

Turkish Sephardic Women's Social Life in Istanbul between the 1930s and 1980s Discovered through Interviews: Respecting Atatürk's Reforms for Women

Fazıla Derya Agış¹

Abstract

This study will analyze the lifestyles of Sephardic women in the Turkish city of Istanbul from the 1930s through the 1980s collected via oral history interviews from a Centropa project by Sephardim from Istanbul. The interviews with Turkish Sephardic women in the Centropa interview database will be supported by research conducted in the Şalom Newspaper archives in Istanbul, the Turkish Official Journal archival database research, as well as historical and anthropological material search at libraries. As Sephardic Jews speak Judeo-Spanish, this study aims to shed light on Judeo-Spanish words used by Sephardic women on social activities, emphasizing the importance of the Judeo-Spanish language. Besides, this study also aims to analyze the societal roles of Sephardic women as professionals, their pastime activities, their culinary traditions, the historical information about their quarters' surroundings, and the occupations that disappeared, underlining the importance of the reforms Atatürk brought to all the women living in Turkey as a way of history and culture education.

INTRODUCTION

For gathering the data for revealing the importance of the historical and cultural reforms of Atatürk mainly on Sephardic women and then on the entire human race, I referred to an oral history database on Jews: “Preserving Jewish memory - Bringing history to life” supported and realized by Centropa (2018). I selected interviews conducted with Sephardic women living in Istanbul. Here is the list of the interviews I have selected for this project: 1) an interview with Lina Franko conducted in August 2004 by Feride Petilon: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/lina-franko>, 2) an interview conducted with Güler Orgun in May 2005 by Anet Pase: <https://>

1 University of the People, deryaagis@gmail.com, Orcid: 0000-0001-7871-0932

www.centropa.org/biography/guler-orgun, 3) an interview with Zelda Ers conducted in February 2006 by Yusuf Sarhon: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/zelda-ers>, 4) an interview with Rebeka Evgin conducted in May 2006 by Feride Petilon: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/rebeka-evgin>, and 5) an interview with Janet Arguete conducted in August 2006 by Feride Petilon: <https://www.centropa.org/biography/janet-arguete>.

As I conducted archival research, I will supply the oral history interview's evidence with newspaper and research articles. From a historical point of view, this study will answer the following research questions on Sephardic women's social lives between the 1930s and 1980s: 1) What were the jobs of Sephardic women since Atatürk gave the equal rights to women as those possessed by men in modern Turkey? 2) What were the pastime activities of Turkish Sephardic women between the 1930s and the 1980s? Did they disappear? Did the places they visit change or disappear? 3) What were the culinary traditions of Sephardic women that can be regarded as cultural heritage? 4) What did change in the quarters they have once lived, such as street sellers, street food, and buildings? 5) To conclude, what were the effects of reforms of Atatürk for women on their lives?

Regarding my methodology, in this study, I will refer to qualitative (via *MindMup 2: Zero-friction online mind mapping* (n.d.) and text analyses) and quantitative content analysis (via Sinclair's & Rockwell's (2022) *Voyant: See through Your Text*) for finding out historical details on Istanbul's Sephardic Jewish women's social lives between the 1930s and 1980s in oral history interviews conducted with them. I will decipher their lifestyles from their published narratives that consist of answers to the questions of the ones who interviewed them for a project supported and hosted by Centropa. I will focus on their narratives that form explicit data on their societal statuses and social life experiences via proximity analysis based on the word uses related to their professions, hobbies, culinary traditions, and the quarters in which they have lived, emphasizing the novelties Atatürk brought to Turkish women, also including the Sephardic Turkish women. Afterwards, a cognitive map related to their social lives between the 1930s and the 1980s will be developed.

Besides, the female Sephardic interviewees were asked questions on their societal experiences during the two world wars; their answers will shed light on the statuses of Turkish Sephardic Jewish women during these wars, and their memories about Atatürk's novelties after the Turkish Liberation War (May 19, 1919 – July 24, 1923) contribute to the world history since as

a leader in the world history, Atatürk made unique exemplary reforms for women some of which do not still exist in some parts of the world.

This manuscript aims to address questions about the representativeness of the five interviews' evidence and claims about the broader community of Turkish Sephardic women with archival and library research to provide the readers with additional context information about the community. Therefore, this study intends to shed light on the importance of archived oral history interviews in a world history and a history of the Middle or Near East or Eurasia course, thinking about the reforms Atatürk made for women without excluding the Sephardic women.

Besides, this study will try to decipher which Judeo-Spanish terms these Turkish Sephardic women use for reviving the Judeo-Spanish language. The women's professions, hobbies, and culinary traditions, as well as the changes in the quarters in which these Turkish Sephardic women have lived will make the readers better understand the past habits, disappearing professions, and culinary traditions of Sephardim together with the uniqueness of Atatürk's reforms for women in the world history.

1. HISTORY OF THE SEPHARDIM AND THE JUDEO-SPANISH LANGUAGE

In 1481, Sultan Mehmed II would accept non-Muslims as the inhabitants of the Ottoman Empire, and accordingly, among the first Turkish Jews, one can encounter "Ashkenazim, Romaniots, Karaites, and small numbers of Sephardim"; numerous Sephardim arrived in the Ottoman Empire after their expulsion from Spain in 1492 (President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2022). Currently, many of them live in Istanbul and Izmir and try to preserve the Judeo-Spanish language.

Furthermore, Judeo-Spanish is the native language of Spanish Jews, known as Sephardim, expelled from Spain in 1492; it is based on Medieval Spanish, but it was influenced by Hebrew, "Aramaic, Arabic, Turkish, Greek, French, Bulgarian, and Italian" (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016).

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Previously, Armistead and Silverman (1983) discussed the similarities between Sephardic songs, poems, riddles, and proverbs in Greece, Israel, and Turkey as these can be obtained via oral history interviews. Besides, Benmayor and Kandiyoti (2020) conducted an oral history project with fifty-five Sephardic restorative Spanish or Portuguese citizenship applicants

from four continents between January 2017 and October 2019 to collect their perspectives on the year 2015's Spanish and Portuguese restorative citizenship laws' historical and ideological frameworks. Moreover, Cohen (2011) refers to oral history interviews twenty-seven of which were conducted with Moroccan Sephardim between 1984 and 1986 and fifteen of which were conducted with Moroccan Sephardim between 2009 and 2011: these Sephardim immigrated to Quebec.

My study differs from these previous studies since it focuses on the social lives and traditions of Jewish women from the 1930s through the 1980s. Additionally, the Centropa interview database on Turkish Sephardim differs from other databases on Sephardim from other parts of the world that focus on sorrowful and tragic Holocaust memories of many Jews, such as the "Oral Histories" database of St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum (2022) and the Oral History Interviews at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection (n.d.).

3. DISCUSSION

In this section, I will talk about the societal roles and socialization activities of Sephardic women as professionals, their hobbies, their culinary traditions, and their surroundings, which give us information about the attitudes of Sephardic women towards their neighbors, their shopping habits, and the urban structures in Istanbul between the 1930s and the 1980s, as well as the impact of Atatürk's reforms on their lives.

3.1. Sephardic Women and Their Roles within Society between the 1930s and the 1980s: Professions

I will introduce the readers to the interviewees and their professional experiences to prove how strong they are as women. Besides, first, I have to remind the readers of the fact that Turkish women obtained equal rights to those of men only after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey on October 29, 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Atatürk explained in a congress held in Izmir on January 31, 1923 that women had to have the same educational rights as those of men for the development of the whole country (Özer, 2013).

Accordingly, Sephardic women can become successful as businesswomen. Regarding the selected oral history interviews, Lina Franko (2004), born in 1929, depicts that the father of her paternal grandmother, called Haskiya Hatem, was "the undersecretary to a chief rabbi"; they were from Istanbul; her paternal grandfather was a cashier "at a glassware shop in Beyoğlu" in

the European side of Istanbul, her paternal grandmother was from Ortaköy that is a quarter in the European side of Istanbul, and one of her sisters passed away due to cholera. These explanations make us realize that working in a big shop in Beyoğlu was respected for a man, and a pestilent cholera pandemic was spread in Istanbul during her paternal grandmother's time. The illnesses she witnessed, and the jobs performed by men might have shaped Lina Franko's views about a career life. The other sister of her paternal grandmother immigrated to Argentina, as she (2004) narrates. Furthermore, Lina Franko's (2004) words about the last times of the Ottoman Empire emphasize the need for a new leader that could establish a republic instead of an empire: "After World War I, the Ottoman Empire of the time was regarded as a 'sick man.' The economy had collapsed, while the fall of the empire was about to be declared. Planning a future under these circumstances, in this country, had become a dream for some people. Under these conditions several families emigrated to many parts of the world. The continent of America became the main center of this emigration." She explains (2004) that she was born in 1929 and depicts the impression her family had before the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923. The economic collapse and the corruption in the Ottoman Empire had led to its invasion by many nations. She (2004) tells us that her grandmother volunteered and washed the dead or took care of the sick in the community, although she was a primary school graduate. The graduates of the Jewish Primary School in Üsküdar were respected at that time, according to her (2004). She (2004) says that a hair bun was called "*kurulika*" in Judeo-Spanish; her paternal grandmother had one and wore black clothes, as she was mourning for her husband's death due to a heart attack before the marriage of his offspring. She (2004) narrates that her grandmother died in 1963 in the Jewish Or-Ahayim Hospital in Istanbul, and her oldest daughter, called Anet was a tailor, since her husband's business failed after their immigration to Israel. The hair bun and tailoring underline that Atatürk modernized Turkey with the "Hat Reform" he started in Kayseri in 1925: men would not carry a fez, and women would wear modern clothes that could make their identities visible in public places to declare their equality to men after this reform; some journals of that time wrote that men welcomed Atatürk with hats and women unveiled themselves in his visit to Kayseri on August 28, 1925 for initiating this reform (Bozkuş, 1991). This was the first step in their liberation and the start for gender equality within the Turkish society. Lina Franko (2004) also narrates that her mother's relatives are from Edirne, and her maternal grandfather owned a winery. However, women were discriminated in her family, as she (2004) narrates that as soon as her grandfather

had retired from the *Banco di Roma* [Bank of Rome], her father received a medal with Romulus and Remus, as the founders of Rome, and no female family member participated in the award ceremony. Despite that, she knows that women and men have equal rights in work and education. A Jewish woman called Simbul (the Turkish word “sümbül” means jacinth in English) was visiting them to wash the clothes: she was the most powerful female role model in front of her as she gained her own money, and this affected how she would feed her daughter, as Lina Franko (2004) explains, “The wash-erwoman had a daughter with red cheeks. My mother asked her enviously what she gave her daughter to eat. She replied that she dipped bread into the coffee grounds which she had drunk before and gave this to her in the morning, and she shared with her daughter the food she was given at the houses where she worked.”

This woman was actively working in the Jewish community, and would also wash corpses, as Lina Franko (2004) cites that she replied in Judeo-Spanish to her grandmother that she would have washed her, if she had passed away: “*‘Si, a si biva la madam, de alma i de korason’* meaning ‘of course madam, I’ll do it with all my heart.’”

However, Lina Franko knitted sweaters and sold them to her neighbors, although her mother preferred to offer these as gifts to the poor, as she (2004) mentions. Despite this economic dependence of Sephardic women on their husbands within her family, her daughter studied Business Administration (Franko, 2004).

Besides, regarding the second interviewee Güler Orgun (2005), she can speak English, French, Spanish, and Ladino; her grandfather “worked in a bank called Marmarosh Bank” and he was “a wheat expert” in Romania. She (2005) mentions that her maternal grandmother married when she was fourteen. After the establishment of the Turkish Republic, it was determined that the marriage age should have been 18 for men, and 17 for women on a decree published in the *Turkish Official Journal (Resmi Gazete)* on April 4, 1926 with the number 339. However, her grandmother was a role mother for Güler Orgun as she sold the cloth sacks for hazelnuts she had sewed to an exporter, as she (2005) explains. Moreover, Güler Orgun would keep the accounts of the Jewish Or-Ahayim hospital voluntarily, and her daughter completed her graduate studies in Scotland (Orgun, 2005). She and her husband had a poultry farm; she had woven rugs and kilims: she initiated a cottage industry with her female friend, who had a bachelor’s degree in Textile Designing: she supervised the housewives working for her, while her friend was designing the rugs and kilims (Orgun, 2005). Güler Orgun

was born in 1937, according to the Centropa project. On October 4, 1926, the Civil Code of the Republic of Turkey passed into legislation thanks to Atatürk, and women and men were started to be regarded as equal legally, since the men's marriages with many wives were forbidden, women obtained the same inheritance rights as those of men, women can become testimonies in courts, and again women can divorce their husbands after the legislation's approval (Erdem, 2015). Güler Orgun appears as a defender of Atatürk and tries to empower every housewife by offering them jobs. In addition, she (2005) says, "In those years, 1958-1959 maybe, I was the only woman who drove herself to factories to sell raw materials and machinery," after having started to accompany her father, while working. Even the Dutch were shocked to see a woman, when she visited them as a business-woman, according to her (2005).

Concerning the third interviewee, Zelda Ers, she was born in 1934 and lives in Gayrettepe, her grandfather was a rabbi; her grandparents were from Balat: they left Turkey after the World War II to live with her uncles in the United States, as she suggests in 2006. In the United States, her grandmother never covered her hair with a wig, however, she had a scarf (Ers, 2006). Besides, her brother sold glassware, whereas her mother was a tailor (Ers, 2006). She could not study due to the difficulties in her life, but she started to work as a child, when her mother was paralyzed, as she (2006) says, "There was a pantyhose factory in Kasımpaşa belonging to some Druzes, I started working there. First, I started working in the weaving, I would attach labels. Then I would make straps for bras. We paid the rent with the money I earned. One of my brothers was a soldier, the other had just returned and did not have a job" (my correction).

Additionally, the fourth interviewee Rebeka Evgin is from Adana, but she lives in Istanbul, she was born in 1934; she did embroidery to contribute to her family's budget, when they came to Istanbul, as she (2006) suggests.

Finally, the fifth interviewee, Janet Arguete is from Istanbul, she was born in 1924: she had not known her paternal grandparents, and alongside these, she also (2006) mentions that her father owned a textile business. All these Sephardic women from Istanbul show themselves as strong women to whom Atatürk had given the right to work without relying on their husband's or male family members' pockets.

3.2. Hobbies or Pastime Activities

The first interviewee, Lina Franko (2004), depicts that they would play games in the gardens as a child in an environment without any racial or re-

religious discrimination: “I had a childhood full of quite nice memories. We would gather in the gardens, and play games. At night girls and boys, Muslim or not, would gather and play hide-and-seek with a piece of wood. [...]. Throughout Ramadan [month of fasting for Muslims], we would gather around the mosque and sing all together during Iftar [the dinners after the sunset for breaking fast for Muslims], when all the lights were on” (my correction). Besides, she (2004) tells us that she learned how to swim by a seashore close to the Çırağan Palace; plus, she (2004) describes that many of her primary school friends’ mothers gave up hiding their faces behind veils after the Hat Reform of Atatürk (1925). She (2004) adds, “For this reason, I have a big love for Atatürk and secularity.” She (2004) explains that she witnessed the sadness that prevailed in Istanbul on November 10, 1938, when Atatürk passed away, since her teacher brought all the students, including her, to Dolmabahçe Palace, and they -all- burst into tears.

Besides, Lina Franko (2004) depicts her family’s social life with some guests: they would play card games recognized as “*Pastra*,” played like “*Pish-ti*” (*Piști nasıl oynanır? Piști kaç kağıtla oynanır? Piști oyununun kuralları*. 2020), *Kunkam*” (*TürkçeBilgi*, 2004-2022), and “7.5” (*İskambilci.com*, n.d.); they would offer cheese, vanilla, and black pepper cookies to guests; these cookies were known with the Judeo-Spanish term “*ke se tope*” (“to have something to offer - to guests”).

Furthermore, Lina Franko (2004) would water plants in her garden, when she was young; they would go to cinemas and theatres, some singers would sing before the movies. According to her (2004), Ajda Pekkan was a female Turkish singer who sang before the movies; furthermore, as she (2004) narrates, a “*fikso*” (the Judeo-Spanish counterpart of the phrase “a fixed day or night”) was a planned gathering among friends.

The second interviewee, Güler Orgun (2005), underlines that she liked riding horses; she was an only child, and she used to live in Taksim until she had become twenty-three years old; as a child, she would spend the summers in Büyükkada with her parents: they all enjoyed swimming, but she and her father liked rowing a boat and riding bikes. She (2005) also mentions “*kunkam*” (cooncan) as a card game played with friends and family members.

The third interviewee, Zeldi Ers (2006) believes that she does not have any nice childhood memories, but children had to finish at least primary school legally, thus she (2006) explains that a school committee arrived her home to investigate why she was not attending school and witnessed the

sickness of her mother, and accordingly, she was allowed to stop working at 3 pm to attend an evening school, because an elementary school education was obligatory. However, despite her harsh life, she (2006) mentions that she was enjoying making blouses out of her old dresses, walking, playing with balls, and jumping ropes; but on Saturdays, songs would be sung during family Shabbat gatherings, and she would go to Florya to swim with her family. The fourth interviewee Rebeka Evgin (2006) enjoyed reading books, but her mother warned her since educated women were disliked by society at that time. Accordingly, Turkish women owe a great deal to Atatürk for underlining gender equality. As well, the fifth interviewee, Janet Arguete (2006) loved reading magazines.

3.3. Culinary Traditions

I will analyze the religious meal rules and herbal remedies suggested by Sephardic women alongside the novelties introduced by Atatürk to which they refer in this subsection.

The first interviewee, Lina Franko (2004) mentions that her family obeyed the rules on eating Kosher (see Marengo, 2020 for details) food and not to work on Saturdays during her childhood in Ortaköy. Besides, she (2004) emphasizes the importance of using local food, referring to a Turkish national celebration for children: “Domestic Goods Week.” The week is celebrated after the scarcity of the resources after the World War I: Atatürk held the Economic Congress in Izmir in 1923, emphasizing that the local products promote a country’s security; after İsmet İnönü had delivered a speech at the Turkish General Assembly on December 12, 1929 on the positive effects of using local products, the week of December 12-18 is recognized as the “Local Products Week” or the “Domestic Goods Week,” and it has been celebrated in primary schools since 1946 (Habertürk Gazetecilik A.Ş., 2021) thanks to the awareness Atatürk raised on food security.

The second interviewee, Güler Orgun (2005) mentions that her great grandmother burned cloves against the evil eye since many believe in the dire and destructive effects of the gazes of jealous people around the globe. She (2005) teaches us an ethnic local remedy from the Sephardim of Istanbul. Thus, we learn about a certain herbal remedy.

The third interviewee, Zelda Ers (2006) says that her mother observed the Kosher diet laws and visited the synagogue on holidays; she also celebrated the Jewish feasts with her children.

The fourth interviewee, Rebeka Evgin (2006) mentions the henna burning ceremony for women before their marriage ceremonies in Anatolia since her mother painted her hair with henna, most probably for having thicker and healthier hair. Besides, she (2006) lists the national festivities after the foundation of the Turkish Republic at schools: “Turkish Independence Day on October 29, National Independence Day, and Children’s Day on April 23 (The anniversary of the establishment of the Turkish Parliament by Atatürk. Atatürk [...] created the first children’s day in the world in this way) would be celebrated with exuberance. The love of Atatürk had been instilled in all of us” (my corrections). We feel the respect of Sephardic women for Atatürk in their speech, and she appreciates the freedom and equality Atatürk had given to all the women of the Republic of Turkey: women can paint their hair and choose their jobs freely, accordingly.

The fifth interviewee, Janet Arguete (2006) indicates that she eats only Kosher food. After the Passover (The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2021) cleaning, her mother would say, “*Ya entro pesah en esta kamareta*” in Judeo-Spanish, thus, “Passover has arrived in this room.”

After these details, one can analyze the culinary traditions of Sephardim.

About culinary traditions, the first interviewee, Lina Franko (2004) explains how she would make the salt, the sugar, and the meat Kosher especially for the Passover. Besides, she (2004) gives the recipes of “*boyikos de pimienta*” (blackpepper cookies) and “*boyikos de kasher*” (yellow cheese cookies) on her interview page on Centropa.

The second interviewee, Güler Orgun (2005) mentions that her family cooked Sephardic dishes.

The third interviewee, Zelda Ers (2006) narrates that her mother would cook green beans for her, as she was a small child; as an adult, she prefers to cook “*turlu*,” thus mixed vegetables, “*apyiko*” [celery roots], “*kofikas de pira-sa*” [leek balls with meat], and “*kofikas de patata*” [potato balls with meat].

Rebeka Evgin (2006) gives the recipe of “stuffed grape leaves with yoghurt” on her oral interview page on Centropa: grape tree leaves are filled with rice and spices. Besides, she (2006) also gives the recipe of *Shillece*, which is a Passover meal with chicken broth, Swiss chard, rice, turmeric, salt, and pepper: these ingredients are boiled. To sum up this section, the Local Products Week made Sephardic Jewish women prudent and thrifty, while cooking food.

In the next section, I will talk about the quarters in which Sephardic women enjoyed their lives.

3.4. Surroundings

The first interviewee, Lina Franko (2004) lived in Ortaköy in Istanbul, and she says that she lived in a house and had good relations with her Muslim neighbors; she and her family would go to Tünel to visit her aunts and would walk from Tünel to Taksim or from Taksim to Dolmabahçe and would take a tram or a bus to arrive in Ortaköy. According to her (2004), the streets on the way from Tünel to Taksim were full of luxury shops and restaurants; they would put on hats, going to cinemas, especially close to Pera, where patisseries existed.

The second interviewee, Güler Orgun (2005) lived in Sirkeci, but she lives in Çengelköy today. She (2005) tells us that her family members lived in Rashel Han on Bankalar Avenue; Jewish families lived in this building; she also enjoyed the celebration activities for the establishment of the Republic of Turkey by Atatürk: “On holidays, like the Anniversary of the Republic, one could observe from the windows the trams decorated with paper flags passing through Bankalar Caddesi [Avenue].” There was an open café at the corner of the Bankalar Avenue, she (2005) says.

The third interviewee, Zelda Ers (2006) lived in a house to which they brought water “in buckets”: a fountain existed under a tree close to her home; water-sellers sold drinkable water; the family had a brazier; according to her (2006), Kuledibi was full of Jewish inhabitants, the transportation was realized with horses and vehicles, and a trashman would pass through the streets in a vehicle, and she would go to the Turkish bath in Kasımpaşa.

Furthermore, the fourth interviewee, Rebeka Evgin (2006) tells us that her paternal grandmother Cevahir Babaoğlu would sell socks and handkerchiefs, and for this reason, she was recognized as “Mr. Cevahir.” She used to live with her in Kuledibi in Istanbul; she (2006) mentions that the touristic attraction of the zone was the Galata Tower, which was also close to the Neve Shalom Synagogue and dining places.

In addition, the fifth interviewee, Janet Arguete (2006) lived in the quarter known as “La Juderia,” however, the place was recognized as Catalfirin [Çatalfirin in Turkish: Forkbakery]; there were the synagogues of Yirush, Mayor, and Etz Hayim in the zone. The sellers that are not present today would sell yoghurt, poultry, and eggs; they usually joked with the following sentence in Judeo-Spanish: “*Los huevos del dede son grandes*” [The eggs

-balls- of the grandfather are big]. Besides, she (2006) says, “On Saturdays the firesetter would pass through the neighborhood. The Jews who did not consider it appropriate to light a fire on the Sabbath [see The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2020 for more information] were able to light the lamps or stove thanks to the firesetters who were Muslim.” According to her (2006), there was a cotton fluffer who would beat the cotton in mattresses to renovate them, people would go shopping in the Closed Bazaar where “silk cocoons would be displayed”; lawyers worked on the top of the bazaar, and “coal stoves and braziers would be lit on laundry days, [and] food would be cooked on the same stoves,” according to her (2006).

In Beyoğlu, Tokatliyan Passage was in front of the first home of the fifth interviewee, Janet Arguete (2006). All these oral interviews show us that Atatürk made women walk freely in the streets and practice different professions. Some jobs disappeared today, but Atatürk gave importance to the progress of Turkish economy with the efforts of all the citizens of Turkey regardless of their gender and cultural background.

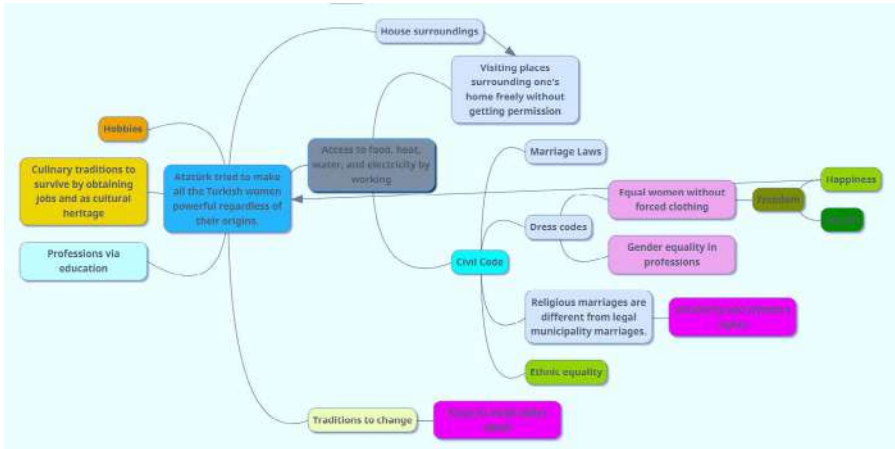
CONCLUSION

To conclude, Jewish women could become professionals in every field after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 and the reforms of Atatürk which are crucial for history and culture education. Some could have believed that women could be businesswomen, too; however, others became successful in commerce and enjoyed reading books. Atatürk led to the equality of women and men in various educational fields and professions, as well as before the law after a congress held in Izmir on January 31, 1923 by successively giving the women “the right to attend in municipal elections” in 1930; “the right to elect and be elected as mukhtar” in 1933, alongside “the right to elect and be elected as deputy” in 1934 (Özer, 2013) regardless of their ethnic background, but with the obligation that they are Turkish citizens. The equality of women and men in legal and political spheres leads to a healthy and happy society where women do not feel the pressure of extremist male religious leaders as in the case of a woman who cannot divorce her husband despite the physical and psychological violence of which she is a victim at home, for instance; besides, in a healthy society, women can get employed in every field: the role models for every Turkish citizen woman include Black Fatma as a female warrior during the Turkish Liberation War (Zafer, 2019), Sabiha Gökçen as a female pilot, who was born in 1913 and obtained the surname Gökçen [belonging to the sky] for the surname law put into legislation by Atatürk in 1934 and was trained as

a war pilot at the Eskişehir Military Air School in 1936 (Sabıha Gökçen Uluslararası Havalimanı, 2009), Ülkü Adatepe’s childhood photo with Atatürk is a symbol for the alphabet reform that was declared in *the Turkish Official Journal (Resmî Gazete)* on November 3, 1928; according to this reform, the Arabic alphabet was replaced with Turkish characters for writing Turkish words; besides, Ülkü Adatepe got married to a Sephardic Jew after her first marriage, but she got divorced from him, and remarried with another Turkish man (*Biyografi*, 2004-2022) as a result of the Turkish Civil Code, which was accepted in 1926 (Caarls & de Valk, 2017) for allowing to civil mixed marriages, usually opposed by ultra-religious groups, who also prevent women from working for making their own money without any religious obligations posed upon them, and Afet İnan worked as a renowned history professor (*Sessiz Tarih*, 2013).

Therefore, Turkish Sephardic women can be professors, deputies, cooks, historians, businesswomen, et cetera successive to the reforms of Atatürk for all the women who are the citizens of Turkey. Thinking about the reforms of Atatürk, the following mind map can be formulated as a result of the qualitative content analysis of five interviews with Sephardic women who witnessed the first effects of the reforms of Atatürk on women:

Table 1. Mind map: Celebration the societal equality of women guided through the reforms of Atatürk



Resource: Mind mapping tool: “Mindmup 2: Zero-friction online mind mapping,” accessed January 9, 2022, <https://app.mindmup.com/>, and a map created on January 9, 2022.

Besides, the Judeo-Spanish language can be preserved via oral history interviews that show us also the importance of Atatürk’s reforms for the

whole world as exemplary for protecting the women's rights, and these reforms must be conserved for a progressive world where women and men have equal rights and opportunities in every profession and before the law. Contemporary Sephardic women receive higher education as one sees that the daughters of interviewees received university degrees; the pastime activities of Turkish Sephardic women between the 1930s and the 1980s changed over time: many do not play with cards, but computer group games may be preferred because different family members live in different countries; the public places the Sephardic women who were young between the 1930s and the 1980s changed as new culinary traditions appeared in the European side of Turkey based on immigrations from other Middle Eastern countries that led to the opening of new cafés and restaurants; however, Sephardic women try to preserve their culinary traditions as cultural heritage by writing cook books just like Koronyo and Ovadya (2005); today street sellers are replaced by markets, and firesetters by automatic lights, and villas were replaced by apartments; however, most crucially, the reforms of Atatürk led Turkish women to find jobs, get educated, and appear in social spaces without any hesitations and discrimination: Atatürk's reforms lead to a healthy and wealthy society as long as they are preserved and followed, as the mind map above shows.

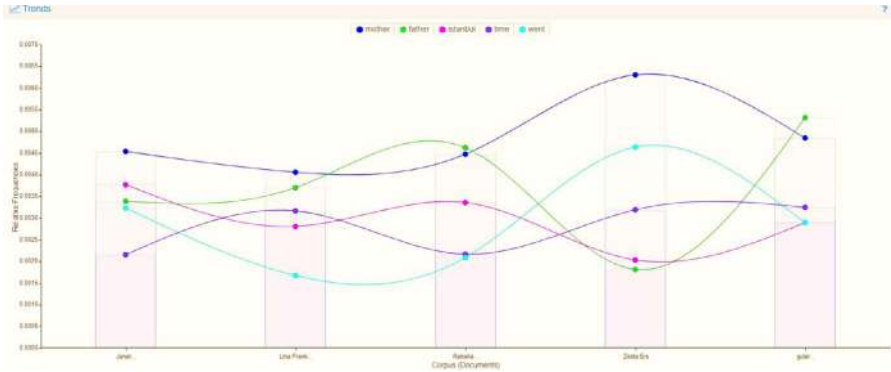
These findings are also supported in old articles published in the *Şalom* newspaper; for instance, Marko Paşa was a Jewish humor magazine published between 1946 and 1950 (Akpınar, 2021), and Kosher döner and butchers were present in Büyükkada and a goodbye-to-the-summer concert was held in Burgazada in 1985 ("Artık yeni şohetler yetişmiyor" and "Yaz biterken...", *Şalom*, October 8, 1985), and a ceremony was organized by the Jewish high school for commemorating Atatürk on November 10, 1986 ("Atatürk 10 Kasım'da Musevi Lisesi'nde Anıldı," *Şalom*, November 12, 1986), indicating that ideas of Atatürk are followed and Turkish-Sephardic culture is preserved.

In sum, Atatürk formed laws for an exemplary pluralistic secular nation where women and men are equal regardless of their ethnic origins, as appreciated and admired by Turkish Sephardic women. If the way Atatürk created is followed by any nation, this nation will prosper. Accordingly, the reforms of Atatürk shall be included in world history, as well as in Near or Middle Eastern or Eurasian history courses.

Moreover, Figure 1 shows us the frequency of words used in oral history interviews, underlining the importance of the concepts associated with these words in Sephardic women's lives; accordingly, the words "mother,"

“father,” “Istanbul,” “time,” and “went” are mentioned the most in the five oral history interviews:

Figure 1. Frequency Rates of Concepts in the Oral History Interviews, Underlining their Importance for Sephardic Women of Istanbul from the 1930s through the 1980s



Resource: Graph drawn via Sinclair’s & Rockwell’s (2022) *Voyant*: *See through Your Text* on February 4, 2022: <https://voyant-tools.org/?corpus=cf91f0787842de06de41d82c9ea6c458&query=mother&query=father&query=istanbul&query=time&query=went&view=Trends>.

Alongside this, “Ataturk” [Atatürk] appears 29 times in the five oral history interviews, these most frequent words in the investigated corpus include the concepts of “mother” (398), “father” (329), “Istanbul” (245), “time” (238), and “went” (236) (as in Figure 1 and calculated via Sinclair, & Rockwell, 2022): Figure 2 demonstrates that the core of the Sephardic women’s lives was their family life between the 1930s and the 1980s; however, they prevailed in society as they got university degrees and established businesses thanks to Atatürk, the founder of the Republic of Turkey. The most frequent 500 words used in the oral history of the Sephardic women can be found in Figure 2:

RESOURCES

- Akpınar, B. (22 Aralık 2021). *Anlat derdini Marko Paşa 'ya, Şalom*. https://www.salom.com.tr/haber-120736-anlat_derdini_marko_pasaacuteya.html.
- Armistead, S. G., & Silverman, J. H. (1983). Sephardic Folkliterature and Eastern Mediterranean Oral Tradition. *Musica Judaica*, 6(1), 38–54. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23687889>.
- Artık yeni sohbetler yetiştiriyor & Yaz biterken...* (8 Ekim 1985). *Şalom*.
- Atatürk 10 Kasım'da Musevi Lisesi'nde Anıldı*. (12 Kasım 1986). *Şalom*.
- Benmayor, R., & Kandiyoti, D. (December 2020). Ancestry, Genealogy, and Restorative Citizenship Oral Histories of Sephardi Descendants Reclaiming Spanish and Portuguese Nationality, *Quest. Issues in Contemporary Jewish History* 18, 219-251. <https://doi.org/10.48248/issn.2037-741X/10981>.
- Biyografi*. (2004-2022). *Ülkü Adatepe*. <https://www.biyografi.info/kisi/ulku-adatepe>.
- Bozkır, G. (1991). Şapka Devriminin İzmir Basınındaki Yankıları. *Çağdaş Türkiye Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 1, 109-153.
- Centropa, Preserving Jewish memory - Bringing history to life. (2018). <https://www.centropa.org/search-our-database-jewish-memory>; interview database: https://www.centropa.org/pictures-stories?type=biography&field_biography_country_tid=192#collapsed.
- Caarls, K., & de Valk, H. A. (2017). Regional diffusion of divorce in Turkey. *European Journal of Population*, 34(4), 609–636. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10680-017-9441-5>.
- Cohen, Y. (2011). The migrations of Moroccan jews to Montreal: Memory, (oral) history and historical narrative. *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies*, 10(2), 245–262. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14725886.2011.580984>.
- Erdem, A. R. (2015). Atatürk'ün Kadına ve Kadın Eğitimine Verdiği Önem, *Belgi Dergisi*, 1266-1277.
- Habertürk Gazetecilik A.Ş. (14 Ekim 2021). *Yerli Mali Haftası ne zaman 2021? Yerli Mali Haftası nedir, neden kutlanır? Yerli Mali Haftası şairleri...* <https://www.haberturk.com/yerli-mali-haftasi-ne-zaman-2021-yerli-mali-haftasi-nedir-neden-kutlanir-yerli-mali-haftasi-siirleri-3220328>.
- İskambilci.com* (n.d.). *7 Buçuk nasıl oynanır?* <https://www.iskambilci.com/7-bucuk-nasil-oynanir/>.
- Koronyo, V., & Ovadya, S. (2005). *Sefarad Yemekleri: Sephardic Cook Book*. İstanbul, Gözlem Gazetecilik.
- Marengo, K. (December 22, 2020). *What does Kosher mean? Medical News Today*. <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/what-is-kosher>.

- MindMup 2: Zero-friction online mind mapping.* (n.d.). <https://app.mindmup.com/>.
- Özer, S. (2013). Kadına Seçme ve Seçilme Hakkı Verilmesinin Türk Kamuyundaki Yankıları. *Atatürk Araştırma Merkezi Dergisi*, 29, 131-168.
- Piştî nasıl oynanır? Piştî kaç kağıtla oynanır? Piştî oyunun kuralları.* (26 Şubat 2020). *Hürriyet*, <https://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/piستي-nasil-oynanir-pisti-kac-kagitla-oynanir-pisti-oyunun-kurallari-41456134>.
- President and Fellows of Harvard College. (2022). *Religion and Public Life: Judaism in Turkey*. <https://rpl.hds.harvard.edu/faq/judaism-turkey>.
- Resmî Ceride [Gazete]*. (4/4/1926). No: 339. <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/339T.pdf>.
- Resmî Gazete*. (3/11/1928). No: 1030. <https://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/arsiv/1030T.pdf>.
- Sabiha Gökçen Uluslararası Havalimanı. (2009). *Sabiha Gökçen: 1913-2001*. <https://www.sabihagokcen.aero/sabiha-gokcen-kimdir.html>.
- Sessiz Tarih*. (2013). *Atatürk'ün Manevi Evlatları Kimlerdir?* <http://www.sessiz-tarih.net/2014/02/ataturkun-manevi-evlatlari-kimlerdir.html>.
- Sinclair, S., & Rockwell, G. (2022). *Voyant: See through Your Text*. <https://voyant-tools.org/>.
- St. Louis Kaplan Feldman Holocaust Museum, Oral Histories. (2022). https://stlholocaustmuseum.org/survivor-stories/oral-histories/?gclid=CjwKCAiA5t-OBhByEiwAhR-hmzUJRpkU0k_R8O2y2yHNfiNnqmfBP-3pHGaOC8q5HNmCMtNXliHHboBoCOKoQAvD_BwE.
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (2016, April 22). *Ladino language*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ladino-language>.
- The Editors of the Encyclopaedia Britannica. (February 26, 2020). Sabbath. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Sabbath-Judaism>.
- The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica. (March 29, 2021). Passover. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/Passover>.
- TürkçeBilgi* (2004-2022). *Konken*. <https://www.turkcebilgi.com/konken#post>.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Collection. (n.d.). <https://www.ushmm.org/search/results/?q=oral+history+interviews>.
- Zafer, S. (3 Eylül 2019). *Millî Mücadele'nin kadın kahramanı: Kara Fatma*. *Anadolu Ajansı*. <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/yasam/milli-mucadenenin-kadin-kahramani-kara-fatma-/1571715>.

Oral History Interviews:

- Arguete, J. (August 2006). <https://www.centropa.org/biography/janet-arguete>.
- Ers, Z. (February 2006). <https://www.centropa.org/biography/zelda-ers>,

- Evgin, R. (May 2006). <https://www.centropa.org/biography/rebeka-evgin>.
- Franko, L. (August 2004). <https://www.centropa.org/biography/lina-franko>.
- Orgun, G. (May 2005). <https://www.centropa.org/biography/guler-orgun>,