The first element to keep in mind concerning Turkish Islam in Germany is its transnational dimension. Being located ‘between’ at least two national contexts, namely home- and host-countries, Islamic groups – mainly organized into associations – and individuals develop original and particular social practices and discourses which deal with multiple national settings. This relevance of transnationalism is directly linked to the specific national background of Turkish Muslims. The transplantation of political religious tendencies and Turkish-Islamic territories from the 1960s onwards mainly helped to increase the potential of these groups because Germany offered opportunities, with terms of authority, legitimacy and independence – which Turkey, a Republic that, having interpreted laïcité as state control, did not and still does not provide. The transnationalization of the socio-space produced by Islamic-Turkish actors in Germany grows also on the basis of a long distance nationalism referring to the extension of the ‘traditional’ audience among migrants through the media, maintained by the presence of political personalities and debates in the daily life of Turks living in Germany. The situation of Turkish migrants in Germany comprises then a permanent interplay of social positions neither systematically, nor clearly attached to stable forms of social capital in both countries.

Muslims of Turkish origin in Germany can also benefit from their particular location in a country of which they are not systemati- cally citizens. Associations can be viewed as providing alternative modes of action to that which is provided by the exclusive refer- ence to the welfare state as a form of incorporation that is deeply embedded in ter- ritorial and national definitions of membership. This emergence of a transnational space in which Islamic mobilization has been organized lies at the cross-roads be- tween the legal management of religion and the externalization of Islam as a ‘for- eigners’ cultural issue’. It is a pure product of the complex articulation of rights, rules, and institutions, independent of the usual focus on debates about political participation and jir medicine.

The German political management of Is- lam is mainly diplomatic. In relation to the political agenda, Islam is treated as a For- eign Affairs object; and the domestic and cur- rently linked problematic. From its symbolic to material aspects, many indicators justify the assessment of Islam as not being a so- cially protected policy matter. As the very sym- bol of the Kemalist definition of laïcité, the management of several aspects of religious life has been exercised by the minority (Verein Türkisch-Islamischer Religiöser Dru- k (DTIB), Office of Religious Affairs) introduced the Turkish state as one of the actors of the Islamic scene reconstructed in Germany. At the same time, the German authorities’ des- ignation of the DTIB as the ‘most favoured lord’ among the plausible partners stimu- lated competition among associations – such as the Islamische Gesellschaft Mihi Göt- tis (IGMG, Islamic Society National Vision) or the Verband der Islamischen Kulturzen tren (VIKZ, Union of Cultural Islamic Centres) in the field of education, the opening of mosques or the ‘importation’ of imams from Turkey to Germany. Several means have been organized between Turkey and Ger- many, thus giving more space to these matters. In the 1990s, for example, the VIKZ opened a centre for the education of hoca in Cologne, giving the possibility to recruit persons with experience in living in Germany and German language capacity to teach in their mosques. Significantly, those institutions, opening religious places and be- ing actors are not submitted to direct interven- tion and repression of the Turkish state. Indeed, the first opportunities for Islamic Turkish associations in Germany arose from the distance from the Turkish state, in spite of its maintenance of sovereignty in Germany, especially through taxation and conscription. Escaping from Turkey without really leaving it, Turkish Islam in Germany cannot be dissociated from a symbolic and complex interaction of the two national settings referring to different sets of oppor- tunities.

The opportunities

The first elementary opportunities used by the transnational Turkish network were open to all non-German citizens who are al- lowed to organize eingetragene Vereine (e.V.) associations. Thus, the Islamic associative network, which initially developed in Ger- many, corresponded to the juridical restaura- tion of religious tendencies that exist in Tur- key yet had found in Germany the possibili- ty to act freely. This appears to be the first step of the installation of Islamic associations in Germany. A second stable set of opportunities is provided by the rules concerning the posi- tion of religion in the public sphere. The German tradition separates religion and state without concerning religion as a non- legitimate actor in the public sphere, such as is the case within the other EU countries. The pre- vention of laïcité in France or Turkey. One elementary resource the associations can have been adapted to the change of clien- tele – passing from parents to children or grandchildren. Thus, the Islamic associative network could gain immediate benefits from this recognition in terms of authority, legitimacy and inde- pendence in their functioning. It could be argued that the dynamics of the associational com- petition among Muslims in Germany is a result of institutionalization in the quest for recognition. De facto, the claim for offi- cial recognition began in 1997 with an offi- cial demand made by the Turkish VIKZ – a demand rapidly followed by other requests. This is a real difference compared to other countries where the claim for institutionali- zation appears to be a late indicator of ‘visi- bility’.

The set of opportunities derives from the fact that so many to avoid a DITIB monopoly on these matters. In the 1990s, for example, the VIKZ opened a centre for the education of hoca in Cologne, giving the possibility to recruit persons with experience in living in Germany and German language capacity to teach in their mosques. Significantly, those institutions, opening religious places and being actors are not submitted to direct intervention and repression of the Turkish state. Indeed, the first opportunities for Islamic Turkish associations in Germany arose from the distance from the Turkish state, in spite of its maintenance of sovereignty in Germany, especially through taxation and conscription. Escaping from Turkey without really leaving it, Turkish Islam in Germany cannot be dissociated from a symbolic and complex interaction of the two national settings referring to different sets of opportunities.

The opportunities

The first elementary opportunities used by the transnational Turkish network were open to all non-German citizens who are allowed to organize eingetragene Vereine (e.V.) associations. Thus, the Islamic associative network, which initially developed in Germany, corresponded to the juridical restoration of religious tendencies that exist in Turkey yet had found in Germany the possibility to act freely. This appears to be the first step of the installation of Islamic associative networks in Germany. A second stable set of opportunities is provided by the rules concerning the position of religion in the public sphere. The German tradition separates religion and state without concerning religion as a non-legitimate actor in the public sphere, such as is the case within the other EU countries. The prevention of laïcité in France or Turkey. One elementary resource the associations can have been adapted to the change of clientele – passing from parents to children or grandchildren. Thus, the Islamic associative network could gain immediate benefits from this recognition in terms of authority, legitimacy and independence in their functioning. It could be argued that the dynamics of the association network among Muslims in Germany is a result of institutionalization in the quest for recognition. De facto, the claim for official recognition began in 1997 with an official demand made by the Turkish VIKZ – a demand rapidly followed by other requests. This is a real difference compared to other countries where the claim for institutionalization appears to be a late indicator of ‘visibility’.

The third set of opportunities derives from the fact that so many to avoid a DITIB monopoly on these matters. In the 1990s, for example, the VIKZ opened a centre for the education of hoca in Cologne, giving the possibility to recruit persons with experience in living in Germany and German language capacity to teach in their mosques. Significantly, those institutions, opening religious places and being actors are not submitted to direct intervention and repression of the Turkish state. Indeed, the first opportunities for Islamic Turkish associations in Germany arose from the distance from the Turkish state, in spite of its maintenance of sovereignty in Germany, especially through taxation and conscription. Escaping from Turkey without really leaving it, Turkish Islam in Germany cannot be dissociated from a symbolic and complex interaction of the two national settings referring to different sets of opportunities.

A secular change?

This ‘changing face’ appears to be a central aspect for the Islamic Turkish associations as well as for their audience. The urban landmarks they provide, and the identity references and discourses they mobilize, have been adapted to the change of client- ele – passing from parents to children or grandchildren. Thus, the Islamic associative network remains firstly defined as an actor and a praxis (respect of the five pillars), but being born Muslim is not a guar- antee of orthodoxy. For instance, the rela- tionship to religion and the praxis is not directly inherited from the family but is transformed and Reinvented by younger generations, while the associative network maintains the collective reference such as the moral code and educational needs. The multiplication of the contacts and modes of participation in the host society gives new opportuni- ties to young generations of Mus- lims who no longer need to stay exclusively in an assigned group or community. In addition, the bricolage of reference appears to be the key concept underpinning these new forms of dealing with Germany belonging people: produce their own ways of being a Muslim.

At an individual level, this change gives relevance to the category of ‘personhood’ which crosses religious, political and national boundaries. Feeling under ‘social’ pressure in European societies. Different socialization dynamics and inter- acts, the associative, familial or religious aspect being one part of it. It also represents an ethic for life which medi- ates familial relations, respect for the self, and蘭 while also opening new spaces and guaranteeing the freedom of others. In this sense, ‘personhood’ represents a re-inter- pretation of tradition based on personal and individual choice and priv- ate conscience. This process is similar to that of transnationalism: multiplication of the identity references, mobility, invisibility, necessity, avoiding state control and authority. This idea of multiple identities and complex- ity induces the idea of culture playing as a reference on both individual and collective levels, providing codes, symbols, repertoires and symbolic places in which people occa- sionally live. It also provides an ideological apparatus, practices and a symbolic refer- ence to which the individual/collective con- sciousness as part of a believer’s life is built, educated and controlled. In a kind of ‘secu- lar’ perspective, the identification as Muslim is no more the exclusive producer of referen- ces and meanings. It rather figures one of the possible options, but certainly not the dissolution of religious affiliation.

Notes

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