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## Atatürk School

New York, New York

*Maurie Sacks*

Atatürk School is a Turkish language and culture school in New York City which meets on Saturdays. Centrally located, it serves the Turkish community in the Bronx, Manhattan, Queens, Long Island, and Brooklyn, as well as in upstate New York and Connecticut.<sup>1</sup> The American Turkish Women's League, an organization of middle-class and elite Turkish women living in the New York metropolitan area who are interested in serving the Turkish community, administers the school.

The women's league established the school in 1973 at the Turkish consulate in New York. Later it moved to the United Nations School, where several ethnic groups had space for their ethnic heritage programs. Teachers volunteered their services in the early years, and there were few expenses since no rent was paid before the move to the United Nations School. At that point the school began to charge tuition to cover the rent. The practice of charging tuition has continued, with each child paying a nominal fee of fifty dollars per year.

Space was inadequate at the United Nations School, making teachers, pupils, and parents unhappy. In 1978 Atatürk School moved to its present location, where it is again housed at the expense of the Turkish government. It is now on the second floor of a large office building. The large space is divided up into smaller areas through the use of partitions. They are moved into place each week to accommodate the school, creating areas for six classes—kindergarten through fifth grade.

Preparations for classes, which are held on Saturday mornings, include carrying folding chairs into the class areas and rolling blackboards to desired locations. At the end of the day everything has to be put away; school materials are stored in a small room set aside for the women's league. The room also houses lockers for the teachers, principal, and league president, and curriculum materials. For special occasions the entire floor can be opened up and turned into an auditorium.

A teacher at the Atatürk School kisses the cheek of one of his pupils at the Closing Day ceremonies. (ES82-197561-4-16) Photo by Lance Tarhan

Administrators, faculty, and parents all expressed satisfaction with the current location of the **school**. They feel that it is their own space, that there are adequate provisions for the classes and waiting parents, and that they have sufficient storage space for the school's equipment.

The **school** began nine years ago with only one class; today it has six, including a kindergarten. There are nine teachers—six classroom teachers, a music teacher, a folk-dance teacher, and a religion teacher—serving approximately ninety pupils aged four through fifteen.

Although there are other **Turkish** schools in the Bronx, Brooklyn, and Queens, some families from each of these boroughs bring their children to Atatürk **School**. The Brooklyn **school** serves a special constituency of Crimean Turks who settled here after World War II and have their own organizations. The Queens and Bronx schools also apparently serve special sub-ethnic populations. Atatürk **School** offers an education consistent with the culture of the modern **Turkish** nation and does not appeal to any particular sub-ethnic group. Parents bring their children to the **school** because they see themselves as mainstream Turks, because of its central location, and because Atatürk **School** offers an opportunity to connect with the **Turkish**-American elite.

The first impression one gets of Atatürk **School** is that it is a place full of life and exuberance. Children race and tumble amidst a cacophonous din before, between, and after classes. Boys wrestle and toss around each other's hats, shoes, or books, while girls wander about in groups of two or three, talking, playing games like "London Bridge," and drawing on blackboards. During classes the demeanor is more decorous, however. Teachers expect the children to sit quietly and copy lessons from the board, take dictation, or listen to each other recite.

### **School Administration**

As stated previously, the American-**Turkish Women's League**, which is affiliated with the Federation of **Turkish**-American Societies, sponsors the **school**. A woman educator started the **women's league** informally between 1948 and 1950. It was formally registered in Albany, New York, in 1956. According to Münevver Özdil, its current president, the **league** has several objectives: to foster ethnic awareness and knowledge in **Turkish**-American children, to administer Atatürk **School**, and to further friendship and love

between Turks and Americans in the United States. The **league** currently has over two hundred members, but, as in many organizations, the work of supporting and maintaining the **school** reportedly falls to about a dozen of them.

The **women's league** raises money for the **school** budget—about \$10,000 per year—selects teachers and a principal, oversees the acquisition of curriculum materials from Turkey, sets tuition fees and salaries, and plans and organizes **school** functions, such as holiday celebrations. The **league** raises money by charging entrance fees to some **school** functions, selling food, and organizing fund-raising events, such as teas and balls. There are conflicting reports as to whether the **Turkish** government subsidizes the **school** in any other way than by contributing space. In any case, however, the **women's league** is independent of the **Turkish** government and takes full responsibility for the existence of Atatürk **School**.

## Teachers

The teachers at Atatürk **School** are professional educators from Turkey living in the United States. The **school** stresses the qualifications of the teachers, all of whom teach at the **school** because of their concern for **Turkish** children and love of teaching. They receive an honorarium of twenty-five dollars per week for their services, which merely meets their expenses. One of the school's goals is to eventually raise the teachers' pay.

All of the classroom teachers at the **school** have teaching certificates from **Turkish** institutions or are professional educators. One spent his professional life in Turkey editing and publishing textbooks. Another taught **school** in Turkey and Germany. The music teacher's avocation has been performing **Turkish** music at public functions for many years, and the folk-dance teacher has danced in a prize-winning **Turkish** folk-dancing troupe which toured Europe. The religion teacher has two graduate degrees from Istanbul University, a certificate from the High Institute of Islam in Istanbul, and works as a full-time *imam* (priest) and **school** administrator for a **Turkish** community in Brooklyn.

The principal of the Atatürk **School**, Mrs. Karcioğlu, taught biology at the college level in Turkey and has a certificate from Teachers' College at Co-



lumbia University. Mrs. Özdil, president of the **women's league** and a **school** administrator, taught for many years in a private **school** in Brooklyn and served as its principal.

## Classes and Curriculum

Atatürk **School** derives its curriculum from books published by the National Education Ministry in Turkey and monthly magazines for each grade published by one of the large **Turkish** banks. The president of the **Turkish-American Society** acquires the magazines for the **school**. Classes use the books and magazines which are appropriate to their grade level. Pupils pay one dollar for each book they take for the year. At the end of the year-they can return the books, if they wish, and get their money back.

Since the **school** has only a few hours per week in which to make use of the materials, the lessons leave out quite a bit. The **school** does not teach math or science, for instance. The classes emphasize **Turkish** language, history, social studies, music, and religion. The nursery-kindergarten class stresses songs and poetry, the first grade emphasizes reading and writing, and the higher grades concentrate on social studies and history. All grades use **Turkish**. I was unable to obtain lesson plans, but was told that teachers choose their study materials at the beginning of the **school** year in conference with the principal, making yearly, monthly, and weekly lesson plans.

The **school** chooses curriculum materials with several goals in mind. Many parents and teachers stress the importance of the children's knowing the **Turkish** language well. In fact, children have the impression that language instruction is the main purpose of the **school**. Language is taught as it is taught to schoolchildren of comparable age in Turkey—not as a second language. The fostering of ethnic pride is another emphasis of the **school**. To this end lessons stress the glories of **Turkish** history, the greatness of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk—the founder of modern Turkey—and the beauties of the **Turkish** homeland. This body of knowledge, along with the ability to speak **Turkish**, is an important marker of **Turkish** identity.

Atatürk **School** recently added religion as a subject. To be **Turkish** in Turkey means to be Muslim, and when someone has converted to Islam, the



saying goes, "He became a Turk." (Although being Muslim is so closely associated with being **Turkish**, many educated Turks do not practice religion.)

In some classes, when the **school** day begins at 10:00 A.M., students shout a motto after the teacher while standing at attention. It starts, "I'm **Turkish**, upright, and hardworking," and goes on to mention defending the young, honoring the elders, loving one's people, and uplifting one's nation; in other classes the call to order is more subtle. The teacher then announces a lesson, frequently writing it on the blackboard for the pupils to copy. Lessons might be on **Turkish** language, "life knowledge" (customs), social studies, or history. Teachers may then expect their pupils to listen to further explication, read aloud before the class, or answer questions.

There is a lunch break at 12:00 noon. Most children bring their lunch, although some parents bring in pizzas at lunchtime and have their children share with their classmates. Although one teacher stays upstairs in the class area on "lunch duty," there is no attempt to enforce orderly behavior at this time—short of throwing food or injuring someone, most kinds of horsing around are tolerated, along with the soaring noise levels. Some children go downstairs to have lunch in the waiting room with the parents. Most of the lunches are American-style sandwiches and drinks. There was no noticeable tendency for children to bring **Turkish**-style picnic foods for lunch.

When classes reconvene, the children dispose of lunch refuse in overflowing wastebaskets and resume a quieter demeanor. On alternate weeks the music teacher and the religion teacher arrive. The students split into two groups and the two teachers alternate between each half of the **school**. Sometimes, during the week when the teachers do not come, the whole **school** assembles and the regular teachers instruct the children in **Turkish** songs. For example, the teachers taught the children the song "My Mother" in preparation for Mother's Day. The lyrics describe an older child's longing to have mother hold him in her lap and sing lullabies again, like she did when he was small.

**School** let outs at 3:00 P.M. and the children drift away, except for those staying for the folk-dance class. About a dozen children seem to be involved in the class. They were practicing for the 19th of May celebration during the weeks I observed the **school**.



Mothers gathering at the Atatürk School for the Mothers' Day program. (ES82-196411-7-17A)  
Photo by Lance Tarhan

Atatürk School allows many different teaching styles. The first grade teacher uses warmth, physical contact, and praise to encourage the youngsters to behave well. She rewards good work with red ribbons pinned to the children's clothing and called to the attention of anyone around who might be interested. The second and third grade teachers are more formal in their approach to the classroom and more stern. They use stern voice tone, scolding, and occasional ear tweaking to encourage the children to settle down and do their work. Both of the classrooms have rows of seats facing the blackboard. The fourth and fifth grade teachers are more soft spoken, but also use a stern voice tone to guide the youngsters toward good behavior and good work. The seats in the fourth grade class are in a circle and those in the fifth grade are in arcs around the teacher's desk.

In addition to lessons directed toward language learning and proper Turkish etiquette, Atatürk School provides formal occasions and informal situations in which children pick up proper Turkish comportment. Turks engage in a whole range of polite behaviors which are unfamiliar to Americans. Greeting behaviors, including cheek and hand kissing accompanied by appropriate verbal expressions, are very important. Children should be familiar with those gestures and must perform them in public



as signs of their socialization in Turkish culture. On the final day of classes, for example, one of the younger girls went around and kissed the cheeks and hands of some of the "aunts" (as Turkish children are taught to address the adult women gathered in the waiting area off the school lobby) in a formal and polite farewell. Both the recipients of the gesture and the mother of the girl, who beamed with pride at her daughter's good manners, praised and appreciated her behavior.

In addition to being able to communicate in the Turkish language, being Turkish involves being familiar with Turkish history and symbols. This includes knowledge of the history of the Turkish Republic, acknowledgment of Atatürk as a cultural hero, and familiarity with the geography of Turkey. Atatürk School provides its students with this body of information as well.

## Parents

Atatürk School serves first-generation Turkish immigrant families living in the New York metropolitan area and the Turkish consular staff serving temporarily in this country. Some of the children were born in the United States, others in Turkey. Many Turkish immigrants represented in the school population are members of the intelligentsia who came here as college students and stayed to practice professions, but workers and small entrepreneurs also send their children to the school. The families whose members I interviewed include several individuals with Ph.D.s, families in which both the father and mother have professional careers, families in which the sole wage earner is a mechanic, building superintendent, engineer, doctor, or diplomat, and others in which both parents run a small business, such as a dry cleaning establishment, restaurant, or tailor shop.

The families interviewed exhibited differences in their commitment to living in America. No one admitted that they never planned to return to Turkey. Everyone had been to Turkey within the last five or six years, at least as visitors. Some are in the United States with short-term goals in mind, such as completing an assignment from the Turkish foreign ministry or educating a youngster. Others are raising their families here because of favorable economic conditions, but hope to return to Turkey. Among the most highly educated families are some who have made a conscious decision to settle in America; but, when pressed, even they do not rule out the possibility of retiring in Turkey eventually.



My observations indicated that the most educated families are the most assimilated and the most secure in their decision to remain in America, except for those working in the diplomatic corps. The least educated tend to remain more **Turkish** in their language and behavior, to view their stay in America as an economic adaptation to difficult times, and to anticipate their eventual return "home." Many demonstrate the "boxes in the closet syndrome"—whenever they purchase an appliance they save the box, because someday it will be packed up and sent to Turkey!

While **school** is in session, twenty or more mothers usually gather in the waiting area of the lobby, which has benches, chairs, and a coffeepot. Less than half a dozen fathers may gather at the opposite end of the room from the mothers. The fathers sometimes engage in conversation, sometimes read a newspaper, or just sit quietly. The mothers engage in lively conversation and gossip, making the occasion into an important social event. For some this is the only chance they have to meet regularly with other **Turkish** women—certainly, to sit with a whole group of them—as is common for women in Turkey to do.<sup>2</sup> Sometimes a mother brings homemade cakes for the gathering. Most of the women who sit in the lobby are homemakers, and my impression is that the core who come most faithfully are wives of blue-collar workers. I have also spoken to wives of professional men, however, who like to visit with the other mothers, at least occasionally. I did not find any career women among them.

The talk, which is in **Turkish**, revolves around homemaking skills—cooking, sewing, and shopping—ill health and good fortune among acquaintances, problems of adaptation to American life, and events at the **school**. The gathering is an important clearinghouse for information concerning products available, proprietors worth patronizing, housing, vacations, and coping with American and **Turkish** institutions. It also serves as an ad hoc PTA for the **school**. The principal regularly joins the mothers for some time each week, discussing **school** matters and the contributions expected from the parents, such as preparing the children's outfits and food for special events. Teachers sometimes join in the conversations before and after classes.

At the end of the **school** day, as parents and children drift away, some mothers stay to make the most of the last few moments of conversation, urging their friends not to be in a rush to leave. There is some Turkish-style kissing on both cheeks among the mothers at parting.

## Purposes of the School

The purposes of the school include socialization in Turkish identity for the children, enculturation in Turkish language and world view, formation of a Turkish ethnic group, and provision of a forum where bicultural children can formulate their own value system.<sup>3</sup> Parents, teachers, and administrators give many reasons for their participation in Atatürk School. Underlying all of them is a burning concern that the children acquire and retain a sense of identity and ethnic pride. All are willing to give their time and energy for the rewards of hearing the children speak Turkish, seeing them write Turkish, and having them participate in Turkish events.

College-educated parents show an awareness of "identity crisis" and express concern that their children formulate a sense of identity and know "who they are." They feel Atatürk School can provide this for their children. Less educated parents demonstrate less interest in abstract identity and more concern for their children's continuation of traditions that are familiar to them; they do not want to be cut off from their children and their homeland by loss of the language and culture. One mother, born in America and married to a Turkish-born man, expressed a fear that, if she did not expose her son to an ethnic education, he would one day accuse her of depriving him of his birthright.

Turkish language acquisition for the children seems to be one of the primary goals of the school. All curriculum materials are in Turkish exclusively. The only classroom in which the teacher speaks English frequently is the first class, attended by children less familiar with Turkish. Even there an attempt is made to conduct most matters in Turkish. One teacher eloquently expressed to me the need for the children to be fluent in Turkish so that they would be able to feel at home in Turkey. He likened Turkish children in America without the Turkish language to nightingales in a gilded cage. No matter how beautiful and rich the cage, the inhabitant is still not free. To be free—to return to their homeland if they wish—Turkish-American youngsters must have command of the Turkish language and culture.

Attitudes toward the use of the Turkish language vary with the education of the parents and the degree of their assimilation. Parents who have a career are more likely to report speaking English to their children at home. One family, in which both parents are involved in American ca-

reers, employs a **Turkish** housekeeper to care for the children and speak **Turkish** with them. College-educated parents emphasize the general benefits which accrue to language acquisition in the business and academic world as part of their reason for sending their children to Atatürk **School**. Since these parents are also most concerned about assimilation themselves, however, they most often speak English to their children, "to make sure the child understands," to facilitate the child's adjustment to his American peers, or to perfect their own skills in English. Wives of highly educated professionals complained most to me about their inadequate English; they speak English better than the other mothers, but not as well as their husbands. One blue-collar mother reports speaking **Turkish** to her children at home because her ethnic neighbors told her that, if she did not, her children would lose the language, as theirs had. She feels that she is sacrificing her own opportunity to learn English better for the good of her children.

Münevver Özdil has a more broad-reaching vision for the **school**. She sees it not only as a language-teaching institution and link between Turkish-American children and their homeland but also as a fosterer of a **Turkish** ethnic presence in the United States. Fully aware of the small number of Turks living in this country, she is concerned that they be able to unite and make their voice heard and respected. She expects that creating **Turkish**-conscious youngsters who are educated and aware will contribute to this cause. The children, she says, learn that they are representatives of the **Turkish** community in their public lives and that they must be careful to set a good example, to be loving and fair to their fellows, so that others will know that the Turks are a loving and friendly people.

## Students

There is a difference between the children and their parents over the issue of staying in America permanently. Although many youngsters professed insecurity about their future in this country, most indicated quite strongly that they want to spend the rest of their lives here. No child showed any reluctance to assimilate, to speak English, have American friends, dress in American clothes, and enjoy American foods. This includes children of the consular staff. On the other hand, some children did show a reluctance to stress **Turkish** behaviors, including use of the **Turkish** language; but none seemed eager to forget about being **Turkish** altogether.





Folkdance class at Atatürk School.  
(ES82-196411-3-17A)  
Photo by Lance Tarhan

The children, like children in most ethnic schools, profess little interest in the issues of such burning importance to their elders, and most would rather be doing something else on Saturday. Boys especially are eager to disclaim any interest at all in their Turkish studies, to assure me that they are hostage to their parents, and to underscore the point that they are "made to come to this school." Most children believe that they are at the school to learn Turkish because their parents do not think that they know the language well enough. The children feel that they do know the language and that they get along fine when they visit Turkey. They do not see the need for learning all the history and social studies, singing, and religion taught at the school. Many who feel unhappy about the school give boredom as their reason. Most also feel bored with their public

**school** education, although some make distinctions between the two. Several girls did feel free to tell me that they enjoy Atatürk **School**, they like learning **Turkish** better, and find **Turkish** history interesting.

The children I spoke with have American friends where they live and do not especially seek out Turks, even when they are in the same **school**, unless their families carry on relationships with the other families. Some of the children have acquired Americanized nicknames. When asked if they share their **Turkish** culture with their American friends, more than one child told me that their friends tease them when they act or appear **Turkish**, and that they want to pass as any other American. Some play on softball or soccer teams, take music lessons, or belong to a YMCA with their American friends. When extracurricular activities conflict with attendance at Atatürk **School**, they sometimes sacrifice attendance at the **school**. One girl told me that she had missed several Saturdays because of softball.

Asked what they like best about the **school**, many children responded "lunch" or "fooling around with my friends," which indicates that, even for the disaffected, the **school** holds the pleasure of associating with other **Turkish**-American youngsters in the same situation. Since the children come from such scattered homes, **school** provides the only regular opportunity for some students to be in a gathering of Turks, to feel that they are not alone or weird, and to create a culture of shared **Turkish**-American experience.

## Conclusions

It is clear that Atatürk **School** is engaged in creating and maintaining ethnic identity for children of **Turkish** parents residing in America, whether they are permanent residents, staying here temporarily to raise their families, or on a tour of duty. There are two main aspects to the school's function: (1) the sharing of a body of knowledge which Turks acknowledge as their own and which serves as a marker of **Turkish** identity; and (2) the provision of social space where students can act out their "**Turkish**-ness," practice their mannerisms and language, honing them to a **Turkish** norm (or at least a **Turkish**-American one), and express solidarity for an appreciative audience. The end product of both functions is an ethnic group

capable of behaving as an interest group. This idea has been expressed in scholarly literature by Anya Royce<sup>4</sup> and from the lay perspective by Mrs. Özdil (see above).

Almost all transactions that occur at Atatürk School take place in Turkish, with the exception of the banter that goes on among the children, and even that is sometimes in Turkish. Nothing can establish social boundaries as quickly and emphatically as a shared language. It provides not only a vocabulary and idioms which create a common medium in which those who know the code may communicate, but it also provides a world view.<sup>5</sup> In fact, there is no satisfactory English equivalent for many Turkish concepts. By teaching Turkish as a mother language and not as a second language, thereby avoiding much direct translation, Atatürk School operates within the Turkish world view and passes it on to the children.

Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, the first president of modern Turkey, is the school's namesake and hero. A mural depicting Atatürk's great humanism and quoting his wise sayings dominates the mothers' waiting area. The holidays celebrated throughout the school year were mostly established by Atatürk. On those occasions the children recite his orations, perform songs glorifying his achievements, and listen to speeches which hold him up as a great man to be emulated and revered. A speech being practiced by one of the children for the celebration on the 19th of May depicts him as a leader of the victorious Turks and founder of the nation. The knowledge about the founding of the Turkish Republic, which increased nationalistic pride and self-respect for all Turks, inspires a recognition of Atatürk's greatness. The children at the school learn to respond to Atatürk as the symbol of modern Turkey and the source of modern Turkish patriotism. They also learn to honor the Turkish flag, to sing the national anthem and other patriotic songs, such as "To Be a Turk Is the Greatest Honor," and to recognize Turkish folk costumes and music.

Concerning the religious component in the school's curriculum, Mrs. Karcioglu told me that parents at the school wished to have religion taught because they are aware of the saliency of religion as a determinant of identity in America. In other words, religion, which for some would not be stressed as an important element of identity in Turkey, where nearly everyone is born into the same religion, becomes stressed in America, where religion is often a component of ethnic identity and sometimes



even stands alone as a label or designator of group affiliation, e.g., Catholic, Protestant, or Jew. Some parents, especially those who are most educated and would have stressed religion least in Turkey, feel that their children are getting more religious training here than they would have in Turkey because of the inclusion of religion in the **school** curriculum. As in Turkey, however, religion is an optional subject.

Although there are parents at Atatürk **School** who carry over their secularism to the point of celebrating Christmas for their children as a seasonal holiday, others take advantage of the winter holiday season to impress their **Turkish** identity on their children. One parent pointed out that her child's exposure to Judaism as an acceptable alternative to Christianity in America made it easier for her to present Islam as yet another alternative, and the only appropriate one for Turks like themselves to espouse. Whether or not they practice Islam, children at the **school** experience a body of religious knowledge which reinforces their sense of being **Turkish** and differentiates them from other Americans.

Quite apart from the curriculum, Atatürk **School** is an important source of **Turkish** identification as a center where Turks can gather and act **Turkish**. More than one mother acknowledged that, although the manifest purpose of bringing her child to the **school** is to improve his or her knowledge of **Turkish**, the more compelling reason is to socialize with the other mothers.

In-gathering is also very important for the establishment and perpetuation of group norms and values. A reference group provides standards against which members measure their self-worth and success.<sup>6</sup> The mothers and children who gather regularly at Atatürk **School** sort out acceptable and unacceptable behaviors for group members on the basis of the interactions in which they participate. "**Turkish**" behaviors—the use of **Turkish** language, gestures, and greetings—are highly rewarded, while un-**Turkish** behaviors—refusing to sit and visit, or the use of English—are either sharply criticized or ignored. Career mothers may avoid the gathering not only because it consumes so much time but also because they do not live up to the standards of traditional **Turkish** womanhood that are manifested there. If so, the absence of career mothers is an excellent example of the power of in-gathering to set group standards and eliminate non-conforming behavior.

Besides providing a location for Turkish in-group behavior to be honed and developed for Turkish-Americans, Atatürk School provides a focus for Turks in the area, who are otherwise divided in their loyalties by their socio-economic status, sub-ethnic interests, and commitment to assimilation in the United States. One father pointed out that, although the Turkish-American community has become fragmented during the past few years by a proliferation of associations formed by Turkish interest groups,<sup>7</sup> the members of many of the groups support Atatürk School. Children at the school, therefore, come in contact with a cross section of Turkish society in the United States. The mutual agreement on the part of many groups to submit their children to a single curriculum means that there is a common denominator of Turkish culture shared by all.

For the children Atatürk School is the one place they experience a large number of Turks congregating in a limited space on a regular basis. In some cases it may be the one place outside their home where their Turkish identity is salient and where they get a chance to practice it. The inclusion in the student body of the children of consular staff, "Turkish Turks" (as opposed to "American Turks"), further emphasizes the fact that Atatürk is a school for Turkish children. It also brings out the commonality between the children born in America and their Turkish-born brethren.

Of greater significance for the children, however, is the fact that Atatürk School is not only a place to learn about Turkish culture and behavior but also an arena in which they can act out the tensions involved in being bicultural. Many children spend most of the week ignoring or even denying their differences from other American children, at least in public. Several told me that there is no opportunity at their public schools to share aspects of their ethnic heritage with other children, and several boys assured me that their American friends teased them mercilessly if they let slip a Turkish-ism in their behavior. Some have American nicknames to mask their Turkish names. Yet these very same children will fight, if necessary, to protect the good name of Turks.

Many of the children act out some of the tension involved in being bicultural in their display of dislike for Atatürk School. The children tell me that they are "Turkish enough" and have no use for the enculturation they experience at the school. They are highly sensitive about their Turkishness; they do not enjoy having it "rubbed in." One boy provided a clue

to the noisy negative feelings expressed by the children by telling me that he would really like to go to a **Turkish school** in Turkey, but that his parents told him that it is too expensive. He seems to be saying that he would like to be all **Turkish** in Turkey, or all American in America, but that being both is a strain. After trying all week to be just like any other American kid, it must be difficult for the youngsters to “turn on” **Turkish** on Saturdays. The one adult I interviewed who could look back on such an experience herself, however, says that she appreciated it and wants her child to have the same experience. Perhaps one of the greatest services **Atatürk School** offers the children is an opportunity to vent their negative feelings to each other in a safe environment. These feelings, which would be anti-**Turkish** if shared with American friends or **Turkish** parents, become part of the culture of **Turkish-Americanism**. **Atatürk School** is wise to provide the students with a relatively unsupervised lunch period during which the children can discharge the tensions they feel in a situation in which mutual support and understanding is possible and the disapproval of adult authority figures is absent.

If the manifest function of **Atatürk School** is to socialize children as *Turks*, one of the important latent functions is to provide an organized vehicle for the formulation of a *Turkish-American* culture. Americanisms in the children’s dress (blue jeans and sneakers for many), food (pizza), and use of **Turkish** language (“I ate breakfast” rather than “I did or made breakfast,” which is idiomatic) are readily accepted. Children have unstructured time to share their own values and experiences. The formal structure of the **school** comprises the use of strictly **Turkish** curricula, but the informal structure cannot help but model a blend of **Turkish** and American culture.

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## Notes

1. Unlike some of the communities documented by the Ethnic Heritage and Language Schools project, the Turks do not have an archive which records the history of the **Turkish** community in New York or the United States. It has been estimated that there were fewer than one hundred thousand Turks in the United States in the late 1970s. About one thousand Turks per year, mostly engineers and doctors, have been immigrating for the past twenty years. Although there is a plethora of **Turkish** organizations in the United States, most are small and relatively inactive. See Talat Sait Halman, “Turks,” in *Harvard Encyclopedia of American Ethnic Groups*, Stephan Thernstrom, ed. (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 1980).



2. Turkish women's visiting patterns have been well documented in anthropological literature. See Barbara C. Aswad, "Visiting Patterns among Women of the Elite in a Small Turkish City," *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 1 (January 1974), pp. 9–27, and Peter Benedict, "The Kabul Günür: Structured Visiting in an Anatolian Provincial Town," *Anthropological Quarterly*, vol. 47, no. 1 (January 1974), pp. 28–47.

3. The importance of establishing criteria for "evaluation and judgement" of behavior pertinent to ethnic group membership is discussed in *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture*, ed. Fredrik Barth (Bergen-Oslo: Universitetsforlaget and London: George Allen & Unwin, 1969).

4. Anya Peterson Royce, *Ethnic Identity: Strategies of Diversity* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1982).

5. See Benjamin Lee Whorf, "Science and Linguistics," in *Language, Thought, and Reality*, ed. John B. Carroll. (Cambridge, Mass.: The Technology Press of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1956). Reprinted in *Anthropology, Contemporary Perspectives*, David E. K. Hunter and Phillip Whitten, eds. (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1975), p. 280.

6. See David E. K. Hunter, "To Find A Community," in *Anthropology, Contemporary Perspectives*, David E. K. Hunter and Phillip Whitten, eds. (Boston: Little Brown and Company, 1975), p. 158.

7. Some Turkish organizations include the American Turkish Islamic and Cultural Center, Turkish Cultural Alliance, Kibris Türkane Yardim Ocağı (Association for the Aid of Cypriot Turks), American Association of Crimean Turks, Anadolu Club, Inc., Azerbaijan Society of America, Turkish-American Neuropsychiatric Association, and Turkish-American Scientists and Engineers.