

## A DESIGN STORY IN THE SKY: TURKISH AIRLINES' STEWARDESS UNIFORMS (1933-2021)

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### ABSTRACT

The fact that civil aviation is a rapidly developing and spreading field since the early 1900s has made it an important promotional tool for countries. Due to their national flag carrier positions, airlines have an important position in the representation areas of the countries, because it is possible to reach even overseas countries where it is difficult for countries to promote or represent themselves through airlines. National flag carriers take their identities, which are represented by design, with them in every location they reach. In addition to advertising campaigns, aircraft dressings and flight uniforms are important opportunities to increase visibility or accurately reflect representation. At this point, design comes to the fore because design is vital both at this point of differentiation and prominence and in making sense of the stages that institutions have gone through. Countries that use this power provided by design correctly find the opportunity to express themselves more accurately. When the design stages are read carefully, it will be possible to reach important historical information about both the flag carrier institution and the countries represented. In this study, the historical process of Turkish Airlines, which is the flag carrier of Turkey, will be read through flight personnel uniforms and the relationship between flight personnel uniforms and Turkish Airlines' company profile will be evaluated.

**Keywords:** Design, National design, Corporate image, Airlines.

## GÖKYÜZÜNDE BİR TASARIM HİKAYESİ: TÜRK HAVA YOLLARI HOSTES ÜNİFORMALARI (1933-2021)

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### ÖZ

Sivil havacılığın 1900'lü yılların başından beri hızla gelişen ve yayılan bir alan olması ülkeler için de önemli bir tanıtım araçlarına dönüşmelerini sağlamıştır. Milli bayrak taşıyıcı konumları nedeniyle havayolları, ülkelerin temsil alanlarında önemli bir konuma sahiptirler çünkü ülkelerin tanıtımlarını yapma ya da kendilerini temsil etme imkanını zor bulacakları deniz aşırı ülkelere bile havayolları aracılığıyla ulaşılması mümkün olmaktadır. Milli bayrak taşıyıcıları ulaştıkları her lokasyonda tasarım aracılığıyla temsil edilen kimliklerini de beraberinde götürürler. Görünürlüğün artırılması ya da temsilin doğru bir şekilde yansıtılması için reklam kampanyalarının yanı sıra uçak giydirmeler ve uçucu personel kıyafetleri önemli birer imkandır. Bu noktada tasarım ön plana çıkar çünkü tasarım hem bu farklılaşma ve öne çıkma noktasında hem de kurumların geçirmiş oldukları aşamaları anlamlandırmada hayati önem taşır. Tasarımın sağlamış olduğu bu gücü doğru kullanan ülkeler kendilerini daha doğru bir şekilde ifade etme imkanı bulurlar. Geçirilen tasarımsal aşamalar dikkatli okunduğunda hem bayrak taşıyıcı kuruma hem de temsil edilen ülkelere dair önemli tarihsel bilgilere ulaşmak mümkün olacaktır. Bu çalışmada Türkiye'nin bayrak taşıyıcı konumunda olan Türk Hava Yolları'nın geçirmiş olduğu tarihsel süreç uçuş personeli üniformaları aracılığıyla okunacak ve uçuş personelinin üniformaları ile Türk Hava Yolları'nın şirket profili arasındaki ilişki değerlendirilecektir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Tasarım, Milli tasarım, Kurumsal imaj, Hava yolları.

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## INTRODUCTION

Civil aviation is a rapidly developing field since the early 1900s and has a very important place for countries due to its national flag carrier positions. Positioned as the flag carrier, national airlines gain personality with their design and take these designs with them to every location they reach. It is aimed to differentiate from other airlines, to stand out and to be remembered with aircraft dressings, stewardess outfits or advertising campaigns. Undoubtedly, the most important provider in this is the design itself, and it is possible to reach historical information about that institution from the design stages of an institution. However, studies on the design cultures of airline companies usually include logos or advertising posters. In this study, the relationship between the stewardess uniforms of Turkish Airlines, the flag carrier of Turkey, and the company profile of Turkish Airlines will be investigated.

The design styles produced for Turkish Airlines generally consist of the national colors of the Turkish flag, red and white. This is a result of its flag carrier status. Turkish Airlines' unique logo, aircraft dressings, especially the uniforms of the stewardess, advertising posters, and the design of different communication tools create a unique design story in the sky. Turkish Airlines (then the State Airlines), which was established only 10 years after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, was also directly affected by the historical phases of the Republic of Turkey, and this was reflected in its corporate culture. The strategic plans followed by the country became the primary target of Turkish Airlines and the institution was shaped by the influence of these various strategic ways. In this direction, both domestic and global changes affect the stewardess uniforms. The traces of this shaping can also be observed directly on the stewardess uniforms.

## 1. YOUNG REPUBLIC, YOUNG AIRLINES: 30S AND 40S

At the beginning of the 1930s, the newly established Republic of Turkey was slowly recovering both inside and outside its territory. On the one hand, it was aimed to achieve development within the country; on the other hand the goals of being strong at the international level were followed. For this, it was necessary to paint an image that the Republic of Turkey was different from the Ottoman Empire. In 1929, the economic crisis caused by capitalism all over the world had a direct impact on the Republic of Turkey, and like many countries, Turkey was looking for solutions to this crisis within its borders. (Köymen, 2007: 97) For this purpose, the first 5 years of the industrialization process were planned and new industrial facilities were started to be established. Civil aviation, on the other hand, was one of the industrialization steps of young Turkey. In 1925, the Turkish Teyyare Community was established to gather parachute, model aircraft, glider and aircraft services under a single roof and to organize its activities. (Turkish Aeronautical Association, 2021) Thus, the foundations of civil aviation were laid. After these developments, commercial aviation started to show a new formation. Later, TOMTAŞ was established in partnership with the German Junkers Company and the Turkish Air Force. TOMTAŞ aimed to support the Turkish Air Force and was intended to manufacture aircraft for the Turkish Air Force. However, TOMTAS was closed in 1927. (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 56). State Airlines was established in 1933 as a turning point in terms of developments in the field of civil aviation in Turkey. Thus, an important process began in the young Republic of Turkey. All the pilots working in the State Airlines were of military origin and the institution was affiliated with the Ministry of Defense. The establishment of the State Airlines was made with very limit-

ed resources and in the first years of the establishment of the institution, there were only 5 aircraft and 24 employees within the institution. (Kozlu, 2006: 18,19) State Airlines was affiliated to the Ministry of Public Works in 1935. Later, in 1938, it was transferred to the Ministry of Transport as the Department of State Airlines. (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 59, 60).

The high tension in Europe in the late 1930s brought the Second World War with it. Young Turkey, on the other hand, still bore the traces of the First World War and the wars of independence in those years. İsmet İnönü, who became the 2nd President of the Republic of Turkey after Atatürk, aimed to stay away from the Second World War in order not to harm the economic and political development of the country. Unfortunately, Turkey's neutrality could not fully protect Young Turkey from the devastating conditions of the war, and the economic recovery that started in the early 1930s began to suffer. However, despite the bad economic conditions as a result of the direct and indirect effects of the war, civil aviation in Turkey started to develop rapidly after the Second World War. In 1946, 13 years after the establishment of Turkish Airlines in 1933, it bought 30 American planes left over from the Second World War. The number of passengers, which was eighteen thousand in 1945, reached thirty-seven thousand in one year with the addition of 30 new aircraft to the fleet (Kozlu, 2006: 22). After the DC-3 model aircraft were purchased, in 1946, three female cabin attendants took office under the name of "female aviator stewardess". (The First Turkish Women in the Sky, 2014). Thus, the history of stewardess in Turkey began.

In 1947, the General Directorate of State Airlines carried out the first international flight to Athens and increased promotional activities for more passengers (Turkish Airlines: 2021). The stewardesses, who started to take part in interna-

tional flights, brought Turkish hospitality to the planes. The importance of presentable cabin crew in air travel began to be understood when the stewardesses took their jobs for the first time in Turkish Airlines, and the elegant female silhouette reborn after the deprivation years of the Second World War came to the fore in international fashion (Cansever, 2008). Thus, the young aviation company started to represent the new republic in the international arena.

In the history of civil aviation, which took its foundations from the military, the 1930s were the first years when airline stewardesses were recruited. Due to the military origin of aviation, stewardesses were also chosen from nurses and wore thick and coarse suits made of dark blue wool fabrics. In these periods, which coincided with the war years, there were fabric problems and there was no opportunity for details, decorations or special designs. For this reason, both the pilot and stewardess uniforms of the period had the appearance of military clothing. A military rationale for uniforms certainly prevailed on most airlines (Gentil-Homem and Ferrao, 2015:74). In keeping with this tradition, three female aviator stewardesses who started to work at Turkish Airlines wore blue skirts, jackets, caps and white cotton blouses. Skirt lengths were kept long in skirt-jacket sets.

**Picture 1: First Three Stewardesses  
"Havacı Kadın Kamarot", 1946**



In light of these developments, the State Airlines Office became the largest airline in the Middle East and was renamed the General Directorate of State Airlines in the same year (Kozlu, 2006: 19).

## 2. POPULAR CULTURE AND AMERICAN INFLUENCE: 50S

In the 1950s, two main views were prevalent in the world in general: socialism and capitalism. Both views wanted to propagate their own ideologies. The United States of America, the representative of capitalism, considered the Republic of Turkey to be of strategic importance because of its borders with the Soviet Union (Köymen, 2007: 106, 107). Turkey, on the other hand, offered a friendship agreement to the Soviet Union in 1945, but this request for rapprochement remained inconclusive (Ahmad, 2007: 128). Trying to find allies for itself in the international arena, the Republic of Turkey decided to side with the United States of America (Köymen, 2007: 104). Thus, a new era began for the young Turkish Republic. By siding with the United States of America, it would be possible to receive military, food and financial support from the United States in line with American ideologies (Köymen, 2007: 106, 107). In 1947, Turkey took part in the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan established by the United States to revive the European economy (Ahmad, 2007: 129). Thus, the United States of America became the decision maker in Turkey's economic policies.

This period also greatly affected the aviation industry in Turkey. State-owned aircraft assembly and production factories stopped aircraft production due to new industrialization policies (Saldıraner, 2011: 6). Yeşilköy Airport was opened to international transportation as a first in international standards. In 1955, the corporate structure of State Airlines was changed and Turkish Airlines (THY) was

established in line with the international trade policies adopted by the government (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 68). Following the changes in the corporate structure, Turkish Airlines became a member of the International Air Transport Association (IATA) in 1956. With this membership, Turkish Airlines took the first step of its cooperation in technical, economic, commercial and administrative fields (Turkish Airlines: 2021).

As of the 1950s, the use of long-distance and multi-seat jets brought along the changes in air transportation all over the world. New methods have begun to be implemented in order to deal with all passengers on crowded journeys. Before the 1950s, the captain and co-pilot greeted passengers, but this tradition has been replaced by stewardesses. Thus, stewardesses have become important personnel representing airlines in front of the public. The uniforms of the stewardesses, whose numbers were increasing in these years, started to become more fashionable than practical use. With these diverse stewardess uniforms, stewardesses have begun to turn into icons representing the corporate identity of airlines. In the 1950s, the effects of the New Look movement are seen in women's clothing in general. Narrow waist area, full skirts, wide-soled high-heeled shoes are the prominent features of the trend. The main purpose of the 50s was to paint a self-confident and free woman portrait. Tight trousers, called cigarettes, and tight and short jackets were preferred. Turkish Airlines, on the other hand, did not change its pilot and stewardess uniforms during this period, and stewardess uniforms in the form of blue skirt, jacket, cap and white cotton blouse continued to be used.

**Picture 2 and 3: Turkish Airlines stewardesses and pilots. 1956**



### 3. TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN AVIATION: 60S AND 70S:

In 1963, the second five-year development plan was approved by the government. The country's import policies were rearranged and new decisions were made to import parts and assemblies in Turkey. In the same year, as a result of the agreements made with Germany, labor migration from Turkey to Germany started. Thus, the remittances sent by the workers working in Germany started to come to Turkey and these remittances were used in payments such as foreign debt and imports (Köymen, 2007: 112).

The 1960s were also years of political tensions all over the world. With the Cyprus Problem that emerged in 1963, America and Turkey came face to face. This led to the rise of national feelings in the country and increased hostility to the Americans. At the same time, political polarization began to increase throughout the country. At the beginning of the 1970s, there was an economic crisis all over the world and as an effect of this, unemployment started to increase in Turkey. The country was in a social turmoil in general and the Turkish Armed Forces requested the resignation of the government on 12 May 1971 in order to prevent political polarization, conflicts and violence (Ortaylı and Küçükkaya, 2012: 168). At the same time, political and

economic changes were taking place in the world, and social life throughout the world was in turmoil.

In the early 1960s, Turkish Airlines focused on its corporate development in order to reach international standards in areas such as aircraft maintenance, ticket sales and land service. In those years, all of Turkish Airlines' pilots were of military origin, and pilots began to be sent to the United States for passenger aircraft training. At the same time, engineers and technicians were sent to different countries, especially America, to receive various trainings (Kozlu, 2006:74). Various language courses were also opened for other Turkish Airlines employees. Thus, the language training of the personnel working in fields such as ground handling and ticket sales was given importance. The abstraction logo, prepared by Mesut Manioğlu in 1959, was re-evaluated and started to be used in 1961 (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 87, 88).

Worker migration to Germany in the same years had increased the number of trips to Germany. New destinations such as Munich and Rome have been added to international flights to Europe. In addition to the professional development trainings given to increase the quality of personnel, the seating arrangements on the aircraft were also re-planned (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 89). Thus, the passenger carrying capacity of the aircraft was increased. Thus, Turkish Airlines gradually began to gain a foothold in the European continent.

In addition, with the agreements made with Arabian Airlines, the number of flights for the pilgrimage and passenger capacity increased. Thus, Turkish Airlines made a profit for the first time in 1966. The use of two jet planes that join Turkish Airlines in international flights has parallels with other airlines (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 90, 91). Thus, Turkish Airlines experienced progress in terms

of modernization. In the light of these developments in Turkish Airlines, a new planning period has begun.

Along with the technological developments in this period, a new image emerged around the world under the name of Futuristic Look, with the effect of science fiction movies and books. The fact that the trip to the moon was planned in these years also strengthened the futuristic style, and the space pattern was started to be used in the designs. At the same time, a new look called the Hippie Look is mentioned in the period. Innocent and childish woman image has been replaced by sexy-looking transparent and ultra mini skirts. Nevertheless, with the effects of globalization, folkloric features from various cultures began to come to the fore. In the images taken in the early 60s, it is seen that Turkish Airlines flight personnel did not change their uniforms.

**Picture 4 and 5: Turkish Airlines stewardesses and pilots. 1964**



At the beginning of the 70s, during the economic crisis in the world, Turkish Airlines took advantage of this crisis and entered the European market. Parallel to this, it increased its capital by one hundred percent. In 1973, it achieved the highest profit since its establishment (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 117). This coincides with the 40th anniversary of its establishment. On its 40th anniversary, a large-scale promotional campaign was organized for the first time. Much attention was paid to this promotion and advertisement, and as a result, an increase

in the number of passengers was seen (Kozlu, 2006: 84).

1974 was a tough year for world civil aviation. There was a worldwide economic crisis and Turkish Airlines was also affected by this crisis. In addition, the tense environment created after the occupation of Cyprus by Turkey also affected Turkish Airlines. As a result of all these, Turkish Airlines closed the year with a loss for the first time in a long time. The United States imposed an embargo on Turkey as a result of Turkey's attitude towards Cyprus and its occupation. As a result of this embargo, Turkish Aircraft Industry Inc. (TUSAS) started its attempts to establish a factory in order to ensure the production of Turkish aircraft (Kozlu, 2006: 87). Towards the end of the 1970s, Turkish Airlines entered a recovery process. Prices of domestic flights were increased in order to balance supply and demand (Genç, 2016:38). It aimed to maintain its position in the market by adding additional flights in Europe. The pilgrimage expeditions were rearranged as round-trip. A survey was conducted for the first time in order to increase advertising campaigns by determining passenger profiles in line with customer satisfaction studies. Thus, feedback was received on the services offered (Taşçı, 2014: 62).

Turkey's current geopolitical position was also an advantage for Turkish Airlines. Taking advantage of Turkey's position, Turkish Airlines started to expand to the Middle East and Arab countries. Due to the competition in international aviation, first class service was added to the Middle East flights. In 1978, Turkish Airlines began to prepare new advertising strategies. In the late 70's, promotional posters in four languages were prepared by the Ministry of Tourism and Promotion due to Turkey's great tourism potential, and these posters were published with the Turkish Airlines logo. These promotional posters were sent to Turkish Airlines' overseas offices (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008: 134, 141).

At the beginning of the 1970s, the movement in world fashion was increasing. Hippie Look, which was released in the 60s, continued to be influenced by increasing political events, global problems, environmental problems and social events such as student movements. In addition to the Hippie Look, embroidered blouses called Indian Look, oriental patterns and Indian motifs were also prominent. With the sexual freedom revolution of the 1960s, airline bosses have used the approach of increasing their sales by bringing gender to the fore in uniforms since the early 1970s (Hall, 2007:25-27.) Turkish Airlines also closely followed the changes in the world. The style started by Marj Quant affected the whole world trend, causing the skirts to become shorter and colored, and the skirts of Turkish Airlines stewardesses to change from sky blue to Gypsy pink in 1968 in an assertive way. This new uniform, consisting of a plain pink dress and jacket suit, was complemented by a dark blue cap and dark blue gloves. Pink jackets with gold buttons were closed to the throat. However, when compared to the previous stewardess uniform, it was seen that there was a serious shortening in the hemlines. It can be said that Turkish Airlines has caught the trend of global fashion with its choice of gypsy pink fabric and mini skirt length used in stewardess uniforms.

**Picture 6-12: Turkish Airlines stewardesses with pink uniforms 1968-1973**



Since the establishment of the Republic of Turkey, the economic wealth, the possession of the latest technology and the modern image of the people were reflected in the appearance of Turkish Airlines' stewardesses. The change from conservative plain uniform to colorful and bright fashion has changed the image of flight personnel in society in the process. The conservative uniform, white gloves, cap, and flamboyant 2-tone shoes gave the flight crew an attractive and professional appearance (Holden, 2008). Turkish Airlines' well-trained aircraft crew, large passenger base and modern stewardesses also emphasize modernization.



However, in 1973, Turkish Airlines changed its stewardess uniform again. The blouses in the new uniforms, used in two sets in cream and beige, reflected the influence of Optical Art in fashion. At the same time, the uniform was animated with polka dots and brown caps were used. This return to ground colors reflects the more cautious outlook of the period compared to the previous decade (Cansever, 2008:18).

**Picture 13-15: Turkish Airlines stewardesses and pilots. 1975**



#### 4. THE PERIOD OF MODERATE POLITICAL DISCOURSE - 80S

As a result of the inconclusive attempts at various political stability; the third military coup was carried out with the support of the United States of America on September 12, 1980, due to reasons such as political instability, violence, religious and ethnic polarization (Köymen, 2007: 127). After the 1980 coup, the National Security Council (NSC) was established under the leadership of General Kenan Evren in order to build a new social, economic and administrative order in Turkey. The NSC dissolved the parliament first, and the political parties held respon-

sible for the unrest in Turkey were closed. In addition, the administrators who were deemed suspicious due to their political connections in local governments were dismissed and military personnel were appointed in their place (Ahmad, 2007: 186). Thus, the army seized both executive and legislative powers of the state. A new cabinet was established in order to distance the Turkish society from politics, to ensure social peace and to carry out reforms in almost every field. Turgut Özal, on the other hand, took charge as the deputy minister of economy in the new cabinet and on January 24, 1980, the economic plan known as the "January 24 Decisions" was launched. January 24 Decisions planned economic recovery. In line with the January 24 Decisions, Turkey would take important steps towards industrialization by turning to exports (Köymen, 2007:127).

Strategies such as limiting the society to the public sphere in order to depoliticize it, establishing the Higher Education Institution to supervise universities, and censoring media such as newspapers, books, magazines and news channels began to be followed. The concept of national security has been associated with many social and political issues and elevated above politics (Köymen, 2007: 131, 132). The National Security Council, which was established for the purpose of supervision, began to actively use its absolute power. In 1982, the constitution, which included various privileges and powers for high-ranking soldiers, imposed prohibitions on many daily practices of the people. Thus, a Turkish-Islamic synthesis ideology dominated politics, education and social life (Köymen, 2007: 137; Ahmad, 2007: 187). This new social and political structure, which will be called the Özal period in the following years, has gradually opened up to foreign capital and global competition.

In the 1980s, Turkish Airlines reached a global economy. In 1981, a paint-

ing competition was held to celebrate Atatürk's 100th birthday and Atatürk's words about aviation were hung on the signs on the planes. Thus, it was aimed to strengthen the relations established between Turkish Airlines and the public (Kozlu, 2006:19). It was realized that Turkish Airlines needed to keep its relationship with the public warm, only in this way could it consolidate its position in the global aviation market. For this purpose, a large place has been given to public relations within the corporate vision. In 1983, the 50th Anniversary book was published in honor of the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Turkish Airlines. Thus, Turkish Airlines embarked on a path to rebuild its place in the public (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:153,154; Kozlu, 2006:20). Following the 50th anniversary book, Turkish Airlines started to publish a monthly magazine under the name of Turkish Airlines magazine in the same year. With this magazine, detailed information about the institution and flights began to be given to the passengers.

1984 also occupies an important place in the history of Turkish Civil Aviation in terms of the establishment of new private aviation companies in Turkey. With the newly established private aviation companies, a local competitive environment was created for the first time. In the same year, the Far East countries had also become powerful actors in the global market and industrialization environment. The steps to be taken by Turkish Airlines in the Far East market also played an important role in its efforts to gain a global presence (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:160). Thus, Turkish Airlines reviewed its strategic planning. After 1988, privatization discussions started to take place on the agenda of Turkish Airlines. With the contributions of the government, Turkish Airlines' management team changed and a new corporate structure was created. With this new corporate restructuring, the system called 3K (quali-

ty, capacity, capital) was adopted as the symbolic expression of Turkish Airlines' new targets (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:161; Kozlu, 2006: 54,119, 129). With the motto of "Putting People First", Turkish Airlines aimed to increase personnel quality by establishing a cordial relationship between management, staff and customers (Kozlu, 2006:71).

In the same years, the new board of directors reconsidered the corporate image of Turkish Airlines. For this purpose, Turkish Airlines, located on the fuselage, was translated into English. The Turkish Airlines inscription in red and white, the national colors of the Turkish flag, began to appear on the aircraft. In addition, the decoration of the aircraft and the uniforms of the crew were changed under the consultancy of designers and colorists (Kozlu, 2006:76,77). Turkish Airlines has rebuilt its corporate identity around a western-oriented axis. In order to increase the service quality, first class and business class lounges were opened especially at international airports. In 1989, the name of the Turkish Airlines magazine was changed to *Skylife*, and the magazine began to be published in both Turkish and English languages. With these design and institutional changes, Turkish Airlines reshaped its corporate identity with domestic and international promotions. This new image of Turkish Airlines has become compatible with international conditions (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:166,167,171).

In the 1980s, diversity was also increasing in the fashion and textile industry. And at the beginning of the period, the image of a stylish and luxurious woman began to be created. Comfortable and loose cuts came to the fore; Emphasis was placed on the shoulders. The cuts and fabrics that were facilitated movement were also reflected in the uniforms. Trousers became widespread and pleated skirts and trousers were frequently used. The image of a professional and strong business woman has gained importance.

Towards the end of the 80s, white collar and striped shirts, double-breasted jackets and yuppies came to the fore. In 1983, Turkish Airlines changed its stewardess uniform again. The suit, consisting of a plain navy blue jacket and skirt, was completed with white shirts with red vertical stripes. The red scarf and navy blue hat were used as complementary elements of the uniforms.

**Picture 16-19: Turkish Airlines stewardesses. 1985-86**



## 5. DIVERSIFIED AVIATION SERVICES AND FAST FASHION: 90S

The 1990s was a period when socialist systems collapsed and their neo-liberal systems spread. In this period, parties with different ideologies had to form coalition governments in Turkey. Therefore, it is not possible to talk about a stable political administration in the conditions of the period. With the Gulf War in 1991, political and social problems continued to increase (Köymen, 2007:145). At the same time, being a member of the European Union has become very important. In 1999, the Copenhagen Criteria for candidate membership was presented to Turkey by the European Union. Within the scope of these criteria, improve-

ments in human and minority rights, economic reforms and regulations had to be made (Ahmad, 2007:193).

In the 1990s, Turkish Airlines made steady progress in terms of corporate modernization and profitability. The company capital of Turkish Airlines, which was included in the scope of privatization in 1990, was increased. In addition, the interior and exterior design of the aircraft was changed. Uniforms of all flight and ground crew were also renewed. The catering service was increased and the corporate packaging of the catering was renewed. By 1990, Turkish Airlines' passenger carrying capacity reached 10.6 million passengers per year (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:211-241; Turkish Airlines, 2021).

Unemployment, globalization, media and technology growth, along with the war that came to the fore again in the 90s, affected fashion trends. On the one hand, the image of a strong and stylish woman continued, on the other hand, returns to old fashion trends were followed. The rapidly spreading movies and music clips greatly influenced the fashion sense of the period. Fast consumption fashion came to the fore under the name of fast fashion.

Turkish Airlines started to work with brands such as Vakko, Beymen and Cemil İpekçi since the 1990s (Alpan, 2009). In 1998, Vakko prepared a set of navy blue skirt jacket and trouser jacket for the Turkish Airlines flight crew. The hemlines were kept below the knee and the suit was completed with a white shirt and blue scarf.

**Picture 20: Turkish Airlines stewardesses' uniforms designed by Vakko. 1998**



## 6. TURKISH AIRLINES AS A WORLD BRAND - 2000S

The late 1990s were years of debates between the military forces and the government on secularism and reactionarism. With the AKP's coming to power in 2002, a period that left its traces in Turkey's history in terms of politics, economy and society began. The AKP government has made many changes and arrangements to increase the sympathy of its voters and to change the administrative mechanisms in Turkey (Ahmad, 2007: 227).

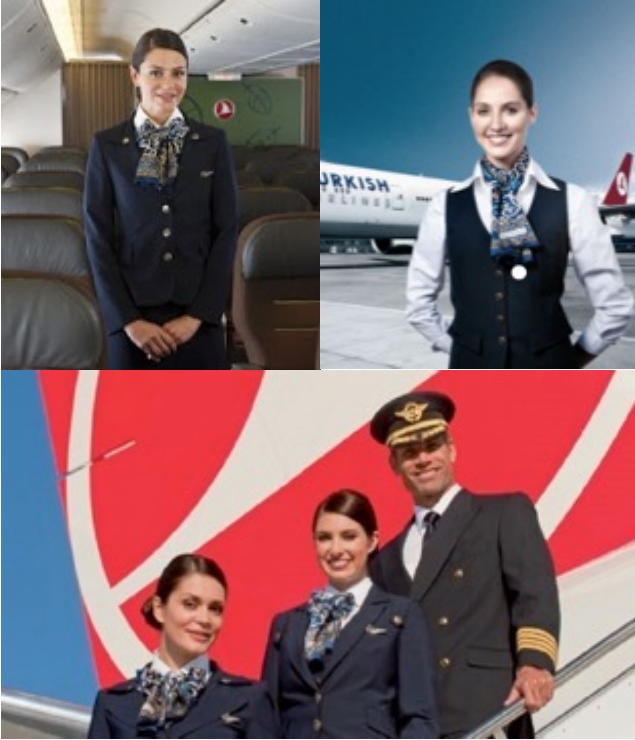
The rapid privatization of public institutions and the adoption of global economic approaches during the AKP period also directly affected Turkish Airlines. 2003 is defined as the year of access to becoming a world brand in the corporate history of Turkish Airlines (Turkish Airlines, 2021). In the same year, renewal processes began at Turkish Airlines in areas such as public relations, media and press, and customer relations. This period is called the service and communication period (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:263). In 2004, it completed its institutionalization as a website design and various services such as online cus-

tommer services and online check-in began to be provided through the website (Turkish Airlines, 2021). In 2005, the largest aircraft purchase in its history was made since the year it was founded, and 59 new aircraft were added to the Turkish Airlines fleet. These planes were dressed with complementary applications for their corporate identity and took their place in the skies as flag carriers. THY's successful competition in the aviation sector continued at an accelerated pace (Karaosmanoğlu, 2008:271).

In 2006, Turkish Airlines gained the status of a private company and technical, maintenance and training companies were established to serve under the same roof (Turkish Airlines, 2021). In the light of all these developments, Turkish Airlines received the "National Quality Award" in the aviation industry. In 2008, Anadolu Jet was established as a sub-brand in order to provide more economical travel between Ankara - Istanbul and Anatolia - Istanbul (Turkish Airlines, 2021). Again in 2008, Turkish Airlines became a member of Star Alliance, a global airline alliance, and right after that, the "Feel Like a Star" promotional campaign started in 2009.

In the early 2000s, Turkish Airlines continued to work with Vakko stewardess uniforms. Turkish Airlines logo was specially designed on the buttons of the uniforms, which were renewed with minor revisions. The scarf and tie patterns were also prepared in harmony with the THY concept. Simplicity and elegance were aimed in the uniform. While skirts, trousers, topcoats and two jacket models were designed in previous years, this year, apart from two jackets, another safari-style jacket and two separate skirt models were designed to be used in summer. In this way, it is planned that cabin crews had more options.

Picture 21-23: Turkish Airlines stewardesses' uniforms designed by Vakko. 2008



## 7. THE ERA OF AWARDS IN THE INTERNATIONAL ARENA: 2010S

It may be possible to consider the 2010s as a golden age for Turkish Airlines. During these years, Turkish Airlines won many national and international awards. In 2011, 2012 and 2013, it was named Europe's best airline on UK-based travel site Skytrax for the 3rd consecutive year (Turkish Airlines, 2021).

In 2011, fashion designer Dilek Hanif stated that Turkish Airlines' clothing from the past did not contain anything specific to Turkish culture. Stating that Turkish Airlines and stewardesses are the face of Turkey in the international arena, Hanif said that pieces of Turkish culture should be in the stewardess uniforms. She emphasized that the country of a stewardess anywhere in the world can be understood through her uniform and that Turkey should follow the same path (Hanif, 2011).

Thereupon, in 2012, Turkish Airlines made an offer to famous fashion designers for the design of new uniforms to be worn by the stewardesses. THY Chairman of the Board Hamdi Topçu (2012) stated that

they are working on the design of a new stewardess outfit that has a corporate identity and will be liked by everyone. He stated that the uniforms will contribute to the rising image of THY in the international arena, and therefore they do not impose any restrictions on fashion designers regarding the features that their uniforms should have.

Picture 24: Fashion designers are designing a new stewardess outfit for THY. Newspaper Article 2012

## Modacılar, THY için yeni hostes kıyafeti tasarlıyor



Türk Hava Yolları (THY), kabin memurlarının (hostes) giyeceği yeni üniformalarının tasarımları konusunda 6-7 ünlü modacıya teklif götürdü.

3. Nisan 2012 | 11 Mart 2012 Perşembe • Air News Times

Modacıların hazırlayacağı tasarımlardan en güzeline ise THY yönetimi ve yolcular karar verecek. Kurumsal kimliği taşıyan ve daha da önemi herkes tarafından beğenilen yeni hostes kıyafeti tasarımı konusunda çalışma yürüttüklerini bildiren THY Yönetim Kurulu Başkanı Hamdi Topçu, THY'nin uluslararası arenada yükselen imajına katkı sağlayacak hostes

The stewardess uniforms (pic. 25) prepared by Dilek Hanif in 2013 received a lot of criticism. After this uniform, the images of which were published on social media, THY officials stated that these designs were sketches, that they asked many designers to design uniforms and that a decision had not been made yet. After the images of this uniform spread, the discussion of reaction in media flared up again.

**Picture 25: Turkish Airlines stewardesses and uniforms sketch designed by Dilek Hanif, 2013**



With the AKP government coming to power and Turkish Airlines' privatization, it is possible to talk about a complex national identity for Turkish Airlines. Turkish national identity is represented in different forms, including Muslim, Anatolian and western.

## 8. NEW ISTANBUL AIRPORT AND A NEW BREATH IN UNIFORMS: FROM 2018 TO THE PRESENT

Turkish Airlines proudly introduced the new uniforms designed by Italian designer Ettore Bilotta on the occasion of its 85th anniversary. The new uniforms, which started to be used in 2018 with the move to the newly opened Istanbul Airport, consist of flag red and anthracite gray colors. The uniform has undergone rigorous testing in different climatic conditions and long-haul flights. Cabin Officer Eda Akar stated that these new uniforms have become much more remarkable in the skies and that more eyes will be on them from now on (Akar, 2018). The new uniforms were classified so that cabin crews would wear gray and supervisors would wear red. The

uniforms feature the “flow” pattern, inspired by many classical details in Turkish culture, from the harmonious flow of the Bosphorus to traditional arts.

İlker Aycı, chairman of the board of directors and executive committee of THY, stated that the elegance and comfort of the cabin crew, which is the most important element of the unrivaled service quality, is of great importance for the THY brand, which is walking to the top of its sector, and that when the elegance of the crews combined with the new cabin outfits bearing the traces of many elements of Turkish culture, the representation of their brands in the skies reported that they believed it would be much more impressive (Aycı, 2021).

**Picture 26-30: Turkish Airlines stewardesses and pilots' uniforms designed by Ettore Bilotta, 2018**



## CONCLUSION

National identities are institutional associations consisting of cultural experiences, rituals, and natural diversity created by differences. Daily practices or economic policies in countries also directly affect the representation of national identity. The national identity formation of the Republic of Turkey shows some fluctuations in the axis of both the traditions from the past and the new Western identity that is desired to be created. The cultural values and Muslim structure that the Republic of Turkey brought from the Ottoman Empire, together with the radical reforms carried out in the first years of the young republic's establishment, left its place to the Turkish national identity.

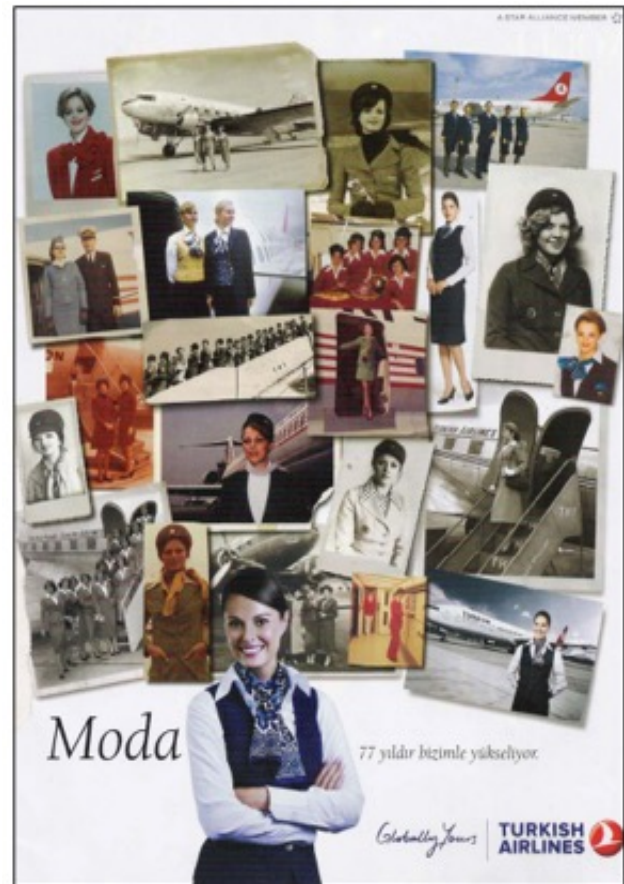
The Turkish national identity and nation-state policies, which started to settle in the 1950s, entered the democratization process with the military coup environment in the 1960s. The national identity, which was consolidated in the 1960s and 1970s, has become compatible with the developments since the establishment of the republic. With the military coup environment experienced again in the 1980s, the phenomenon of power was reshaped in line with financial purposes together with liberal policies. In these years, a new national identity reform was created by creating a Turkish-Islamic synthesis. The political impotence and the ideological uncertainties of the government in the 1990s led to the formation of an American-centered elitist national identity, and with the establishment of the AKP (Justice and Development Party) government in the 2000s, Turkey assumed a moderate Islamic identity.

Cultural and national identity should be the main visual strategy used by flag carrier companies to maintain their identity (Gentil-Homem and Ferrao, 2015: 87). The current context is not easy to understand, because in order to understand the current context, it is necessary to follow all the developments in the periods. This complexity at the global level, strategic alliances, political movements in

countries, socio-economic conditions of countries, changes in culture and identities also directly affect the design developments of institutions.

It will be possible to say that the progress of Turkish Airlines and the developments experienced are directly related to the Turkish national history. The institution has consolidated its existence as a part of the establishment and progress of the Republic of Turkey. Examining flag carrier airlines in a design context is essential to preserving a very rich tangible and intangible heritage (Gentil-Homem and Ferrao, 2015: 86). In addition, examining the national flag carrier Turkish Airlines in detail in terms of design will be a very important data source for design history.

**Picture 31: Fashion is rising with us for 77 years. (1999)**



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