

MIGRATION AND SOCIAL SECURITY

THE CASE OF TURKISH MIGRANTS IN THE NETHERLANDS AND THEIR RELATIVES AT HOME¹

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1. Introduction

Between 1975 and 1989, the number of Turks living in the Netherlands rose from 63,000 to 177,000. The increase was mainly due to the immigration of dependants of the workers who had come to the Netherlands before 1975. The recruitment of Turkish workers had ended in 1974. One may say that many of those labour migrants eventually became immigrants. In the same period, unemployment among Turkish immigrants increased to 44 per cent, as compared to 13 per cent for the total Dutch labour force. Among the younger generation of Turks, the unemployment rate is now over 50 per cent (Muus 1989).

These developments have brought Turkish immigrants into more frequent and intensive contact with Dutch officials, for example, in the fields of education, health care, housing and social security. For informal social contacts, however, Turkish immigrants look primarily to their fellow-countrymen. Social interaction between Turkish immigrant families is fostered within the residential concentrations which have developed in some older working-class quarters in the larger towns. There, immigrants find all kinds of ethnic services: mosques, Turkish coffeehouses and grocers, Islamic butchers, video shops, travel agencies, and credit banks.

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Outsiders readily assume that all Turkish residents in such a quarter form part of a single ethnic community. However, if one can speak of a community at all, it is a community divided within itself by many differences. Turkish immigrants form various networks based on kinship, common regional origin (eastern or western Turkey), life style (more or less westernized), and political preference.

Most Turkish immigrants remain attached to their community of origin by several links. Some workers did not bring their families to the Netherlands. Others brought their wives and elder children, but left their younger children in the care of relatives in their home country. Many immigrants own a house or land in their country of origin. Most children of first generation labour migrants bring over marriage partners from Turkey.

These circumstances provide the background for my on-going research among Turkish migrants. The subject of the study is social security. My aim is to clarify the ways in which migrants apply rules, rights and obligations of different origins (Dutch and Turkish law, state and 'folk' law) which are of importance to their social security. The study is being carried out in a middle-sized town in the Netherlands, in a few districts where relatively many Turkish families have settled. I have been a participant observer and I have conducted repeated interviews with the members of Turkish households. In addition, I have visited the relatives of some of these migrants in Turkey.

In this article, I shall present some findings, focussing on the relations between migrants living in the Netherlands and their relatives who have stayed behind in Turkey. Migration does not have to lead to the severance of those relations, but it is likely to change them. In the Netherlands, both incomes and income security are higher than in Turkey. This could make it easier for migrants to provide financial assistance for their relatives at home. It may also induce the latter to demand more assistance. There may be a trend in the opposite direction, too. Insofar as migrants can rely on the Dutch welfare state to support them at need, they may be less motivated for meeting kinship obligations. These changes will be described and analyzed. Before presenting my findings, however, I will try to explain my conception of social security.

2. The notion of social security

For the purpose of this study, I have adopted a rather wide interpretation of the concept social security. Prevalent notions of social security are limited to state provisions, but I use the term also to refer to mutual support among, for instance, relatives and neighbours. Furthermore, social security is often defined in terms of the ensuring of a 'minimum standard of life' or provision of 'basic

needs' for people who cannot support themselves. People from different societies or different groups within one society will give different answers to the question of what they consider a minimal standard of living. I therefore prefer to use the term social security in a wider sense, so as to include forms of assistance extending beyond the maintenance of an absolute minimum level of existence.

Turkish migrants' perceptions of a minimum standard of life probably also depend on the duration of their stay in Western Europe. After a year or two, they may regard commodities such as a television, a video recorder, and a refrigerator -- commodities which many of them did not miss before their migration -- as basic needs. When they left their country of origin, most Turkish labour migrants saw themselves as 'target workers', that is to say, they intended to return home with as much money as possible, as quickly as possible. However, many of them extended their stay abroad again and again. Eventually, a large proportion of the supposedly temporary labour migrants settled down. Undoubtedly, an important factor in this process was that those migrants in the Western European consumer societies became attuned to a higher standard of living than they could ever attain back home (cf. Böhning 1972: 54-71).

The main characteristic of social security, no matter how widely interpreted, is that it implies redistribution of resources. People who cannot support themselves are provided for by others; either directly, through transfers of goods and services, or indirectly, through money transfers. It should be noted that people who support others may simultaneously provide for their own security, inasmuch as they can rely on receiving support in return if they should need it.

Where the provision of social security is still primarily a task for the family rather than for the state, as is the case in Turkey, the care of the unproductive family members is often arranged in what may be called a 'contract between three generations', implying that the productive members of a family support the unproductive ones, the young as well as the old. One may also say that children are their parents' 'living' old-age insurance (Freiberg-Strauss and Young 1988). During their productive years parents invest energy in bringing up their children, assuming that the latter will support them when they are no longer able to work.

Where the state organizes social security to a greater extent, the system operates essentially in the same way, in spite of enormous differences in scale. In welfare states, people yield a substantial part of their income in the form of taxes and premiums in order to pay for public expenditures, relying on the state to support them at need. Thus both state-law and folk-law social security are based on the principle of generalized reciprocity (cf. Sahlins 1965; and Van Baal 1981: 91-107). People are expected to contribute to the common fund in proportion to

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their abilities, without claiming direct or proportional return benefits. One may also say that solidarity is demanded of participants in both types of systems.

Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish social security from other forms of security. It can be assumed that most people do not rely completely on others for their old age and for such casualties as a crop failure or an illness. If possible, they will also prepare themselves by accumulating capital, for instance saving money and investing it in a house. Such forms of provision, which people can make individually, at first sight seem to have no relation with social security, since they do not entail a redistribution. On second thoughts they do have redistributive effects, though. People who try to accumulate capital, often do so not only with a view to their own future needs, but also for the good of their dependants. (Indeed, even if self-interest is their only motive, the capital they accumulate during their lifetime will be redistributed among their heirs upon their death.) It should also be noted that in societies where children are their parents' main old-age insurance, it may be of crucial importance that a family owns sufficient land or other capital to offer its children a reasonable economic base, because otherwise the latter might not be able to support both their own children and their parents.

Where people who are in their productive years do not perceive sufficient possibilities to provide for their (and their dependants') subsistence and to accumulate some capital for the future, out-migration may be seen as the best or only solution. In such areas, a significant proportion of the population may become involved in seasonal, temporary or permanent migration. This has been the case in large areas of Turkey, too.

3. Two cases

Any question of how Turkish migrants adapt their norms and behaviour to life in the Netherlands is complicated by the fact that they have greatly varying backgrounds. This is illustrated by the cases below. The couple in the first case migrated from a town in one of the more industrialized and urbanized areas of Turkey, whereas the migrants in the second case originated from a rural area. Students of changes in migrants' norms and behaviour should take background differences such as these into account. Migration probably always entails a more or less complete secondary socialization upon the migrant. To the man and the woman in the first case, however, the discrepancies between their environment of origin and the society in which they have settled must have appeared smaller than to their fellow-countrymen in the second case. In both cases, it is clear that differences in background remain relevant throughout all phases in the migration process.

The migration of the married couple in the first case can be characterized as a nuclear family venture. None of their relatives left before them or after them, and only few people left for Europe from their native town. The couple remains attached to their next of kin in Turkey, but they are concerned first and foremost with securing their own (nuclear family's) economic base. In the second case, migration appears to be much more an extended family undertaking. The community of origin may be characterized as 'migration-oriented', that is, relatively many residents have become involved in out-migration (cf. Philpott 1968). The relatives of the two brothers in the second case have invested heavily in their emigration. In return, the brothers are expected to remain very much part of the extended family in Turkey. This implies, for instance, that they are to remit a substantial part of their earnings and that they are to act as sponsors for relatives who wish to follow in their tracks.

3.1 The nuclear family venture: investments in the Netherlands are taking priority

In 1973, at the age of 25, Necati came to the Netherlands as a worker. He had been recruited by a Dutch firm. It had been his own decision to try his luck in Europe. He could have stayed at home to work in his father's carpenter's workshop. The workshop, established in a provincial town, was his parents' last remaining possession. Necati's mother was chronically ill. In the course of time, she and her husband had been forced to sell all the land they owned in their native village to pay for medical bills. Necati, who longed to marry, realized that he could not rely on his parents to finance his wedding.

After three years of working in the Netherlands, Necati had saved enough money to marry Güllü, a girl from his home town. Necati had not saved enough, however, to return to Turkey and start his own business. He rented a house and asked Güllü to join him in the Netherlands. For several years, Necati and Güllü both worked. They saved some money and contracted an additional loan with a Dutch bank, in order to buy a house and a shop in their hometown in Turkey. Necati and Güllü remained in the Netherlands. Necati's sister and her husband have been living in the house ever since. They do not pay rent, but Necati's brother-in-law can be relied on to keep the house in good repair and to collect the rent from the shop-tenant.

Güllü gave up her job six years ago, after the birth of their second child. Three years ago, Necati lost his job. He tried in vain to find other employment. When a Turkish acquaintance asked him if he would take over his cafeteria, Necati welcomed the opportunity. In spite of their having almost paid off the old loan, they were unable to secure financing from their bank, because they were now

unemployed. A good friend of Necati's, who came from the same town in Turkey, offered to lend him as much money as he needed. With this assistance, after one year of unemployment, Necati was able to set up his own business.

Necati and Güllü set their hopes on the cafeteria because they did not expect Necati to find other employment at his age. They also contemplated remigration to Turkey, but they decided against it since they foresaw just as many difficulties in providing for their family there (and they would not be entitled to any social security benefits, either). As a matter of fact, Necati's sister and her husband also dissuaded them from returning to Turkey, offering them a gloomy picture of the present-day Turkish economy. (The picture was probably not unrealistic, but it may have been coloured by self-interest.)

In the last three years, Necati and Güllü have tried to put aside as much money as possible, in order to pay off their debts quickly. They still send their parents some 'spending-money' occasionally, like they used to do, but they have not visited their home country for four years. Perhaps they could have raised the travelling-expenses, but they know from experience that, once in Turkey, they would spend much more money on supporting their relatives than they do from afar. (During former visits they paid for surgery, both for Necati's father and for Güllü's sister.) Last year, Güllü's sister wrote that their father was no longer able to meet their younger brothers' college expenses. She herself would contribute a little, and she asked Güllü to do the same. In fact, she counted on Güllü to contribute substantially more. Güllü wrote in reply that the request came at an inopportune moment. She promised, however, to send some money (less than her sister had suggested) within a few months.

3.2 *The extended family venture: kinship obligations are rousing resentment*

Raziye and her children came to the Netherlands in 1976, to join their husband and father, Hasan. Hasan had been one of the first to leave their village for Europe. At that time, he was also one of the first to have his family join him. Two years later, their eldest son, Orhan, was married to his cousin Nurten. She also came to the Netherlands, and the couple moved in to live with Raziye and Hasan.

During the following years, Orhan, Nurten and Orhan's two younger sisters were employed. They all gave the greater part of their income to their father, who was thus able to build up a substantial savings. Hasan bought three houses in the town nearest to their village of origin in Turkey, hoping that he and

Raziye would return to Turkey with their three sons. Their idea was that later, each of the sons would get a house; however, Hasan died prematurely.

Meanwhile, the eldest daughter, Fatma, had married a man originating from a neighbouring village. He stayed in the Netherlands as a 'tourist' for some time; through marrying Fatma, he could have his stay legalized.² For this, he was willing to pay a round sum of money, both to his father-in-law (as a bride price) and to his bride Fatma (in the form of gold bracelets, for her personal possession). In fact, his parents financed his marriage by selling some land.

Hasan's relatives in Turkey were angry, because they had expected him to give his daughter in marriage to one of their sons. Hasan and Raziye, however, were pleased with their son-in-law. (Raziye confided to me that she doubted whether those cousins, who seemed to hope for a share of their riches, would have proved themselves such diligent workers as this man.) As a gesture of support for their son-in-law, they agreed to marry their second daughter to his younger brother. By enabling his brother to come to the Netherlands, too, Fatma's husband, in a sense, compensated his family for sacrificing part of its land base to have him settled in Europe. He also contributed to the costs of his brother's wedding.

When they married, Fatma and her sister moved out of their parents' household. Since Hasan's death, five years ago, the family household in the Netherlands has further disintegrated, and remigration to Turkey seems to have been postponed indefinitely. Raziye now lives alone with her youngest son, who is still a schoolboy. She receives a widow's pension from the Dutch state, which should provide sufficient subsistence for herself and her son. Even so, her elder children have to help her out time and again, for she goes to great expenses to maintain close ties with relatives in Turkey. Recently her mother had to undergo an operation in a private (i.e., expensive) hospital. Raziye counted on all her children to contribute to the costs. She relies most heavily on Orhan, her eldest son.

Orhan does not easily reject his mother's requests. He seems to blame himself, being his mother's first-born, for not having stayed to live with her after his father's death. His wife Nurten, on the other hand, is getting more and more

2 The Dutch immigration policy had been changed, so that virtually only spouses and children of Turks already established in the Netherlands could receive residence permits. Formerly, Turks who entered the country on a tourist visa and succeeded in finding employment could subsequently apply for a residence permit.

annoyed with her mother-in-law. She thinks Raziye should try to manage on her own pension. Nurten privately resents that Raziye still has not transferred the property rights of one of the houses in Turkey to Orhan and herself. Nurten considers her claim justifiable, because she and Orhan used to contribute to the family income. Another reason for Nurten's annoyance is that Orhan does not seem inclined to arrange for her youngest brother to come to the Netherlands. Her brother, who is bored with village life, has appealed to Nurten. He wants her to find him a bride in the Netherlands. Nurten's mother has let her know (in a phone call that worked very much on Nurten's conscience), that she hopes that her children will help each other. Orhan does not want to render assistance because it would entail great expense. Nurten thinks that after all the assistance they have rendered to her mother-in-law, they should help her family just for once.

Orhan's sisters have similar grudges against their parents-in-law. Both Fatma and her younger sister have continued working after their marriage. Their mother Raziye mostly takes care of their children. They feel, however, that their efforts are without avail, because their husbands' relatives in Turkey reap the fruits. Besides supporting their parents by regular remittances, their husbands (the two brothers) had a new house built for them in their village; they financed their younger brother's wedding; and they have given assistance on numerous other occasions. Consequently, their wives' plans to invest in a house for themselves have been shelved.

4. Remittances to relatives staying behind

Almost all the migrants in my research group appeared to give support to relatives staying behind in Turkey now and again; however, levels of support vary a great deal. Most families are used to sending money on the occasion of Islamic feasts. These alms may be intended for the relatives to whom they are addressed. More often, however, those relatives are requested to distribute the alms to 'poor' people. It is felt that one's close kin should not have to rely on alms; kinspeople should support each other at all times. It does not occur to the migrants that they might distribute alms in their environment in the Netherlands. Whenever I suggested this possibility, people started to laugh. "In the Netherlands, you will not find any poor, for here the state takes care of everyone", was their reasoning.

In general, the redistribution based on Islamic rules involves only small sums of money. Some migrants frequently send much greater amounts for the support of close kin (for example, children left behind in Turkey, aged parents, a widowed sister or sister-in-law, a brother or sister at college). In addition, most migrants

are occasionally asked to help relatives who urgently need money. In most cases, the money is needed for medical care. Nowadays, all kinds of medical provision is available in Turkey, that is, to those who can pay. The majority of the Turkish population either has no insurance at all or is insured to a limited extent only against the costs of medical care. As Turkish doctors' bills are not much lower than those of their colleagues in Europe, the amounts involved may exceed fl.10,000 (about six times the monthly minimum wage in the Netherlands).

When families at home make requests for financial assistance, the requests are made in such a way as to make it difficult for the migrants involved to refuse to give any help at all. It is salient that the relative living abroad is not approached straight away by the person in need of support. For example, in the case of Nurten, her mother called on her on behalf of Nurten's brother. Likewise, it was Güllü's sister who requested support for their father (who would pass it on to their brothers). Naturally, if assistance is needed for a remote kinsman, the relatives abroad will be approached by their next of kin in Turkey. Moreover, if there are several relatives abroad, one will approach those who maintain the closest ties with the relatives at home, counting on them to mobilize the others. Thus in the second case above, much support is sent to Turkey via Raziye, the oldest of the kinsfolk in the Netherlands, and via her sons-in-law, the latest comers.

With several relatives involved, migrants will find it awkward not to comply with a request, for a refusal might be taken as a way of saying that one no longer attaches value to maintaining one's membership of the kin-group at home. Under these pressures, help is given when requested; however, many migrants have a feeling that they are 'overcharged'. They sometimes respond by reducing their contacts with relatives at home. Necati and Güllü, for example, have not visited their home country for a long time, so as not to be obliged to disappoint relatives needing support. Another woman, whose income had been significantly reduced of late, said to me: "No matter how much I remit, they never get satisfied. I have trouble myself to make ends meet here. Therefore I don't want to write them or visit them." Not long before, I had visited her parents and brother in Turkey. They had indeed complained that their daughter and sister in Europe seemed to have forgotten them.

It is small wonder that relatives staying behind in Turkey sometimes ask for more than migrants are able or willing to give. Relatives in Turkey are, as a rule, well-informed about each other's (financial and other) means, so that they are able to judge what can be asked for and what would exceed the means of a prospective donor. They are much less informed, however, about the financial strength of relatives staying abroad. They often form an exaggerated idea of it, trusting in outward appearances. I once happened to be present when a migrant

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couple visiting their native village related to a kinsman that their household income had been reduced by half during the last few years because both of them had lost their employment. Meanwhile, their kinsman was looking at their car. (In the village, there was only one car owner, who earned his living transporting people to town and back.) When the couple had finished, he reacted: "You all say so. Yet you cannot bear to wait for the end of your holidays. If life in Europe is really as bad as all that, then why don't you stay here?"

Migrants may also more actively create the impression that they are well off. In a few instances, I saw migrants who had not fared well abroad deliberately make a display of conspicuous consumption while in Turkey. A migrant whom I visited during his holidays in Turkey had a house full of visitors during the first days of his stay. He explained proudly to me: "According to our custom, a little man should come to a great man, to pay his respects." He drove to the nearest town almost every day, in order to buy Coca Cola and Marlboro cigarettes (not available in the village shops) for his visitors. They could not have had any idea of his hopeless financial situation. Several people asked him for financial assistance, and he promised to give it. Back in the Netherlands, disenchanted, he complained of the great expenses he had been obliged to make in his home country.

Apart from their burdens, requests for assistance can be interpreted as affirmations of the prestige a migrant enjoys at home; therefore an individual may be pleased to be asked for help. Status validation depends on meeting expectations, however. Thus a claim to support that goes beyond a person's financial means places him or her in an awkward situation. Some migrants find it easier to draw the line than others. For example, Güllü and her husband did not comply with her sister's request because they first wanted to secure their business in the Netherlands. Others who feel greater uncertainty about their future abroad (or who feel more certain about returning to their home country) may be more sensitive to moral pressure exercised by needy relatives at home. Consequently, they will find it more difficult to set limits to the sums they are prepared to spend on supporting kin. In a few cases, I observed that migrants who were themselves living on a minimum (welfare) income, tried to contract a loan in reaction to claims to support. In the Netherlands, Turkish migrants can take advantage of credit facilities that are not available to their relatives in Turkey. If a bank or credit company denies them a loan, they can still try to borrow from fellow-countrymen who are affluent. By utilizing such facilities, however, migrants risk curtailing their own future spending and saving possibilities.

Left to the choice between leaving a relative in the cold and weakening their own financial base, migrants cannot base their decision on the rules of conduct

they grew up with. For one thing, they are confronted with claims their relatives would never have expected them to meet if they had stayed at home. At the same time, having settled in a welfare state, they themselves may have become accustomed to the provision of benefits such as free medical care, which their relatives lack for no other reason but that they have stayed behind in the home country. Not only do their financial means exceed those of relatives staying behind, but (considering the credit facilities that are available in the Netherlands) they have also acquired 'elastic' properties. Are not their relatives right to claim a share of their 'riches', and should not migrants be prepared to contract loans for them if need be? The old standards from Turkey provide no answers to questions arising from the new circumstances. Consequently, migrants have to decide for themselves how much they are prepared to spend as each case arises.

Migrants who are inclined to reject a claim to support may refer to the law of the country of immigration in order to make their decision acceptable (both to the claimants and to themselves). I once overheard a migrant woman explaining over the telephone that she and her husband had tried to contract a loan, but that the mayor himself had decided that they would not get one. Afterwards she explained to me that a niece of hers would have to undergo an expensive operation. All the relatives in Turkey had contributed small amounts, in proportion to their abilities. The relatives in the Netherlands were expected to make up the deficiency, amounting to fl.5,000. She and her husband had applied for a loan to the Municipal Credit Bank (Gemeentelijke Kredietbank). Considering their low income and the debts they had run up, the bank (signing on behalf of Mayor and Aldermen) had sent them a negative decree. In all likelihood, the couple had not expected otherwise. By applying for a loan, however, they could show their relatives that they were prepared to help, but that the highest man in town had refused their request. They did send a smaller amount of money to Turkey. Six months later they bought a parcel of land in their home country. Apparently, they did have the necessary savings, but did not want all their money to flow to their kin.

5. Other forms of support

In studies of migration processes, one often comes across the notion of an 'ideology of return'. Many migrants seem to keep constantly in mind the idea that they will return to their country of origin one day – no matter how firmly they have settled down in the host country. I found that this observation applies to the migrants in my research group, as well. Most of them have not worked out concrete plans for returning to Turkey, but they cannot imagine staying in the Netherlands for good, either. Those who would like to stay permanently yet

take into account that the attitude of the Dutch government or population might change and that they, as 'aliens', might be forced to leave the country.

With a view to their eventual remigration, almost all the migrants in the research group appeared to attach great importance to owning some real estate in their home country. Most of their investments are still made in Turkey. It can be assumed that many migrants obtain less than optimum proceeds from those investments. Some leave their houses in Turkey vacant all through the year, so that they can make use of them themselves during their holidays. Others are not able, as 'absentee owners', to control their tenants' behaviour. Many migrants have relatives live in their houses. In that case, the relatives are likely to prune away the profit, for, if relatives can be asked to pay rent at all, one cannot expect them to pay as much as a stranger.

Thus, relatives staying behind often profit by the investments of migrants living abroad. Likewise, not infrequently, migrants give up their inheritance in favour of relatives (mostly brothers) who have stayed at home. They are more inclined to do so the longer they have been abroad and the more successful they have been in buying real estate in their home country. Under these circumstances, their share in the parental property is likely to be of smaller importance to them. By waiving their portion, they may also compensate their siblings for their caretaking roles vis-à-vis elderly relatives. A woman who had been living in the Netherlands for almost twenty years told me that she and her sister (who was living in Belgium) had signed away their rights to a share in their patrimony (consisting of a house and several fields in their native village) upon their father's death. She explained to me:

I did not want to claim my portion, for what should I do with it? My husband and I have bought two apartments and two shops in Ankara. I do not know if we will ever return to Turkey. But we will certainly not return to the village. My sons have grown up here; they have never worked on the land. I have got one brother. My mother is living with him; she is very old. My sister and I send her money now and again; what else can we do? My brother's wife looks after her. So let my brother have the land.

This woman also told me that in her village, women did not hesitate to assert their rights to the patrimony. It should be noted, however, that this may not be the case in many other villages.³ Researchers into land ownership in rural

3 Under the Turkish Civil Code, sons and daughters are entitled to equal

Turkey in the 1940s and 1950s reported that brothers usually divided the land between themselves upon their father's death. Sisters did not, as a rule, upset this arrangement.⁴ Their exclusion was held justifiable, because they married out, whereas their brothers remained with their father's household, and worked his land under his direction, until his death (e.g. Stirling 1957). Starr (1985) asserted that by the 1960s rural Turkish women were increasingly making use of district courts to exercise their right to an equal share, but it is questionable whether her findings in western Turkey can be used to draw generalizations for the whole of Turkey.

Be that as it may, I found that male migrants sometimes forego their inheritance for the same reasons as females. For example, they sometimes say that a brother who has remained with their father and who has worked their father's land until his death, should in fairness regard the house and the land as his. They will find this all the more justifiable to the extent that the patrimony is of less economic value, and to the extent that they consider their brother economically disadvantaged in comparison with themselves.

Instead of helping their kin to manage in Turkey, migrants can also help them to come to the Netherlands. One of the migrants in my research group brought over his mother after his father died. A few others contemplated the possibility of sending for a widowed parent. However, feeling that an old person would not adapt to life in Europe, they decided to entrust the care of their father or mother to another relative in Turkey, and to remit money regularly by way of compensation. On the other hand, quite a few migrants did arrange for younger relatives (mainly brothers) to come to the Netherlands. For example, Fatma's husband (case 2) immigrated with the help of an uncle who was already living in the Netherlands. In his turn, Fatma's husband brought over his younger brother. Later the two brothers acted as sponsors for a cousin of theirs, who also wished to migrate.

Many other Turkish migrants have also initiated or extended 'migration chains'. During the first years of Turkish migration to the Netherlands, it was relatively easy for a Turk already working in the country to bring over another aspiring labour migrant. In those years, it was not too difficult to find employment, and

shares of the parental property. This code, adapted from the Swiss Civil Code, was introduced by the government of Atatürk in 1926, to replace Islamic family law (the Shari'a).

4 Note that this practice was not in accordance with Islamic inheritance rules, either. According to Islamic law, sisters should have been given shares amounting to half that given to their brothers.

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with that condition fulfilled, the newcomer could apply for a residence permit. In course of time, however, the Dutch government imposed more and more controls on the migration, so that nowadays it has become very difficult for a Turk to obtain a residence permit, unless he (or she) belongs to the family of a migrant already settled in the Netherlands. As the term 'family' in the Dutch immigration regulations is used in a very narrow sense (so as to include only nuclear families), a Turkish immigrant is legally permitted to bring over only his (or her) spouse and their unmarried children under 18 years of age.

While the Dutch immigration regulations have been tightened, it does not follow as a matter of course that aspiring labour migrants in Turkey give up their hopes. Especially in migration-oriented communities, where many people have become involved in the migration process, aspiring migrants are likely to call on the help of relatives already living abroad, just like their predecessors did. During my stay in Turkey, I could form some idea of the pressures put on migrants to obtain their assistance. For example, one day, one of my hosts, a migrant on leave in his native village, was sent for by his eldest living relative, his grandfather's sister. She asked him about his life in the Netherlands. Remarking that he had been very lucky indeed, she changed the conversation to the bad luck of one of her grandsons (a cousin of the migrant). This young man had been expelled from Germany, after a year of illegal stay in that country. Concluding, the old woman begged the migrant: "Please rescue your cousin, take him along with you to Holland and make him a labourer there." When the migrant told her that would not be possible, she started to cry, so that he, much embarrassed, felt obliged to promise to 'arrange something' for his unfortunate cousin.

Several migrants in my research group described similar scenes from their own experience. The only way to help an aspiring migrant gain a residence permit is to find him a bride in the Netherlands. (A woman, for that matter, would need a bridegroom, but those wishing to migrate are mainly young men.) Migrants who had acted as marriage brokers told me that marriageable Turkish girls living in the Netherlands are much sought after.⁵

In Turkey (especially in rural areas), parents often give their children in marriage to close kin. Marriages between first cousins are a frequent

⁵ The same situation probably pertains in other western European countries, for all those countries admit few new Turkish immigrants except the spouses and children of migrants already settled (see e.g. Gitmez and Wilpert 1987:95, about Turkish migrants in Berlin).

phenomenon.⁶ It seems that many Turkish migrants continue this practice, both because they themselves are reluctant to marry their children to non-kin, and because relatives in Turkey expect them to look within the circle of kin first. Indeed, inasmuch as there may also be aspiring migrants amongst the young kinsmen at home, those relatives often set extra great store by such marriages. In a few cases, I observed that migrants who preferred to defer their daughters' betrothals until the girls reached a marriageable age were pressed hard by relatives in Turkey who sought some commitment years in advance.

Consequently, aspiring migrants hoping to obtain admittance to the Netherlands through marriage transactions stand little chance of finding a Turkish bride, unless they have relatives with marriageable daughters already settled in this country. For these reasons, most migrants are not at all keen on acting as marriage brokers for relatives in Turkey. Rather than bluntly refusing, however, they promise to do their best when requested to help an aspiring migrant. During my stay in Turkey, quite a few young men told me that they were looking forward to a letter from a relative abroad who had promised to look for a bride. Some aspiring migrants, however, are not content with waiting patiently. They ask their relatives in the Netherlands if they may come over on tourist visa, so that they can try their luck themselves for a while. Most of the migrants in my research group were reluctant to comply with such requests, anticipating that they might have to give the invitee board and lodging over a long stay. For if a 'tourist' does not succeed in finding a bride before his visa expires, he may be tempted to keep on trying for a while, staying in the country as an 'illegal alien'. Several migrants in my research group nevertheless have invited relatives to come over as tourists in the last few years, although they were aware of the risks involved. The invitees in all those cases were close relatives, mostly younger brothers. It can be assumed that most migrants -- now that the Dutch immigration regulations have been much tightened -- are no longer prepared to help distant relatives in this way.

6. Conclusion: erosion of remittance obligations?

From the preceding discussion, it may appear that the flow of support between Turkish migrants and their kinsfolk at home moves mainly in the direction of

⁶ In a survey held in Turkey in 1968, it was found that almost 30 percent of all married persons in the sample were married to relatives. This proportion increased to 36 percent in rural areas, whereas it decreased to 17 percent in metropolitan areas. Among those couples who were related, 78 percent were married to first cousins (Timur 1978:237-238).

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Turkey. Migrants, as was shown, are expected to remit money for the support of relatives staying behind; it is often taken for granted that they let relatives benefit from their investments in their home country, or that they give up their own inheritance rights in favour of siblings at home. In addition, migrants are expected to enable young kinsmen to follow in their tracks and to migrate too. Hence it would seem that the reciprocity in relations between migrants and their relatives staying behind is far from balanced. Unbalanced reciprocity is in itself not exceptional. As was argued above, all social security systems are based on the principle of generalized reciprocity, that is to say, that the strong support the weak. In the case of Turkish migrants and their relatives at home, the first are obviously the stronger part, and accordingly they may be expected to give more than they take.

In spite of surface appearances, the flow of support does not move completely in one direction. To start with, many migrants would not have been able to leave if relatives had not financed their migration. Besides travelling expenses, the expenses entailed by a marriage are also underwritten by relatives at home. Nowadays, marrying a daughter of a Turkish family in the Netherlands appears to be the most attractive way for aspiring migrants to obtain a residence permit. As a result, the bride's family has acquired greater bargaining power. The bridegroom (unless he is a close relative) should be prepared to spend a correspondingly greater sum on gold bracelets for the bride and/or a brideprice for her family. Inasmuch as aspirant migrants often rely on relatives to meet these expenses, their remittances during the first years after their out-migration may be considered repayments.

However, many migrants keep on remitting money to relatives staying behind long after they have paid off their debts. They may be induced to do so by a combination of more and less altruistic motives, such as attachment, compassion, pride, and desire of self-enhancement (cf. Strijbosch 1988). They may also fear the cold welcome at home should they return without having met their relatives' claims to support. Such a cold welcome is to be feared all the more, as they might be compelled to seek their relatives' help in the future. The migrants in my research group appeared to be well aware of the risks of losing their rights with respect to the Dutch welfare state upon their return. In this connection, their remittances may also be regarded as a kind of insurance, a means of holding their place with their kin-groups at home. This notion of insurance is important in a much more general sense, too. Migration probably always entails great uncertainty for individual migrants. Clinging to the norms and values of their society of origin and always trying to keep the way back open appear to be natural reactions to this uncertainty.

Nevertheless, although migrants may have many motives for supporting their kin at home, it is questionable whether they will remain prepared to do so in the long run, and, above all, whether their children, having grown up in the Netherlands, will not let the flow of support dry up. It can be assumed that the above-mentioned motives weigh much less with those children. They have their next of kin, parents and siblings, in the Netherlands. Turkey and the relatives living there are only known from their parents' stories and from short visits. Unlike their parents, they never depended on the support of relatives for their living. They take it more or less for granted that the state provides for those unable to earn their livelihood themselves. It remains to be seen whether this generation will wish to maintain their membership of the kin-group in the country of origin, if remaining attached means contributing considerable sums to the support of needy kin.

A continued widening of the distance between Turkish migrants and their families in Turkey seems very likely -- though I must add that this is partly conjecture on my part. My research group did not yet contain households of migrants' children who grew up in the Netherlands. All households were established either by 'first generation' migrants or by migrants' children who themselves had come to the Netherlands only after the age of ten. Moreover, these children brought their spouses over from Turkey. All these migrants came to the Netherlands expecting to return to Turkey after a stay of limited duration. Yet I found a few cases where a husband and wife differed on the question of sending support to Turkey. Just like Fatma and her sister in the second case above, the spouse who had lived longer in the Netherlands and whose next of kin were also living here, objected to being called on for financial support by the other spouse's kin. Furthermore, I found several cases where children lodging with their parents and contributing to the household income, tried to curb their parents when those parents wanted to render assistance to relatives in Turkey.

In conclusion, migrants' children are likely to be less inclined to support relatives staying behind than their parents have been. An erosion of remittance obligations can be reasonably predicted in the long run, although continued migration might delay such an erosion. As yet, many migrants' children have marriage partners from Turkey, and many of those newcomers are indebted to relatives at home once they arrive in the Netherlands. In this respect, they can be compared to the first generation of labour migrants who came to the Netherlands before 1975. Unlike most of these 'pioneers', however, the migrants who nowadays are admitted as a result of marriage have obligations in the Netherlands from the very first day of their stay, since their spouses are already resident. Furthermore, times have been changing. Most newcomers are unlikely to find employment soon after their arrival in the Netherlands. Many of them are dependent on welfare payments for their livelihood. These payments just cover

the costs of living in the Netherlands. It can be assumed that these two factors reduce the potential of what the newcomers can do for their kinsfolk at home.

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