



# Making, unmaking and remaking of context in entrepreneurial identity construction and experiences: a comparative analysis between Türkiye and the Netherlands

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**Abstract** This study analyses how women entrepreneurs of Turkish origin do context in constructing their entrepreneurial identities and experiencing their entrepreneurship in two national contexts, namely Türkiye and the Netherlands. In order to study context, we use the term opportunity structures and analyse how these entrepreneurs interpret and perceive opportunity structures, and construct their entrepreneurial identities in relation to their interpretations. Relying on the life story narratives of 21 women entrepreneurs, we analyse social, political and institutional opportunity structures and the relationship between these and the processes of entrepreneurial experiences and identity construction. We propose that Turkish women entrepreneurs make, unmake and remake context during these processes. In the Netherlands, these entrepreneurs challenge existing opportunity structures either by providing alternative images of a Turkish migrant woman or questioning culturalist perspectives behind these opportunity structures. In Türkiye, they are compelled to be more hesitant in challenging the opportunity structures. They either have to step down from their enterprises or downgrade their entrepreneurial affiliations to fulfil the requirements of opportunity structures. This study

contributes to the field of entrepreneurship in its contextualisation by providing an extended understanding of the ways in which entrepreneurs do context.

**Plain English Summary** While there is criticism on the lack of contextual analysis of entrepreneurship, there are also concerns about over-contextualisation and disintegration in the field. As a response to the scholar's interest to categorise successful entrepreneurs in creating and enacting their contexts and to understand how and why they became successful compared to others, this study demonstrates the power relations between and across opportunity structures that lead to imbalances between entrepreneurial agency and context. It shows how some entrepreneurs make context, while some others can also unmake and remake context. In this way, it extends our understanding of entrepreneurial diversity, and questions whether categorising entrepreneurs as successful or not is doing justice to the entrepreneurs who face more powerful opportunity structures with possible sanctions imposed on them. Future studies can further this discussion on entrepreneurial diversity by analysing how and for which contexts power dynamics plays out differently in the nexus of entrepreneur and context.

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## 1 Introduction

Entrepreneurship is about variation, and it varies with respect to context (Porfirio, Carrilho and Mónico, 2016; Mitchell et al., 2002; Welter, Gartner, and Wright, 2016). It is impossible to universalise entrepreneurship, but it is valuable to contextualise it (Welter et al., 2016). Contextualising entrepreneurship involves recognising differences and questioning the ‘one-size-fits-all’ understanding of entrepreneurship and of universal entrepreneurial identity (Welter, 2011). Thus, acknowledging context emphasises the uniqueness of the entrepreneurial self and reveals the variety among entrepreneurs and entrepreneurship (Welter et al., 2017).

Contextual awareness in the entrepreneurship field has arguably developed in the last two decades (Gartner and Birley, 2002; Zahra, 2007; Hjorth, Jones, and Gartner, 2008). There are many studies discussing individual, social, spatial and institutional contexts (Letaifa and Goglio-Primard, 2016; Welter and Smallbone, 2011; Gaddefors and Anderson, 2017; Hayton, George, and Zahra, 2002; Brush, De Bruin, and Welter, 2009). Such growing interest raises certain concerns about over-contextualisation and disintegration in the field. These concerns have led to scholarly efforts to understand how and why some entrepreneurs are more successful at creating and enacting contexts through their entrepreneurial activities and to find commonalities among their entrepreneurial activities and identities (McMullen, Ingram and Adams, 2020). Doing context might infer a powerful agency in some contexts, such as women entrepreneurs who defy social expectations through strategic disobedience (Barragan, Eroglu and Essers, 2018). Yet, this powerful agency might not be the case for some other contexts, such as migrant women entrepreneurs trying to cope with contextual restrictions (Essers, Benschop, and Doorewaard, 2010). These examples lead to a more balanced take on agency and context (Baker and Welter, 2020), in which the relationship between entrepreneurs and context is more nuanced and intricate. This means that entrepreneurs’ engagement with context entails an interplay (Ozasir Kacar, 2021). Hence, in response to the call of this special issue, this study explores the

following main research question: ‘How do women entrepreneurs of Turkish origin do context in their entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity construction in the Netherlands and in Türkiye?’

Drawing on the work of Lasalle and McElwee (2016), we use the concept of opportunity structure to develop a perspective on Turkish women entrepreneurs’ engagement with context in their entrepreneurial experiences and identity constructions. This concept is also useful for comparative research on migrant and ethnic minority entrepreneurs across different countries, communities and localities (Lasalle and McElwee, 2016: 261). A comparative analysis of Türkiye and the Netherlands based on opportunity structure provides a better view on how contextual engagement and thus entrepreneurship vary, particularly in terms of entrepreneurial identity (Welter et al., 2016). In this article, opportunity structure is conceptualised as ‘the situational opportunities and constraints in an entrepreneur’s external environment’ and categorised into three types—social, political and institutional—based on the literature review (Koopmans and Statham, 2000; Hooghe, 2005; Nicolini, 2012).

In this analysis, we treated migration and the sense of being a migrant as contextual elements. Turkish women entrepreneurs operating in Türkiye (as the country of origin) and the Netherlands (as the country of residence) became the research subject. In this way, there were two similar groups of entrepreneurs within two different national contexts given that Turkish migrants in the Netherlands tend to maintain their original culture by living in a cultural environment dominated by Turkish norms and practices (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019; Ozasir Kacar, 2021). Migration is not the distinguishing contextual element in this study, because different countries provide different contexts for Turkish women entrepreneurs as no two contexts are alike. Rather, we understand migration as an identifier, influencing the social categories of gender, ethnicity, class and entrepreneurship at their intersections.

The analysis derives from 10 life-story narratives of Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands and 11 life-story narratives of women entrepreneurs in Türkiye. The results indicate that in experiencing entrepreneurship and constructing entrepreneurial identities, women entrepreneurs in Türkiye make context, whereas in the Netherlands,

they also unmake and remake context. In the Netherlands, they challenge existing opportunity structures, whereas in Türkiye, they are subjected to adjusting to the requirements of these opportunity structures. This study contributes to the entrepreneurship field in several ways. First, as suggested by Lasalle and McElwee (2016), it provides a contextual analysis by using opportunity structure as a tool. In this way, it reveals the dynamic relationship between entrepreneurship and context and shows the intricacy of this relationship at the individual level, thereby adding to the understanding of contextual construction of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity. Second, the identification of various contextual engagements of two similar groups of entrepreneurs—namely making, unmaking and remaking context—demonstrates the power imbalance between entrepreneurial agency and context. Thus, this study underscores the power dynamics in the conceptualisation of the ‘nexus of entrepreneur and context’. It extends recent discussions on whether analysing successful entrepreneurs in creating and enacting contexts is an appropriate path in future studies on entrepreneurship and context, and it questions whether framing entrepreneurs as successful or not does justice to the entrepreneurs who face more powerful opportunity structures and are constrained in their enactments. Third, by studying two countries connected with a history of migration, this study examines migration as an additional contextual layer and broadens our understanding of the multiplexity of context.

In the remainder of the article, first, we present a literature review on entrepreneurship and context, along with the theoretical framework on entrepreneurial experiences and identities, opportunity structures and the relationship between the two. Then, we present the research subject in two national contexts. After we provide the details of the study and the analysis performed, we present the findings in two contexts separately in two levels: (1) the interpretations and perceptions of Turkish women entrepreneurs concerning opportunity structures and (2) the relationship between these interpretations and their entrepreneurial identity construction processes and experiences. We conclude the article with the discussions on contextual engagements and contributions to the entrepreneurship field.

## 2 Theoretical framework

### 2.1 Entrepreneurship and context

The academic literature on entrepreneurship acknowledges that entrepreneurial practices, identities and opportunities change with respect to societal, institutional and cultural settings (Welter, 2011; Zahra, Wright, and Abdelgawad, 2014; Essers and Tedmanson, 2014; Villares-Varela and Essers, 2019; Lewis, 2013). Although the literature is limited in terms of contextual influence on entrepreneurial processes (Zahra et al., 2014) and the ‘everydayness of entrepreneurship’ (Welter et al., 2017), there is a growing interest in context among entrepreneurship scholars that draws attention to, for instance, the dynamic relationship between entrepreneurs and community context (McKeever, Jack and Anderson, 2015), the contextual environment of social entrepreneurship (De Bruin and Lewis, 2015), the complex interactions between individual, organisational and societal contexts in the emergence of entrepreneurial action (Spedale and Watson, 2014) and the influence of the spatial context of rural entrepreneurs on the opportunity creation (Korsgaard, Ferguson and Gaddefors, 2015).

To date, among many studies discussing individual, social, spatial and institutional contexts (Letaifa and Goglio-Primard, 2016; Welter and Smallbone, 2011; Gaddefors and Anderson, 2017; Hayton et al., 2002; Brush et al., 2009), contextual analyses in the entrepreneurship field are still criticised as ‘implicitly or explicitly under the assumption to either remove or control for context’ (Baker and Welter, 2018: 27). This is because of a static and linear understanding of context influencing entrepreneurs in their entrepreneurial activities (Larson and Pearson, 2012). As a response to remedy this shortcoming, there is a growing emphasis in the field on constructing and enacting contexts (Zahra, 2007; Zahra & Wright, 2011; Welter et al., 2016, 2017), based on a dynamic relationship between entrepreneurs and context. This means that entrepreneurs use their agency, actively engage with their context and co-create their entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identities.

## 2.2 Opportunity structures, entrepreneurial identities and experiences and the relationship between the two

In this article, we study context through the concept of opportunity structure. We define this term according to Johns' (2006) understanding of the external environment as 'situational opportunities and constraints that affect the occurrence and characteristics of an entrepreneurial behaviour'. The concept of opportunity structure was first coined by Aldrich and Waldinger (1990), but it has recently been studied by Kloosterman and his colleagues mostly through the mixed-embeddedness approach (Kloosterman, 2010; Kloosterman, Rusinovic and Yeboah, 2016; Kloosterman and Rath, 2018). These studies consider opportunity structures as the demand side of the entrepreneurship market, which provides material resources for migrant entrepreneurs such as state policies, market conditions and access to businesses (Kloosterman, Van Der Leun, and Rath, 1999). Group characteristics such as gender, ethnicity and culture are considered the supply side of the market and excluded from the concept of opportunity structure. Thus, opportunity structures are predominantly considered (1) material resources, (2) neutral and the same for everyone and (3) in a linear, one-way relationship with entrepreneurs (Ozasir Kacar, 2021). In our conceptualisation, opportunity structures are not transparent, static, generic and only material (Lasalle and McElwee, 2016) but rather are dynamic and situational. They include market imperfections, information asymmetry, perceptions, biases, norms, practices, policies, regulations and discourses (Lasalle and McElwee, 2016; Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2021).

The literature review on opportunity structures revealed three types of opportunity structures: social, political and institutional (Hooghe, 2005; Koopmans and Statham, 2000; Nicolini, 2012). Social opportunity structure refers to the notion that economic behaviour is embedded in social relations (Granovetter, 1985), and it includes social, cultural and religious norms, practices and resources governing gender, (ethnic) business relations and the societal discourse on Turkish (migrant) women. Political opportunity structure holds that political action does not operate due to strategic wit or courage all the time but rather that an important portion of it is shaped by structural characteristics (Koopmans, 1999). It includes policies and political discourses on

Turkish (migrant) women and (migrant) women entrepreneurship. Institutional opportunity structure refers to the modes of opportunities and constraints presented by organisations at the meso level, which refers to the intermediate set of formal and informal institutions and organisations that mediate between individuals and macro-structural systems (Landolt and Goldring, 2009). It composes the rules and regulations regarding (women and/or ethnic) business development and business relations.

Identity construction is an activity reflexively performed by individuals to be recognised and valued (Marlow and McAdams, 2015). The ways individuals construct their identities are reflected in their perceptions about the world around them and this shapes their experiences. Similarly, their everyday experiences influence the way they construct their identities in a dynamic and iterative way. Experiences and identities reinforce each other. They are processual and contextual so that who is and can be an entrepreneur differs significantly depending on social, political and institutional settings (Lewis, 2013). Entrepreneurs try to fit into the category of the 'entrepreneur', yet the category itself is derived from a context with various intersecting structures (Gill, 2017; Welter, 2011). They perceive and interpret opportunity structures, construct their identities and experience their entrepreneurship in relation to these perceptions and interpretations (Welter, Baker, and Wirsching, 2019; Guerrero, Liñán, and Cáceres-Carrasco, 2020). This theorisation incorporates an interplay, meaning that entrepreneurial identities are relationally constructed with opportunity structures, while the relevance of opportunity structures for entrepreneurs is mediated by their understanding of gender, ethnicity and class (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019: 714). This theorising also acknowledges the diversity of entrepreneurship as entrepreneurs do not interact with opportunity structures in the same way but rather do so according to their own interpretations and perceptions. Thus, the relationship between opportunity structures and entrepreneurial identities and experiences is highly intricate.

## 2.3 The research subject and the two national contexts: Turkish women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands and Türkiye

This study focuses on Turkish women entrepreneurs as the research subject. The literature on

Turkish women entrepreneurs is quite dispersed both in Türkiye and in the European context with respect to migration. Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs have been studied in various national contexts, including Germany (Erel, 2003) and the Netherlands (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019) as well as in specific city contexts, such as London (Struder, 2003) and Amsterdam (Baycan-Levent, Masurel, and Nijkamp, 2003). These studies have included various perspectives such as identity, ethnic economy and ethnic and female roles (Essers et al., 2010; Baycan-Levent et al., 2003). In addition, Essers and Tedmanson (2014) studied Turkish migrant women in the Netherlands with a focus on socio-political aspects from a postcolonial feminist perspective. Similarly, in Türkiye, studies on Turkish women have examined family moral support (Welsh, Memili and Kaciak, 2016); the social capital of women entrepreneurs (Yetim, 2008); obstacles and future prospects of women entrepreneurship (Ince, 2012); human, family and financial capital on decisions to become an entrepreneur (Cetindamar et al., 2012); secular and Islamic female entrepreneurship (Ozkazanc-Pan, 2015); and female entrepreneurial identity (Erogul, 2019). The study of Humbert and Essers (2012) appears to be the only one comparing the effects of two national contexts—the UK and the Netherlands—on Turkish women entrepreneurs, yet it has not considered migration as a contextual element in its comparative analysis.

The following paragraphs outline certain demographics of Turkish women entrepreneurs and background information about the social, political and institutional opportunity structures in these two countries.

Turkish people in the Netherlands generally migrated as guest workers in the 1950s and 1960s, and Turkish women mostly joined after the promulgation of the family reunification law in the 1980s (Essers and Benschop, 2007). Turkish migrant women engaged in entrepreneurial activities due to the need for ethnic goods, informal network possibilities and financing arrangements or lack of labour market opportunities because of discrimination and/or migration-related shortcomings such as lack of necessary education, certificates or language capability (Baycan-Levent et al., 2003). Contrary to the first generation, second-generation Turkish women entrepreneurs have integrated better, have improved language capabilities and higher levels of education (Beckers and

Blumberg, 2013), engage in more diverse sectors such as business services, accounting, consulting or marketing (Baycan, 2013) and perceive themselves as belonging to a higher social class (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019). Turkish migrant women sometimes face restrictive cultural and religious community norms and practices. However, they also benefit from these ethnic resources to grow their businesses and organise their work and family responsibilities by using their ethnic network for childcare, recruitment and business contacts. At the same time, they are exposed to Dutch cultural norms because they are educated in Dutch schools and have close contact with Dutch people as friends, colleagues and neighbours. However, societal discourse still considers these women as belonging to the working class because they mostly come from working-class families and have a Muslim background (Essers and Benschop, 2007). For this reason, these women attribute higher social status to their connection with Türkiye and want to keep that connection tighter (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019). The political opportunity structure includes policies and the political discourse on migrants, women and entrepreneurship both in the Netherlands and Türkiye. In the Netherlands, political discourse is exclusionary as it signifies Turkish migrants as cultural and religious ‘Others’ (Verduijn and Essers, 2013), while in Türkiye it is nationalistic and more inclusive of all Turkish migrants in Europe. Regarding the institutional opportunity structure, Dutch rules and regulations exert an excessive amount of control for financial and tax purposes without any attempt to waive structural barriers for women and ethnic migrants (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2021).

Turkish women entrepreneurs in Türkiye mostly operate in the retail sectors of food and clothing, but they also take part in the service sector in education, consulting, human resources, tourism, insurance, health and cleaning (Nayır, 2008). Tan (2006) summarised these women’s major motivations as productivity, passion for success and knowledge about the market, independence and earning money. They mostly live in cities and have at least a high school diploma (Soysal, 2010). They start their businesses with capital initially obtained from family, friends or personal savings (Cakici, 2003). Socially and culturally, working women are depicted as modern and emancipated in Türkiye, yet, due to traditional



gender roles and patriarchy, women are considered responsible for childcare and the household chores whether they are working or not (Karatas-Ozkan, Inal and Ozbilgin, 2010; Kandiyoti, 2005). Women entrepreneurship is considered to be necessity-driven, low scale and less credible compared to male-owned businesses (Ozar, 2007; Karatas-Ozkan et al., 2010). Turkish women face both neo-liberal and neo-conservative political tendencies and Islamic and secular political discourses (Acar and Altinok, 2013). Neo-liberal politics encourage women entrepreneurship with a focus on income generation and economic development. Neo-conservative tendencies support women entrepreneurship with the intention of letting women earn some money while also being responsible for childcare and the household. These approaches extend to the institutional funding possibilities provided specifically to women entrepreneurs with the assumption that women need help, such as tax incentives, lower commission rates and 'Women in business' bank credits (Arat, 2010).

Reviewing these opportunity structures regarding Turkish women entrepreneurs(hip) in the two countries, it is obvious that no two contexts are alike. Both countries contain dynamic and complex social, political and institutional environments regarding the entrepreneurship of Turkish women. The environment has become even more complex in the Netherlands especially after the political friction between the two countries following the 'Rotterdam Events'<sup>1</sup> in 2017 (Hageman, 2017). In addition to the discussions about the failure of multiculturalism in the Netherlands (Verduijn and Essers, 2013), these recent developments politicised Turkish people and polarised Dutch society (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019: 714). Similarly, Turkish society has historically been polarised between secularist and Islamist political and social elements, and recent nationalistic and neo-conservative political tendencies (Acar and Altinok, 2013) have rendered Türkiye even more polarised and fragmented along secular, religious and ethnic lines (Keyman, 2014).

<sup>1</sup> In 2017, due to political elections in the Netherlands, the Dutch government refused to allow Türkiye's Minister of Foreign Affairs to organise speeches in the Netherlands about the Turkish constitutional referendum and escorted Türkiye's Minister of Family Affairs out of the country, which led to street demonstrations in Rotterdam.

### 3 Research method

This study follows an interpretive research methodology (Gephart, 2004). In line with the historical dimension of opportunity structures and the processual nature of identities and experiences, life stories were used as the data collection method (Ghorashi, 2008). We used purposeful sampling method to capture information-rich cases (Patton, 2002). Ten life-story narratives from the Netherlands and 11 from Türkiye were collected through the social network of the researcher and contact with trade unions, chambers of commerce and (ethnic or women) business associations. These organisations provided access to women entrepreneurs operating in various sectors, and access through the researcher's social network helped to build trust among interviewees and the interviewer, particularly since Turkish people are known to be reluctant to reveal their life stories to foreigners via recorded interviews due to recent incidents about the misuse of several records. These 21 life stories were considered a sufficient representation of a certain level of variety and content (Malterud, Siersma and Guassora, 2016). Appendix Table 1 presents a summary of the women entrepreneurs interviewed in terms of age group (27 to 72 years), marital status (married, divorced, widowed or single), ethnicity (Kurdish, Armenian, Turkish or Assyrian), nationality (Turkish, German, Dutch), religion (Muslim, Atheist or Christian), religious sect (Alevi or Sunni) and professional sector (science and technology, manufacturing, retail or service). Women entrepreneurs in Türkiye do not have a migrant background, although they have various ethnicities and nationalities. In contrast, women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands have a migrant background, even though some of them were born and raised in the Netherlands, because the Dutch government defines a migrant background based on the birthplace of one's parents. Hence, the distinction between autochtoon (native Dutch) and allochtoon (people considered to have a migrant background with at least one parent born in a foreign country) defines the migrant status of the women born in the Netherlands (De Vries et al., 2014). All the interviews except one were conducted in Turkish (except for one interview in English with an Assyrian woman in the Netherlands who was less proficient in Turkish) and were digitally recorded and literally transcribed.

The qualitative data was collected in two parts. In the first part, the entrepreneurs were asked to tell their life stories. In the second part, they were asked to answer open-ended questions for elaboration and clarification regarding the political atmosphere; social, cultural and religious norms and practices; and the institutional rules and regulations (in cases where the interviewees had not already brought up these issues). Almost all of the women in the Netherlands talked about the political, social and institutional opportunity structures in their narratives, whereas the interviewees in Türkiye needed to be prompted to foster discussions in this regard. This realisation already provided information that helped further interpretation of the transcripts comparatively.

Data analysis began during data collection according to the guidelines of naturalistic inquiry and constant comparison techniques (Corley and Gioia, 2004). This helped to form the basis of rigorous collection and analysis of qualitative data through a focus on content as well as eliminated time inefficiency. The data analysis involved two levels. The first was deductive coding (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006), based on three types of opportunity structures—political, social and institutional—derived from the literature review (Hooghe, 2005; Koopmans and Statham, 2000; Nicolini, 2012). We defined these codes before data collection. Thus, during the data collection, these opportunity structures were already in mind. In the data analysis, we deduced the transcripts with respect to these opportunity structures. We also applied a discursive approach (Phillips and Hardy, 2002) to analyse both what was said and how it was said. We examined how women entrepreneurs in each context perceived and interpreted the opportunity structures. This level of analysis helped to highlight the differences in their perceptions, which is important to understand entrepreneurial identity construction and experiences, because entrepreneurs construct their identities in relation to the opportunity structures in the way they perceive them. Not all the opportunity structures mean the same for Turkish women entrepreneurs in each context, and each entrepreneur evaluates opportunity structures differently according to her own understanding of gender, ethnicity, class and entrepreneurship.

Second, we used selective coding (Strauss and Corbin, 1990) to question the main analytical idea regarding the relationship between opportunity

structures and entrepreneurial identities in each context, and to analyse the variation between the contexts. Through selective coding, various processes of individual entrepreneurial identity constructions were unified to yield a core category as the central theme of the study. We found that women entrepreneurs in Türkiye were mainly in a defensive position in response to societal discourse about working women, traditional patriarchal norms and cultural gender roles, contradictory political discourse between Islamists and secularists and institutional rules and regulations. Therefore, we introduced the theme ‘making context’ for the ways in which these women engage with the opportunity structures when constructing their entrepreneurial identities and experiencing their entrepreneurship. Whereas, Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands questioned cultural norms and practices and challenged social and political discourses. They were trying to rediscover their capabilities and reinterpret the social, political and institutional opportunity structures in which they live and engage in entrepreneurship. We defined their interaction with these opportunity structures as ‘unmaking and remaking context’.

Ultimately, we compared the interaction between opportunity structures and entrepreneurial identities and experiences on two levels: (1) entrepreneurial interpretation of opportunity structures and (2) entrepreneurial identities and experiences in relation to the opportunity structures. We selected stories of two women entrepreneurs from each country based on their power in representing various contextual engagements through these women’s perceptions and interpretations of opportunity structures and entrepreneurial identity constructions. This selection presented a sufficient depth in the analysis. Various other stories in the study also express how Turkish women entrepreneurs make context in Türkiye and unmake and remake context in the Netherlands. We presented narrative excerpts from the four selected stories to support the central arguments.

#### **4 Comparative understanding of the relationship between opportunity structures and entrepreneurial identities and experiences**

Empirical findings on doing context in entrepreneurial experiences and identity construction are drawn

from the life-story excerpts of four women entrepreneurs. These women interacted with the three types of opportunity structures simultaneously, but, for simplicity and clarity, we focus on one type of opportunity structure in each narrative excerpt.

This paragraph provides a basic overview of each woman whose story is detailed further in the following sub-sections. Ilkay (47) is Assyrian-Turkish and came to the Netherlands as a political refugee with her family from the Eastern part of Türkiye when she was 4 years old. They were given permission to stay due to the heated Kurdish dispute in the region. She owns three children's theatres, lives in Amsterdam and has two children, a son with her ex-husband and a daughter with her current Dutch partner. Canay (53) has a Kurdish-Alevi background and came to the Netherlands at 15 years old as the daughter of a guest worker to pursue her education. She owns several companies in consulting, event management and education, mainly on intercultural communication, diversity and integration. She is married to a Turkish man, lives in Rotterdam and has two adult children. Aliye (49) owns a company providing audio-visual services in four cities in Türkiye. She is married to a Turkish man and has two daughters. Sevgi (48) has a manufacturing company in Istanbul. She also exports to European countries. She is married to a Turkish man, lives in Istanbul and has a daughter.

The following sub-sections present narrative excerpts that explore (1) women entrepreneurs' interpretations of opportunity structures in each context and (2) the relationship between opportunity structures and their entrepreneurial identities and experiences.

## 4.1 The Netherlands

### 4.1.1 *Entrepreneurial interpretation of opportunity structures*

This section draws on the narrative excerpts of Ilkay and Canay. Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs acknowledge societal and political discourses and they either conform to them, as per Ilkay's emphasis on cultural adaptation, or they confront with them, as reflected in Canay's emphasis on multiculturalism.

Ilkay has been highly influenced by social, cultural and religious norms and practices throughout her life, especially in her upbringing. She stresses the

restrictions of ethnic community culture and Protestantism and acknowledges societal discourse towards Turkish migrants. As a response to these elements, she emphasises the need for cultural adaptation in the public sphere and cultural maintenance in the private sphere:

I never understand why girls cannot do many things but boys can. Mostly it is religion that constrains women in life. My parents are Protestant; they live by the Bible. They always imposed what their religion or community told them. I always questioned why things were different in my house than in my Dutch friends' houses. It was actually because of this desire for freedom that I became an entrepreneur. I could never stand to have a boss. (...) People ask me if I am Dutch or Assyrian or Turkish. Well, I really don't care. I really don't put a label on people, nor on myself. I do not look Assyrian, also because of my appearance, most importantly not Turkish, either. So, I never encountered that strange look on people's face; I did not face any discrimination. But I knew that you needed to adapt to the society you live in. If you do business in the Netherlands, you cannot function here with a burqa, for instance. I understand it is good to have values, I respect that, but when someone has a headscarf, she immediately gets a stamp. Why do you do that? Your company will be influenced as well. You should instead wear it at home.

Ilkay wants more freedom, especially because she has seen different examples in the Dutch context. She questions what is given to her and what is taken away. This also links to her motivation to be her own boss. She interprets religious norms and ethnic community practices as constraints imposed on women. For her, having an ethnic identity as Assyrian or Turkish is unnecessary or even discriminatory as she equates it to labelling people. Thus, she does not ethnically identify herself or anyone around her. However, she is grateful that she does not look Assyrian and especially not Turkish, because she is aware of the societal discourse on Turkish migrant women, and she does not want to be labelled as such and excluded. Therefore, she has a preference for being identified as Dutch rather than as Assyrian and/or Turkish, because—very pragmatically—she interprets both cultures



(Assyrian and Turkish) as restrictive through cultural and religious norms and people belonging to these ethnicities/cultures as socially discriminated against in the Netherlands. Interestingly, Assyrian culture has norms and practices from Christianity, while Turkish culture has Islamic norms and practices, yet Ilkay considers them similarly restrictive regardless of the differences in religions. She expresses her respect for people with religious values, but she limits these to the private space, although in religious terms, wearing a headscarf or burqa cannot be limited to the private sphere.

On the contrary, Canay favours multiculturalism. She tries to view social problems from different angles and to create a solution through her entrepreneurship. She is mostly influenced by the political opportunity structure. She evaluates Türkiye's politics as being equally influential on migrants as Dutch politics:

I have to follow the news on Türkiye's politics because of my work. It is related to integration policies, migrant and refugee politics, and societal issues. Politics in Türkiye influences us a lot. After the Rotterdam events, Dutch people started to worry about Turkish people here. They asked 'Why do they only take Türkiye's flags to street protests? They are living here!' But this is also related to Dutch politics. They segregated these people. Turkish migrants lived the little Türkiye here. These people received money from the social welfare system and they did not have a good reputation because of that, unfortunately. Then the politics changed, and these people could not adapt. My job starts in relation to that. After these many years, I know Dutch society, Turkish community, and their problems. There are prejudices from both sides. But I am always in favour of multiculturalism. This is what I do for a living: to organise projects on multiculturalism and diversity. I work with municipalities, non-government organisations, schools, and private companies.

Canay engages in social entrepreneurship. She organises social events, networking programmes and trainings for diversity, integration and emancipation purposes. Her work requires following Dutch politics as well as politics in Türkiye. She is very concerned about recent politics in Türkiye, which she thinks

strongly influences the position of Turkish people in Europe. In particular, she refers to the 'Rotterdam Events', which raised questions about the integration of Turkish people in the Netherlands, showed the influence of Türkiye's politics and changed the perceptions of Dutch society about Turkish people. Canay believes that Dutch people became frightened after witnessing the partisanship of Turkish migrants. She traces this back to the early years of migration and claims that Turkish migrants were segregated both by the Dutch government due to temporary housing planning and migrants' own motivation to stay within Turkish community and eventually return to Türkiye. Although she acknowledges the misuse of resources by migrants, she perceives social welfare policies as problematic because the opportunities provided initially to migrants later became restricted, and migrants struggled to adapt. Based on her perceptions of historical events and everyday experiences of prejudices and problems, Canay contends that multiculturalist policies can bring understanding and harmony to society as a whole.

#### *4.1.2 Entrepreneurial identity and experience in relation to opportunity structures*

In relation to their perceptions of opportunity structures, migrant women entrepreneurs try to unmake context by questioning and challenging opportunity structures and remake context by representing an alternative image. They do this either like Ilkay by distinguishing themselves from the stereotypical image of Turkish migrant women and presenting a different entrepreneurial image, or they identify themselves with the Turkish community but question existing opportunity structures in the way that Canay tries to achieve through her entrepreneurship.

As a response to social, cultural and religious constraints, Ilkay ran away from home when she was 17. This was an important moment in her life that she builds her life story around it. She provides an alternative image of a migrant woman entrepreneur, and by doing so, challenges the existing image portrayed in societal and political discourses.

I could not stand these constraints anymore and I actually ran away. I spent six years in New York, but I did not know what I could do when I returned to the Netherlands. I did not

have a diploma because I left high school. I did not receive any official education in New York either. But I guess I developed the necessary skills. I learnt acting and how to direct plays. Not being allowed to do many things made me have a very big imagination. Now I am using this in my theatres, my scripts. People are amazed by these – they kind of disappear for half an hour in that magical world. I have done everything my parents forbid according to their religion and community customs and norms. I am rebellious in some way. Now I do not have any connection with Turkish or Assyrian communities, only to my close family. I do not even speak those languages, and all my friends are Dutch. Because I know that if you want to do business here or find a job, you need to adapt, even if you do not want to. If you dress differently, or have an accent, then people approach you differently. I think that is something I have never encountered because I have a different background.

Although part of her motivation to become an entrepreneur was due to the lack of diplomas necessary for the labour market, Ilkay connects her entrepreneurial motivation with the social opportunity structure effective, especially in her upbringing. She perceives that her strong will to become free from cultural and religious restrictions led her to entrepreneurial endeavours. Similarly, she constructs her entrepreneurial identity strongly in relation to societal discourse by adapting to the Dutch culture and embracing Dutch identity as she distances herself from Assyrian and Turkish communities and languages and adapts to being Dutch through her clothing and language. She also relates her entrepreneurial success to the restrictions she faced because she perceives that the social opportunity structure constrained her physically and emotionally but developed her imagination. Ilkay describes herself as rebellious because she has sought experiences contrary to her original cultural, religious and ethnic community norms and practices. In this way, she differentiates herself from the members of both the Turkish and Assyrian ethnic communities, questions the stereotypical characteristics of a Turkish migrant woman, and provides an alternative image of a woman entrepreneur without any

ethnic minority reference but with emphasis on being Dutch.

Canay is also aware of the stereotypical image of a Turkish migrant woman. However, she does not differentiate herself from the Turkish community. Rather, she feels part of this community. Because of this, she knows the problems Turkish people face and tries to solve them together with municipalities, NGOs and policy makers. In this way, she tries to change perceptions and challenge opportunity structures.

I have lots of hats – Kurdish, Turkish, Dutch, and Alevi. Therefore, I always found multiculturalism very beneficial for my work and personal life. I have lived here most of my life; this is my country. Thus, my priority is the Netherlands, but I have an emotional connection with Türkiye. I had many difficulties when I first got here. I was discriminated against both by the Dutch community due to my Turkish background and by the Turkish community for my Kurdish-Alevi background. This is the reason why I started doing business in intercultural issues. But now, I know different languages; my friends are from various cultures. I have never thought that I would be seen in a position supporting Erdogan [the Turkish President], but I have to support Turkish people and Türkiye, although I do not agree with most of Türkiye's politics now. Otherwise, Turkish people lose their right to speak here. I want certain standards for all people, not only for Turkish people. This is an idealist entrepreneurship. But Dutch people are afraid of him [Erdogan], they see his influence on people here, and they do not know what he is going to do next. People here know me well and being a woman is an advantage. They do not fear women that much. In my field, men are not my competitors.

Canay moved to the Netherlands when she was 15, yet she managed to learn Dutch and received an education in the Netherlands. She acknowledges her own multicultural background and transfers her personal experiences, especially the discrimination she faced because of her ethnic minority background, to society through her entrepreneurship. She questions the political opportunity structure in the Netherlands that treats migrants as 'Others' and tries to create an

atmosphere where migrants receive sympathy and support from local and national government institutions. She works with these institutions and produces projects for the social and financial integration of migrants. She realises that both Turkish and Dutch people consider her a follower of President Erdogan, although she explicitly denies her support of him. However, she does not have any secondary thoughts about what she is doing, because she believes that she is fighting for a good cause, namely to prevent ethnic discrimination in Dutch society and to create equal opportunities for people from ethnic minorities. Canay has been working in this area for a long time and believes that people know her and her intentions, so she does not hesitate to follow her passion. With respect to gender, she intersectionally constructs her being a woman entrepreneur positively as it helps her to communicate more easily with local authorities than a male entrepreneur could do. She therefore constructs her multiple identities intersectionally as a Turkish, Kurdish, Dutch, and Alevi woman entrepreneur to justify her multiculturalist approach to her personal and business life.

## 4.2 Türkiye

### 4.2.1 *Entrepreneurial interpretation of opportunity structures*

Women entrepreneurs in Türkiye perceive opportunity structures as more osmotic and complex due to the dynamic nature of Turkish society. According to one's social position, political views or religious affiliation, opportunity structures in Türkiye tend to change in a shorter period of time compared to the Netherlands, leading to a more complex and dynamic structural environment (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2021). Narrative excerpts from Aliye and Sevgi demonstrate how they try to make context.

Aliye is mostly challenged with the social opportunity structure regarding working mothers who also remain responsible for childcare. She struggles to balance her work and life, especially after having children.

My mum always complained that I was away from home because of work while my daughters were with the babysitters. She always made my daughters call me during the day and ask me if

they would grow up without me. I was always questioned what I would do with that much money. It is not about money. I do not even have time to spend that money! After a while, my husband agreed with my mum that the kids needed me, and he accused me of being stubborn by believing the company would fail without me. I thought that I provided the necessary attention to my kids. I had no social life, and I still don't, not even with my husband. My time off from work is devoted to them. I sent them to nursery when they were 18 months old, yes, but they received an education in English by native speakers. If they stayed at home, they would have only watched cartoons. I think I am like a friend to my kids, but I don't know what they think.

Aliye runs her company in audio-visual services with her husband for almost 15 years. She feels that she provided enough care for her children, including through their private schools and English education. However, the social opportunity structure is so strong that she devotes all her free time to her children, but she still feels remorse for working so much. She tries to justify her actions by thinking about what would have happened if she had not put her kids into daycare. This remorse also deeply influences her relationships. She is unsure about her relationship with her daughters as a mother, with her husband as a wife because she does not spend time with him, and with her work as an entrepreneur because she is accused of exerting so much control on the company and taking all the credit for success for herself. She feels resentment that she has been seen as a mother who values money more than her children, and she explicitly expresses that she does not even have time to spend the money she earns. Aliye's narrative also shows that the social opportunity structure, with its patriarchal norms and traditional gender roles, was first imposed by her mother and then by her husband, revealing the misconception that patriarchal pressures are mainly enforced onto women by men (Kandiyoti, 2005).

Sevgi is puzzled by the political opportunity structure in Türkiye with current government policies and political discourse. She values nationalistic policies on the one hand, which resonates with her own political ideology as a former parliamentary candidate in the centre-right wing, but on the other hand, she

criticises political favouritism or grudge against her entrepreneurship. She interprets this contradiction as follows:

I have a lot of experience in life, and I want to share this. Politics is a tool for this, a way to express your ideas, feelings and objectives. There are also other tools, like NGO's. I had political experience as well. It came after I succeeded in my business. I worked with many respectable and experienced politicians. Besides, there are not many women in politics. Therefore, as a woman I want to do politics. It is not like things are going worse now and I will change that, but more like contributing to what has been done so far, because there are many good things happening now. I am in the spotlight because of my business, and when you are successful and doing nice work, you become automatically involved in politics, whether you are aware of it or not. But politics should not be involved in business. It should not matter from which political party you are; you should be able to provide your services or products as your business requires. Otherwise, I do not find it ethical. People might have different political views, but the criteria should be quality. You should be able to enter any institution or organization.

Sevgi runs her company with her husband and exports to various European countries. She has political experience and wants to go into politics again. There are offers from political parties, but she is hesitant to accept as she is concerned about how they might influence her business. Although she was previously involved in politics because of her successful business, she now wants to do politics without her company being involved. She was so concerned and suspicious about dirty politics that even after the interview, she explicitly asked the interviewer about which political party had sent her to dig up dirt on her business, such as tax issues or illegal operations, to defame her company and her name as a political candidate. This shows how concerned she was about any possible damage her political affiliation might cause to her business. This also influenced the way she articulated her narrative. During the interview, she provided public declamation rather than telling her life story or experiences. She provided examples of

how Turkish women were restricted from following their dreams and relegated to the position of housewives. She gave tips that a woman should follow in life and in the entrepreneurship, starting from finding an understanding partner and questioning one's own desires and capabilities. She explained best practices for politics and entrepreneurship with ethical standards. For her, the interview was seen as a platform to reach her followers and respond to her opponents.

#### 4.2.2 *Entrepreneurial identity and experience in relation to opportunity structures*

Women entrepreneurs in Türkiye make context in a more defensive way to respond to opportunity structures. Aliye stepped down from her company to enable her to be a 'real' mother, and Sevgi downgraded her entrepreneurship to be able to engage in politics and entrepreneurship simultaneously.

Regarding being constrained by the social opportunity structure, Aliye explained:

I made a decision to retract my responsibilities from the company. I left the company with a gross revenue of 60 million. My husband found a man as the general coordinator, who claimed to apply an ERP system [Enterprise Resource Planning], but he disappeared when the company went bankrupt after three years. It took three years to understand what he did. What I did during these years when I was at home with the kids: I did not know how to cook before, and then I became a real cook. I learned many recipes. I was just keeping myself busy, somehow trying to show that I can be 'just' a mum. After three years, I had to go back and save the company. I managed to revive it, but we are not that big anymore. I do not want that now.

Aliye could not resist the arguments and criticisms of her mother and husband, and she quit to prove herself as a good mother, or at least as being capable of becoming one by staying at home with her daughters and doing household chores such as cooking. However, she accepts that she was only trying to keep herself busy, and in the end, she does not know whether this has worked for her children. She does feel that her absence did not work for the company. Aliye wants to construct herself as a mother, wife, woman and an entrepreneur simultaneously, but, because of

the social opportunity structure, she was constrained to dedicate herself to her identities as a mother, woman and wife at the expense of her entrepreneurial identity. Societal discourse forced her to struggle with the idea that being an entrepreneur is incompatible with being a good mother reinforcing the main, masculine-dominated entrepreneurship discourse and traditional gender roles.

With regard to Sevgi, her conflicting interpretations of the political opportunity structure led her to downgrade her entrepreneurial success:

I provide my services regardless of the political parties in power. I have not encountered any discrimination because of my political views so far. My company is not in a position to harm anybody or any firm here. Instead, I am helping every institution, every organisation to which I sell my products. My competitors are companies abroad. I have never put my work together with politics, and I am not willing to do that! I always tried to have that balance. Sometimes my name is heard even before my company's name, that's true, but I do not do this on purpose. People trust me because I am a perfectionist. My customers know how I do business. But I have never put my company's name into politics, never! In the end, we are a medium-sized company, not a holding! So, this does not have that much impact on my personal or political life. If people combine my company with me or with my political views, it would not be ethical and it will only harm Türkiye because then foreigners will enter the market, Chinese products will be on the market. Who can possibly want that!

Sevgi wants to be involved in politics. She knows that her company provides her with the legitimacy and credibility to be nominated as a political candidate. However, due to the current political environment and the polarised and fragmented nature of Turkish society (Keyman, 2014), she questions whether her political affiliation might negatively affect her business. To avoid this, she emphasises that her competitors are foreign companies operating outside Türkiye. She makes sure that no company within the country, which might have political allies, needs to hold political grudges against her. For the same reason, she underrates the image and the impact

of her company by stating that it is a 'medium-sized company, not a holding'. She is making context by emphasising that she does not run a holding company because the Turkish interviewer knew that previously some holding companies in Türkiye had gotten into trouble due to political animosity. She stresses that her business does not have much voice financially or in the media, as holding companies do. She also defends the necessity of her company's survival by a nationalistic reasoning that foreigners would occupy the market with low-quality products. She is highly politicised and expresses this explicitly, but she tries to construct an entrepreneurial identity distanced from politics. She has a constrained choice between her business and political affiliation, and thus, her entrepreneurial identity is restricted by the political opportunity structure in Türkiye.

## 5 Discussion

The study of identity construction processes and everyday experiences of Turkish women entrepreneurs presents various contextual engagements from a comparative perspective of Türkiye and the Netherlands. Providing a unified picture of a context is challenging because of the uniqueness of individual entrepreneurial identities. However, we realise that from a migrant point of view, Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs in this study experience a more structured environment, because of the strong migration discourse in the Netherlands. They recognise existing discourses and the stereotypical image of a Turkish migrant woman clearly, but neither of them identifies with this image. They unmake context by dislocating themselves from the social discourse and remake context via new constructions. They either distinguish themselves from the Turkish community and offer an alternative image of a Turkish migrant woman entrepreneur, or they try to question the culturalist assumptions of these discourses from a multiculturalist perspective while considering themselves as a member of the ethnic community. In both ways, they challenge existing opportunity structures and construct their entrepreneurial identities to discover opportunities and their position in Dutch society. For instance, Ilkay discussed the physical embodiment with respect to ethnic look with darker hair, eyes and skin as well as clothing when doing entrepreneurship

as a migrant woman entrepreneur in the Netherlands. She emphasised the self-reflective project (Marlow and McAdam, 2015) by stating the necessity of presenting the self in ‘proper’ clothing to demonstrate contextual compatibility.

In Türkiye, women entrepreneurs perceive a more osmotic structural environment. They face comparatively less clear opportunity structures, and they adhere to their political or religious affiliations or social identities as mothers, wives or ethnic minorities. They construct their gender, ethnicity and class mostly at the expense of their entrepreneurship. They seem to either give up being an entrepreneur or downgrade their entrepreneurship. They could not question what these opportunity structures entail regarding their intersectional identities. For instance, Aliye had to retract all her responsibilities from her company to fulfil the expectations for being a ‘good mum’, and Sevgi had to downplay her entrepreneurial success to avoid becoming a political target. These women have to act in a certain way; they cannot experience their entrepreneurship intersectionally with politics or motherhood. This is because entrepreneurship is gendered as the context itself is gendered by gendered institutions (Welter, Brush and de Bruin, 2014) such as the family and politics. These institutions limit women into specific industries, business sizes and identities because entrepreneurship is embedded within institutional biases that produce and reproduce bounded constraints on entrepreneurial identities interrelated to other social identities, such as being a mum and having a political identity (Ahl and Marlow, 2012). In a gendered context like Türkiye, Turkish women entrepreneurs feel less protection if they break rules and defy norms.

In comparing the relationship between entrepreneurial identities and opportunity structures between Türkiye and the Netherlands, it emerges that Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs try to challenge existing structures and discover new opportunities and positions, whereas women entrepreneurs from Türkiye have restricted choices in their engagements with politics, society, culture, gender, ethnicity and/or religion. They have to construct their entrepreneurial identities in an imposed way. This is interesting as these women entrepreneurs in Türkiye do not face the restrictions created by being a migrant.

Possible reasons for a more restrictive contextual engagement in Türkiye may include that, first, women entrepreneurs in Türkiye anticipate possible sanctions that might be imposed on them especially in relation to religious and political affiliations due to recent political tensions<sup>2</sup> and the historical polarisation and fragmentation of society along secular, religious and ethnic lines (Keyman, 2014). They are highly politicised, but they deliberately distance themselves from political discussions and socialise in closed circles (Ozasir Kacar et al., 2023). Second, Turkish women entrepreneurs in the Netherlands draw distinctions between Dutch culture, Turkish culture in Türkiye and the Turkish ethnic community culture in the Netherlands. They can consider differences between institutional rules, regulations and resources and social, cultural and religious norms and practices. They are also aware of the political discourse on migrants in the Netherlands and ongoing political discussions in Türkiye. They can compare themselves with the local Dutch people as well as Turkish people in Türkiye, and they can realise what is provided to them and what is taken away. Third, opportunity structures in the Netherlands might be more influential as they are perceived more clearly due to strong migration discourse. However, this applies more to first-generation Turkish migrants. In the current study, Turkish women entrepreneurs mostly belong to the second generation (with two exceptions from generation 1.5), who are educated, know the local language and the culture and are thus socially and financially integrated better than the first-generation migrants (Beckers and Blumberg, 2013). Therefore, they are aware of the opportunity structures and their social positions, do not identify with stereotypical images and try to challenge and change these opportunity structures (Ozasir Kacar and Essers, 2019).

It is the merit of comparison that revealed the differences in how opportunity structures are recognised and interpreted within different countries and even

<sup>2</sup> The military coup attempt in 2016, which was orchestrated by the Gulen Movement—a transnational organisation inspired by the religious teachings of Fethullah Gulen, active in education and interfaith dialogue, and recently classified as a terrorist organisation by the Turkish government.



between generations. The comparative analysis of the interaction between opportunity structures and entrepreneurial identities and experiences made it clear to examine how these women make, unmake and remake context.

## 6 Conclusion

The contribution of this study to the field of entrepreneurship is three-fold.

First, this study analyses the interaction between entrepreneurs and context through the concept of opportunity structure by applying the conceptualisation of Lasalle and McElwee (2016). The in-depth analysis that demonstrates entrepreneurs' perceptions and interpretations of opportunity structures and their entrepreneurial identity constructions and experiences based on these perceptions reveals the level of engagement with context. It shows how entrepreneurs use their agency and do context through the processes of making, unmaking and remaking of context. In this way, it reveals the dynamic relationship between entrepreneurship and context and shows the intricacy of this relationship at the individual level. The uniqueness of each contextual engagement extends our understanding of entrepreneurial diversity, thereby adding to the understanding of contextual construction of entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial identity.

Second, entrepreneurs' various types of engagement with context—making, unmaking and remaking—demonstrate the power relations between and across opportunity structures that lead to imbalances between entrepreneurial agency and context. Thus, this study questions recent scholarly interest (McMullen et al., 2020) in searching for common best behaviours of successful entrepreneurs in managing context, and it underscores the injustice that is to be made to entrepreneurs who face powerful opportunity structures with possible sanctions imposed on them. This study emphasises the importance of power dynamics in the conceptualisation of the 'nexus of entrepreneur and

context' and thereby contributes to recent discussions on entrepreneurship and context (Welter et al., 2019).

Third, the comparative analysis of two similar groups of entrepreneurs operating in two countries connected by a history of migration has provided a multi-layered understanding of the contextual construction of entrepreneurship, because migration and being a migrant play a significant role in Turkish migrant women entrepreneurs' evaluation of opportunity structures and constructing their entrepreneurial identities accordingly, as compared to Turkish women entrepreneurs in Türkiye. They have a more clear-sighted view of opportunity structures in the Netherlands due to the role of migration both as a sense of being a migrant and the strong migration discourse in the Netherlands. They have a selective perception of migration and they evaluate opportunity structures and construct their identities accordingly. Thus, this study highlights migration as an additional contextual layer and broadens understanding of the multiplexity of context. In this way, such an in-depth analysis raises scholarly awareness of how complex it can be to study the context in relation to individual entrepreneurs.

This study is limited to the two countries and a specific research subject selected. Further studies might empirically analyse various other contexts for different groups of entrepreneurs. Contextual engagements of entrepreneurs from different migrant groups can also be analysed and compared to add an extra contextual element to the analysis to study migration from different effects such as religious background or historical proximity with colonialism. Moreover, future studies can address questions such as how the power relationship between agency and context shifts and which contexts require further consideration to gain extended knowledge on the contextualisation of entrepreneurship.

### Declarations

**Conflict of interest** The author declares no competing interests.

**Table 1** Demographics of the interviewees

#	Name	Ethnicity/nationality	Religious affiliation	Age	City/country	Operation (years)	Field of operation	Marital status	Age at migration	Reason for migration
1	Neva	Turkish	Sunni	34	Gaziantep/TR	8	Boutique Patisserie	Married with two children	-	-
2	Demet	Turkish	Sunni	36	Gaziantep/TR	6	Jewellery store	Married with three children	-	-
3	Saadet	Turkish-German	Sunni	58	Kayseri/TR	21	Furniture production	Married with three grown-up children	-	-
4	Vildan	Turkish	Sunni	56	Kayseri/TR	19	Traditional Food/restaurant chain	Married with two grown-up children, seven grandchildren	-	-
5	Melda	Turkish	Sunni	41	Yalova/TR	9	Mum-children website	Married with two children	-	-
6	Emel	Turkish	Atheist	27	Kocaeli/TR	3	High-tech biologic worm production	Single, no child	-	-
7	Ruya	Turkish-Kurdish	Not disclosed	52	Istanbul/TR	20	Leather manufacturing	Married with two children	-	-
8	Kadriye	Turkish	Sunni	72	Istanbul/TR	32	Chemicals and detergent production	Widow, two grown-up children, three grandchildren	-	-
9	Sevgi	Turkish	Sunni	48	Istanbul/TR	20	Test-machinery production	Married with a child	-	-
10	Aliye	Turkish	Sunni	49	Istanbul/TR	13	Audi-visual implementation	Married with two children	-	-
11	Karine	Turkish-Armenian	Christian	29	Istanbul/TR	3	Custom-made fashion boutique	Married, no child	-	-
12	Sonay	Turkish - Dutch	Sunni	43	Amsterdam/NL	8	Cultural Social Formation Consultancy	Divorced, two grown-up children, remarried to a Dutch man	19	Marriage
13	Gulay	Turkish-Dutch	Sunni	38	Amsterdam/NL	8	Elderly, disabled, foster care and maternity care services	Married with two children	Born in NL	Father as a guest worker
14	Nuray	Turkish-Dutch	Sunni	45	The Hague/NL	9	Business doctor, care services for coaching and counselling	Married with a child	6	Father as a guest worker

**Table 1** (continued)

#	Name	Ethnicity/nationality	Religious affiliation	Age	City/country	Operation (years)	Field of operation	Marital status	Age at migration	Reason for migration
15	Feray	Turkish-Dutch	Sunni	46	The Hague/NL	15	Legal counselling	Single, no child	4	Father as a guest worker
16	Nilay	Turkish-Dutch	Sunni	46	Amsterdam/NL	15	Coaching, and training in personal development	Divorced, one grown-up child	6	Father as a guest worker
17	Serenay	Turkish-Dutch	Sunni	47	Rotterdam/NL	14	Journalism, PR, media relations	Divorced, one grown-up child	6	Father as a Turkish teacher sent by Turkish government
18	Asilay	Turkish-Dutch	Sunni	33	Utrecht/NL	12	Nursery school, tourism and accountancy services	Married with five children	Born in NL	Father as a guest worker
19	Miray	Turkish - Dutch	Sunni	34	Rotterdam/NL	9	Interior design	Married, no child	Born in NL	Father as a guest worker
20	Canay	Turkish-Kurdish-Dutch	Alevi	53	Rotterdam/NL	17	Intercultural communication, and integration events	Married with two grown-up children	15	Father as a guest worker
21	Ilkay	Turkish-Assyrian-Dutch	Atheist	47	Amsterdam/NL	9	Children's theatre and script writing	Divorced with a child, in a relation with a Dutch man with one child	4	Father as a refugee

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