences can again be noted, along with theoretical analyses. During ten months of fieldwork, I discovered a number of sundry issues in addition to the study’s main focus. Mainly and briefly, in line with my observations, hip hop culture appears to contribute to the formation process of national identity in a way, and its usage for situating/positioning themselves in Dutch society among Turkish young people mostly follows different patterns from among their counterparts in Germany. One reason for this can be explained through the Dutch and German political systems’ differing approaches to youth culture and immigrants. For example, according to Ayşe Çağlar, the German state “was and is actively involved in the popularization of hip-hop among German-Turks as a creative expressive art form of the ‘margins’ ” (Çağlar 1998: 250). She says, “[y]outh centers (Jugendtreff, Jugendzentrum) in Berlin and the local Berlin government played a crucial role in making hip-hop popular among German-Turkish youth in Berlin” (Çağlar 1998: 249; see also Kaya 2001). Even if certain Dutch city governments provide financial support to a few youth centers, for instance by building professional music studios (as in Hengelo and Rotterdam), the picture in the Netherlands is hardly comparable to what Çağlar paints. It does not encourage Turks or other minority ethnic groups to produce/perform rap to use this music for the sustained process of integration for young people living in the Netherlands. In Germany, as Ayşe Çağlar also mentions, “Hip-hop was promoted together with other expressive art workshops (like break dance and graffiti) to promote alternative forms of communication” (Çağlar 1998: 249). In the Netherlands, a few local authorities actually promote not only rap music, but also various other activities in order to prevent young people from committing crimes, or to keep them away from the streets or violence. In a youth center in southern Rotterdam, a Turkish rapper, Fatih (Dutch born, 18) said, “Generally, Dutch people don’t come to this youth center. There’s a football pitch and a music studio here. They

built them to keep young people away from trouble and instead spending their time here, not on the streets”<sup>106</sup>. It seems here that for local governments, one of the first steps in integrating immigrant young people is to steer them away from criminality and towards adopting the social formation of the host society.

Here, the term integration is simply used to refer to the degree to which members of non-Western peoples become part of Dutch society. Gijsberts states, “For a long time the socioeconomic disadvantage of ethnic minorities received the most attention; currently, however, the more cultural aspects of integration have become the main focus of the political and public debate” (Gijsberts 2004: 27). Obviously, integration has become one of the most crucial phenomena for social sciences since the flows of migration to Western countries especially from the 1960s onwards. Clearly, integration should not be considered just a political process attained by governments, but both a cultural and political issue. The critical point about this issue is how it is regarded by people who are expected to be integrated into a host society. Foreigners sometimes feel that they are losing their own cultural values due to the integration process. In some cases, they consider this process a kind of cultural homogenization with the culture of the host country. For example, many rappers often expressed regret about the transition of the Turkish community’s traditions in the Netherlands due to difficult conditions and the survival strategies people have produced in order to resist the pressure of Dutch culture and politics. On this issue, Cey Cey (24) from Amsterdam said the following:

I don’t think that I’ve integrated completely into [Dutch society]. And I don’t think that I could, either. My heart lies in Turkish culture, not in Turkey. We couldn’t live in Turkey anymore. They would eat us alive [implying that Turkish immigrants are more naive than Turks living in Turkey]. People here are naive. Since people in Turkey tend to be confronted with thousands of different strange incidents almost every day, they always need to be careful, like foxes. For example, sometimes we visit Turkey just for vacation. He [a salesman] obviously asks us to pay 10 TL (Turkish Liras) even if the price is just 5 TL. If I didn’t look at the price list, he would pocket much more money [implying that emigrés face unequal treatment in Turkey, especially during shopping]. If you asked me if I really want to integrate, I would say, no! I don’t. I don’t want to lose my personality or my Turkishness. I’m proud to be Turkish. Allah bestowed Turkishness on eighty million people in this world. Being Turkish is a privilege, I think. I don’t want to integrate. I’ve already integrated as

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<sup>106</sup> Genelde burada Hollandalı yok çünkü. Burada futbol şeyi var, burada işte stüdyo. Çocukları sokaktan uzak tutmak yani vakitlerini burada geçirsinler.

much as I can. Time has changed. Actually, in Turkey, there are young people who don't live like Turkish. In İstanbul, Ankara or here, there are many young people losing the [Turkish] culture<sup>107</sup>.

Cey Cey's views illustrate particularly Turkish young people's situation of feeling torn between Turkish and Dutch culture which becomes more understandable and clear with a line from Cartel's song: "In our homeland we are thought of as being from Germany, and here we are called foreigners<sup>108</sup>" (Robins and Morley 1996: 248). The rapper's particular statements above reflect a prominent resistance against becoming assimilated. On the one hand, Robins and Morley mention Turkish families who escape Turkishness in order not to be excluded from the host society in their article about German-Turks (ibid). Conversely, Cey Cey had a striking self-confidence and was proud to be Turkish. However, the feeling of not belonging in Turkey seems also to cause the occurrence of diasporic consciousness at the same time. While Turkishness becomes an imagined identity in the Netherlands which is based on the feeling of pride, to visit Turkey apparently brings the feeling of alienation since Turks in Turkey treat them as if they are "foreigners" who can speak Turkish somehow, but on the other hand are unable to adopt particular conditions in Turkey. Such a situation of in-betweenness sometimes causes either negative emotional reactions against both Turkey and the Netherlands or the feeling of acceptance of the situation to appear. Let us continue the discussion with a long quotation from Şaperon (17, Dutch-born rapper) that is very similar what Cey Cey said:

Statements like "Nobody likes us here in this country, because we're Turks" have become a cliché. We've been living in this country [the Netherlands] for 40 years. Over time, we've gotten used to living here. When we visit Turkey, we see ourselves as strangers. We're also strangers in this country [the Netherlands], but I think we feel this in Turkey much more. That's why rap lyrics like 'we're strangers in this country' were [popular] ten years ago. We don't perform such songs [anymore]. If you were born and raised here, you would get the

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<sup>107</sup> Tamamen entegre olduğumu düşünmüyorum. Ama entegre olabileceğimi de düşünmüyorum. Benim gönlüm Türk kültüründe Türkiye'de değil. Türkiye'de de biz yaşayamayız. Bizi orada yerler. Buradaki insanlar saf. Türkiye'deki herkes günde 1001 olayla karşılaştığı için tedbirli, hatta tilki gibi. Biz bazen izne gidiyoruz Türkiye'ye. Adam göz göre 5 liralık şeye 10 lira alıyor. Eğer menüye bakıp da fiyatını görmesem fazla para alacak. Entegre olmak istiyorum diyen sorarsan istemiyorum derim. Kişiliğimi kaybetmek istemiyorum. Türklüğümü kaybetmek istemiyorum. Türk olmakla övünüyorum. Allah 80 milyona Türk olmayı nasip etmiş. Türk olmak bir ayrıcalıktır bence. Entegre olmak istemiyorum. Olabileceğim kadar entegre olmuşum zaten. Zaman değişiyor. Aslında Türkiye'de de Türk gibi yaşamıktan çok genç var. İstanbul'da Ankara'da burada da bu kültürü kaybeden çok genç var.

<sup>108</sup> Vatanımızda Almanca, burada yabancı.

culture of this country, but feel closer to the Turkish language [than Dutch]. In terms of your school life and friends, you also always spend time with Dutch people<sup>109</sup>.

He, as a Turk, has relatively more positive approaches to the Dutch society comparative to Cartel from Germany where “the everyday xenophobia in public space and culture” (Robins and Morley 1996: 249) is more often experienced. As seen above, Cey Cey and Şaperon state very similar thoughts of the host country: “My heart lies in Turkish culture, not in Turkey. We couldn’t live in Turkey anymore” (Cey Cey) and “We’ve been living in this country [the Netherlands] for 40 years. Over time, we’ve gotten used to living here” (Şaperon). In 1995, the imperative for the members of Cartel was to protect Turkish people’s culture and never to give it up (Robins and Morley 1996: 249). As observed from these two Dutch-Turkish rappers, there is not any hesitation towards or fear of losing their own culture, but rather they have a kind of self-esteem deriving from protecting the Turkish culture. Hence, they find rap songs saying “we’re strangers in this country” or about “exile in a foreign country” old-fashioned or “cliché” like many other Dutch-Turkish rappers. Without experiencing “the everyday xenophobia in public space and culture”, multicultural policies in the Netherlands have provided them the required socio-cultural conditions for protecting their own culture without the feeling of being assaulted by racists. Those rappers also stress that Turks living in Germany experience problems and difficulties that are generally different from those experienced by Turks in the Netherlands. The sense of integration tends to be questioned in certain cases in which antagonisms between the diaspora and the host country become much less visible. The chief similarity between Cey Cey and Şaperon is their both being born and raised in the Netherlands. Except for holiday visits, they do not form direct social connections with Turkey. Thus they experience the effects of the host culture very differently from young people who were born and raised in Turkey before moving to and living in the Netherlands. For example, MT, a rapper born in Turkey, sees integration or relationships with the host

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<sup>109</sup> Onlar artık klişe laflar oldu. “Biz burada Türküz bizi kimse sevmiyor.” Biz 40 senedir burada yaşıyoruz. Ondan sonra alıştık buraya. Biz Türkiye’ye gidince orada yabancılik çekiyoruz. Buraya gelince tamam burada da yabancıyız ama bence Türkiye’de daha çok yabancılik çekiyoruz. Onun için burada yabancıyız falan bu tür rapler 10 sene öncede kaldı. Biz o tür rap yapmıyoruz. Şimdi burada doğup büyüyünce burada kültürleniyorsun ama ona rağmen Türkçe dili sana daha yakın oluyor. Okulun arkadaş çevren o anlamda Hollandalılarla da içicesin. Burada ben kendimi denedim mesela Türklerle Hollandalılar fazla içice değil. Burası mesela yüzde 90 Türk. Biz Hollandalılar’la içice yaşamıyoruz. Onların kültüründen bir şey bilmiyoruz. 40 senedir burada yaşıyoruz diyorum ama 40 senedir burada yaşıyoruz ama bir Hollandalı Türk olarak. Ama bir Türk değil. Bir Hollandalı Türküz biz ya da bu Hollanda’da yaşayan Türkler.

society differently, and reflects his thoughts on this issue through a different lens. When I asked him if it was difficult to be Turkish in the Netherlands, he replied like this:

It depends on the situation. A guy comes to me and says that you have some integration problems. I say, “Look! I grew up in a big city.” I mean Trabzon<sup>110</sup> is a large city. Although I came here from Trabzon, which is a conservative city where people are very tied to traditions and customs, I don’t suffer any problems with integration, assimilation or the like; this [Amsterdam] is such a city. I feel very comfortable here, because I used to wear Nike Jordan shoes there and now I’m wearing the same here too. I used to wear big sweatpants there and now I’m wearing the same things here<sup>111</sup>.

Yet, in an informal interview, MT claimed that the Dutch government doesn’t want immigrants to get better jobs, but encourages them to be employed in the service sector or trade. So his comments about what he wears lead to a different discussion of everyday life and its relation to the integration. He interestingly stresses that he can dress like a rapper (sports shoes and sweatpants) in both Trabzon and Amsterdam without facing any problems with the people, although Trabzon is a relatively conservative city, as he mentioned. MT simply emphasizes the cultural and social liberalism in the Netherlands through his dress style. He apparently sees the process of integration as a sort of personal freedom of choice. On the other hand, his emphasis on the difficulty of finding a good job as a Turk illustrates another aspect of the integration process. Compared to Turkey, the Netherlands is clearly a liberal country in terms of cultural and social regulations and structures. However, reducing the integration to such societal structures as MT does seems to be a little problematic. Surely, his claim of the Dutch government’s so-called unwillingness to offer better jobs opportunities to immigrants also appears very critical here, because it reflects the emotion of insecurity and mistrust against the government though he feels liberated in his daily life and on the street. Such negative perceptions of the host country’s governance were also mentioned through the statements of two Dutch-Turkish respondents in the context of multiculturalism in Chapter 4.

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<sup>110</sup> “Trabzon is a city on the Black Sea coast of north-eastern Turkey and the capital of Trabzon Province. Throughout history, Trabzon has been an important meeting point for international trade and cultural exchange due to its strategic location which controls the *east-west* (Asia-Europe) and *north-south* (Russia-Middle East) trading routes. Trabzon formed the basis of several states in its long history, and was the capital city of the Empire of Trebizond. The population of the city is 275,137 (2006 census)” (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trabzon>, accessed on July 12, 2007).

<sup>111</sup> Nasıl olduğuna bağlı. Herif bana geliyor diyor ki senin diyor entegrasyon problemleriniz var diyor. Diyorum bak ben büyük şehirde büyüdüm. Yani Trabzon büyük bir şehir. Trabzon tutucu törelerine bağlı bir şehir olmasına rağmen öyle bir şehirden buraya geldiğim halde burada hiçbir entegrasyon problemi asimilasyon şu bu falan yok; [Amsterdam]böyle bir şehir. Ben burada çok rahatım. Çünkü orada da ayağımda Nike Jordan vardı burada da nike jordan var. Orada da eşofman giyiyordum bol, burada da eşofman giyiyorum.



While negative perceptions for immigrants by the host society have increasingly appeared in the aftermath of 9/11 and the murder of Theo van Gogh, Dutch-Turks experienced such negativity with the policies beginning to be applied in the nineties, as discussed before. The effects of religious matters on perceptions will be discussed later.

As will be discussed below in detail, even though many rappers claim that the popularity of “gurbet rap” (rap about being in a foreign land or exile) has declined, some of their comments in the interviews still indicate that they struggle over feelings of in-betweenness. This means that many feel they belong to neither the Netherlands nor Turkey somehow.

### **“Gurbet”<sup>112</sup> Rap in the Netherlands**

As aforementioned, such bands as Islamic Force and King Size Terror were pioneers of Turkish rap, but Cartel, which was mainly founded to protest racist attacks in Germany, particularly paved the way for many Dutch-Turkish young people to use this music as a way to express their anger in their own vernacular towards such attacks. Moreover, Cartel and also Karakan introduced “gurbet rap” and its rhetoric in songs such as “Sen Türksün” (You’re a Turk), “Almancı Yabancı” (*Almancı*,<sup>113</sup> Foreigner). Yet one cannot say that such songs are popular among Turks in the Netherlands. Almost all the rappers I spoke to said that performing “gurbet rap” or writing lyrics based on nationalism or the problems of Turks living in a foreign country were not popular at all. Some even see these styles as “old fashioned.” As an example of this, here is what Reverb, Dutch-Turkish rapper, said:

I haven’t composed any “gurbet rap.” It’s because I was born and bred here. So I can’t call this a “foreign land.” If I did, it wouldn’t be fair. It would be more appropriate if I had gone to Turkey because I grew up in the Netherlands. It would be ridiculous for me to call this a “foreign land.” Of course I want to go to Turkey. It’s a different feeling. I can’t call the feeling coming from this to be “gurbet.” It’s my country here. I grew up here. They took care of me here. This country helped me, educated me. There’s also, yes, discrimination, racism. But that’s changing as well. Of course there’s that. When I say I’m Turkish, everyone acts differently.

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<sup>112</sup> “An Arabic word, which derives from *garaba*, to go away, to depart, to be absent, to go to a foreign country, to emigrate, to be away from one’s homeland, to live as a foreigner in another country” (Kaya, 2001: 216).

<sup>113</sup> “*Almancı* designates someone who has adopted Germany; a ‘real’ German is *Alman*” (Robins and Morley, 1996: 248) (italics in original).

They don't understand it at first, but they look at me differently when I say I'm Turkish. They start talking differently<sup>114</sup>.

Like Germany (see Çağlar 1995), it is obvious that different kinds of Turks live in the Netherlands as well. The critical problem point here is why other people act differently toward the rapper when he says he is Turkish. Probably, a majority of the host society has a common idea which is probably based upon homogeneous perception of the foreigners' culture and life styles. Therefore, when people meet a distinctive figure, like Reverb –well-integrated Turkish with his open-minded thoughts, they might consider such a Dutch-Turk “strange”. I also need to admit that according to my observations as a Turk who lived abroad for three years, such a manner of perception of foreigners was extremely common amongst people from different European countries. For instance, when I shared my thoughts on particular sensitive issues such as religion, homosexuality or the Kurdish issue in general, some people I met regarded me differently from Turks living in Germany or the Netherlands. Usually, the conversations reached a particular conclusion which was based on differentiation between Turks from Turkey and Turks living in the mentioned countries. However, it is generally forgotten that there are different types of Turks in both countries such as secular, religious, politically left or right, and so on and so forth. Such overgeneralizations by people meeting “distinctive strangers” reflect the perceptions of immigrants which refer to homogeneous or totalistic understanding.

Fatih (18) from Rotterdam stresses the situation of being a stranger in a foreign country and strategies to cope with this. At this point, he still distinguishes the experiences of Turkish-Germans from Turkish-Dutch by citing an example from Cartel. For Fatih, there is apparently one significant similarity between Turks living in both Germany and the Netherlands, i.e., being a stranger:

One of the problems that I have to cope with in this foreign country is feeling like a stranger. I don't know what kind of experiences and problems caused members of Cartel to write those lyrics 10 years ago, but I wouldn't write such lyrics, because I haven't experienced what the members of Cartel did. We predominantly have contacts with

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<sup>114</sup> Gurbet rapim falan yok. Burada doğdum büyüdüm o yüzden. Gurbet diyemem. Gurbet dersem haksızlık olur. Şimdi Türkiye'ye gitsem asıl gurbetim olması gerekir çünkü Hollanda'da yetiştim ettim. Saçma olur benim gurbet demem. Tabii Türkiye'ye gitmem istiyorum o başka bir his de. Gurbet diyemem ama. Burası benim için gurbet olamaz. Burası benim ülkem. Burada büyüdüm. Bunlar bana baktı. Bu ülke bana yardım etti, okuttu. Ayrımcılık, ırkçılık falan var. Ama o da değişiyor abi ya. Var tabii abi ya. Ben Türk olduğumu dediğimde tabii herkes çok farklı, tabii hemen ilk başta anlamıyorlar ama Türk olduğumu dediğimde değişik şekilde bakıyorlar, değişik şekilde konuşmaya başlıyorlar.

other Turks. In other words, we're all Turks here. We feel like strangers when we should go out of our [neighborhood]. Here, this is our neighborhood. We're all Turks here. In my neighborhood, I feel at home. That's why we don't feel like strangers here<sup>115</sup>.

What Fatih feels in his neighborhood is apparently the feeling of safety. However, this is not because he has the fear of being attacked by someone in the other parts of Rotterdam, but rather he stays distanced from the host society both culturally and socially. Instead of socializing with Dutch people, he tends to stay close to other Turks living in the neighborhood. Thus, he would not take the risk of leaving his neighborhood so often. His Turkishness seems to be formed in a neighborhood densely inhabited by Turks. This is why the rapper would decrease the level of risk by socializing with people in this way or living isolated from the host society. Such understandings could explain why the Turkish-speaking rap scene has the position of being isolated in Dutch popular music.

As mentioned above, many of them consider Cartel's style somehow old-fashioned and somewhat inappropriate for the Netherlands, due to its different socio-political structure from Germany. Kolika (21) critically explained his reasons for not doing rap similar to Cartel's like so:

It's not that people are bored, but I did a lot of that kind of rap already. When Cartel was popular, I did that a lot. I think that in four minutes Cartel both killed the rap and made me feel the rap. Why do you see skinheads in their videos or Turks throwing Molotov cocktails? That's why older people in Turkey started to see rap as something bad. That's why I believe that Cartel both made us feel the rap music and killed it in four minutes. I think there's no ultra [Turkish] nationalism in the Netherlands now, because young people have been Europeanized quite a bit. If you try to talk about the problems of Turkey and nationalism in Turkey here, you get nowhere<sup>116</sup>.

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<sup>115</sup> Benim burada yaşadığım sıkıntılar tabii yabancılık var fakat 10 seneki bilmiyorum Cartel'in grubunun üyeleri neler yaşadı da öyle lirikler yazdılar bilmiyorum. Ama ben öyle lirik yazmazdım çünkü ben öyle bir şey yaşamadım burada. Çünkü biz Türk Türk'e yaşıyoruz burada biz bizeyiz yani. Dışarı çıkınca yaşıyoruz [yabancılığı]. Burası bizim mahallemiz. Burada biz Türküz. Burada ben kendimi evimde gibi hissediyorum. Onun için bir yabancılık yok.

<sup>116</sup> İnsanların sıkıldığından falan değil de o tür raple çok takılmıştım. Cartel zamanında çok yaptım. Benim gözümde cartel bence, 4 dakikanın içinde rap'i hem yaşadım hem öldürdüklerini düşünüyorum. Neden klipte dazlakları görüyorsun, bilmem türklerin molotof kokteyli falan attıklarını görüyorsun. O şekilde Türkiye'deki daha büyük bir nesil yaşlılarımız o şekilde türkçe rap'e kötü bir isim takmış oldular. O yüzden 4 dakikanın içinde Cartel'in türkçe rap'i hem yaşadım aynı anda da öldürdüklerini düşünüyorum. Şimdi Hollanda'da fazla milliyetçilik olmadığını düşünüyorum. Çünkü nasıl diyeyim buradaki gençler zaten daha çok Avrupalılaşmış olduklarını görüyorum. Yani sen Türkiye'deki sorunlardan bahsedersen Türkiyedeki milliyetçiliği burada yansıtmak istiyorsan bence hiçbir yere varamazsın.

Most rappers state that the most significant reason for the lack of popularity of “gurbet rap” is that the Netherlands has not seen attacks like the ones in Germany. Moreover, they laid particular stress on the cultural differences between Germany and the Netherlands. For them, German culture is much more assertive and based on “honesty” to a greater degree than Dutch culture, as claimed by Erhan (25), a Turkish rap fan, in Chapter 4. Similarly, many rappers also claim that even though Dutch people smile to your face, they actually have inner racist tendencies. Some cite examples like this: If there is a flat for rent from a Dutch owner, this owner will avoid renting it to a Turk. When a Turk calls the owner to ask if the flat is available, the answer is usually like this: “Well! I’d really like to rent it to you, but you’re too late” even if it is still available. So many rappers say they have some difficulties trusting Dutch people. Many rappers, in friendly talks or after interviews, warned me not to trust Dutch people. They mostly befriend Turks, not Dutch people, due to this distrust. Moreover, some rappers say they only feel safe in their own neighborhoods, where the population is mostly Turkish. For example, as discussed above, Fatih and Şaperon from Rotterdam said that they try to avoid going anywhere outside their immediate neighborhood in order not to feel like strangers and uncomfortable:

**Me:** You’re from the South. What’s it like for Turkish young people outside the South? Do you still feel at home? Do Dutch people make you feel like a stranger, or do you feel that way because you leave your neighborhood?

**Şaperon:** We feel like that mainly because we leave our neighborhood. There are lots of Turks living in Amsterdam. We know almost everything about our neighborhood. I know where my friends hang out. I’m familiar with every part of my neighborhood. In other words, I know my home and my place. Besides, the people in our neighborhood are a bit arrogant. We tend to think that our neighborhood is superior to others<sup>117</sup>.

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<sup>117</sup> [Bold font illustrates my questions in Turkish] **Buradan çıktın Güneyden. O zaman ne var Türk genci için dışarıda?** - Dışarıda ne olacak. - **Evinde hissetmiyorsun?** - Tabii evimde hissetmiyorum. - Ben şimdi Güneyden çıkarsam evimde hissetmiyorum - Evet evet **Ama burası Hollanda burası Rotterdam?** Burası Rotterdam mesela ben batı yakasına geçeyim orada bir Türk göreyim onlarla bıraktımı de fazla şey hissetmiyorum. Ben güneyin insanıyım. Buradan çıktığımızda yabancı gibi hissediyoruz kendimizi öyle diyeyim yani. **Hollandalılar mı sizi yabancı mı hissettiriyor siz sadece mahallenizi bıraktığınız için mi yabancı hissediyorsunuz?** Bizim daha çok mahallemizi bıraktığımız için evet mahallemizi bıraktığımız için çünkü amsterdamda da bayağı Türk var yani. Evet, ama burada yani özellikle bizim mahalle kendini fazla şey yapar yani. Burada her noktayı biliyorsun yani. Bu nerede arkadaşlar nereye gider tanıyorum bölgeleri. Evimi mekanımı biliyorum yani. Biraz da kendini beğenmişlik var bu mahallede. Bizim mahalle üstündür diğer mahallelerden böyle bir şey var.

Here, the striking point is that these rappers feel a kind of self-confidence and have a sort of superiority complex due to the neighborhood they live in. However, being distant from other parts of the city because one feels safe in a particular neighborhood might slow down the integration process, at least psychologically. Though ghettos in the Netherlands are rather different from Kreuzberg or American-style ghettos, there are still some areas which are mostly populated by non-Dutch ethnic communities. The increasing level of feeling like a stranger due to the socio-cultural distance between two societies tends to become a sort of feeling like self-confidence stemming from any source like neighborhood, ethnicity or language. But success in professional life, education or art could also give immigrants a means of coping with an inferiority complex-like feeling. This can be interpreted as either a struggle with/against the host society or resentment against present socio-cultural and economic conditions. On this subject, what Osman Han (25, Amsterdam) said can help us understand this situation. Asked if discrimination and racism against Turks often occur in the Netherlands, he replied as follows:

No, bro! I oppress whoever tries to oppress me. I approach these issues with this mentality now. If the Netherlands tried to oppress me, I would break its neck. We Turks have trained ourselves so much. So I can grapple with the Netherlands by both fighting and challenging with my knowledge. What's more important is of course to challenge by using knowledge. I mean, for example, a Dutch guy might have graduated from elementary school, but I graduated from high school, bro. He should kneel down in front of me. There are Dutch people working for me at my workplace. They feel it beneath them. I can defeat them this way, bro. I mean, this is the real nationalism. You can challenge/beat a stranger/foreigner not with empty talk, but with information, technology and decency as a nationalist<sup>118</sup>.

On the other hand, MT suggests a different point of view which can show us significant differences between rappers. In presenting these approaches to the host society, here I mean to emphasize the heterogeneity in perceptions of the integration process.

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<sup>118</sup> Yok abi, beni ezeni ben ezerim. Artık ben bu mentalite ile bakıyorum. Şu Hollanda beni ezerse kafasını kırarım. Biz burada tekil yaşayan Türkler kendini öyle geliştirdi ki. Ben onu döverek de kırarım bilgiyle de kırarım. Daha önemlisi bunu bilgiyle kırmak. Çünkü o ortaokul mezunuysa ben yüksek okul mezunuyum abi. Önümde diz çökmesi lazım. İşyerimde altımda çalışan Hollandalılar var. kendilerine yediremiyorlar. Ben onları öyle ezerim abi. Asıl milliyetçilik de budur yani. Kuru gürültüyle değil karşıdakini yabancıyı ezmek istiyorsan milliyetçi olarak bilgiyle teknolojiyle edeple ezersin.

We're guests here [the Netherlands] and we always need to be aware of this fact. Even if we live here for forty years or would be the fifth generation here, but we will be still in their home. This is my point of view. If I had a car, I would give way to cars driven by Dutch people, but if they don't do the same, I wouldn't be angry with them. You sometimes don't feel free here. You're definitely not free here<sup>119</sup>.

It is interesting that a Dutch-Moroccan historian, Abdelhakim, says also, "we are still guests here..." (Buruma 2006: 258). As mentioned above, MT also presented a particular mistrust to the Dutch government. Here, he states that he feels like a guest in the Netherlands. It might be suggested that such mistrust and the feeling of insecurity have caused him to say that "we're guests here" which connotes the feeling of temporality in the host country. MT's comments might pave the way for exploring some of the particular socio-cultural conditions in the Netherlands immigrants face which create a feeling not of being at home, but on the contrary, feeling like a stranger. While the first opinion by Osman Han represents a more self-confident individual, the second one signifies the feeling of a sort of unease and being in-between. What Fatih (18) says about the neighborhood he lives in and how he feels when he has to leave for any reason is striking in terms of his feelings of insecurity or being a stranger. In the interview, he said, "Here's Rotterdam. For example, when I go to the western side of the city and run into a Turk, I don't feel comfortable. I belong to the south. I mean, when we leave our neighborhood, we feel like strangers"<sup>120</sup>.

Obviously, education is important in terms of engaging immigrants in the integration process. But at the same time, based on rappers' opinions, it seems clear that Turkish immigrants have faced certain difficulties with education. Education is not only engaging individuals in the process of learning, but also their engagement in the socialization process. According to Gijsberts, "The better educated migrants are, the more contacts they have with the indigenous population and the less traditional are the views they hold" (Gijsberts 2004: 31). But the problems in this process require dealing with more critical issues, as the school experience of Cey Cey (26) from Amsterdam exemplifies:

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<sup>119</sup> Biz burada misafiriz ve bunun da her zaman farkında olmalıyız. Burada kırk sene de yaşasak, beşinci nesil de olsa, hala onların evinde oluyor olacağız. Ben böyle düşünüyorum. Eğer bir arabam olsa, Hollandalıların arabasının geçmesine öncelik tanırdım. Ama aynı şeyi o yapmasa ona kızmam. Bir şekilde, burada özgür hissetmiyorsun. Burada kesinlikle özgür değilsin.

<sup>120</sup> Burası Rotterdam. Mesela ben Batı yakasına geçeyim orada bir Türk göreyim onlarla kendimi de fazla şey hissetmiyorum. Ben güneyin insanıyım. Buradan çıktığımızda yabancı gibi hissediyoruz kendimiz öyle diyeyim yani.

I went to a school which didn't have so many foreign students. There weren't any other Turkish students, either. I was ostracized by the rich Dutch people there. To make a long story short, I beat up a kid and broke his nose. The kid's father, who was a retired police officer, sued me. I was fined, the incident temporarily went on my personal record, and finally I was expelled from the school. Afterwards, I developed a grudge against these people. The reason for the fight was discrimination. There was a cleaning woman who was Turkish. They bothered and provoked that woman. They said that Turkish people were only suited for such jobs and that this job was just for her. And she was my mother's age<sup>121</sup>.

Dutch Turks told me many stories marking the social and cultural distance between the native population and Turkish immigrants, besides some negative feelings that they have towards the native population similar to Cey Cey's. Turkish rappers sometimes harshly criticized me for developing relationships with Dutch people, as this example shows: During my stay in Amsterdam, the University of Amsterdam provided me with an affiliation. I was provided an office and access to the library. To start the legal process for this, I had to apply to the Student Affairs Office, where a man who worked there was very helpful to me. I shared this with a few rappers and told them how the man helped me much more than I expected. Unexpectedly, though, they were skeptical and even angry at the story, telling me that unless there's money to be made, Dutch people never help anybody else. Even though I told the story in detail and stressed that his help had nothing to do with money, but only official business, they still were not convinced. They insisted that a Dutch person would never help unless he stood to make some money from it. In the end I explained that the man was a "karakafa"<sup>122</sup> [blackhead] Dutch citizen. When they heard this, they suddenly changed their attitude, and said, "Ok! He helped you because he's a 'blackhead'." This reaction surprised me as much as their initial skepticism. The reason underlying this social and cultural distance as exemplified by the rappers' reaction might be the experiences of Dutch Turks similar to what Cey Cey went through. Finally, I would like to conclude this section by saying that interestingly, while many Dutch-Turkish rappers see "gurbet rap" as old-fashioned and say they don't want to create any, what they told me in interviews about being "torn between" or "caught between" two

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<sup>121</sup> Ben pek yabancı olmama rağmen bir okula gittim. Hiç Türk yoktu okulda. Ben orada zengin Hollandalılar tarafından dışlandım. Neyse uzatmadan, ben orada bir çocuğu dövdüm. Burnunu kırdım. Oğlanın babası emekli polis memuru çıktı. Bana dava açtı, para cezası, geçici sicil aldım ve okuldan atıldım. Bunlara karşı kinim arttı. Kavganın nedeni ayrımcılık. Bir temizlikçi Türk kadın vardı. Onu rahatsız ediyorlardı. Onu tahrik ediyorlardı. "Türkler anca bu işi yapar, tam sana göre iş gibi şeyler" söylüyorlardı. Annem yaşında bir kadın.

<sup>122</sup> In the Netherlands, being black is generally associated with ethnic communities such as Turkish, Moroccan, Indian or Iranian – i.e., being black means being non-European.

cultures was in fact quite similar to the themes of this rap style. For example, Cey Cey's complaints about being charged more at stores in Turkey because he is a *gurbetçi*, or what Şaperon said about relationships between Dutch and Turk people, can give insight into the themes of "gurbet rap".

In the next section, Islam and its role in the Turkish diaspora will be examined in the Dutch context in light of the theoretical discussions in Chapter 4 of Islamophobia and multicultural policies.

## 7.6 The Role of Religion among Turkish Immigrants in the Netherlands

My initial aim in this section is to explore the Islamophobia in the wake of a series of tragic incidents such as 9/11, the bomb attacks in Madrid and London, the debate over cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed<sup>123</sup>, and the 2004 murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, which will be analyzed in the next section in detail. Recently, for instance, Dutch politician Geert Wilders, the leader of the Party for Freedom (Partij voor de Vrijheid, or PVV) who excoriates Islam much as van Gogh did and wants to curb immigration, particularly from non-Western countries, has become a significant figure in the debate over the growing Islamophobia in the Netherlands. The top banner of the English version of Wilders' official website says, "Stop the Islamization of Netherlands"<sup>124</sup>. According to Gijsberts, Dutch views of Islam have turned negative in recent years, "partly as a result of the terrorist attacks in New York and Washington on 11 September 2001, the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and the Palestine-Israeli conflict. An SCP (Social and Cultural Planning Office) survey of the Dutch population revealed great distrust in the future cultural integration of minorities" (Gijsberts 2004: 27).

Religion plays an important role in cultural integration. At present more than 900,000 Muslims live in the Netherlands. Virtually all Turks and Moroccans regard themselves as Muslim, and this applies just as much for the second as the first generation. This unwaveringly strong identification with Islam is moreover closely related within these groups to a close identification with their own ethnic group (ibid, 30).

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<sup>123</sup> European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia report on "Muslims in the European Union - Discrimination and Islamophobia" (2006a).

<sup>124</sup> <http://www.groepwilders.com/website/default.aspx?ID=4>, accessed on July 24, 2008.



However, it bears saying that both these groups, Turks and Moroccans, though both are Muslims, see each other's religious understanding and ways of life differently. For example, many Turks see themselves as being much more conservative and close to Islamic worldviews. On the other hand, both groups have been affected negatively in the wake of 9/11, the Madrid and London bombings, etc. To grasp the changes in Dutch people's stance on Turks, especially due to religious differences and their post-9/11 perceptions, I asked rappers if being a Turk or Muslim in the Netherlands was difficult or not. Many replied along the following lines, like two Dutch-born rappers from Rotterdam:

**Şaperon (17):** It's more difficult to be a Muslim<sup>125</sup>.

**Fatih (18):** I think they see you as different because you're a Muslim. For example, when you go to a job interview, if they can tell you're a Muslim, they immediately rule you out<sup>126</sup>.

What Fatih states above is also apparently confirmed by a report by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC): "Differences in wages, type of employment and unemployment rates of migrants, of which a significant *proportion belong* to Muslim faith groups, indicate persistent exclusion, disadvantage and discrimination" (EUMC 2006b: 11). According to the report:

- Muslims are often victims of negative stereotyping, at times reinforced through negative or selective reporting in the media. In addition, they are vulnerable to manifestations of prejudice and hatred in the form of anything from verbal threats through to physical attacks on people and property.
- Many Muslims, particularly young people, face limited opportunities for social advancement, social exclusion and discrimination which could give rise to hopelessness and alienation (ibid, 8).

Also, the 2006 report by the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia (EUMC, superseded in 2007 by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, or FRA) about the negative perception of Islam among Europeans said this:

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<sup>125</sup> Daha çok Müslüman olmak!

<sup>126</sup> Bence Müslüman olduğun için sana farklı bakıyorlar. Mesela bir kişi iş görüşmesine gittiğinde bakıyorlar Müslümansen bakmadan hemen atarlar yani.

National as well as international opinion polls invariably show a negative picture of general public opinion towards Muslims, but with considerable variations between Member States. The 2004 GfK Custom Research survey showed that over 50 percent of Western Europeans considered that Muslims living in Europe today are viewed with suspicion (EUMC 2006: 10).

Religion seems to be a key factor in categorizing foreigners, especially in the aftermath of September 11 and van Gogh's murder. As the entire Muslim community was held responsible for the September 11 attacks, and violence against and opposition to foreigners – particularly Muslims – increased, immigrants started to identify themselves generally with religion and to strongly link their identity with Islam. In the aftermath of van Gogh's murder, some rappers wrote lyrics with the main theme of religion. Hayal (17, Amsterdam), one of the three female rappers I interviewed in the Netherlands, is one of them. Hayal wrote a song entitled "Allah." She obviously uses rap music' "the discourse of protest and commentary", like her counterparts in Germany (see Solomon 2006), in order to show reactions against the negative imaging of Turks' identities through Islam. She said that her early lyrics were in Turkish and dealt mainly with religion, but that her later lyrics were in English and dealt mainly with love. Although one line in her lyrics ("People prefer love to religion") seems contradictory, this change can be explained through her personal development and social conditions. One part of the song is as follows:

**Allah**

İnsanlık ölmüş, gençlik solmuş,  
Herkesin derdi para pul olmuş  
Vicdanları aç iken,  
Keseleri dolmuş.

Millet aşkı dinden üstün tutmuş  
Allah aşkı sönmüş,  
Dumanı tütmüş,  
Buna alkış tutan körmüş  
Her dinsiz dinine bir set örmüş.

Müslüman ise dinini ayıp misali örtmüş  
Kimi dine küfür etmiş,  
Kimi elleri açıp çökmüş

Avrupa hevesi benliğimizi sömürmüş.

**Allah**

Humanity has died, youth faded away,  
While money is the only concern  
Consciences are poor,  
But their money bags are full.

People prefer love to religion  
Love for Allah has died away  
And already disappeared  
Those who applaud this are blind  
Each unbeliever's closed the door on his religion.

Muslims have hid religion like a disgrace  
Some have cursed religion,  
Some have begged for and genuflected.

Ambition for Europeanness's taken our identities.

Boş vaadlerle çok ocak söndürmüş.	And wiped out many households with empty promises.
Küfre girme kendine gel,	Don't be an unbeliever; behave yourself,
Gözlerim yaşardı oldu sel.	I'm tired of crying.
Allah aşkına vurma gem, Bu kandırmacaya olma yem Allah birdir, Allah tektir, Dini sevdik, Al bir tekbir. Uzaklaşma, burda kal, Hak dinde.	Never restrain your love for Allah. And don't take the bait in this game. Allah is the one, Allah is the only one. Make them love religion, Say "Allahuekber" (Allah is great). Don't go away yow, stay here, Religion is the justice.

As mentioned in the previous section, Robins and Morley (1996) emphasize a particular German-Turkish community who escape their ethnic identity to avoid exclusion from German society. With the lines "Muslims have hid religion like a disgrace/ Some have cursed religion/ Some have begged for and genuflected" from the song above, the rapper also criticizes the presence of a community escaping from religious identity. She began to be into rap music in 2004. In those years, Islamphobia had been triggered by the tragic incidents mentioned above. Religion had come to construct the major part of ethnic identity. Therefore, she emphasizes the ethnic identity of a regular Turk through religion in the song. Ironically, in the interview she also stated she had started writing rap songs about emotional issues recently, but not Turkish anymore but English since she stated she wanted to be different from the majority of Turkish rappers who are dominantly males. She briefly said, "Generally I write about love. Also, other stuff, problems, etc."<sup>127</sup> This shift in her rap songs might illustrate a relative decline of Islamphobia.

In his article about Islamic themes in Turkish rap, Thomas Solomon examines rap groups from both Germany and Turkey. One of those groups, Sert Müslümanlar, "whose name can be translated as 'Tough Muslims'", is composed by German-Turkish rappers from Frankfurt that "has in particular cultivated an explicitly Muslim identity [...]" (Solomon 2006: 61). Solomon presents an excerpt from Sert Müslümanlar's song "Solingen" in which "[...] invocation of a Muslim identity can be heard in their song about attacks on German Turks by neo-Nazis in 1993. According to Solomon:

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<sup>127</sup> Genelde aşk hakkında yazıyorum. Onun dışında işte sorunlar falan.

In this song the rappers suggest that the unity of a shared Muslim identity is a way to find strength. However, this Muslim identity is in no way passive. The rapper adopts the aggressive rhetoric of US gangsta rap and says he will use his gun to defend himself and his fellow Muslims against those who attack them. (Solomon 2006: 62)

An excerpt from the song, which can be also regarded as an example of Oriental rap, is below:

### **Sert Müslümanlar – “Solingen” (excerpt)**

[depressed speaking voice:]

Ah gurbet ah	Oh, living away from the homeland, oh
Yaktın harcadın bizi	You've ruined us, you've done us in
Suçumuz neydi?	What was our fault?
Müslümanlığımız mı? Türklüğümüz mü?	Our being Muslim? Our being Turks?
Yoksa insanlığımız mı?	Or was it our being human?
Allah rahmet eylesin	May God have mercy
Ölenler kalbimizde yaşıyor	The dead go on living in our hearts

[...]

[rap, chorus:]

Bizler Müslüman kardeşiz, kardeşiz	We are Muslim brothers, we're brothers
Hep beraber olup gavurları yeneriz	Together we'll defeat the unbelievers

[rap, 1st verse]

Ne haber getirdin gene bana?	What news have you brought me again?
Ey Müslüman nöbette kim buralarda?	Hey Muslim, who's standing guard here?
Al eline tabancayı çık dışarı	Get your pistol and go outside
[onomatopoeia] tabancayı çek	[onomatopoeia] draw your gun
Çek çek çek çek	Draw it, draw it, draw it, draw it
Acıma hepsini vur tek tek ...	Don't feel sorry, shoot them one by one ...

(Solomon 2006: 62)

The major difference between these two songs above is how they imagine identities through Islam. While the Dutch rapper expresses her discontents via relatively “passive” words which refer generally to rituals, faith or emotional perceptions, German-Turkish rappers directly use an “explicit” language including violent attitudes which are visible at the end of excerpt. As aforementioned, xenophobia or racist attacks on property also occurred in the Netherlands after the murder of Theo van Gogh, yet there was not any report related to physical attacks or violence directly against foreigners. In this context, while the first song calls for a “decent”

Muslim who performs religious rituals, the second one calls for the unity of Muslims as if they were in a kind of war or even “jihad” in Islamic terminology. Ted Swedenburg also discusses “heterogeneous nature of Islam” through rappers and rap groups in France and Britain such as Aki Nawaz, Akhenaton (Swedenburg 2001: 75). The expressions of rappers appear to have differences from each other in accordance with socio-cultural and political conditions in the host country.

Indeed, various Dutch TV stations broadcast documentaries on Islam that are usually subtitled in Turkish, Arabic and Dutch. They often feature religious figures reciting the Quran, and they also portray different ethnic groups’ relations with religion and also the place of religion in their everyday lives. The Quran recitations are subtitled in both Turkish and Dutch. The documentaries on Islam are broadcast with the intention of providing native people with accurate information about Islam, thus helping to dispel prejudices against it.

Apparently, the murder of filmmaker Theo van Gogh by the Dutch-Moroccan Mohammed Bouyeri pushed the Dutch state to reconsider tolerance and multiculturalism in the Netherlands:

Minister of Integration and Immigration Verdonk immediately made van Gogh's murder an integration issue, not least by very symbolically (and in the face of a quite hostile public reaction) speaking at a noisy rally organized in Amsterdam the evening of the murder, and saying bluntly, “It has gone this far, and it goes no further.” ... Integration discussions in the past characterized the “Turks and Moroccans” in one breath as not integrated. But in the weeks following van Gogh's murder, many in the Netherlands singled out Moroccans as the problem community (van Selm 2005).

The next section will discuss how the Turkish diaspora and in particular rappers were affected by this tragic incident.

## **7.7 The Impact of the Murder of Theo van Gogh**

I had sleepless nights for week... Every night I see Theo van Gogh fall and Mohammed B. quietly finishing his job... Since then I trust very few people. Mohammed B. could be one's neighbor. If I say ‘fucking nigger’ to a Surinamese, I’m called a racist, even though he

can call me a whitey. You can no longer say what you think these days. No, we've become foreigners in our own country.<sup>128</sup>

As briefly discussed in Chapter 4, the tragic events of 9/11 were followed three years later by in the Netherlands by another tragedy. In 2004, the murder by a 26-year-old Muslim Moroccan of Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, who had made a controversial film about women in Islamic culture, drastically changed many things in the Netherlands, especially for Muslims, as also briefly mentioned in Chapter 3. In this section, how Turkish rappers saw the murder and the subsequent changes will be presented through the rappers' own words. I simply asked them what changed after the murder. What did Turkish people think, what did you think about it? Kolika (21) from Amsterdam, who calls his rap style pessimistic/melancholic, answered like so:

Actually, after the murder of Theo van Gogh, discrimination and racism and the like in the Netherlands really increased. A group of people similar to the German neo-Nazis began to slowly appear in the Netherlands. People tend to show very harsh reactions to foreigners, especially Muslims, also because of the impact of 9/11. Actually a Moroccan killed him. Yet he did it to defend Islamic ideals. So other people might show very harsh reactions<sup>129</sup> to all Muslims<sup>130</sup>.

According to the EUMC report, following van Gogh's murder, 106 violent anti-Muslim incidents were recorded in the Netherlands over the next four weeks<sup>131</sup>. According to NGO and media reports,

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<sup>128</sup> Tom (48), eyewitness to the murder of Theo van Gogh (Buruma 2006:1).

<sup>129</sup> After the murder, "Three men tried to torch a mosque in Huizen with turpentine and gasoline. Then a mosque in Rotterdam was targeted, though only the door got scorched. There was another arson attempt at a mosque in Groningen. And in Eindhoven a bomb exploded in an Islamic school ... Another Muslim school, in Uden, a small town in the south, was set on fire. Someone had written 'Theo R.I.P.' on the wall [...]" "The country is burning,' said the announcer on the television news" (Buruma 2006: 6, 7).

<sup>130</sup> Açıkçası Theo van Gogh cinayetinden sonra ayrılaşma bayağı bir ilerledi. Irkçılık falan sanki Hollanda'da ayrı bir grup oluşmuş gibi Almanya'daki neo-naziler vardı, sanki Hollanda da yavaş yavaş oluşmaya başlıyor yani. Millet yabancılara karşı bayağı bir sert tepki gösteriyorlar. Özellikle Müslümanlara karşı o 11 Eylül davasıyla falan, özellikle Müslümanlara karşı daha sert tepki gösterebiliyor yani. Faslı öldürdü ama sonuçta İslam görüşünden İslam'ı savunduğu için yapmış. O yüzden yani bütün Müslümanlara daha sert tepki gösterebiliyor.

<sup>131</sup> "Within the weeks following Theo's murder, there were [sic] a multitude of violent eruptions, including incidents of vandalism and a series of vicious arson attacks throughout the country, most of which were aimed at the Muslim community. One of the more severe attacks occurred when a bomb was set off at an Islamic primary school in the town of Eindhoven. Luckily there were no injuries because the attack occurred in the early morning hours, yet the school was severely damaged" [http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious\\_murders/famous/theo\\_van\\_gogh/7.html](http://www.crimelibrary.com/notorious_murders/famous/theo_van_gogh/7.html), accessed on July 30, 2008.

migrants have confronted name-calls on streets, in the public transport vehicles and during sports events. Leaflets consisting of anti-Muslim sentiments were distributed in Rotterdam, Den Bosch and in the northwest of the country, and also seen in Amsterdam, and graffiti was targeted at mosques, Islamic schools, and Muslim-owned shops. The KLPD (the National Dutch Police Services Agency) recorded 44 violent attacks against Muslim properties in 23 November 2004-13 March 2005. The so-called 'Lonsdale' youth group became synonymous with the right-wing extremism in 2004 and 2005. 14 incidents apparently involving the 'Lonsdale' youth as perpetrators have been noted by a number of sources, including the NFP in 2005 (EUMC 2006: 17).

Particularly in the aftermath of September 11, "Islam and Muslim values and patterns of social interaction have increasingly been at the centre of a debate concerning their compatibility with 'western values.' Muslims are often stereotypically portrayed in media reports as a devoutly religious and undifferentiated group sharing a fundamentalist version of Islam" (EUMC 2006a: 31). Erkan (30, Hengelo), founding member of the rap band Arka Sokak ("Back Street"), also criticized the attitudes of the Dutch mass media after the murder:

Well, after the murder, predominantly fundamentalists, psychopaths or some men who are so-called *imams*<sup>132</sup> were shown on TV. Mainly they chose to speak on TV. Someone needs to ask why so many imams or *hocas*<sup>133</sup> organizing radical Islam in the Netherlands were brought to the Netherlands. Those people aren't one of us. I mean all of those men are generally from Lebanon or somewhere else, were trained in Arab countries, America or Germany and brought here for special reasons. I mean I've never seen an imam who was born and raised in the Netherlands. So a guy suddenly appears as a so-called imam and declares that he's against faggots ['ibne' in Turkish, a slur for homosexuals]. He also declares that if you steal, your hands will be cut off. People who hear those things tend to fear Islam<sup>134</sup>.

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<sup>132</sup> One who leads prayers in a Muslim mosque; Muslim religious leader or chief ([www.seslisozluk.com](http://www.seslisozluk.com)).

<sup>133</sup> A devout Muslim man respected for his knowledge of Islam who might perform a specific duty within an Islamic community.

<sup>134</sup> Ya o cinayetten sonra televizyonda nerede radikal var nerede sapık var kendini imam olarak gösteriyor onlara söz hakkı verildi. Onları televizyona çıkardılar. Hollanda'ya gelen imamların, hocaların radikal İslamı örgütleyen ve pompa demeyeyim de radikal İslam'a sahip çıkan elebaşlarının ne birimler tarafından buraya getirildiğini çok iyi araştırmak lazım. Bu herifler bizim içimizden çıkmıyor. Yani bu heriflerin hepsi işte lübnandan şuradan buradan ya da Türkiye'nin Almanya'da Amerika'da Arap ülkelerinde yetiştirilip özel olarak buraya getirilen adamlar. Yani ben burada doğup büyüyen de burada imamlık yapan kimseyi görmedim daha. Ya adam bir çıkıyor imam ibnelere karşı, hırsızlık yaptığın zaman ellerin kesilecek, yani islamiyet tanımına bir kişi baktığı zaman ister istemez korkuyor İslamiyet'ten.

Similar to what the rapper above said related to media, about what they experienced in the aftermath of van Gogh's murder, Turkoman-Dutch Dragon (21, Weert<sup>135</sup>), who was born in Afghanistan and moved to the Netherlands when he was six years old due to the war says the following:

For example... how can I say to you? If Dutch people meet non-Muslims they develop a closer relationship with them than Muslims. First religion comes, then color. For example we have a Dutch person. If a person has dark hair, s/he is treated as second-class person. Racist. There are also people who are entirely racists. Furthermore, there are also people who are not racist but who consider Islam as terrorist religion by being influenced by mainstream media<sup>136</sup>.

To consider Islam as a sort of “backwardness”, “The fear of Islam” and “Islamization of the Netherlands” are dominantly terms used by far-right, anti-immigrant Dutch politician Geert Wilders. He came to the prominence with his controversial short movie, *Fitna*<sup>137</sup>, about Islam in 2008 and later with the results of local elections held in 2010. His Partij voor de Vrijheid (PVV) emerged as the second biggest party in The Hague<sup>138</sup> and the leading in Almere<sup>139</sup> in the local elections taking place in March. The Freedom Party, founded in 2005, has significantly raised its vote rates and popularity since the first election it joined in 2006. The party is particularly known to move towards hard-line and restrictive policies in foreign policies and the Islam issue. In fact, the rise of such policies started with Pim Fortuyn in 2003. According to Kees Van Kersbergen and André Krouwel, “[t]he transformation of the issue structure culminated in the enormous electoral success of Fortuyn’s LPF<sup>140</sup> at the national elections of May 2002 and of the PVV led by Geert Wilders, which came from nowhere to win 5.9 per cent in November 2006” (van Kersbergen and Krouwel 2008: 399). The rappers to whom I talked generally see those three controversial figures, Pim Fortuyn, Theo van Gogh and Geert Wilders as “huzur bozucular” (peace breakers) in the Netherlands though none of rappers approved the assassinations of Pim Fortuyn and The van Gogh in the name of religion or other reasons.

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<sup>135</sup> A Dutch municipality in the southeastern Netherlands.

<sup>136</sup> Mesela nasıl diyeyim sana burada Müslüman olmayanlarla karşılaşsalar Hollandalılar onlarla daha yakın ilişki kurarlar. Önce din gelir daha sonra renk gelir. Mesela Hollandalılarla ilişkimizde öyle bir Hollandalı var ki mesela siyah kafalı oldu mu tamamdır o 2. sınıf olaraktan gelir. İrkçi. Komple ırkçılar da var. Ama ırkçı olmayıp da medyadan olsun televizyondan gördükleri şeylere inanaraktan mesela İslamın bir terörist dini olduğuna inanır.

<sup>137</sup> “The word *fitna* comes from an Arabic verb which means to “seduce, tempt, or lure.” There are many shades of meaning, mostly referring to a feeling of disorder or unrest” (<http://islam.about.com/od/glossary/g/fitna.htm>).

<sup>138</sup> <http://www.denhaag.nl/en/businesses-and-organisations/to-5/Official-election-results-for-The-Hague.htm>.

<sup>139</sup> Almere is a city and municipality in the province of Flevoland, the Netherlands, bordering Lelystad and Zeewolde (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Almere>)

<sup>140</sup> Lijst Pim Fortuyn (“Pim Fortuyn List”)



Dragon, Turkoman-Dutch, raps in the Turkmen language, but has almost perfect command of Turkish. When I asked him how Turks were affected by the van Gogh murder and September 11 attacks, he said:

We were really affected, yes, so much. For example, I saw that some close friends of mine I'd been hanging out with even after 9/11 put a distance between us after the murder, or we had some arguments with my best friends. Those two events affected us so much. 9/11 especially affected us so much. It's changed the entire system. I disagreed with both sides [both the murderer and van Gogh]. I didn't agree with either side because what Theo Van Gogh did was horrible. He tried to use a lie and prove it true, without using any facts. But the reaction against him shouldn't have been to murder him<sup>141</sup>.

All the rappers I spoke with told me more or less the same things about what happened after the murder. Yet, here we are talking about an event that is interpreted differently by Dutch people than by Turks. This situation relates to the content of Karl Heider's (1998) article, "The Rashomon Effect," which refers to the manifestation and interpretation of a given reality according to different personalities and cultures as mentioned in Chapter 2. As quoted above, the eyewitness of Theo van Gogh's murder says, "[...] you can no longer say what you think these days. No, we've become foreigners in our own country" (Buruma 2006: 1). As we see, this controversial issue is again stuck with the matter of freedom of speech and tolerance, as also occurred in the Prophet Mohammed cartoon issue. Even though Dutch-Turkish rappers did not justify the murder of anyone for such a reason, they harshly criticized Theo van Gogh because of his ways of speech when criticizing Islam and immigrants. They clearly showed uneasiness to be defined as "goat fuckers" by van Gogh. On the one hand, as Kolika said above "Actually a Moroccan killed him" also refers to a clear distance from Moroccan people, who were considered extremely conservative by not just rappers, but also many Turks living in the Netherlands.

I would like to continue the discussion through a particular prejudice of Dutch people about Turks. I observed that Dutch people often confuse Turks with Arabs in terms of ethnicity and think that Turks speak Arabic. During my ten months in the Netherlands, I heard

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<sup>141</sup> Biz etkilendik evet, bayağı etkilendik. O 11 Eylül olayında mesela bayağı bir önceden beri ahbab olarak takıldığım kişilerin biraz daha soğuduğunu gördüm. Veya bu Theo van Gogh'dan sonra tartışmalarımız oldu bazı en iyi arkadaşlarımla mesela. Bu iki olay çok etkiledi, bayağı etkiledi. Hele bu 11 Eylül bayağı etkiledi. Komple değiştirdi bütün sistemi. Her iki tarafa da hak vermedim. Çünkü Theo van Gogh'un yaptığı çok alçakça bir şeydi. Yani doğruları görmeden tamamen böyle yalanı ortaya koyarak herkese onu doğru olarak göstermeye çalıştı. Ama onun cevabı ölüm değildi.

many questions along these lines, especially from Europeans. Once I was quite surprised when a Dutch social scientist from the Communication Studies Department who had visited İstanbul three times asked me whether Turks used the same vernacular as Moroccans. After I explained to him that Turks are ethnically different from Arabs, and speak neither Arabic nor any Arabic-like dialect, he was very surprised. I heard these sorts of questions not only from Dutch people, but also from people from different parts of Europe. For example, after I introduced myself at a social gathering, an undergraduate law student asked me where I was from. I told her I was from Turkey. Then she asked me if I could speak Turkish, and, very surprised, I answered that of course I could. I added, "I'm Turkish, as I already said." Then she said to me, "As far as I know, you speak Arabic in Turkey and the Turkish people are Arabs, actually." I explained to her very briefly that this was not true. I think, after those tragic incidents, Westerners have begun to form much more connection between being Muslim and being ethnically Arab. Therefore, Turks, as a predominantly Muslim society, might be confused with Arabs.

In the aftermath of the van Gogh murder and the September 11 attacks, the common attitude towards Turks dramatically changed, as Turks started to be identified with Arabs because they are Muslims as well. What is striking here is that while the Arabs are largely associated with radical Islam, the image of Muslim behaviour is associated with radical Islam in the same way. Although van Gogh was murdered by a 26-year-old, Dutch-born extremist Moroccan, Turks began to be seen as accomplices to this murder due to their shared Islamic identity. Not only the murderer himself, but the entire Muslim community was held responsible for this murder. But it should be noted that all the Turks I interviewed condemned the murder, contrary to the widespread mistaken belief that most Muslims approved of it. Before this event Turks were not confused with Arabs and judged due to their Muslim identity, but the situation changed radically after the murder, which accelerated the rise of explicitly anti-Muslim politics, increased the fear of Islam among the general public, and made the Dutch more suspicious of Islam. Reverb (Dutch-born, 20) said the following about this:

I'm a Muslim as well. It surely impacts me. I can't deny it. You need to accept yourself and make others accept you. Not every Muslim is a terrorist, or every Jew is a terrorist, and not every European collects black people from Africa to colonize them. In other words, everyone isn't the same. So, in that sense, these events had an impact [on me/us]. The perspective of the Dutch people changed. There wasn't even a discussion about Muslims before. Not a discussion about

religion. These events changed these. I don't have problems with these issues. Religion is personal to me. I share it, but it's for me. I keep it to myself, just like I don't do my prayers in the middle of the street, in front of a bunch of people. But if someone asks me, of course I'd tell them that I'm Muslim. I don't in any way deny it<sup>142</sup>.

The perception of the East is particularly striking in this discussion. Political decisions taken regarding particular regions apparently need a kind of justification in terms of the global political agenda, via some essentialist approaches which help to form, for example, Islamophobia, changing almost every cultural, socio-political structures in Europe and USA. The rise of the right-wing in the West could be one of the outcomes occurring due to Islamophobia. What Edward Said basically says in *Orientalism* is that the West produced an Orient in the realms of cultural, social and even religious hierarchy. He briefly identifies "Orientalism as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient" (Said 1979: 3). In this sense, it could be said that the West produced the Orient "politically, sociologically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (ibid).

Here, Reverb raises some valid issues concerning the changes in Dutch society after the murder, especially relating to the religious identity of immigrants from the Middle East. Similar to the majority of Turkish people, he does not choose to deny his religious identity over the debates occurring in society. Obviously, religious identity has become much more important than national identity in terms of forming a kind of resistance among immigrants towards the host culture. At first sight, it might seem relevant to argue that discrimination is the main problem for all immigrants in the Netherlands, but there are significant differences between various immigrant groups in terms of the extent of discrimination they face. On this issue, Peter Kee states, "There are some specific differences between the various immigrant groups, especially between immigrants from the Antilles and Surinam (Caribbeans) on the one hand, and those from Turkey and Morocco (Mediterraneans) on the other. As the Netherlands Antilles are still part of the Dutch kingdom, Antilleans become Dutch citizens by birth. Until 1975, this was also the case for Surinamese" (Kee 1995: 302). Although the data in Kee's article comparing the wages of various immigrants with those of natives covers 1985

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<sup>142</sup> Etkileniyorsun abi, ben de elhamdulillah Müslümanım da, etkileniyorsun ya buna karşı çıkmaman da gerek ve kendini kabul et ve kabul ettirebilirsin başkalarına. Çünkü her Müslüman terörist değildir, her Yahudi de terörist değildir, her Avrupalı da gidip zenciler Afrika'dan toplayıp koloni yapmıyorlar. Yani herkes bir değildir. Ya bu şekilde etkiledi. Hollandalıların bakışı değişti yani. İlk Müslüman muhabbeti yoktu bile. Hiçbir şekilde din muhabbeti yoktu. O ikisi de değiştirdi. Ya onu görüyorum ama ben kendim bir zorluk yaşamıyorum. Din benim içindir yani, paylaşırım da ama kendim içindir. Kendi içimde tutarım. İbadetimi de herkesi toplayıp sokağın ortasında yapmayacağım için. Ama sorduğu an Müslümanım tabii onu inkâr etmem hiçbir şekilde.

and hasn't been updated since, it might provide us with some insights into the differentiation of the groups he mentions: "The data indicate that at the time of interview, natives have 11.8% higher observed wages than Antilleans, 22.9% higher than Surinamese, 36.9% higher than Turks, and 42.9% higher than Moroccans" (ibid, 303). The hierarchy between immigrants can be seen from these numbers. Accordingly, many rappers claimed that especially the Surinamese and Antilleans usually do not face discrimination from the indigenous Dutch, since they are seen as having the same general cultural identity as the Dutch. A summary of a 2005 annual report on integration, prepared by the Social and Cultural Planning Office<sup>143</sup>, clearly presents this with the help and analysis of statistics covering 2005:

A wide range of integration patterns can be observed, with considerable variation in both structural and socio-cultural integration. Of all ethnic groups, Turks, Moroccans, Somalis and part of the Antilleans occupy the weakest positions, although heterogeneity within these groups is substantial, especially among the Moroccan group. The overall picture is most favourable for the Surinamese. They, however, also lag behind the indigenous population in terms of a higher unemployment rate, more poverty and educational disadvantages<sup>144</sup>.

The report presents remarkable and thought-provoking information on the employment and income rates of non-Western minorities in the Netherlands. According to the report, "Unemployment among non-Western ethnic minorities rose sharply after 2001 (from 9% to 16%), a faster rate of increase than among the indigenous population. The weakening economy is a key factor here, and wiped out many of the gains made by ethnic minorities between 1995 and 2001." Here, at first sight, it might seem relevant to discuss the impact of 9/11 on especially Muslim minorities, along with the van Gogh murder three years later, even though the weakening economy is apparently accepted as the key factor here. I focused not only on Amsterdam, but also on Rotterdam due to its high Turkish population density in order to analyze the issue of Turkish rap effectively. For example, Şaperon (17), Fatih (18) and Mert (18) are Rotterdam-born rappers. I interviewed them at a youth center in South Rotterdam (Zuid Rotterdam), where they said interesting things about their neighbourhood,

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<sup>143</sup> The Netherlands Institute for Social Research/SCP is a government agency which does research into the social aspects of all areas of government policy. The main fields studied are health, welfare, social security, the labor market and education, with a particular focus on the interfaces between them. Its reports are widely used by the government, civil servants, local authorities and academics (<http://www.scp.nl/english>).

<sup>144</sup> [www.scp.nl/publicaties/boeken/9037702376/Annual\\_Report\\_on\\_Integration-Summary.pdf](http://www.scp.nl/publicaties/boeken/9037702376/Annual_Report_on_Integration-Summary.pdf), accessed on December 21, 2007.

which has a large Turkish population. As young people, they hadn't had to deal with the difficulties of being a Turkish migrant in the Netherlands, but they had some idea of it. For example, they shared striking stories about the difficulty of finding a job. Şaperon had this to say: "I guess because we're Muslims, they treat us differently. For example, when someone applies for a job and if they're Muslim, they [employers] throw the application away without even looking at it."<sup>145</sup> On what Şaperon said above, Fatih commented, "People who do these kinds of things usually mention the integration stuff, but they practice discrimination. And then they ask why we aren't integrated with the Dutch people. But if you act like this, if you don't offer me a job, what can I do? If you don't offer a job to a man who has no money, won't he steal?"<sup>146</sup>

Here I would like present a long quotation to bridge this section with the next one, which concerns the Netherlands' popular "gangsta rap" and "arabesk rap" genres. When I asked how many rappers in the Netherlands see themselves as religious, here is what MT said:

It [the number] is high. They are young people going to mosques. What I don't like here is how some rappers show images of knives and shotguns in their music video [to look tough], for example Mista Killa. In his video, he says "I'm a gangsta, I fight, I beat you up," but then he helps a woman in the supermarket who needs help and after helping her, he goes to pray. These guys are really good guys. If you asked them to help you, they'd even give you 50 Euros. Something doesn't fit here. That type [gangstas] doesn't help anybody. Nevertheless, [look at the] image they [Turkish rappers] try to create. An image is created to sell the product, but he doesn't sell. [Here he comments on the commercialism of gangsta rap and its visual image, in addition to the contradictions of Turkish rappers presenting themselves as "gangstas."] Be honest, say, "I'm respectful, I'm a good boy, I help women in the supermarket, I pray," etc. So then people who go to mosques or women in the supermarket might buy your album<sup>147</sup>.

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<sup>145</sup> Bence Müslüman olduğun için sana farklı bakıyorlar. Mesela bir kişi iş görüşmesine gittiğinde bakıyorlar Müslümansan [başvuruna] bakmadan hemen atarlar yani.

<sup>146</sup> Bu işleri yapanlar entegrasyon mentegrasyon diyorlar kendileri bu ayrımcılığı yapıyorlar. Ondan sonra diyorlar ki biz entegre olmuyoruz Hollandalılarla. Ama sen bunu yaparsan sen beni işe almazsan ben ne yapayım yani. Bir adamı işe almazsan parası yoksa ne yapısın hırsızlık yapmaz mı?

<sup>147</sup> Yüksek, camiye giden çocuklar işte. Benim sevmediğim olay herif klibinde bıçaklar silahlar filan burada, işte mista killa. Klibinde silahla böyle ben gangsteyim, kıracam edecem ondan sonra bakıyorsun markette kadına yardım ediyor, ondan sonra camiye gidiyorlar. Çok efendi çocuklar, aa baba yardım et desen çıkarıp 50 lira verir sana. Bakıyorum bir şey uymuyor. O tip markette kimseye yardım etmez. Ama hangi imajı yaratıyor. İmaj ne için yaratılır satmak için yaratılır, sen satmıyorsun ki. Daha da beter tersine itiyorsun milleti. Beni almightın diyorsun. Samimi ol, ben çok efendiyim, ben çok iyi bir çocuğum, markette kadınlara yardım ederim, camiye giderim falan de. Camiye giden herkes alsın albümünü, markette yardım edilmek her kadın albümünü alsın.

What MT states above refer to the discussion on authenticity, which might be defined as representation of reality, mentioned in Chapter 5. MT clearly puts his distance from such rappers who pretend to be so-called “tough” guys.

## **7.8 Gangsta Rap vs Arabesk/Love Rap**

According to interviews I carry out with Dutch-Turkish rappers and observation, I considered that both sub-genres are controversial issues for various reasons such as doubt of authenticity of gangsta rap or aesthetic judgments of *arabesk*/love rap. Therefore, in the following sections, I am going to discuss two sub-genres of rap that have been significant in the context of the Turkish diaspora in The Netherlands.

### **7.8.1 Reflections on Kreuzberg, the “Cradle of Turkish Rap”**

I would like to begin this part with a personal anecdote. Though my thesis subject is Turkish rap music in the Netherlands, I also visited Berlin to better understand the issue. I believed that visiting the city’s Kreuzberg district would help me to understand the subject in a much more critical way. Furthermore, when I spoke with my supervisor – who specializes in Turkish rap music – about the trip, he joked that I was going “on a pilgrimage,” pointing to how Kreuzberg is a key area for researchers studying the Turkish diaspora and rap music. I went to Berlin with lots of thoughts in my head. From day one, I could see how Turks are everywhere in Berlin. Soon after arriving, I visited Kreuzberg. This big, densely populated district of West Berlin is in fact best known for its large Turkish population. A striking sign saying “Kreuzberg Center” in both Turkish and German greets one at the entrance to the main Turkish quarter. As I made my way through the district, the sign stirred many thoughts, and I realized why the district is often called “Kleines İstanbul” (Little İstanbul). During my short visit, I had an opportunity to observe that Kreuzberg, as Kaya states, is “literally a multicultural neighbourhood ... surrounded by the images, signs, rhythms, music, foods, shops, banks, traditional cafés, and major political issues of Turkey: a Turkish diaspora” (Kaya 2001: 89). Moreover, I had the chance to talk to a few Germans who find living in Kreuzberg “cool” due to its multicultural character. Kaya’s book details how Kreuzberg is full of Turkish stores, shops, agencies, *döner* kebab kiosks, and so on. For myself, I especially noticed young people’s (age 10-28) dress styles, and how they seem to be interested in rap music and hip

hop culture. Wearing baggy pants, baseball caps, sports shoes, etc., many of them looked like rappers. When I visited the Naunyn Ritze youth center in Kreuzberg, I saw kids 10-12 years old breakdancing in the center's garden. During the course of my research in the Netherlands, I could not find a Turkish B-boy (breakdancers) to speak with, but I easily found them in the center of Kreuzberg. During my short conversations with young people, they told me the many rappers that they knew and also expressed their enthusiasm for hip hop culture. Their fancy bandanas, baggy pants, printed t-shirts, and sports shoes seemed to be meant to underline this enthusiasm. When I did meet with these teenagers in the youth center, however, I should say that my first impression of them was that they were "tough boys."

Although I interviewed one well-known and important German-Turkish rapper from Berlin, he declined permission for me to use the interview, so I am compelled to omit that interesting material. Here, then, what I want to depict is Kreuzberg as a ghetto. Some of the Germans I spoke with about Kreuzberg – a "cultural island within the urban landscape," in Kaya's words (Kaya 2001: 89) – agreed with me that Kreuzberg is a ghetto of sorts. They told how they feel it has a "criminal element" and how they feel "uneasy" walking its streets at night. Barış (31), a Turk born and raised in Kreuzberg who I met on the bus to Berlin, told me similar things. Kreuzberg is getting better now, he said, but in past years it was an unsafe district where it was dangerous to go out after 11 p.m. or for families to walk in. In mentioning these details, my aim is to connect the discussion to gangsta rap and ghetto rap. First of all, it might be useful to quote Yasemin Soysal's view about ghetto rap as often seen by Turkish rappers in Germany:

As social life in ghettos is necessarily comprised with reactions against the assumptions, prescriptions, and values of mainstream culture, so ghetto rap is limited in the positive potential of its subversive and political attitudes by its emphasis on inequality, critique of racism, so forth. As a popular and scholarly designator, the ghetto is an essential element of hip-hop's semi-mystical origin story (Soysal-Nuhoglu 1999: 137).

Most of the rap groups founded in Germany recorded songs with strongly political lyrics rejecting racism and inequality, under the influence of this ghetto atmosphere, Sosyal states. For instance, groups such as Islamic Force and King Size Terror can be included in the ghetto rap category because they make anti-racist rap. Furthermore, recently a number of groups and rappers rapping in gangsta style (e.g. Killa Hakan) have been seen. It is important

in this context to differentiate ghetto from gangsta rap, which will be dealt with in the next section. On the political focus of rappers in Germany, Ayhan Kaya says, “The rappers in Berlin aim to mobilize the masses against arson attacks, racism, xenophobia, exclusion, drug trade, drug abuse, materialism, capitalism, and antagonism between Kurds and Turks” (Kaya 2001: 185). What he presents here simply reflects the meaning of “ghetto rap.”

Once in Kreuzberg, facing a six-hour wait for an interview with a famous Turkish rapper, I had quite a bit of time to kill. While walking around downtown Kreuzberg, I stumbled on a punk rock bar called Trinkteufel (Drink Devil), and in its window was a sticker saying “Nazis Raus” (Nazis out). After going in and sitting along for while, I struck up a conversation about German beers. The bartender asked me where I was from. When I said Turkey, he was surprised. I was also surprised at his reaction since so many Turks live in Kreuzberg. Then the bartender explained his reaction like so: “The Turks living here can’t speak English fluently. I was surprised that you spoke English like this.” So I told him that I live in Turkey but had been in Norway for almost two years, adding that I was in Germany to interview Turkish rappers. By coincidence, he knew the Turkish rapper I was due to interview. After a while, two punk rockers also joined in our conversation. As our talk progressed, I said that my thesis was about Turkish people living in the Netherlands, the issue of migration, and the integration process. After hearing this, one of them immediately started to tell about a terrible incident involving Turks in Germany:

A Turkish woman was murdered by her three brothers on the metro two weeks ago (March 2008). This woman, who was murdered because she was “too European,” got divorced from her husband whom she was forced to marry. After the divorce, she got a job and started to live alone with her children. But these people killed her. Germany is debating the murder. We’ve started to ask each other what integration is. What should I say to Nazis opposing people who’ve lived here for a long time but still don’t know even a single word of German? I’m not a racist. I’m against all the nations and races. But how can I defend these people who commit crime and haven’t been integrated into our community, against Nazis who don’t want these people in Germany? If they don’t start to correct their actions, the Nazis will always be justified, right?

This was a striking conversation for me. It reminded me of another shorter and also more superficial conversation I had with a woman working in the Dutch Embassy in Norway. She also said, “In the past, Turks constituted one of the major problems in the Netherlands.



Most [Turkish] parents didn't send their children to school. There was also a high criminality rate among Turks. But nowadays, Moroccans constitute a big problem. Turkish people have made visible progress in their integration process." Therefore, criminality among foreigners apparently becomes a justification point for the native inhabitants to support anti-immigration policies and the parties discussing such issues like PVV as discussed above.

### 7.8.2 Gangsta Rap

Gangsta rap is usually associated with lives in ghettos and the inner city. "During the late 1980s Los Angeles rappers from Compton and Watts, two areas severely paralyzed by the post industrial economic redistribution, developed a West Coast style of rap that narrates experiences and fantasies specific to life as poor young, black, male subject in Los Angeles" (Rose 1994: 59). African-American rappers relating such experiences, like Ice Cube, Dr. Dre, Ice-T, etc., shaped the gangsta rap style (ibid, 59). Ice Cube is a founding member of the "group called N.W.A ("Niggas With Attitude"), [which] epitomizes 'gangsta,' probably the most popular style of rap right now, and certainly the most truculent and ghettocentric ..." (Davis 1996: 276). This genre is one of the most controversial issues in studies of hip hop. Katheryn Russell-Brown defines "gangsta" rap in this way:

- Uses crude terminology to refer to women or female anatomy
- Glorifies gang activity
- Expresses hatred, dislike, or frustration with law enforcement
- Brags about the use of firearms
- Celebrates the use of marijuana or other drugs
- Professes sexual prowess and domination
- Encourages criminal activity
- Portrays a prison sentence as an expected, routine fact of life (Russell-Brown 2004: 36; see also Davis 1996: 276-277).

Although most Turkish rappers in the Netherlands still identify themselves as "gangsta" rappers, I can easily say for the districts where I conducted most of my field research and also for the Netherlands as a whole, it is not possible to find a district similar to Kreuzberg. However, in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, there are some neighborhoods which, while they have nothing to do with areas generally defined as "ghettos," are in fact predominantly inhabited by particular ethnic groups. According to Gijsberts,

Whether the no-go areas feared by the population actually become a reality depends not only on the socioeconomic concentration of disadvantage, but also on the ethnic diversity in specific neighborhoods. Neighborhoods with a one-sided population profile are regarded as increasing the risk of ghetto formation. One relevant factor in this respect is that there are no mono-ethnic neighborhoods in the Netherlands like those in the United States. There are however indications that certain neighborhoods in the major cities are becoming more ethnically homogenous (Gijsberts 2004: 18).

In some cases, rap lyrics are seemingly embodied in and through rappers' social life and personal experiences in the Netherlands. In addition, one can also note that rappers identifying themselves as gangsta rappers have no direct connection to the USA "gangsta" lifestyle portrayed in USA gangsta rap in terms of their life experiences. In fact, there were a few rappers among my respondents writing lyrics which seem to fit some themes which Russell-Brown enumerates above, regardless of whether the rapper self-identified as such. Some Dutch-Turkish rappers write songs whose lyrics reflect gang violence, drugs, and sexuality. Furthermore, "celebrating" marijuana or hashish in the Netherlands, where soft drugs are legal, does not carry the same significance as in other places. In addition, we can say that these rappers are not caught in the sort of socioeconomic "turbulence" that produces "authentic" gangsta rap with respect to their lifestyles and conditions. On these points, Kolika (21) said:

I don't like rap songs saying "I did that, I could do that, I'm a gangsta." Why? Because there's no such thing as a gangsta life in the Netherlands. There's nothing here like life in the ghettos like America. So what they say in their lyrics is a lie. It's obvious that it's written on a lie. I understand that sometimes you can fight about something, but there's nothing like shotguns firing 24-7 in the Netherlands<sup>148</sup>.

Interestingly, Gijsberts' observations apparently support Kolika's conclusions, which are valid for the time being. However, she also points out that Dutch people are concerned that

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<sup>148</sup> Benim yaptığımda bunu yaptığımda ben ganstayım falan diyerekten öyle bazı rapleri şahsen pek sevmem. Neden çünkü Hollanda'da yaptıkları an Hollanda'da gangsta hayatı yok Amerika'daki gibi gettolardaki yaşantı burada yok. O yüzden bahsettiğin yalan. Yalan üzerine yazılmış bir şey olduğu belli. Tamam arada bir kavga edersin şey olursun ama silahların yedi günde yirmi dört saat patlamasına falan Hollanda'da öyle bir şey yok.

the near future could see the appearance of ghettos in the Netherlands. According to her, “The SCP survey shows that the Dutch population is worried about the concentration of ethnic minorities in parts of the major cities. A large majority believes that in 15 years American-style ghettos will have developed which are no-go areas for many people. How realistic is this scenario?” (Gijsberts 2004: 16). In this context, Şaperon’s answer could epitomize Gijbert’s statement. I asked Şaperon the following: Can we say that there is ghettoisation in Rotterdam? We cannot say this for Amsterdam. What do you think?

Yes there is. For example, just one Dutch person lives on our street. But they’re gradually trying to solve this problem. That is to say, they’re trying to resettle Turkish migrants in other districts where the native population is concentrated.

Therefore, Gijbert’s significant question springing from the concerns of Dutch people – “How realistic is this scenario?” – has been partially answered. Due to Germany’s socio-cultural conditions, the Turkish diaspora there seem to be more closed in on themselves compared to the Netherlands. Despite this, it seems that the Dutch state is conducting a resettlement project to prevent ghettoisation and concentration of one ethnic group in a single district. As a result, my research in Berlin was useful in understanding the differences between Germany and the Netherlands. But the socio-cultural differences between Germany and the Netherlands should not be viewed as the effect or the reflection of the absence of necessary material conditions for music-making; rather, they should be considered a touchpoint for grasping why Turkish rappers in the diaspora construct that kind of identity and make music to express themselves and their differences. Some of the rappers who “principally” call themselves gangsta rappers see this situation as the reflection and representation of both anger and fashion (some rappers also find being a gangsta rapper cool). But at the same time, the absence of a practical basis underlying this process of identity formation provides for suitable conditions for rappers to criticize this condition. On this, Willis says, “Culture is crucially about identity, but social and positional as well as individual and self invention. Cultural identity is certainly about maintenance of the self as a separate and viable force, irreducible to institutional role, ideological definition or dominant social representation” (Willis 2000: 4). Gangsta rap in the Netherlands, as Willis states, cannot be reduced to social representation, and also one cannot talk about an explicit ideological ground underlying it. Kolika, criticizing this situation, said, “I believe that a rap song can be good if it’s written from the heart. It becomes better and better if it mentions realities. As a matter of fact, for me, rap means lyrics related to realities,

real words. It shouldn't include lies.”<sup>149</sup> My main impression is that “gangsta rap” is a somewhat popular style among some part of Turkish rappers. Here, the interesting point is that lyrics written in this musical style dominantly narrate a sociologically non-existent ghetto environment in the Netherlands. Regarding this issue, Ian Maxwell quotes from Mick E from Sydney that “[...] if a rap described a ‘real event that took place on ‘the street,’ then obviously, self-evidently, it was authentic” (Maxwell 2003: 195). In this context, it is hardly possible to mention “authenticity” due the non-existent nature of ghetto life in the country, but rather of “an idealized representation of reality” (Grazian 2003: 10, 12) as aforementioned in Chapter 5. In this sense, Andy Bennett quotes from a German-language rapper about the popularity of US-style ‘gangsta rap’ in Frankfurt:

There are people who don't understand a word of English, but they like the music so they pretend that they understand what they're listening to and I personally have a problem with that. For a lot of people, the commercial side of it, the image and the clothes are more important than the music and I find that ridiculous. They pretend to be ‘gangsta’ rappers from the USA and yet we've got enough social problems here which need to be addressed (Bennett 2000: 148).

I interviewed many rappers who think like Kolika. For instance, APO (Rotterdam, 26, now living in İstanbul) said that though he shared this belief, if I also interviewed rappers making “love rap,” as in the next section, he would refuse to be interviewed. On this issue, like Kolika, he stressed that rap music needs to be realistic and creative. According to interviews by Adam Krims with hip hop fans and scholars, “[...] gangsta rap has not been popular in Holland because social conditions there have not produced the gangs and persistent underclass that have enabled gangsta rap to arise and thrive in America” (Krims 2000: 158-59). However, Krims, at the same time, mentions some warnings of Dutch people about a particular neighborhood to which he was not recommended to go, particularly at nights. He emphasizes the relative poverty among Moroccan and Turkish immigrants (ibid, 159). In this context, he also says that “[...] some aspects of hip-hop culture and rap music (and/or their representations) have indeed been globalized, so that some (largely American) image of ‘real’ African-American hip-hop (and the ghetto) will probably never be absent from any local rap context” (Krims 2000: 157). According to my observations and the economical level of

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<sup>149</sup> Bence bir rap kalpten gönülden yazıldıktan sonra her zaman iyi olur. Gerçekleri bahsettikçe iyi olur. Zaten rap benim gözümde rap eşittir gerçek sözler, gerçek laflar. Yalanı içermemesi gerekiyor.

Turkish-Dutch rappers to whom I talked, it is hard to say that they face relative poverty or hard living conditions which might force them to feel like the part of an underclass. Even half of those rappers come from the upper-middle class economically, even though they have songs which are made in gangsta style such as rap group Rotterdam-based Felaket's ("Disaster") song that justifies what Krims suggests related to globalized rap music. The excerpt from the song is below:

**Kan Kusturdum (excerpt)**

Önce gangsta rap de,  
Şimdi romantizm siktir git!  
İşte burada ghetto Rotterdam  
Underground lan güney yakası  
Ve her günümde bir olay,  
Hayatta kalmak zor  
Polis ensende,  
Her an korku var.  
Taze kan aksın,  
Hedefine varamayacaksın,  
Paranoyaksın bence  
Psikolojik tedavi gör sen,  
Sonunu getirdim ben.  
Tektim, yekim,  
Kaderimi kendim çizdim.

**I Made Him Throw up Blood**

First [you did] gangsta rap,  
Now romanticism, fuck off!  
Here there is ghetto Rotterdam  
Underground man, South side  
And an incident at my everyday,  
Difficult to survive  
Police at back of my neck,  
Every moment is full of fear.  
Let the fresh blood flow,  
You won't be able to reach your target  
I think, you're paranoid  
You need to take psychological treatment,  
I finished you.  
I was alone, I am unique,  
I determined my own destiny

In the lyrics, the rap group portrays a very dangerous or risky city for a foreigner to live in, even the group prefers the words "to survive" as if they live in a very "tough" place. I have to say that I visited the neighborhood in which they live and carried out the interview at the youth center in it and I could hardly say that it was chaotic, dangerous or "ghetto-ish", according to my observations. On the contrary to the lyrics above, during the interview the member of the group stated how he feels safe to be in that neighborhood. He said,

Of course there are some problems here, such as due to being foreigner. I don't know what the members of Cartel experienced and why they wrote the lyrics like that. But, I would not write similar to those lyrics, since I haven't experienced same things with them. Anyway, we live here together with other Turks. I mean we are all Turkish [in this neighborhood]. We experience [such problems] when

leave here. This is our neighborhood. We are all Turkish. I feel at home here. This's why there's no feeling of being foreigner<sup>150</sup>.

While his statements refer to a neighborhood where he feels the same as other inhabitants, the song represents the neighborhood in a different way. What he emphasized during the interview is feeling safe due to the high density Turkish population. On the other hand, the song narrates the police as a kind of “invader” of the neighborhood which is portrayed as if it was a “safe zone”. Discontent with and fear of police or so-called “turbulence” where they live in reminds us of the globalized subgenre, American style gangsta rap songs which are predominantly about tough lifestyles stemming from the hard conditions of the inner-city. Contrary to the definitions of gangsta rap above, the members of the group also stated they are against drug-use, violence and were keen on attending school. Even they said “education comes first, then music”. Even though as a group, Felaket performs songs like this, the members of it also make different kinds of rap songs separately.

I would like to continue the discussion with another example from Germany. Killa Hakan, also mentioned before, is an important figure in the Turkish-speaking rap music scene. Although similar to Felaket's emphasis on maintaining tough life conditions throughout lyrics, Killa Hakan far more focuses on creating reality that can be experienced over the song, yet focuses less on pretending to be “gangster” and allowing emphasis on life conditions. In his album collaborating with Ceza from Turkey dated 2009, Killa Hakan uses the term “gangsta” and “gangster” themes, mentioning guns, fights, drug-use, etc. in his songs. However, Killa Hakan's emphasis on hard life conditions forcing him to be “gangsta” draws attention in the song below:

### **Basit Bir Suç (excerpt)**

Zaman geldi yine zaman karanlık  
Hayat yaşam tadacaksın anlık  
Gösterme bana kozunu verme kartın  
İşkence yersin,  
Gece duyulmaz bağirtin.

### **A Simple Crime**

Time has come, again time's darkness  
Lifetime, life! Seize the day  
Don't play your trump card,  
You'd be tortured at night,  
No one can hear you.

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<sup>150</sup> Benim burada yaşadığım sıkıntılar tabii yabancılık var fakat 10 seneki bilmiyorum Cartel'in grubunun üyeleri neler yaşadı da öyle lirikler yazdılar bilmiyorum. Ama ben öyle lirik yazmazdım çünkü ben öyle bir şey yaşamadım burada. Çünkü biz Türk Türke yaşıyoruz burada biz bizyiz yani. Dışarı çıkınca yaşıyoruz. Burası bizim mahallemiz. Burada biz Türküz. Burada ben kendimi evimde gibi hissediyorum. Onun için bir yabancılık yok.

Gangsterim ama zevkten değil  
Yaşam şartlarına boyun eğdim  
Savaş çabala uğraş koştur harca  
Arkadaşlıklar olmuş paramparça

I'm a gangster but not for pleasure<sup>151</sup>  
I surrender to life conditions  
Fight struggle try rush spend  
Friendships have been broken.

Levent Soysal describes how Killa Hakan and other so-called “dangerous foreigners” are portrayed in the German media in his research about the life of migrant youth in Berlin that “[o]ne of the dangerous youths portrayed in person was a ‘Turkish ex-gang’ member Hakan Durmuş, street name Killer-Hakan. He was identified as a member of the gang 36-Boys, who had spent four years in prison for a crime, which he did not ‘wish to talk about’” (Soysal 1999: 195). Ayhan Kaya also states, “he [Killa Hakan] used to be gangsta before joining Islamic Force” (Kaya 2001: 196) whose songs address “a pedagogical mode [...] (whether against violence, drugs or religious animosity)” in its album “Mesaj” (The Message) (Çağlar 1998: 252). According to Çağlar, in an interview Killa Hakan gave to Der Spiegel a similar attitude can be also seen. In this interview, Killa Hakan says, “[i]n my concerts I tell the youth how I ended up in youth gangs and violence. Now I am happy that I am no longer violent as I used to be” (quoted in Çağlar 1998: 252). What he states in the interview apparently explains the line of the song above which is “I’m a gangster but not for pleasure”. According to Ayşe Çağlar, “[t]he designation of hip-hop or rap as the critical, rebellious but also as the creative voice of those on the periphery influences the way German-Turkish rappers are portrayed in the scholarly discourses” (ibid, 246). The difference between both rappers mentioned above is that while Felaket wrote such lyrics in a place which can hardly be defined as a ghetto, Killa Hakan writes such lyrics in Kreuzberg, which can be accepted as a kind of ghetto. The concept of authenticity might be remembered in such a discussion.

About the rap scene in the Netherlands, Adam Krims says, “It must be noted that by far the best-selling rap music in Holland is American rap, which is imported in massive quantities” (Krims 2000: 157). Though his study does not include the Turkish rap scene, a great many rappers say that they have at least been occasionally influenced by American West Coast rap. But at the same time, *arabesk* – also called “love rap” in the Netherlands, and generally identified with the Netherlands – seems to be very common. Unfortunately, there is no precise information on who coined the term “love rap,” although Dj Akman<sup>152</sup> is generally

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<sup>151</sup> He implies that hard life conditions push him to be a gangster though he does not want to be.

<sup>152</sup> My several e-mails seeking an interview with him went unanswered, so I was unable to talk to him about this genre.

accepted as a pioneer in this genre. Likewise, the number of rappers criticizing this style is not inconsiderable, as they think the style is not “authentic” and fails to represent and reflect the spirit of rap. In the next section, this style will be examined.

### 7.8.3 Arabesk “Love” Rap

According to rapper, graffiti artist and journalist Tunç Dindaş, in the beginning of the 1990s, rap songs featuring samples from Turkish pop, *arabesk* and folk songs became very popular among Turks living in Germany, through the works of King Size Terror, Islamic Force, Micforce, Advanced Chemistry, etc. (Dindaş 2005). As mentioned in the previous chapter, the first legally distributed rap song with Turkish lyrics was King Size Terror’s “Bir Yabancı’nın Hayatı” (Life of a Foreigner), from its 1991 album “The Word is Subversion.” The song addresses various socio-cultural problems of Turks living in Germany. Another very important band is Islamic Force, founded by Boe B. (Bülent İpek) and DJ Cut Em’T (Taner Bahar) in 1986. Islamic Force was “the first Turkish group to combine a drum-computer rhythm of Afro-American tradition with melodic samples of Turkish *arabesk* and pop music” (Kaya, 2001: 189-190). The musical genre that Islamic Force makes is conceived of as Oriental Rap<sup>153</sup>. The roots of *arabesk* rap, which is very popular in the Netherlands, apparently lie in Oriental Rap in terms of some aspects of musical style, especially use of samples from Turkish popular music, particularly including *arabesk*. However, the lyrics of *arabesk* rap are apparently very different from Oriental Rap. Yet many rappers in the Netherlands also prefer to call it “love rap” due to the predominant themes of its lyrics: love, suffering, emotions, and the like. That is to say, Dutch-Turkish rappers tend to write fatalistic, very emotional lyrics concerning love affairs and to use various samples from popular *arabesk* songs. In this genre, most of the rappers seem mainly concerned about reflecting their thoughts, specifically emotions, through words which are sung on top of snippets of melodies sampled from *arabesk* songs. Most of them usually bring together different musical genres to produce a mainstream rap song, but *arabesk* is the sample of choice. In describing the process of stylistic generation, we have made partial and somewhat eclectic use of Levi Strauss’ concept of “bricolage”, as discussed in Chapter 5. By using a sort of cross-fertilization, rappers tend to produce something “new” to express their own emotions and thoughts through a music genre including Turkish *arabesk* and rap music. It can even be said that musically,

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<sup>153</sup> Aziza-A is a German-Turkish female rapper, who is an important musician in the Oriental Rap scene (see Burul 2003).



this is a “bricolage” of different genres and even socioeconomic contexts. *Arabesk* music, according to Martin Stokes, has gained significant popularity in Turkey since the late 1970s. On the other hand, this music

poses a number of problems to the Turkish government and the urban intelligentsia alike. It presents a metaphor of the disintegration of state and person, and an abandonment to fate which is clearly at odds with both the dominant Kemalist ideology and (quite separately) Islamic orthodoxy.

It is, firstly, a music inextricably linked with the culture of the *gecekondu*, literally the ‘night settlements’ which mushroomed around Turkey’s large industrial cities after the Menderes government program of rural regeneration in the 1950s produced a large rural labor surplus. By the 1970s these squatter towns accounted for up to 60 percent of the population of cities such as Istanbul (Stokes 1989: 27).

Apparently, as Stokes mentions above, the complicated socioeconomic conditions paving the way for *arabesk* make this music and its lifestyle easy to understand. Most criticism of this controversial genre comes because of its pessimistic, emotional lyrics and themes, and also because of the thought that it is influenced by the sounds and melodies of Arab music and hence does not fit a Turkish sound. *Arabesk* music, representing especially the male-dominated and hopeless spiritual state of the lower class, turned into an expressive style of individuals who are living through the trauma of modernization. Martin Stokes states,

Arabesk is a music of the city and for the city. It portrays a world of complex and turbulent emotions peopled by lovers doomed to solitude and violent end. It describes a decaying city in which poverty-stricken migrant workers are exploited and abused, and calls on its listeners to pour another glass of raki<sup>154</sup>, light another cigarette, and curse fate and the world (Stokes 1992b: 1).

Hence, here our starting point is to discuss *arabesk* and love rap not as music specifically, but as narrating particular experiences from various socioeconomic classes besides ethnicities. Moreover, such a rap music scene, with contributions mostly coming from Turkish immigrants, in a sense expresses a process of musical cultural hybridization and syncretism. To better understand *arabesk*/love rap through the syncretism of traditional/rural

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<sup>154</sup> Traditional Turkish drink.

and urban culture, it might be useful to discuss what Saskia Sassen states about city life. According to Sassen,

The city concentrates diversity. Its spaces are inscribed with the dominant corporate culture but also with a multiplicity of other cultures and identities, notably through immigration. The slippage is evident: the dominant culture can encompass only part of the city. And while corporate power inscribes noncorporate cultures and identities with “otherness,” thereby devaluing them, they are present everywhere (Sassen 2007: 212).

Though it is usually considered that the Turkish “westernization<sup>155</sup>” process began in Tanzimat era between 1839-1876, it can be said that the direct encounter of Turkish people with “modernization” was triggered after the fifties. After the Second World War, the acceleration of the integration with the world capitalist system led not only to the encounter of the “center” and “periphery”, but also the development of rapid urbanization, industrialization, and mass communication media. The consequences of this social dynamic showed themselves with the transition to a multi-party system after 1945 (Özbek 1994: 24-25). After the termination of the one-party system in Turkey in 1946, a new socio-cultural era was triggered with the governance of Demokrat Parti (Democrat Party) between 1950-1960. The new parliament was composed of younger members and many of those were from rural areas of Turkey. Voters of the party were also largely rurally based. Kemalist elitists were not part of the government anymore, but people coming from predominantly conservative, religious and rural backgrounds wielded the power (Keyder 1999). In this context, what Sassen states above becomes much more substantive: cities started to be populated with a large amount of rural laborers due to the Democrat Party’s “program of rural regeneration in the 1950s” as Stokes (1989: 27) also stated above. This situation caused the meeting of people from urban and rural. For the inhabitants of the city, “new comers” were “the other” who began to be present in different parts of the city with their own cultures. *Arabesk* music has been present also since this meeting, or even so-called clash, between two social groups. Rural laborers started to generate the working class in big cities. If we relate this to the issue of *arabesk* in Turkey, Meral Özbek’s words cast some light:

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<sup>155</sup> Şerif Mardin, a prominent Turkish sociologist, makes distinctions between westernization and modernization. For him, westernization, dominantly happening in 18<sup>th</sup> century, refers to copy almost all values or technical developments of Europe without a particular adaptation process into local conditions (Mardin 2006).

Arabesk is not an inharmonious culture, which carries aspects of traditional social space to urban space or avoids being part of the urban culture. On the contrary, it is a cultural practice presenting itself as a ‘meaning problem’ determined by urban dynamics and producing an answer to this problem; and also, it is a practice that at once includes act of *harmony* and *resistance* with that answer (Özbek 1991: 110-111; italics in original)<sup>156</sup>.

Ayhan Kaya states that mostly working-class youth groups are attracted to Turkish *arabesk*, as “a hybrid form of urban music,” music and to hip-hop in Berlin. He defines *arabesk* as a kind of narration and musicalization of “the troublesome experience of dislocation, dispersion and longing for home. Hip-hop, contrarily, reflects the experiences of migration and urban segregation in the diaspora” (Kaya 2001: 52). In the context of what Sassen states above, it might be stated that rap music and *arabesk* meet each other in the point of reflection of “otherness” and the expressions of being “stranger”. About the term *arabesk*, Irene Markoff states that the “success of arabesk in the early stages of its development (late 1960s to late 1970s) can be attributed to its lyrics with their themes of alienation, separation, unrequited love, and resignation to fate which appealed to acculturating urban immigrants” (Markoff 1994: 225). This state can be interpreted as an emotional reaction of individuals who are struggling to overcome the conflict between the modern and the traditional. As Andy Bennett suggests, “in ‘late modernity’ identities and lifestyles are fluid and constructed rather than static and given” (quoted in Kahn-Harris 2007: 18). As a result of the clash between traditional and modern and the transitional states between these two realities, flexible but also complicated identities emerge. Though the emphasis here (in regard to *arabesk*) is on migration into the cities in Turkey, the same thing can be said also for the diaspora. Both the young people using rap as a global music and the young people who are nourished by *arabesk* have a chance to express their inner worlds with this combination. It seems that the experience of alienation and otherness makes this state more catastrophic. Markoff continues as follows: “For these estranged individuals, overcome by a sense of fatalism because of their inability to control their own destinities, the words of the songs echoed the experience of foreign land (*gurbet*) and alienation/adaptations, instead of invoking home” (Markoff, 1994: 225). As mentioned above, many rappers stated that to write lyrics about *gurbet* or the difficulties of being foreigner, as Cartel did, has become somewhat old-fashioned and cliché

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<sup>156</sup> The original text in Turkish: “Arabesk, ‘geleneksel ortamı kenti taşıyan’ ya da ‘kent kültürüne sırt çeviren bir uyumsuzluk kültürü’ değildir. Tam tersine kent dinamiği ile belirlenen bir ‘anlam problemi’ olduğunu kabul eden, ona yanıt getiren; ve bu yanıtıyla da bir yandan *uyum* bir yandan da *direnme* taşıyan bir pratiktir.”

recently. However, even though rappers who perform *arabesk*/love rap in the Netherlands do not tend to write such lyrics, they still appear to use *arabesk* to express their emotional turbulences or alienations through this genre. It is better to continue the discussion with an example by the pioneer of love rap, DJ Akman, that is below:

**Kalleşçe Yazılmış Senaryom (excerpt)**

Sevgilim neredesin?  
Kim bilir kiminlesin!  
Sensiz yaşamak çok zor  
Terk edip sen gittin  
Değerimi bilmedin.  
Gözlerimden yaşlar akar  
Oynadım oyunu,  
Kazanamadım kaybettim.  
Son bir şans daha ver bana Tanrım,  
Hayatın anlamını anladım.  
Kalleşçe yazılmış bu senaryom  
Aldım elime kalemimi çizdim her şeyi,  
Yazdım tek tek herşeyi yeniden,  
Geride kalanlara masal olsun benim kaderim.  
Ben artık ben değilim!  
Kimim, neyim?  
Nerdeyim, neyledim?

**My Treacherously Written Script**

Where are you, my lover?  
God knows with whom you are!  
It is hard to live without you.  
You left me,  
You didn't appreciate me.  
Tears drop from my eyes.  
I lived my own life game,  
I was not able to win, and I lost.  
Just give me one more chance, my God.  
I've understood the meaning of life.  
My destiny was determined treacherously  
I grasped my pencil and drew everything,  
I rewrote everything again and again,  
Let the rest see my destiny as a tale.  
I am not myself anymore!  
Who am I? What am I?  
What have I done? (2008)

With this song, the rapper does not only express the desperation and melancholy that he feels after his lover left him but it also expresses his lack of faith in this life. That is to say that the rapper might have been distanced a little bit from the pain of hard conditions of life thanks to his love and his lover. When he has to live without his lover, he also has to face the painful realities of life much more directly. Thus, here love turns into an expression of the emotional turbulences and alienations of the rapper together with his hopeless spiritual state emerging after being left. As Stokes (1992) expresses while talking about the relationship between *arabesk* and the trauma of modernization, as is mentioned above, here we can talk about the same relation between love rap and the trauma that Dutch-Turkish youth have to go through after migrating from a country whose modernization process has started lately towards becoming a member of a European Union that is liberal, multicultural and democratic.

According to Martin Stokes, “the musical background of arabesk musicians is highly varied” and many famous musicians “have undergone intense and formal training in the techniques” of Turkish art music (Stokes 1992: 172). Such musicians appear to have a

thorough knowledge of *makam* [the modal structures of Turkish art music (Stokes 1992: 258)] and *usul* [the corresponding system of rhythmic modes (Reinhard and Stokes n.d.)] (Stokes 1992: 172). Producers of *arabesk* rap tracks may, however, not have such knowledge of *makam* and *usul*. I think *arabesk* rap as a genre does not necessitate knowing much about such technical issues; it requires instead knowledge of how to import extensive samples from recorded *arabesk* songs into rap tracks using computer-based sampling and song production technology. Arabesk rap producers generally use previously existing whole songs (not just short samples from them) as templates for *arabesk* rap songs, thus importing into their productions the *makam* and *usul* used in the original source recordings. Such use of lengthy samples also entails preserving in *arabesk* rap songs aspects of the musical texture and formal structure of the original songs used as sources for the samples. Musical textures in *arabesk* are often based on a contrast of large string orchestras with solo instruments (primarily the *bağlama* and *kaval* [an end-blow ductless flute used in Turkish and Balkan folk music (Stokes 1992: 257)]) (Stokes 1992: 168-169). DJ Akman describes, in an interview published on his official MySpace page<sup>157</sup>, what he perceives as the many differences between *arabesk* rap and “regular” (his term) rap music. According to him, “Arabesk rap is full of more emotional lyrics and melodies. And the lyrics are about everyday life issues, for example sorrowful love or happy love. On the other hand, regular rap is full of tough lyrics and lyrics about rappers battling with each other. Also, the melodies are heavier and do not use *arabesk* sounds.”<sup>158</sup>

The aforementioned musical aspects of *arabesk* can be exemplified in *arabesk* rap tracks which appropriate or re-create the aesthetic of the *arabesk* genre, either through the use of samples or the re-creation of *arabesk*-like musical textures through recording live musicians in the studio. DJ Akman’s song discussed above, for example, begins with a conventionally (in the context of Turkish musical aesthetics) “sad” melody played on keyboard and *kaval*. After about fifteen seconds, the rapper begins by announcing the title of the song followed by the English phrase “come on, yeah,” an expression conventional to the rap genre. After this short introduction, the rapper begins rapping the first verse while a solo violin takes over the *kaval* melody. After the rapped verse, a different vocalist (credited as “27 Firari” in the CD booklet) comes in singing the chorus, also based on the opening *kaval* melody, here doubled again by a solo violin. This singer uses the particular vocal quality

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<sup>157</sup> <http://www.myspace.com/djakman#ixzz0wrxGalfX>

<sup>158</sup> “Arabesk rap daha çok duygusal melodilerle ve duygusal sözlerle dolu ve sözlerin çoğu ise normal dünyada yaşanan konulara değiniyor örneğin bir aşk acısı veya mutlu bir sevgi tablosunu anlatabiliyorsunuz, ama normal rapte daha çok sert sözler ve birine laf atma gibi sözlerle dolu, melodilerde daha çok sert tonlarla geçiyor ve normal rapteki melodilerde arabesk tonları yer almıyor.”

known in Turkish as *yanık* (“burned” or “scorched”), which is commonly used in the performance of *arabesk* and some genres of Turkish folk music (Stokes 1992: 134-135, Erol 2007). Stokes describes the *yanık* vocal quality as “a harsh and bitter sound” sung (in the case of male vocalists) with “a high male head voice, in the region of a high tenor,” a sound and vocal range conventionally considered appropriate to the “intensity of emotions associated with arabesk” (1992: 135). Musicologist Ayhan Erol, in an article about what he calls “the aesthetic experience of *yanık*,” describes this technique of vocal production as “an image of ... bittersweet emotions in music” (2007: 89). Erol notes that “In many cases words and music have a complementary relationship” (Erol 2007: 90), and musical aspects thus intensify emotions conveyed by the words. Erol argues that the term *yanık* refers to a vocal quality that expresses such “sad feelings” in a musical way particularly appropriate to songs whose lyrics express “painful feelings” such as “resignation to fate, separation, abandonment, loneliness, sorrow, melancholy, and pessimism” (ibid, 90). Many *arabesk* rappers draw on this vocal quality to express sorrow or sadness in their songs. If their voice is suitable some rappers themselves, besides rapping, also sing using the *yanık* quality. Others use sampled voices or have guest vocalists sing on their recordings, as in the song by DJ Akman discussed here. According to some Dutch-Turkish rappers, practitioners of “love rap” usually want to become popular by using *arabesk*, a musical genre that is also very popular among Dutch-Turks. Hence, the majority of love rappers produce tracks by using infrastructure of a recognizable, pre-existing *arabesk* song. According to Şaperon:

We see that some love *arabesk* rappers, I don’t want to give their names, use İbrahim Tatlıses<sup>159</sup> samples. For instance, I don’t like that. This is not suitable for Turkish rap. Love [as a theme] cannot be [suitable] in Turkish rap. They don’t match. Rap means remembering your past. It’s not doing rap by talking through a hat<sup>160</sup>.

What makes this issue difficult to discuss is the ambiguity between the the use of the terms “arabesk” and “love” together. At the same time, it can be said that there is no specific differentiation between these two terms in terms of the choice of music, normally *arabesk* songs, as the background to a song. Because their lyrics are usually based on emotional love,

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<sup>159</sup> Very famous, Kurdish *arabesk* musician in Turkey

<sup>160</sup> Hani görüyorsun şimdi isim kullanmayayım hani bazı aşk arabesk rapçiler böyle İbrahim Tatlıses’ten falan filan sample’lar alıyor. Mesela benim hiç hoşuma gitmiyor. Bu Türkçe rape uymaz. Türkçe rap’de aşk olamaz. Gitmiyor. Beraber gitmiyor uymuyor yani. Rap dediğin böyle eski hayatımı öne getirmek. Kafadan uydurma aşk rap yapmak değil.

they prefer to call the genre this, although *arabesk* rappers in Turkey mention other issues in their lyrics such as poverty, alienation, social exclusion etc. Some themes in *arabesk* such as alienation are mostly expressed through the emotional relationships that young people have. When we look at the socio-cultural spaces of Turkish people, this style is much more understandable. I grasped particularly from my observations that most of the rappers don't have close Dutch friends, they feel disconnected from Dutch society, and they criticize Dutch culture and its apparent alienation and intolerance.

Finally, I would like to finish the section with comments by Şaperon (17). What he said can point us to something critical concerning the act of making rap music, the differences among rappers producing various musical styles, and some of their harsh reactions to this genre. As discussed in this section, originality is the keyword for many Turkish-speaking rappers. Therefore, the question which some rappers pose here is what the aim of making a rap song is: to express some feelings and thoughts, or to make it creatively together with expressions of personal reflections? Musical simplicity used to be a keyword in punk discussions. However, the seriousness of the political attitudes of punk culture and its understanding of art in a very critical way have usually compensated for this "simplicity." Regarding the quality of "love rap," Şaperon stated:

You might do love rap, but it's absurd to always do it. I think people can make rap if they want, but if they insist on doing it, they should do it well. People who never listen to rap or write lyrics generally fall in love with a girl, and then they decide to write lyrics about love. The quality of their songs is very low. Afterwards, they buy a microphone, a simple one sold for 12 euros... We don't want to be seen as being like those rappers. I don't think you can really call them rappers<sup>161</sup>.

## 7.9 Turkish Hip Hoppers and Cultural Conservatism

The Netherlands is generally accepted as Europe's most socially liberal country and the most respectful of the rights of individuals. For example, in 2001, it was the first country in the world to allow same-sex marriage. Moreover, "soft drugs as cannabis in all its forms

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<sup>161</sup> "Bir kere bir aşk rap yaparsın ama hep böyle hep yapmak da böyle. Bence aşk rap yapabilir insanlar fakat bir şeyi yapıyorsan işi iyi yap yani. Bu insanlar daha hiç rap dinlememiş daha hiç lirik yazmamış birden bir kıza aşık oluyorlar, ondan sonra bir söz yazıyorlar işte. Kalite çok düşük. Beat dersin öyle. Snare attıktan sonra beat oluşuyor zaten onlarca. Ondan sonra üstüne bir mikrofon alıyorlar. Basit bir mikrofon yani 12 liraya satılıyor. Ondan sonra bir mikrofon alıyoruz bir sürü para harcıyoruz, kendimizden gidiyor bir şey de kazanmıyoruz. Bizi aynı kefeye koyuyorlar. Bunu istemiyoruz. Tamam, yani aşk rap yapınlar ama bizi aynı kefeye koymasınlar. Bence onlara rapçi diyemeyiz."

(marijuana, hashish, hash oil) and hallucinogenic mushrooms (so called magic mushrooms or paddos – from Dutch: paddestoel - mushroom) are legal under condition of so called ‘personal use’<sup>162</sup>. That is why the Netherlands’ very liberal social-cultural atmosphere presented a kind of culture shock for Turks who immigrated to this country from rural Turkish areas in the 1960s. Therefore, how Turkish rappers react to this social sphere is one of the topics of this study. Naturally, rappers grew up in very different social spheres and family structures. Hence, how they answered questions I posed to gauge their reaction to the liberal atmosphere was sometimes either interesting or familiar for a Turkish social scientist who is used to the general social structure of rural areas in Turkey.

Before starting my fieldwork in the Netherlands, I had the chance to talk to Dutch people, and this helped me understand how they see Turks. For this, I asked them a few short questions. For example, a female civil servant at the Dutch Embassy in Oslo said, “Turkish people have begun to improve themselves relatively much better than other immigrant groups, especially Moroccans. For instance, I can say that many Turkish families send their children to schools to get a good education. Turks are in a better situation compared to the past.” (Personal interview, 2007). It seems that the efforts of Turks to adapt to Dutch society also contribute to how Dutch people see them in social life. In other words, they have spurred a kind of acceptance by the host society. The reasons behind this woman’s favorable comparison of Turks to Moroccans is because Theo van Gogh was murdered by a young Moroccan. As a result, large swathes of Dutch society started to have a negative opinion of Moroccans and of course Islam. About this tragic event and its consequences, Şaperon stated:

These cultures [Dutch and Turkish] are so different from each other. I can say that they live much more simply. In the ‘80s, Dutch people and Turks were able to live in harmony, but recently many [unwanted] incidents tend to occur, and Muslims are blamed for those. Turks and Dutch people put a distance between each other. Unwillingly, we started to see them in a much more negative way<sup>163</sup>.

I asked rappers specific questions about conservatism, because I wanted to understand how they interpret the social and cultural formation of their host society as mentioned above. Moreover, I also intentionally distinguished cultural conservatism from political conservatism

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<sup>162</sup> <http://www.amsterdam.info/drugs/>

<sup>163</sup> Tabii ki kültürler çok farklı. Onlar daha basit yaşıyorlar öyle diyeyim yani. 80’li yıllarda Hollandalılarla Türkler daha iyi geçinebiliyordu ama şimdi çok olaylar oluyor yani. Tabii hemen de Müslümanlar suçlanıyor. Şimdi böyle ayrılmışta başlıyor Hollandalılarla Türkler. Soğumışta başlıyorlar birbirlerinden. Tabii biz de ister istemez onlara daha kötü bakmışta başlıyoruz.



because of the ambiguity of political attitudes among Turks in particular. Let me explain this in more detail. In November 2006, general elections took place in the Netherlands, which is why I asked rappers what they thought about the elections and what party they favored.

Although some of the rappers said they hadn't known about the elections, almost all of those who voted said that they voted for the leftist parties – e.g. the Dutch Socialist Party, Green Party and PvdA (Partij van de Arbeid, or Labor Party). But when I asked who they would vote for if there were elections in Turkey, the responses changed drastically. Some rappers stated that they sympathized with Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP, a conservative, religious, right-wing party). However, as the Dutch leftist parties actively defend the cultural and political rights of immigrants and minorities, the rappers favor those parties. But when the debate comes to the cultural and social rights of Kurds in Turkey, some of the interviewees stated that the Kurds were citizens of the Republic of Turkey, and so the debate was pointless. The important point here is the fact that the Turkish rappers are also citizens of the Netherlands. For example, MT (26, Amsterdam) said: "A man says that he's Kurdish, so I say to him, 'If you're Kurdish, then you're also Turkish at the same time.' In fact, Turkishness was an ethnic synthesis in the Ottoman era."<sup>164</sup> Erkan (30, Hengelo), founder of the band Arka Sokak (Back Street), conveyed similar thoughts:

Nobody in Turkey sees Kurds the way Turks are seen here. We also have a Turkish identity here. Kurds there don't have a Kurdish identity. Because Kurds are children of Turks, and of Turkey. It's very different. The Turkish issue here and the Kurdish issue are very different. In just the same way, Kurds with Turkish passports also get stigmatized here for being Turkish, or get stigmatized for being Kurdish and face discrimination. Ahmet or Mehmet<sup>165</sup> can be also used by Kurds. The problem here is being a foreigner, being a Muslim<sup>166</sup>.

To see Kurdish people as "children of Turks" apparently refers to nationalistic-assimilative point of views. According to sociologist Mesut Yeğen, the existence of Kurds in Turkey was denied with regard to a different ethnic group from Turks from the mid-1920s until the end of the 1980s (Yeğen 1999a). Mesut Yeğen defines this situation as "denial discourse of Turkish State" in his study (ibid). According to him, "any examination of contemporary Turkish

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<sup>164</sup> Kürtsen Türksün de aynı zamanda. Türklük, Osmanlı'da etnik bir sentezdi aslında.

<sup>165</sup> Very common Turkish names.

<sup>166</sup> Kürtleri kimse buradaki görülen Türkler gibi görmüyor Türkiye'de. Bizim burada bir Türk kimliğimiz de var. Kürtlerin orada bir Kürt kimliği yok. Çünkü Kürt Türk çocuğudur, Türkiye'nin çocuğudur. Çok farklı. Kürtle buradaki Türk olayı çok farklı. Aynı şekilde bak Türk pasaportu taşıyan Kürt de burada türk damgası yiyip ya da Kürt damgası yiyip ayrımcılık yaşıyor. Bir Kürdün de adı Ahmet Mehmet. Sorun yabancı olmak, Müslüman olmak.

State Discourse [...] discloses that the Turkish state has, for a long time, consistently avoided recognizing the Kurdishness of the Kurdish question [...] From the mid-1920s until the end of the 1980s, the Turkish state ‘assumed’ that there was no Kurdish element on Turkish territory.” (1999b: 555). What the rapper says above appears similar to “the ‘practice’ of the exclusion of Kurdish identity” in Kurdish Question (ibid). Basically, the rapper distinguished the immigrant issue from Kurdish Question in terms of such a “denial discourse”. In a song by Arka Sokak about Turks and Kurds which was written during the rise of terrorism in Southeastern Turkey, being Turkish and being Kurdish seem to be accepted as similar things. An excerpt from the song follows:

### **Türk Kürt**

İnsanlık dediğin bunu asla emretmez,  
Dışardan beslenene köpek bile denmez.  
Pusu kurup Mehmetciğimizi vurdular,  
  
Sizin gibi canilere birgün hesap sorarlar.  
Türk milleti hiçbir zaman birşeyden  
yılmayız,  
Sizin gibi canilerden biz asla korkmayız  
Fatih Sultan Mehmet bıraktı bize emanet,  
  
Sağolsun ordumuz hem de yüce millet.  
Kanın mı bozuk var mı söyle senin soyunda,  
Barut ve kan kokuyor senin burnunda.  
Adıyaman, Van ve Kars’ın kalesi,  
  
Türk kanı taşıyanın olmaz hiçbir hilesi.  
  
Biliyon mu kudurmuş köpeğin sonu ne olur,  
Teker teker yakalanıp alınından vurulur.  
  
Zaten de Mehmetçikler sizin kökünüzü  
kazıyor,  
Türk milleti sizden nefret ediyor.  
Türk Kürt hepimiz kardeşiz,  
Alçakların oyununa gelmemeliyiz.

### **Turkish Kurdish**

Humanity never calls for this,  
The one fed outside<sup>167</sup> isn’t even a dog.  
They lay in ambush and shot our  
Mehmetcik<sup>168</sup>,  
They will come for you, butchers, one day.  
Turkish people aren’t daunted by anything,  
  
We’re not afraid of [murderers] like you.  
Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror entrusted us  
with this land  
Long live our army and our nation.  
Is there something wrong with blood?  
You smell of gunpowder and blood,  
The castle of Adıyaman<sup>169</sup>, Van<sup>170</sup> and  
Kars<sup>171</sup>,  
Those who carry Turkish blood would not  
deceive.  
Do you know what happens to the rabid dogs?  
They are caught one by one and shot in the  
head?  
The Mehmetciks are cleaning you out  
  
The Turkish nation hates you.  
Turks, Kurds, we’re all brothers,  
We mustn’t be fooled by the [deceitful]  
games of the vile

<sup>167</sup> It refers to terrorist groups who are supported by other countries.

<sup>168</sup> Affectionate nickname for soldiers.

<sup>169</sup> A city in Southern East Anatolia.

<sup>170</sup> A city in Eastern Anatolia.

<sup>171</sup> A city in Eastern Anatolia.

Türk Kürt hepimiz kardeşiz,  
Canilerin oyununa gelmemeliyiz.

Turks, Kurds, we're all brothers,  
We mustn't be fooled by murderers.

Ironically, while the rapper does not recognize Kurds as a different ethnic group from Turks, but as the “brothers of Turks”, the Dutch State conceive itself as a country of immigration in 1990s and accepted immigrants to stay in the country permanently with their own socio-cultural particularities. Moreover, it can be better also to remember the discussion on prohibited use of the Kurdish letters X, W, and Q, mentioned in Chapter 4, beside the approach of the same Dutch-Turkish rapper above. It is striking here that these rappers tend to see Kurdish people living in Turkey as Turkish. Though they state that being Kurdish in Turkey is very different from being a Turk in the Netherlands, especially because of citizenship rights, they claim that they have become “the other” in Dutch people’s eyes due to Islam.

The first month of my fieldwork was during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. During Ramadan, fasting is the most important ritual practiced by many Muslims. They get up before dawn to eat and then don't eat again until sunset. This ritual is not just about fasting, but also spiritual cleansing and keeping away from worldly affairs for a month. Thus, many Turkish Muslims in both Turkey and the Netherlands, for example, do not usually drink alcohol during that month. Interestingly, as soon as Ramadan ends, many of them start to drink again. However, from what I observed there, Turks in the Netherlands seem to place more importance on this abstention and talking about it. However, the rappers still have divergent approaches concerning Ramadan and fasting. For instance, Hortlak (audience member, aspiring MC, 19) from Rotterdam said: “I see the fasting as bullshit. If you ask me why, I'd say people try to understand how poor people live from morning to night [staying hungry], but when evening comes, people eat like animals”<sup>172</sup>. The importance of this critique can be interpreted as both stressing the disharmony between everyday life and religious practices and also the existence of diversity of religious identities among many Turks due to the particular historical background of Turkey, such as the secularization process occurring particularly from the mid-1920s to the death of the founder of the Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk (see Berkes 1998). Individuals who fast during Ramadan are expected to be more aware of self-control in daily life, in terms of “worldly” practices. Many rappers who practice fasting tend to resume their conventional lifestyle at the end of Ramadan. In this

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<sup>172</sup> Orucu saçma olarak görüyorum. Neden diye sorarsan sabahtan akşama kadar fakirlerin nasıl yaşadığına dair şey edeceksin, akşam oldu mu hayvan gibi tıkmın.

context, what Gijberts states above about the decreasing practice of religious rituals can be discussed in a different way. Yet, being a good Muslim among Turks still appears to be a requirement for keeping the identity of “Turkishness.”

In order to enrich the discussion with another aspect of religion, I would like to share an experience from an *iftar* meal<sup>173</sup> with rappers in Amsterdam. Two rap fans from Rotterdam, a beatbox, a professional MC and I were sitting around the table having our dinner. At the end of the dinner, three of them started to talk about women. One of them used the word “bitch” to describe a woman. The fourth person, who was not actively involved in the conversation but rather barely listening in, scolded the first speaker, saying, “Don’t talk about a Muslim girl like this.” The other three replied that in fact, the woman in question was Dutch, whereupon the fourth guy said, “Ok, then. No problem.” And then he lost interest in the topic of conversation. This incident made me think for a long time about this distance between Turks and Dutch people. As mentioned in previous sections, here an issue of religion again reveals the distance between these two groups. But here, another critical subject is the presence of a Turkish double standard towards Dutch women. In general, among Turkish males, the perception of Dutch women tends to be quite different from the perception of Turkish women in terms of morality. For example, in a study of 64 ethnic Dutch participants, Maykel Verkuyten explored how Dutch people in general interpret the multicultural peculiarity of the Netherlands. In this study, what a Dutch woman said can cast light on the perception of Turkish rappers from the other side:

Well for instance I can see that whenever I’m out and about, and I can feel a kind of contempt coming from a group of Moroccan or Turkish young people towards me or towards other women, Dutch women, a kind of, well, contempt and not just towards me as a woman, but you know me as a Dutch person or Dutch woman, and I think it’s . . . I do understand how it came about, I find it a great shame for them too, as it were, but I’m also worried about myself and my daughter . . . because I think, like, well, what are we going to do in say ten years’ time, what’s it going to be like then, will there be bigger controversies still? Well it worries me, you know (Verkuyten 2004: 66).

What this Dutch woman feels about being held in contempt by Turkish young people also indicates the presence of distance between immigrants and the host society as well. Probably this is because the moral values of many Turks are based upon patriarchal cultural

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<sup>173</sup> Fast-breaking dinner during Ramadan.

codes. For example, in her study about honour killings amongst Turks, Clementine van Eck states, “the term honour killing is almost unknown in the Netherlands” while “honour killing is a widely known phenomenon in Turkey” (van Eck 2003: 10). Honour killing is an extremely violent cultural phenomenon which is based upon a patriarchal, conservative understanding of people. *Namus* (honour) usually appears to be an important issue among Turks in either Turkey or the Netherlands that even to take someone’s life for honour sometimes may be approved by many. For instance, a rapper to whom I talked to in a personal interview showed his clear approval to such a murder if his sister would have sexual intercourse before marriage. For ethical reasons, I disguised his identity. Therefore, to see Dutch women in the way mentioned above due to the lack of a strict and conservative evaluation of sexuality might be met by rappers as being a kind of “dishonour”. While some male rappers were not against sexual intercourse with Dutch women, they did not approve of getting married to them due to moral and religious reasons.

To discuss particular songs by a Dutch-Turkish rapper has implications not only for elaborating on the Turkish-speaking rap scene in the Netherlands in general, but also for more particular theoretical issues such as locality, diasporic consciousness and “the double standard” mentioned above. For instance, the lyrics of the song “Amsterdam” by Şener-E primarily involve a notion of ‘locality’ that makes Amsterdam a place where Turkish migrants construct a kind of hybrid or even, as Şener implies, “hypocritical” identity. The verses of the song are below:

### **Amsterdam**

Burada doğdum, büyüdüm,  
Ne pislikler gördüm.  
Arkadaş bile gömdüm.  
Hacısı hocası, paralı parasız,  
Ulan kim olursan ol,  
Bu şehir sana da verir sızı.  
Orospusundan tut, esrarına kadar,  
Gözüne de gülerek bakan Amsterdam’da.  
Dur yok, durak yok hareket ise çok.  
Burda dikkat etmezsen,  
Hayatın olur bombok.  
Kırmızı muhitte baktım,  
O da ne?  
Hoca gitme der,  
Ama kendisi abone.

### **Amsterdam**

I was born and bred here,  
I’ve witnessed such filth.  
Even I buried a friend of mine.  
Pilgrim, priests, rich or poor,  
It doesn’t matter who you are,  
This city gives such pain.  
From its prostitutes, to its drugs,  
In Amsterdam, who looks at you smiling.  
There’s no stopping, but lots of action.  
If you’re not careful,  
Your life gets fucked up.  
In the Red Light District, I said,  
What the heck?  
The priest says don’t go there,  
But he’s a regular.

Karılar, ışıklar, dapdaracık sokaklar,  
Sakallı hacı karıyla pazarlık yapar.

Bir düşünüp dursam rezalet mi rezalet.  
Bakarım bu şehre,  
Dolar içime nefret.  
Evlisi barklısı oralarda gezer,  
Ulan en iyisi evde git karını becer.  
Şüphesiz böyle adalet olmaz,  
Kimse kimseye bu haksızlığı yutturamaz.  
İçimdeki kin ve nefret duyguları,  
Zehir gibi işliyor kanıma sevgi kazıkları.  
Ona buna gider,  
Nasihatlerini verir,  
Cumartesi gider orospuyu becerir.  
Yutmam,  
Yalancısın suratından belli.  
Sana da bana da yaramaz bu dişilerin eti.  
Neydi?  
Lanet şehir Amsterdam!  
Her şey serbest burada sabah akşam.  
Beni çileden çıkarttı buradaki lanet yaşam.  
Her gün biraz daha sertleşiyorum,  
Herkesten yavaş yavaş nefret etmeye  
başlıyorum  
Nerede bitecek bu karanlık yolculuk?  
Mum gibi söndüm,  
Ama yıkılmadım çocuk.  
Yat kalk çalış yitirme kendini,

Tartış...  
Sana kazık atana sakın el uzatma.  
Pisliklere inanma,  
Anlattıklarına kanma.  
Delilik yapma sakın sen de batarsın ha.  
Aklımı kullan oğlum!  
Değerini bil.  
Sana yaramayan kişileri listenden sil.

İyice bir düşünsen, etrafına baksan  
Hayır gelir mi acaba bu hayvanlardan!

Neler neler gördüm şimdiye kadar,

Women, lights, its narrow streets,  
The bearded pilgrim [religious Muslim]  
bargains with a whore.

If I think about it, it's a disgrace.  
When I think of this city,  
I'm filled with hatred.  
The married and the bachelor all go there,  
The best is to go home and fuck your wife.  
This is not justice, no doubt,  
No one can convince another that it is.  
The feelings of animosity and hatred,  
Love lies are flowing into my blood like poison  
He goes to everyone,  
He advises them,  
And fucks the whore[s] on Saturdays  
I don't buy his [lies],  
I can tell from his face  
We don't need these women's flesh.  
What was it?  
The damned city Amsterdam!  
Everything is allowed here morning and night.  
The damned life here made me out of control.  
I become harsher everyday,  
Slowly I start hating everyone.

Where is this dark journey going to end?  
I got blown out like a candle,  
But I didn't collapse, kid.  
Go to work, come home, don't lose yourself,

Argue...  
Don't shake hands with those who cheat you.  
Don't believe bastards,  
Don't be fooled by what they tell you.  
Don't be stupid, otherwise you'll go down.  
Use your mind, son!  
Know your worth.  
Take the people who don't give you something  
out of your life.

If you think hard, if you look around,  
Do you think any good would come from these  
animals!

I've seen so many things up to now,

Kötü insanlar, ikiyüzlü yamyamlar.  
Çıkarları da varsa,  
Seni didik didik yolarlar.  
Seni beni düşürmek için,  
Ruhumu satarlar.  
Ben yaşadım.

Bad people, hypocritical cannibals.  
If you have something they want,  
They take everything you've got.  
To run over you and me,  
They sell my soul.  
I've lived through it all.

There are no vocals on the original track. The song begins with an introduction which is a radio-like announcement made by a female. Afterward, the sample taken from the recording of a Turkish band, Yedi Karanfil (“Seven Cloves”), performing mainly Turkish folk songs, starts to play. The name of the original track is “Güle Yel Değdi” (The Wind Touched the Rose), which was written by Hasret Gültekin, who was an Alevi musician murdered by radical Islamists setting fire to the hotel where a group of people composed of Alevi intellectual, musicians and artists had assembled in Sivas<sup>174</sup> in 1993. This tragic incident is called “the Sivas Massacre”. The use of folk music samples in “oriental” style and mentioning issues regarding the Turkish diaspora in both songs, “Deprem” and “Amsterdam”, shows the influence of Cartel in the late 1990s which, as mentioned before, Şener-E himself mentions as an influence/inspiration for him to rap in Turkish. With this song, Turkish identity imagined before migration is idealized and Amsterdam city, referring to foreign culture, is blamed since it tempts people getting into “the evil”. Furthermore, the city of Amsterdam is portrayed to entail the intermingling of Turkish culture and the Dutch one in moral values which Dutch-Turks should avoid. Here, Şener-E incorporates local cultural and political forms by using Turkish language throughout a kind of diasporic consciousness. What he strives is to illustrate how Turkish migrants are overcome by the liberal socio-cultural structure in Amsterdam, whose name even evokes many people from different countries, freedom and diversity (about imagining place in Turkish rap music see Solomon 2005b). In the song “Amsterdam”, the city is embodied as a kind of place where moralities are in conflict with each other. Particularly, Şener-E emphasizes religious morality by drawing attention to the anonymous priest who hangs out in the Red Light District for non-marital sexual intercourse, which is strictly forbidden by Islam. Another emphasis made by rapper is the use of drugs which is also forbidden by religion. By using “mediated music” (Solomon 2005a: 16) rappers who live in different geographies have expressed their concerns and experiences (see Mitchell 2001). By “use of mediated music”, Thomas Solomon (2005a: 16) means “[...] not just what people do with mediated sounds themselves, but also the ways they deploy discourses on and around

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<sup>174</sup> An Anatolian city.

those sounds”. The song above simply addresses how Dutch-Turks react to the host culture morally in their daily life in which they sometimes experience disharmony and conflict. To address the issue of disharmony, I will briefly talk about the movie *Otobüs* (The Bus). *Otobüs* (1976), directed and written by Tunç Okan, concerns nine Turkish workers who get on a bus and illegally travel to Stockholm in search of a better life. After many complications they reach their destination. However, their driver parks the bus in the biggest square of the city, takes their passports and leaves them trapped in the bus. The workers do not abandon the bus for hours because of their fear of being arrested, but start to leave the bus one by one at night. After leaving the bus, they start to encounter bewildering incidents. For instance, in the bathroom of a shopping mall a Swedish person asks them in Swedish whether they sell drugs. When the Turkish workers leave the bathroom, surprised because they understand nothing of his question, they see a couple making love in a phone booth. After walking around the streets of the city, their bewilderment keeps increasing by seeing sex shops and sex bars. Fairly tragic events follow. Tunç Okan, the director and an actor of the movie, describes his intentions as follows: “What I aimed at doing from the beginning was to manifest the big conflict, big disharmony, big contradiction...” (in the booklet of the DVD, Gala Film: 2006). In *Almanya, Acı Vatan* (1979) [Germany, Land of Sorrow] by Şerif Gören, another movie about Turkish immigrants in Europe, there is a similar scene. What meets the Turkish worker who moves to Germany to work is the question coming from a German: “Do you have drugs?” The focus of this drama is again disharmony and conflict. As a final point I would like to express that I was asked the same question in Garage, one of the famous bars of Bergen, in my third month in Norway. After thinking about these two similar scenes, both from movies released in the seventies, and my experience, my dissertation topic and field research in the Netherlands have started to look more meaningful and critical. Is that personal experience a sign of conflict and disharmony or just a coincidence?

On the other hand, this does not mean that diasporic consciousness is embedded within Şener-E’s lyrics only through such thematic dislocations and embodiments of differentiation between moralities; indeed, especially in his other songs, such as *Deprem* [“Earthquake”] made for the major disaster in Turkey, some particular forms are directly associated with in-betweenness. While the “Amsterdam” song is of his impressions about life where he lives, the other shows his concern with events going on in Turkey. So the two songs together illustrate something about his hybrid position in the diaspora. Both songs point out that the rapper cannot be indifferent to both Turks in Turkey and the Netherlands. The diasporic consciousness is also visible in musical motifs and patterns which are dominantly oriental.



The song points to a kind of moralistic in-betweenness of Turks in the Netherlands. It can even be interpreted as an illustration of social pressure among people to retain Turks' general understanding of moral values. In order to keep this understanding, some people tend to hide what they do in the liberal social structure of the Netherlands. Also, interestingly, not just from the lives of Turks mentioned in the song, but a particular duality in perceiving such moralistic situations by Turkish rappers can be seen from what the rappers say. For instance, Reverb (20) answered a question related to homosexual marriage in this way:

I really don't care if someone puts himself to shame. If they don't harm me, or don't touch me in a way, I don't care. I haven't had any problems with such people. If my neighbor smokes weed a lot, or has girls over at his place a lot, of course you can be disturbed. You also get used to such things over time. I grew up here. I haven't seen anything different from this. Sometimes Turkish people say they're shameful or disgusting. I saw such things. Why should I say now that they're disgusting!<sup>175</sup>

Although this seems to reflect a kind of acceptance of individuals who have different lifestyles, it still includes some criticism of them, as when Reverb speaks of someone putting "himself to shame" or his emphasis on the frequency of an action like smoking weed. Most of the rappers have negative thoughts of homosexual marriage in the Netherlands, but none of them showed any violent or aggressive expressions against it. Generally, they stated, it is not suitable for Turkish culture. However, a few of them mentioned the particular violent attitudes of Moroccan immigrants against homosexuals.

I would like to finish the section with a song by Turkey-born rapper, MT. The song has particular critical and at the same time futuristic connotations in a sense. He harshly criticizes Dutch-Turkish rappers due to the use of language, unwillingness to integrate into the host society and dreams of returning to the homeland. The whole song supposedly summarizes all issues examined in this chapter. It is also futuristic, because he foresees another generation who will successfully integrate into the host society via constructing an identity which is going to be constructed together with cultural artifacts of both Turkishness and Dutchness at the same time. The song shows his discontents against converting the past of Turkish people into a kind of taboo or something to keep for standing against the host country

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<sup>175</sup> Başkasının rezil olması beni hiçbir şekilde etkilemiyor yani. Bana bir zararı yoksa, beni hiçbir şekilde bozmuysa. Ben hiçbir şekilde yani şu an bir rahatsızlık görmedim. Tabii komşum içip içip otu motu karılar girip dursa tabii eyvallah yani rahatsız olursun. Bir de alışyorsun yani. Ben burada büyüdüm. Ben başka bir şey görmedim ki. Türkler buraya gelip diyor ki "aa nasıl olur ki rezil, bu nasıl olur". Ben bunları gördüm, bununla büyüdüm. Niye şimdi rezil diyeyim ki!

somehow. The lyrics of MT's song are below. The song, which is somewhat didactic and critical, clearly also points to a kind of in-betweenness felt by young Dutch-Turkish people:

### **Şeytanların Cenneti<sup>176</sup> (“Demons’ Paradise”) (excerpt)**

Instead of [insisting on] culture, protect your language first.  
Instead of living in the devils’ paradise,  
Drowning in the paradise of beauty and looking back,  
Instead of dreaming of your motherland, integrate it for your soul.  
You curse it, too.  
40 years of effort, it’s easy to say.  
Always talk about the past!  
Make yourself miss yourself,  
So that devotion won’t be left only in the prayers of those who return.  
The new generation will discover the name Turk in Holland with such might.  
It will return 100% Turk and 100% Dutch  
And a generation will grow up without absurd taboos.  
It will discover itself and realize that “the force they own exists in the noble blood that flows  
in their veins”<sup>177</sup> “Turkish Youth!”<sup>178</sup>  
Did you forget your “first duty,”<sup>179</sup>  
“The very foundation of your existence and your future”?<sup>180</sup>  
Do you care?  
Look, you’re “within the iron shielded wall that surrounds the horizon of the West”<sup>181</sup>  
Does your “heart”<sup>182</sup> realize this?

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<sup>176</sup> Ana diline sahip çık önce kültür diye bas bas bağıracığına  
Şeytanların cennetinde yaşayıp güzelin cennetinde boğulacağına bakacağına ardına  
Ana vatana hayaller kuracağına ruhun için entegre et  
Sen de kahret , 40 yıl dile kolay emek  
Hep geçmişten bahset  
Kendine kendini özlet ki  
Bu dönemlerin dualarında kalmasın ibadet  
Yeni nesil Holla-Türk ismini hararetle keşfedecek  
%100 Türk %100 Hollandalı olacak gelecek ve bir nesil saçma tabulardan ayrı büyüyecek  
Kendini keşfedecek ve sahip olduğu kudretin damarlarındaki asil kanda mevcut olduğunu bilecek  
Ey Türk gençliği  
Birinci vazifeni unuttun mu?  
Mevcudiyetinin ve istikbalinin yegane temelini?  
Umurunda mı?  
Bak garbın afakını saran çelik zırlı duvarın içindesin  
Serhaddin bunun farkında mı?

<sup>177</sup> This is an allusion to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk’s famous Address to Turkish Youth (1920).

<sup>178</sup> Id

<sup>179</sup> Id

<sup>180</sup> Id

<sup>181</sup> From “İstiklâl Marşı,” Mehmet Akif Ersoy’s poem which makes up the lyrics of the Turkish National Anthem. Out of the 10-stanza poem, only two stanzas are actually sung in the anthem.

<sup>182</sup> Id

With the song, on the one hand, MT points out his optimism for the future of Dutch-Turks by stressing a generation without “absurd taboos”. On the other hand, at the same time, he clearly reacts negatively against Dutch-Turks, since they imagine their national identity not to move forward with much more progressive identities, but rather to produce somewhat conservative ones. Particularly, “the force they own exists in the noble blood that flows in their veins” verse refers to the doctrine of the founder of Turkish Republic, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, who expects Turkish youth to adopt European values without losing their national identities. He defends keeping the past not to bring out a sort of “iron shielded nationalistic wall”, but rather an amalgamation of the West and national identity together.

### **7.10 Reflections of Dutch-Turkish Rappers on Rap Music**

George Lipsitz relates a significant story about the act of listening from legendary jazz musician Duke Ellington:

According to a story told among jazz musicians, Clark Terry experienced some exasperating moments when he first joined the Duke Ellington orchestra in 1951. The great trumpet and flugelhorn player had rehearsed every complicated technical maneuver in his repertoire in anticipation of the opportunity to impress his new boss and band mates. But when he got to his audition, all Ellington wanted him to do was ‘to listen’. Terry complained that he was a musician who needed a chance to play, that anyone could just sit and listen. But the ever enigmatic Ellington informed him, ‘There’s listening and there’s listening, but what I want you to do is to listen (Lipsitz 1994: 3).

Eventually, Terry understood what Ellington meant: “He had not yet learned to listen to the voices around him or to understand the spaces and silences surrounding them” (ibid, 3). Let us continue with a personal anecdote. As mentioned in previous sections, I have been into the metal scene for about eighteen years. I got my first record, Iron Maiden’s “Somewhere in Time” (1984), in 1990. As both a listener and critic for a few webzines and magazines, I try to contribute something to this music. Many years ago, I tried to learn how to play electric guitar, but unfortunately failed due to lack of discipline. This is why I always try to be a good listener and to understand and feel music. I take the act of listening very seriously, rather than a simple way of filling up free or spare time. In contrast, listening to music actively for

Turkish rappers seems a little problematic. Many rappers do not listen to different kinds of rap or other genres and show little interest in them. On this very important issue, a rapper from Rotterdam, APO (26), said: “Do you know why we’re losing? Because here there are three MCs, but just one listener”<sup>183</sup>. What he states is important for musically evaluating Turkish rap in the Netherlands. Actually, during the interviews, many local rappers ironically criticized each other due to capacity of to do rap. Hence, the most common aspect Dutch-Turkish rappers stressed while picturing the Turkish-speaking rap scene in the Netherlands was to what degree each rapper participating in the scene is atomized or disconnected from each other. While it is possible to consider how German-Turkish rappers are bonded to each other through hip-hop, their counterparts in the Netherlands usually draw an opposing picture. For instance, it is still possible to talk about a visible publicity of Turkish hip-hop in Germany provided with festivals, concerts, radio and newspaper announcements so on so forth (Soysal 1999) even though it is hard to say the same thing for the Dutch scene, since it is hard to claim that there are enough listener-fans in the Netherlands to support such festivals or concerts.

Mista Brown (Bora, 23) from Rotterdam takes a similar view to APO. In his formulation, a significant aspect is again the act of listening: “There are a lot more rap music makers than listeners. You can see this at concerts. Everybody sees this music as a kind of short-term fad. Most of the people who started to rap in 2003 stopped doing it. According to me, if someone has no legally released album, s/he is not a MC. There are Turkish-speaking rappers in the Netherlands, but there is no one who knows the history of [hip hop], or who are really interested in this music. First of all, show respect to this music<sup>184</sup>”. According to him, rap fans usually seem to be rushing to start making rap themselves before listening to it regularly or closely, and thus lack of a sufficient understanding. Thus, many rappers call them “wack” (bad) MCs. Rap is somewhat accepted as an unconventional genre. At first glance, it seems easy for some people to produce music using the human voice as a kind of instrument along with beats and rhythms made on computers. But managing to do it, I think, is not easy without thinking about and listening to music seriously.

Another point is how rap began to blend with other musical genres starting in the early 1990s, or even before, in 1986 when American hard rock band Aerosmith collaborated with

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<sup>183</sup> Neden kaybediyoruz biliyor musun? Burada üç MC, bir dinleyici var.

<sup>184</sup> Camiada dinleyiciden çok rap yapan. Konserlerde bunu görebiliyorsun. Herkes bunu geçici bir heves olarak görülüyor. 2003’te başlayan çoğu insan bu işi bıraktı. Hollanda’da Türkçe rapçi yok. Hollanda’da Türkçe rap yapan internet MC’leri var. Bana göre bandrollü albümün yoksa MC değildir benim gözümde. Hollanda’da Türkçe rap yapan insanlar var ama bu işin tarihini bilen, gerçekten bu işle ilgilenen kimse yok. Öncelikle bu işe bu müziğe saygı duyacaksın.

rap group Run DMC to remake its 1970s classic “Walk this Way” (on the album *Raising Hell*, 1986: Arista Europa). But in the 1990s, rap music became so popular that many musicians began to benefit from it or draw inspiration from it. Thus, they also started to push the limits of rap musically to produce something interesting. In a sense, rap has a significant potential which might pave the way to creating interesting musical styles. On this point, hip hop pioneer Afrika Bambaataa said, “You can go do anything with rap music... You can go from the past to the future to what’s happening now” (quoted in Lipsitz 1994: 26). In order to go far beyond the borders of rap and be an original MC, there are various technical and artistic techniques. These techniques certainly provide musicians with effective and creative ways of expressing themselves. For example, on this issue, Erhan (25), a good listener and a reflective, intelligent and clever individual, had a view different from many others I spoke with. According to Erhan, there are some rules for being a good MC: “For example, if an MC can’t do freestyle or improvisation, that’s not a real MC. Also, a DJ without a turntable definitely isn’t a DJ ... They need a sort of spirit... I mean, listeners should feel what the MCs are trying to express. They should reflect their feelings to you; they should be able to. It doesn’t matter if it’s in Iranian, Kurdish or Spanish”<sup>185</sup>. He is a very active listener and former editor of a webzine on Turkish rap. He has many different kinds of rap albums, including experimental, underground, mainstream, etc. He has a strikingly critical approach to Turkish rap, because he likes to listen to musicians from all around the world. According to him, the beats, flows, lyrics and samples used in a good rap song need to reflect the spirit of the MC and his/her emotions as a whole. Emphasizing the importance of sampling, he stressed:

If a rapper uses part of another song and manages to create a totally divergent feeling or soul, I say bravo. But if they insist on using it without change and putting it in their own song with the same melody or verse, I say that sucks. Rappers should bring out a totally different mood. I don’t mean they should change it completely, but the sample needs to be as good as the rap song they produce. Rappers have to mix samples with the song in a very good way<sup>186</sup>.

Related to what Erhan states, Mista B, a Turkish rapper who writes most of his lyrics in English, said the following while talking about the Turkish rap scene in the Netherlands: “In

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<sup>185</sup> Mesela bir MC, MC free style yapamıyorsa MC değildir yani. Doğaçlama yapamıyorsa MC değildir. Bir DJ tuning table’ı yoksa Dj değildir kesinlikle MC’lerin anlatmak istediğini hissedeceksin yani. O duyguyu sana verecek, verebilecek. İster iranca, ister Kürtçe, ister İspanyolca...

<sup>186</sup> Bir şarkıdaki sample alıp bambaşka ruh hali çıkartırsan ortaya bravo derim. Yok yine aynı sample nağmeler nakarat aynı ise, yani aldığın şarkıya benziyor ise bir bok. Bambaşka ruh hali çıkartacaksın, mutlaka değiştir diye bir şey yok ama aldığın şarkı ile en az aynı güzellikte olmalı. İyi mixlemelisin.

this music [rap], people should dig into the [CD] crates and then use them [those discs] as samples. The importance of sampling, as one of the most important parts of hip hop music, depends on its originality”<sup>187</sup>. Hence, on sampling and its originality, which means searching for unique samples, Schloss says of “digging in the crates,” or searching for rare records as discussed in Chapter 5. As mentioned above, the most significant factor behind the critiques of *arabesk* and love rap and how some rappers reject it as a creative genre is how the rappers making this music do not tend to use sample or melodies in creative ways, but instead usually use a whole *arabesk* song as background to their song. Many Turkish rappers I spoke to see creatively manipulated samples as the main part of rap music. In general, also, sampling is accepted as one of the most important aspects of this genre. About sampling, Nelson George says,

Before hip-hop, producers would use sampling to disguise the absence of a live instrument. If a horn was needed or a particular keyboard line was missing, a pop producer might sample it from another record, trying to camouflage its artificiality in the process. However, a hip-hop producer, whose sonic aesthetic was molded by the use of break beats from old records pulled away from dirty crates, wasn't embarrassed to be using somebody else's sounds. Recontextualizing someone else's sounds was, after all, how hip-hop started (George 2004: 439).

Generally, this change in sampling techniques can be also observed among African-American rappers. For various reasons, from copyright problems to different musical approaches, digging in the crates as a very old method to produce a sample started to change in the hip hop scene. Particularly, instead of using this method, many musicians started to produce their own “samples” using synthesizers or other techniques. Recently, a search for original and creative samples has tended to be seen among experimental/underground rap bands which try to rap differently from the mainstream. On this subject, Nelson George states that,

Obviously, sampling hasn't disappeared from hip-hop, but the level of ambition in using samples has fallen. The high intensity sound tapestries of [Public Enemy] have given way to often simple-minded loops of beats and vocal hooks from familiar songs – a formula that

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<sup>187</sup> Bu işte plakları araştıracağını, sample olarak kullanacağını. Hip-hop müziğinin en önemli parçalarından birisi olan sampling'in önemli seçilen sample'in özgünlüğüne bağlıdır.

grossed Hammer, Coolio, and Puff Daddy millions in sales and made old R&B song catalogs potential gold mines (George 2006: 440).

Interactions between popular music genres and the impact of the music industry on various genres have pushed musicians to produce more similar works designed to be popular among listeners. For example, the popularization of R&B has spurred the crossing of rap songs with popular R&B songs, or the rapid rise of nu-metal<sup>188</sup> due to the popularity of rap since the 1990s.

Many Turkish rappers I spoke with don't see particular branches of rap or hip hop culture like freestyle, graffiti, or breakdancing as either necessary or important. Most even show no interest in non-Turkish rap. However, I interviewed two very different rappers who see especially freestyle and hip hop culture as important parts of this culture: MT (26), and Melek/Şeytan (30). Especially Melek/Şeytan's reflections on hip hop point to the significant differences of understanding of hip hop among rappers. Although many rappers see freestyle as unnecessary for being a rapper, Melek/Şeytan said, "Sometimes we had open mike nights where our friends did freestyle. We weren't able to breakdance or do graffiti because we weren't so good at them"<sup>189</sup>. Here the issue of breakdancing and graffiti arises. The most significant difference between the Dutch-Turkish rap scene and the German scene is the use of graffiti. In fact it is quite difficult to find a visible presence of graffiti art among Dutch Turks. But in Germany, on the contrary, as Martin Greve states, "For many years there have been breakdance courses in nearly all of the youth centers where Turkish youths go. The walls of the buildings in Kreuzberg have already been covered with Turkish graffiti" (quoted in Çağlar 1998: 249). In Rotterdam, according to a few rappers I talked to, there are a few Turkish graffiti artists, but they declined to give me contact information, citing privacy concerns. On the other hand, in Amsterdam, according to Turkish rappers, there are very few graffiti artists actively spraying the walls among Turkish rappers. So, if we compare the Netherlands with Germany in terms of graffiti art among Turkish rappers, Germany is far ahead on this street art.

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<sup>188</sup> Nu metal is a sub-genre of heavy metal, which refers to a mixed musical structure with rock/metal genres like grunge (Nirvana, Smashing Pumpkins, etc.), alternative rock (Radiohead, Placebo, etc), hardcore metal (Pantera) and various musical genres such as hip-hop, industrial, electronic, etc.

<sup>189</sup> Open mic gecelerinde arkadaşlarımız genelde free style filan da yapardı. Breakdance ve graffiti pek yapamıyorduk çünkü pek iyi değildik o konuda.

## 7.11 Live Rap Performances in the Netherlands

I would like to finish this chapter by sharing some observations from my fieldwork. During the ten months of my fieldwork, I waited for a concert or festival of Turkish rap performers living in the Netherlands, but unfortunately in vain. Once in a big concert hall, Paradiso, an MC from Amsterdam, performed with a beat box, turntablist and another rapper, Reverb, as the support band for Mercan Dede, a famous Turkish DJ and *ney*<sup>190</sup> player. But finally, a concert took place in Woerden<sup>191</sup>. However, it was not a concert by a Turkish rapper from the Netherlands, but by a famous one from İstanbul with another rapper. In any case, I thought that it might be a good chance to observe rappers and the atmosphere of a rap concert in the Netherlands, so I went there. The event was not held in a concert hall, but in a club, much like an old-fashioned discotheque. After buying a ticket and going through security, I walked in, and immediately began to search for young people who look like rappers. Actually my purpose was to speak with rappers about music and the concert in general, so I used dress style as a criterion and looked for people with baggy pants, sneakers, hoodies, or big oversized sports t-shirts. Finally, I saw a few male rappers standing next to the stage. First I explained to them why I was there and asked them if they could talk with me about Turkish rap in the Netherlands, but they were surprised and suspicious. Later, one of them told me, “We have a friend, but he’s not here now. After he comes back, we can talk to you.” After waiting about half an hour, I realized that this was a very strange answer. Probably they didn’t want to talk to me. During the time I spent there, none of them came to me to talk or explain about themselves. Before the concert, a few DJs played urban music and various Turkish pop songs, mostly remixed with dance rhythms and rap beats. After the DJ finished, a three-piece Turkish folk music group performed traditional Turkish music (*türkü* in Turkish) and the young people danced. I realized that all this was no mere warmup for the rap concert, but a three-in-one event to attract more people. Actually, many rappers I interviewed told me in a pejorative way that rap concerts in the Netherlands are much like a Turkish village wedding ceremony. They actually mean that young people generally go to concerts not for rap music, but just to dance, socialize and sometimes meet the opposite sex. Nevertheless, about seventy-

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<sup>190</sup> An wind instrument generally played by Sufis.

<sup>191</sup> Woerden is a municipality and a city in the central Netherlands.



five people in the concert sang almost all the songs together with the rapper. Thus, it can be still said that many rappers also go to concerts for rap music. Personally, during my five hours in the club, I felt like a kind of stranger, even though almost everybody inside was Turkish. This is because I was both significantly distant from the music being played inside and also felt different from young Dutch-Turkish people. I will admit that during those ten months in the Netherlands, I usually felt something similar to a mood of in-betweenness. Honestly, I felt closer to people who were born and raised in Turkey. So it could be better to remind what Cey Cey stated above seems very understandable to cast light on in-betweenness: “I don’t think that I’ve integrated completely into [Dutch society]. And I don’t think that I could, either [He means both Turkey and the Netherlands].”

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

*Welcome to Hell*<sup>192</sup>

1993 it is hard to live here  
The only way of our salvation is to return home  
I am sick of being oppressed  
I am sick of always being made fun of  
Bastard skinhead I do not need a weapon (Karakan)<sup>193</sup>

A dissertation holding consistent and critical discussions aims at giving an overview of these discussions in a compact way in its concluding chapter. A concluding chapter can either be designed as a kind of miniature dissertation without details or as a separate chapter posing some extra questions about the research. In my concluding chapter, I will follow both of these patterns.

Over the past twenty years or so there has been much interest in different popular music genres, diasporas and globalization. In line with this interest, this study has explored the relationship between rap music and migration by providing ethnographic and sociological insights into the musical practices and life-stories of Dutch-Turkish rappers in the Netherlands. The main goal of this study was to show how cultural changes experienced all over the world influence different ethnic groups at a transnational level. It is a fact that the Second World War triggered a series of rapid social, political and economic changes in most countries. Even now, the impact of the war on cultural, economic and social fields and relations still remains. I think the topic of this study, music, is among the social components reflecting these changes. In this sense, one of the main topics of recent ethno-musicological studies has been musical migration, hybridism and diasporas under the umbrella of globalization. Two of the underlying reasons behind the particular musical changes occurring in popular music were globalization and local political transformations. Therefore, Chapter 3

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<sup>192</sup> **Cehenneme Hoşgeldin**  
1993 burada yaşamak çok güç.  
Tek kurtuluşumuz vatana geri dönüş,  
Bıktım artık daima ezilmekten,  
Bıktım artık daima dalga geçilmekten.  
Alçak dazlak silah lazım değil bana (Karakan).

<sup>193</sup> Karakan is a German-Turkish rap group, which was found by Alper Aga.

has clarified the notion of globalization, and places other concepts like locality, diasporas, hybridism and nationality in a theoretical context based upon the impacts of globalization. In this chapter, I have aimed at providing various accounts of how globalization is transforming societies in terms of socio-economic and cultural conditions. This study has also explored the interrelatedness of globalization with musical cultures and identity alongside the fluidity between these phenomena. According to Thomas Turino, “culture is not a thing or a system to which people belong”; rather, Turino uses the concept “to refer to the complex, fluid, and often amorphous resources and processes of lived human relations, identity, and understanding” (Turino 1993: 11). Within this framework, we notice that musical cultures are “fluid” and also from time to time “amorphous” with the influence of globalization and transnational migrations. For this reason, in Chapter 3 the significance of such concepts has been highlighted. In this context, moreover, the appearance of gangsta rap in different ways in a country, wherein there is no ghetto or the coexistence of *arabesk* and rap, make Turino’s notion of culture and scene crucial. With rap subgenres amongst Turkish rappers, the topics of fluidity, hybridism or being amorphous become much more complicated. For example, Turkish-speaking rappers doing gangsta rap in a country without ghettos are put at the center of the conceptual discussions in this study. When we examine the emergence and formation of *arabesk* in Turkey (see Chapter 7) and the social conditions of the Netherlands, it is still possible to say that *arabesk/love* rap is very popular among Turkish rappers, despite the lack of similar cultural tensions and social contradictions in the Netherlands. This shows us that Turkish people living in the Netherlands are not disconnected from Turkey, but on the contrary they are still actively nourished by this culture both musically and socially. Both subgenres (gangsta and *arabesk/love*) are more than music, since they are indicative of a socio-economic structure. For instance, gangsta rap, reflecting ghetto lives, and *arabesk/love* rap, are both nourished by emotional matters. The idea of making gangsta rap in a country like the Netherlands in which there are no ghettos is intriguing. For this reason, the opinions of the rappers saying that they are doing gangsta rap are also remarkable and interesting. Rappers writing lyrics about drugs when they do not use drugs or other rappers writing about street fights call this merely a fashion. This new situation can be explained as the influence of new movements in the global rap scene after *gurbet* rap’s (“foreign land”; see Chapter 7) popularity decreased. Similarly, in this context, love rap brings another dimension to the issue of hybridism. It is basically a combination of *arabesk* music with rap. It can be said that this genre belongs to Turks living in the Netherlands. Though there is a genre called *arabesk* rap in Turkey, as mentioned in Chapter 7, in the Netherlands the name ‘love rap’ has become

common. There are no big musical differences between these two, but the term love rap has begun to be used because its lyrics are about emotional subjects. The musical style of Dutch-Turkish *arabesk* rap and made-in-Turkey *arabesk* rap may be superficially similar (both using lots of samples from *arabesk*), but the lyrics are very different. The proponents of what might be called *arabesk* rap in Turkey, like Yener and the group Kara Öfke, make lyrics much closer to the USA genre “reality rap”, or even “gangsta rap”. For example, Kara Öfke’s “Gecekonu Çocuğu” (1999) [squatter settlement child] is a sort of Turkish reality rap song, in which the *gecekonu* [“squatter house”] (see Stokes 1989) is described in terms similar to that in which the manner USA gangsta rap describes the ghetto.

As discussed in Chapter 2, I preferred to make Paul Rabinow’s “observation of participation” approach dominant in my whole study. I think that this approach provided me with a critical understanding and also made me involved in the study as a Turkish researcher conducting research in a European country. Hence, this research has attempted to map out ethnographic and sociological peculiarities of Turkish rap music in the Netherlands as positioned between the global and local topographies. During my study I tried to hold theoretical discussions with the help of ethnographic data and my personal experiences. The main reason for this is that, as I mentioned in my main chapters, during the course of my field research I was temporarily part of the Turkish diaspora. That is to say, because I had to cope with some of the same problems that Dutch-Turks face in the Netherlands, I thought that the method of “observation of participation” together with participant observation might make the topic more understandable. As much as I could, I benefited from “ethnographic data and microsociological detail” (Bennett 2002: 455) in order to enrich the discussions. Thankfully, recent complex socio-economic and cultural developments have started to force social scientists to produce new and much more flexible concepts covering wider processes in order to reflect these changes more clearly and critically. In particular, globalization and discussions on this issue have led researchers to reevaluate old concepts, social networks, culture, etc. Therefore, I reevaluated some concepts like foreign policies, local peculiarities, youth cultures, etc. Another thing as regarding “observation of participation” that must be mentioned is the personal, sustained relationships that I developed with the rappers. Using a methodological perspective, in Chapter 2, I explained the reasons why the impacts of these relationships on me and also the data that I obtained through these relationships, were not going to be mentioned in this study. The other critical thing is that I included my personal experiences as a researcher from Turkey in my discussion of inbetweenness. That is to say, I

experienced differences concerning culture and language not only with the Dutch people but also with the Turkish respondents. For instance, in an interview that I conducted in Turkish with a Dutch-Turkish turntablist I had to use some English words from time to time. Such situations contributed to the study in different ways. For this reason, such social or musical issues have necessitated discussing the effects of language-use in the Dutch-Turkish rap scene as not just communication ability, but a vital part of rap music itself. I have to admit that as regards language-use; there was a visible distance between my respondents and myself. Nevertheless, this distance did not stem from my researcher identity. As I mentioned in the main chapters, my being from Turkey and mastery of the Turkish language increased this distance. Apparently, in this context, there is also a distinction between Turkish speaking rappers who were born in Turkey and Dutch-born. This distinction shows itself particularly in the use of language.

It is possible to say that intensive interaction and dialogue with some rappers became evident during my fieldwork. I also have to admit that those dialogues were very useful for this study. With the help of such dialogues, I have discovered that hip hop has not been able to become a coherent scene in the Netherlands as it has, to some degree, in Germany. Apparently, socio-political, musical and linguistic issues seem to make such differentiations between the two respective countries much more visible. In this context, my main challenge with this topic of study was whether I should evaluate the Dutch case as a scene having similar characteristics, such as huge fan support, well-organized festivals, new sub-genres, i.e. Oriental rap, good album sales rates, politically thought-provoking bands like Islamic Force, to the German situation. Many times I discussed such issues with Dutch-Turkish rappers and I even got personally involved in some recording sessions at home studios or daily activities, partially including practices relating to the Dutch case, in order to explore its potentials. A few rappers even sometimes asked me how I might interpret their songs, attitudes, and Turkish hip hop culture in general. I tried to comment on what they practice on behalf of hip hop in general. It was hard to be distanced from evaluating their songs in terms of my own personal aesthetic perceptions of both rap and music in general. Therefore, I explained to them what hip hop meant to me and what I focused on during the stay in the Netherlands. I did not allow them to think of me as an “expert” or “professional”, but rather I tended to persuade them that I was just a researcher trying to learn something about Turkish hip hop.

By shifting the emphasis from difficulties experienced in a foreign land to lyrical content including emotional issues, representation of non-existent ghettos, personal matters,

etc. many rappers show us to what extent fashions in musical scenes and socio-political structures on musicians are mutually effective. Even though many rappers declared themselves affected by current somewhat xenophobic attitudes, they still found such issues or difficulties in their daily lives too old-fashioned or boring to mention. In this sense, it has been observed that rhythms and melodies have become more *arabesk* and lyrical content has become more emotionally pessimistic and sad. On the other hand, specific song examples about more political or social issues, such as the earthquake or Kurdish issues belong to rappers over thirty years old. An intention to write lyrics on non-political issues or in the gangsta style was observed among younger rappers. This is to say that older rappers or groups, like Şener-E or Arka Sokak, had experienced visible and effective political changes occurring in the Netherlands during the nineties and also the rapid rise of Turkish rap music, particularly Cartel. After the 1990s, rap music derived from Cartel's fashion began to stay relatively the same, but lyrically converted into various other styles. Of course, it does not mean that no musical modifications took place in any later works. Newer versions of rap music in Turkey or in the Netherlands have apparently been affected by popular music scenes in Turkey as well.

As discussed in Chapter 5, the general musicological overviews of rap music reveal that one of most important features of rap is sampling. It is clear that in the last two decades, we have witnessed a chain of rapid developments through technological innovations in the field of music. Every development has contributed something new to every musical style. As discussed in detail in Chapter 5, sampling has started to be used in most musical genres. It is applied in musical genres ranging from rap to death metal. By sampling, we can hear the call to prayer in a heavy metal song or a speech from an elegy in a dance song. Sampling is sufficient to see how complicated it is to examine rap or musical styles. Discussions of sampling ethically, technically or musically seem to present us with perspectives to grasp a musical culture and also to provide new perspectives in this field. As also stated in Chapter 7, love rap largely consists of samples taken from *arabesk* songs. Even, many *arabesk* rap songs take a complete *arabesk* song, including the sung chorus, and just substitute newly written rapped verses for the original verses, basically creating a rap cover version of an *arabesk* song. From this perspective, listeners' relations with the *arabesk* and rap can be interpreted as an intersection between the local and the global. Nevertheless, here the question of whether *arabesk* or hip hop culture becomes visible is needless, because this genre is hybrid and musical, just as it is a hybrid culture and life style. Even though rap music about *gurbet* (foreign land) does not seem very common in the Netherlands, interviews show us the in-

between state of the rappers. However, I think a few songs by pioneer Turkish-speaking rapper Şener-E, such as “Amsterdam”, show some of the influence of Cartel and the *gurbet* rap discourse from Germany, even if this seems old-fashioned now and Dutch-Turkish rappers have moved on since then to other topics. However, the major difference between Germany and the Netherlands is that the ideal that they would one day return home is relatively weak in the Netherlands. I explained this in terms of the more “inclusive” foreigner politics of the Netherlands. About the Turkish rap scene in Germany, Ayhan Kaya states that “the diasporic cultural identity of the Turkish hip-hop youth [in Germany] is not only limited to the state of “double consciousness”, it goes beyond this factual predicament. These youngsters construct and articulate a state of what he calls “double diasporic consciousness” (Kaya 2003: 212). What Cey Cey from Amsterdam says about this is quite explanatory of what Kaya states: “I don’t think that I have integrated completely into [Dutch society]”. We can make a similar interpretation for the youth doing Turkish rap in the Netherlands. Even though some rappers claim that they are entirely integrated into Dutch society, in interviews they stated that they do not belong to Turkish society and shared their belief that Dutch society has never totally accepted them culturally. However, it seems that in the Netherlands, instead of the term “integration”, terms such as “emancipation” and combating disadvantage have been far more common recently.

Chapter 4, in which the Netherlands and Germany are politically compared, particularly with respect to their citizenship and foreigner policies, has revealed a significant ethnographic discovery. It seems that the socio-political differentiations between the two countries have had a deep impact on the development of rap music. For this reason I have stressed multiculturalism and the policies concerning foreigners practiced in both countries. As has been shown, the socio-cultural and policies practiced in both countries have progressed to the point that distinctions between the rap scenes in both have become much more visible. In the past works of rappers, Cartel’s influence was much more apparent, but this is no longer always the case. The question of multiculturalism and the possibility of shaping the rap scene in the Netherlands through socio-political interventions were at the heart of the dissertation. It can easily be observed that rappers use music in different ways against racism xenophobia, or state policies and politics that they are subjected to which will be discussed below in the context of Turkish rappers’ reaction to the state. Nikos Papastergiadis refers to early sociological accounts in which “[M]igrants and racial minorities have been the subject of many empirical studies which have demonstrated the injustices, hypocrisy and negligence of the welfare system” (Papastergiadis 1998: 35). According to him,

such sociological accounts are concerned with “the dysfunctions of the state” (ibid). It seems that such issues are not one-dimensional sociological issues connected by merely “the dysfunctions of the state”, but rather they include many variables such as culture, historical background, media, social life, etc. In this context, in Chapter 4 what Robins and Morley say about the experience of a Turk living in Germany when s/he used the subway constitutes one of the important parts of the topic of differences between Germany and the Netherlands. Turkish people’s use of rap music more effectively and as a means of reacting against xenophobia, racism and even the racist attacks that they are subjected to, does not appear as merely a coincidence. For example, Cartel’s reactionary and nationalistic rap style is derived from the racist attacks and killings that took place in Germany (see Kaya 2004). As I expressed earlier, hip hop culture in the Netherlands is less prevalent than in Germany. Furthermore, here there are not many rap songs about racism and xenophobia. One of the reasons for this, besides the inclusive policies of the Dutch state, is the lack of physical attacks against people in the Netherlands. I tried to show that the differences between Germany and the Netherlands have been influential on the formation of musical cultures. Particularly the equality and difference from the host-society makes this issue more complicated. But the fact that the legal and cultural structures of the country directly influence the lives of its foreigners is also a crucial issue. As Turino argues, in order to grasp the discrimination that different ethnic groups are subjected to in their host-society or the specific difficulties they suffer from because of their ethnic origins, we need to examine that country’s legal substructures, immigration laws, citizenship policy, religious tolerance, etc. Levent Soysal views Turkish youth and rap music as a way of life, portraying the current political and social structures of the country, more than as a culture resisting them (Soysal 2001).

In order to explore the Islamophobia appearing after a series of tragic incidents like 9/11, the bombing attacks in Madrid and London, the murder of Theo van Gogh in the Netherlands, I discussed the impact of these events on Turkish-speaking rappers in Chapter 7. Apparently, the issue of integration is one of the highest priorities on the Dutch political agenda, particularly since the murder of Theo van Gogh (van Selm 2005). It seems that the Islamophobia that emerged particularly in the aftermath of September 11, 2001 has changed the Turkish people’s definitions of their identity. In the dissertation, multiculturalism in the Netherlands has been analyzed with its crisis especially in the aftermath of 9/11 and the murder of Theo van Gogh. The rise of the far-right and how the Dutch government has put immigrant and multicultural policies into question were discussed through both theoretical data and data I obtained from the fieldwork. Explicitly, nothing has stayed the same in the



Netherlands in the aftermath of the murder. The relative increase of prejudices against immigrants, especially from Muslim countries, and xenophobia might be mentioned, though this has not included physical attacks or violence so far. Of course, I need to state that even if no people were killed or seriously injured in these attacks, the destruction of property that these “physical attacks and violence” involved should be considered. In Chapter 4, I mentioned that the racist attacks were against the mosques and not against the people. It seems that the problems of the Turkish population in the Netherlands have changed in the aftermath of van Gogh’s murder. While before the murder Turks were regarded as an ethnic group, in the aftermath of the murder, they have started to be perceived as a Muslim community by their host society. As I have understood from the interviews, a shift between ethnicity and religion in the identity construction process of Turkish immigrants in the Netherlands has started. What is striking here is that while increasing prejudices against foreigners or attacks on them are reflected in the Turkish rap songs in Germany, it is not possible to talk about a similar case in the Netherlands. However, it is important to note here that the majority of the rap groups clearly stated they have been exposed to Islamophobia and social prejudices in their daily life recently.

What is remarkable after this tragic event is that it is neither race nor ethnic origin that has come into prominence in judging foreigners, but in fact religion. In discussing this point we can go back to the issues of tolerance and indifference. The Netherlands does not seem to contradict the political and social system it constructed, which is based upon tolerance and liberal values. However, the clash between this system and migrants seems to force the Dutch government to find new solutions to promote the integration of foreigners into that system. When scrutinized, it is seen that the topics standing out in the naturalization test (which has recently started to be administered) are sexuality and freedom. It is assumed that the answers of the immigrants taking this test to questions, such as how they react when they see a topless woman or a kissing homosexual couple, can give clues about the probable relationship that these immigrants will build with the Dutch culture. While developing “tolerance” towards a homosexual couple kissing in the park via ignoring them and acting indifferently demonstrates the issue conceived as already ordinary and natural, more importantly, it indicates the attribution of hierarchical value judgments to the issue. In Chapter 7, since the Netherlands is widely accepted as Europe’s most socially liberal country and as among the most respectful countries, in terms of the rights of individuals, the relationship of rappers with cultural conservatism has been discussed as well. For this reason, in the study, I included a

discussion of how rappers perceive this liberal country. Depending on my observations and interviews, I can say that the thoughts of rappers on this subject differ from their peers in Turkey. It appears to me that some Turkish-speaking rappers do not affirm some practices in the Netherlands such as homosexual marriage, a liberal understanding of sexuality, legalization of drugs, etc. from a moral perspective, but rather they seem to accept those practices. The most negatively perceived practice, according to the rappers, is homosexual marriage. At this point, it needs to be stated that this does not mean that they have violent or aggressive attitudes towards homosexuals.

There are some Dutch politicians who have a negative perception about the alleged clash with the West and migrants' perception of it. For example, Rotterdam City Councilman Barry Madlener, regarding immigrants, states, "they really reject a western lifestyle and we think that is very strange, because if you don't want to have a western lifestyle, you shouldn't come here" (Lehrer 2004). In this context it can be said that rather than being influenced by the socio-cultural values of their host country, they judge and evaluate these values according to the mainstream moral values of Turkish society or their families. Most rappers emphasized conserving the moral and cultural values belonging to Turkey. It is seen that religion also influences these interpretations. Also, the argument about women among rappers mentioned in Chapter 7 forms a good example of this. To recall it briefly, a rapper warned other rappers who were talking about a woman at dinner, saying that they should not talk about a Muslim woman like that. The same rapper, once finding out that she was Dutch and not Muslim, told the others to keep talking. The general criticism of this understanding is made in Şener-E's song "Amsterdam" that was presented in the same chapter. What I've also noticed throughout interviews was that many rappers had a tendency to take a side against particular policies of the Dutch state or attitudes of people and repeatedly make quite explicit displays of nationalism and cultural conservatism, even though there are still some exceptional rappers like Erhan or Melek/Şeytan. When rappers insist on criticizing the currently-existing structure of immigration policies or prejudices, xenophobia and even accepting the political structure as "exclusionary", they were not willing to be critical about the Turkish State's policies on the Kurdish issue or Alevis that it parallels, or about gender issues in Turkish society. Such a situation reminds me of Şener-E's song "Amsterdam" which is about the "double standards" and "hypocritical" identity of Turks in the Netherlands that he claims. Indeed, while many Dutch-Turkish rappers seem to pay little attention to political issues in the host country, some of them have songs regarding political changes in Turkey. This means that some of them still

have political connections with Turkey even though they live in another country. According to many rappers with whom I spoke, making songs about the socio-cultural and political problems of Turkish immigrants has become old fashioned in the last decade. Therefore, generally they write lyrics about street life, personal issues or political matters in Turkey. Finally, it can be said that the Turkish diaspora has visibly strong ties with the community in Turkey and in a sense creates a distance from Dutch culture and society. Turkish rap music in the Netherlands, the focus of this dissertation, offers some good examples of subsequent social changes taking place in the host country. From *gurbet* rap to love rap, it is possible to observe transitions and changes of social identities and formations.

Chapter 6 aimed at providing a theoretical framework related to locality and diasporic consciousness, before ethnographically presenting the relationship of the rappers with language. The differences between Turkish-speaking rap scenes and language was also opened to discussion, in order to point out to what extent they differ from each other, linguistically in particular. There is no doubt that the relation between music and language is quite complicated. In this context, the aim of the discussion held in Chapter 5 was to present specific examples from those rap scenes in which we could observe quite different musical and linguistic works. I did not intend to judge those songs or rappers aesthetically, but rather I intended to point out what I meant by a less “developed” rap scene in the Netherlands compared to its counterparts in Germany or Turkey. I observed that Turkish people of the Netherlands are in-between with respect to language and sometimes they even have some difficulties in expressing themselves in the Turkish language. It is not wrong to say that their songs with Turkish lyrics reflect this difficulty. When these rap songs are examined it is noticeable that rappers use their own rather simple and plain Turkish. While most of the rappers express that they do not know enough Dutch to rap in Dutch, the simplicity in their Turkish reflects their inbetweenness. Therefore, in particular for youth cultures and their music (like rap or punk), which are bound with expressions of the host culture and society directly associated with particular imaginations of their identities, the process of evaluation is more complicated and difficult. In this context, the question that I posed in Chapter 7, “Why are there not any rock/metal bands founded by Turkish people that draw the attention of academics in either Germany or the Netherlands?”, brings another along with it: “why does Turkish youth use rap music as a way of expression?”. Especially in Germany, the state actively supported the rising popularity of hip-hop among German-Turks “as a creative expressive art form of the ‘margins’” (Çağlar 1998: 250). It is hard to mention very common

active support in the Netherlands, except youth center including a music studio in Rotterdam as mentioned in Chapter 7.

This study has investigated the “discourse of otherness” in the context of diasporic identity using ethnographic methodology. This identity formation includes both inclusion and exclusion as Laszlo Kurti suggests (Kurti 1997: 30). Jennifer Petzen has also studied Turks in Germany in relation to racism, rap music and localization. According to Petzen, Turks living in Berlin describe themselves neither as Turk nor German, but as “Berliner” (Petzen 2004: 22). This ethnographic discovery demonstrates the complicated and mixed peculiarities of ethnic identities. In Petzen’s article, there is no sharp distinction between being a Turk and being German. The subjects of her study emphasize a localized identity called “being Berliner”. Importantly, the discovery of hybridization and diasporic identity together with localization become possible via an observation of Berlin’s hip hop scene. However, it is not possible to observe that Turkish-speaking rappers, specifically in Amsterdam and Rotterdam, form a local identity that is similar to their counterparts in Berlin. On the other hand, *âşık edebiyatı* (minstrel literature), including poems written with mostly plain language with more syllabic meter and playing with *saz*, was discussed in Chapter 6 in terms of rap music’s connection with this culture, which offers important information on discourse concerning locality. This is to say that rappers and *âşıklar* (minstrels) have something in common in using music and language in order to express their emotions, thoughts or reactions toward something particular. Even so, the similarity between battle in rap music and *atışma* in *âşık* tradition draw our attention to such similarities between the two cultures. In this context, the minstrel tradition is not peculiar only to the village or small town, but it also belongs to hip hop culture.

In spite of the non-existence of ghettos in the Netherlands, both due to distancing from the so-called “old-fashioned” Turkish rap style, *gurbet* rap, and also due to the perception of gangsta rap as being “cool”, the latter has recently become a popular sub-genre among rappers. While particular features of hip hop culture such as rapping, sampling or sub-genres have been discussed, very little is known about Dutch-Turkish graffiti artists, as well as break dancers, neither group being possible to reach. In this way, the differences between the hip hop scenes in Germany and the Netherlands came to the agenda again in terms of such issues. Although I met more than one break dancer in the first hours of my arrival in Kreuzberg, I could contact none during my stay in the Netherlands. Merely paying attention to graffiti or break dancing could make us capture the complete picture of hip hop among Turks in the

country. As mentioned previously, hip hop in the Netherlands appears less developed than its counterpart in Germany. That is to say a hip hop culture which is used not to form a sort of collective consciousness aimed at protesting something unbearable or unwanted in the host country, but rather, as I would like to emphasize, the existence of a particular musical culture solely to express some emotions and thoughts atomistically by Turkish young people in general. Actually, earlier, in the process of arranging interviews and during interviews with rappers, what attracted my attention was that while many rappers were talking to me they appeared to be defending the hip hop culture, but actually by doing this they also defended their own personality. According to my observations and interviews, I can say that there is a kind of “egocentric” understanding among some rappers. Many of them claim their rapping styles differentiate from other rappers. While there appears to be such a group of rappers, on the other hand, there is another group of rappers who have a lack of self-confidence concerning rap music. Therefore, it was very difficult to communicate with rappers from this group. Even to reach them for interviews was a difficult task for me.

During 2001-2003, I was busy with the research, the interviewing and the writing process of my master thesis on dance culture in Turkey, as also mentioned in Chapter 1. In this study, I mainly focused on clubbers living in İstanbul and Ankara as related to metropolitan life, technology and drugs, via modest, out-dated conceptualizations such as subculture. In those years, I have to admit that none of the professors in the department had any specialization on such a topic. Therefore, I wrote the thesis almost on my own. For this dissertation, however, I thankfully worked with a supervisor who professionally specialized in music studies, together with contemporary theoretical and conceptual matters in social sciences. At the very beginning of the research, he warned me about theories I particularly benefited from in my master thesis and showed me new intellectual trends and conceptual fashions in social sciences which are predominantly focused on music studies, youth cultures, diaspora and so on. At the very beginning, he specifically criticized me for the use of the term “subculture”. Afterward, he provided me with a huge selection of readings and a reference list about the discussions on subcultural studies and “music scenes”. Those readings really have expanded my vision. Contrary to the “subculture”, the “scene” has provided me with the inclusion of many aspects of a particular music culture instead of excluding them due to the limits of the former. However, although the concept of scene has meanings and definitions which are deployed with particular flexibilities, surely it does not mean that every fan or performer of a particular music genre might evince a scene necessarily. Hence, I discussed

different types of the term “scene” in Chapter 3 and 5. For this research, this term has played a crucial role even though at the end of writing process it made me pose a controversial question regarding the Turkish-speaking rap music in the Netherlands, in terms of what I got from interviews and the music I picked up during the fieldwork. First of all, I mentioned in Chapter 7 that there is an extreme fragmentation between Dutch-Turkish rappers in terms of musical approaches. Also, it is hard to say that there are visible connections or solidarities among them. Instead, as independent and individual musicians, they apparently focus on producing and performing their own music without a substantive fan base, professionals or the market. As APO from Rotterdam has clearly stated in the previous chapter, there are too many MCs and not enough listener-fans which means that it is impossible to mention people who listen to and support local rappers. Therefore, there is not a big enough critical mass of fans to maintain an active hip hop party and concert calendar. Another point here is that some researchers can be so enthusiastic about the resistance which can easily be observed in particular music scenes. Nevertheless, the question I need to pose here is, do researchers look for resistance in musical scenes or try to analyze them without expecting to find something particular? For this research, I have to admit that I have not found a visible resistance which could be briefly defined as a kind of strategy or way that is followed against power structures or socio-cultural aspects. On the contrary, in the Dutch case, I met atomized, individualistic and independent music performers who do not feel themselves in danger or in a country that pushes them to resist particular power structures, even though socially there are of course still particular problems about strangers/foreigners. As mentioned before, “[a]ll societies produce strangers [...]” (Baumann 1997: 46). Yet, Germany produces “yabancı/Almancı” who feel unsafe in a country due to violent attacks and power structures excluding them (Robins and Morley 1996). Therefore, they feel like resisting them by cooperating with each other instead of atomizing. The Netherlands produces “foreigners” who feel safe and even “untouchable” in the host country. I want to use again one sentence from Chapter 7 to illustrate what I mean by “untouchable”: “If you run into trouble, like physical attacks at the hand of others – for instance Dutch, Moroccans or someone else – just yell at them ‘*siktir git*’ (fuck off). Believe me, that’s enough to scare them off.” As discussed in Chapter 4, the majority of the Dutch-Turkish community is fairly well-integrated into Dutch society in social and economic terms. Moreover, many respondents have stated they do not feel any threat from or consider themselves under attack by the host society. On the other hand, they posit themselves morally, religiously and linguistically as outsiders in the host culture in order to construct a kind of situation of being a “stranger”. Contrary to their counterparts in Germany, many of them do

not prefer to rap in the local language or at least to produce a kind of hybrid language, though they usually speak a relatively hybrid language in their everyday life. By using rap music, they feel like “pure” Turks. The Turkish rap scene in the Netherlands can even be seen as a sort of circle which is totally closed to Dutch people. With minimum contact with the host society and culture, they wish to remain Turkish as much as they can, even if they do not show any willingness to share their experiences or matters with the host society. Let’s remember what a rapper from Rotterdam says in Chapter 7: “[...] we feel like strangers when we should go out of our [neighborhood]. Here, this is our neighborhood. We’re all Turks here. In my neighborhood, I feel at home. That’s why we don’t feel like strangers here”. Indeed, by saying this, they culturally produce themselves as “strangers” who prefer to stay in touch solely with their own ethnic group. I need to say that the Dutch-Turkish rap scene is not a coherent scene, but is composed of dispersed strangers/*yaban[s]*, as discussed in the Introduction, who usually experience particular conflicts with the host culture. Actually, many of them are not foreigners who come from another country, but were born in the Netherlands. Many of them were born as sons and daughters of “strangers in a strange land” indeed.

I would like to present thoughts of where they live in by two important rappers from different countries; one is from Germany, Karakan, and the other is from the Netherlands, Şener-E. The former compares his host country with Hell and the latter one does it with “The Damned City Amsterdam”. The big similarity between these two rappers is to mention their host countries through implication of “the evil”. It is still the fact that it is not so easy to be “a ‘stranger’ in a strange Land” as Iron Maiden, the British heavy metal band, states in their song on the album called “Somewhere in Time” (1986):

[Excerpt:]

Was many years ago that I left home and came this way  
I was a young man, full of hope and dreams  
But now it seems to me that all is lost and  
nothing gained.

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## Discography

[All items are CDs unless otherwise noted; albums not released by commercial record companies but sold informally by the performers/ or other individual entrepreneurs, or available via download from the Internet, are indicated as 'underground release'.]

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