Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

Reflections of 'European Islam' Discourse to Germany and Recognition of Turkish-Islam[*]

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Abstract

Turkish-Islam has become a part of Europe today more than ever. Turkish immigrants and their religious institutions are the leading cause of this new situation, and they have been trying to legalize their belonging with their claims for recognition, especially in Germany. This article mainly elaborates on the recognition process with a focus on the reflections of European Islam discourse on the German scene and attempts to understand the reasons behind the current crisis around the recognition of Turkish-Islam. Even though the current perception of Islam in the host countries is the primary reason for many, this article approaches the issue from a historical institutionalist (HI) point of view and develops further arguments. Analysis of the empirical data shows that the lack of a unified voice in the Muslim society, structural inefficiencies of Islamic organizations, and politicizing of Islam-related issues could be counted as obstacles in the frame of recognition. However, the path dependency concept of HI allows this work to go beyond these visible problems and highlights the transnational linkages created in the foundation processes of these institutions as the main reason behind the failure.

Keywords

Turkish-Islam, Islam in Germany, DITIB, Recognition of Islam.

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Introduction

Although it may seem that religions are not as crucial in today's world as they were in the past, we are probably witnessing the period when Islam and Europe were most frequently used together in history. The main reason for this is the growing Muslim communities in European countries created by migration. This movement initially started with the Muslims coming from the former colonies, then continued with worker recruitment programs from the periphery and refugee waves from war-torn areas. Their becoming permanent in those countries made Islam, seen as 'the other' of Europe, a part of European countries more than at any time in history. While this process continues, questions like 'if Islam belongs to Europe in general' or 'is it a part of Germany' are still debated in contemporary politics. Besides, this issue is also gaining public attention, as seen in the electoral success of far-right parties in Europe. For example, Alternative for Germany (*Alternativ für Deutschland* – AFG) puts anti-Islam sentiments at the center of its campaigns and raised its vote share to 12,6% in the 2017 elections, making them the third biggest party in *Bundestag,* alongside similar results in local and European Parliament elections.

As mentioned, this article will elaborate on the long-discussed "European Islam" discourse and its reflections on Germany. We will look for traces of the concept in policies toward Muslim immigrants by examining the recognition process of Turkish-Islam in the country. The necessary data is collected from the existing literature about Turks and Muslims in Europe and from the reports and minutes of the German Parliament *(Bundestag)*. Additionally, data collected through qualitative research methods such as semi-structured interviews with some of the leading figures in the Turkish community and participant observation between 2016 to 2021 in Germany will be used as sources of first-hand information to support the arguments.

In this frame, the article will try to build a causal relationship between European Islam discourse and the recognition process of Turkish-Islam in Germany. Conditions and critical debates for recognition of Turkish Islamic organizations will lead us to assumptions about the desired Islamic structure in Germany. While solving this puzzle, three things will be elaborated on: the history of organized Turkish – Islam, European Islam discourse and its reflections on Germany, and the religious recognition system of the country.

As a result, it will be seen that the current crisis around the recognition of Turkish Islam in Germany is not a direct result of contemporary political debates or the rise of the far-right movements, as assumed by many. Instead, the current failure of Turkish-Islam results from the initial decisions, leading us to the well-known path dependence concept of historical institutionalism (HI). In conclusion, the central argument of this article will be tested with the empirical data and tools provided by the theoretical framework that will be detailed in the following section.

Theoretical Framework

Historical institutionalism provides the main tools to examine the collected data in this article. Institutionalism could be evaluated as a theory born as a reaction to the1960s society-centered political science theories when its philosophical roots are considered. Contrary to the idea that societies are the only drivers of transformations in politics, institutionalism emphasizes the role of institutions in social and political change. In that sense, it puts institutions, including the state, at the center of factors shaping political behavior (Steinmo 123). While taking this as a base, HI was born in the 1990s as a research discipline focusing on the effects of history and processes on the roots and transformations of institutions (Fioretes et al. 3).

Institutionalist researchers initially focused on the influence of institutions on people's political behavior, and then in the 1990s, they began to concentrate on institutional change or the effects of institutions on real-world outcomes (Steinmo). In that frame, the path dependence concept emerged as one of the most valuable tools they invented to answer why institutions resist change. Briefly, this concept refers to the deterministic effect of the decisions taken in the institution's foundation over those in the future. According to the logic behind this concept, institutions are established as a result of long social processes, and once they are founded, they become relatively independent. This feature makes them resistant to divergences from the initially drawn route (Lecours 11–12). The framing effect of an institution's initial decisions becomes more robust over time because it is always easier to follow policies in line with the initial decisions than the risk of changing the structure. This situation, called positive feedback by HI theorists, increases the price of sheering from the route with every decision, making the institution almost prone to significant changes.

In other words, initial decisions taken in an institution have a determining effect on the decisions to be taken because they tend to constrain decision-makers' policy options from many aspects (Thelen and Steinmo 9).

All in all, the theoretical framework assumes that decisions taken at the beginning determine the future of an institution. The tendency to follow the path shaped by former decisions is simply called path dependence, and this concept will be used to understand the current status of organized Turkish-Islam in Germany. However, as HI implies, history and initial decisions are crucial in such kinds of analyses, so a brief background of the religious organizations of Turks in Germany will be given.

A Brief History of Organized Turkish-Islam in Germany

In contrast to many other European countries, Germany's Muslim population is not a result of its colonial past. Hence, the Muslim population in the country was not considerable until the 1960s. The turning point was the destruction of the 2nd World War, which brought extraordinary economic and political conditions. During the reconstruction process of Germany, a miracle was accomplished by building a giant from ruins. However, the population lost in the war and partition of Germany as the east and west created a labor force shortage. The issue was so severe in some regions that there was a full-employment situation (Comte 43). Germany's response to this problem was a workforce migration program that some other European countries already used. While learning from the experiences of others, Germany created the most organized migrant worker recruitment program after the 1950s and signed labor force recruitment agreements with different countries (Castles 768).

Türkiye was also one of those countries and signed the agreement with Germany in 1961. Unskilled workers selected by the recruitment agencies in Türkiye according to the needs of the companies in Germany were sent to the factories in different regions. In this initial period of worker migration, Türkiye and Germany approached the issue only with economic concerns. While the host country was getting the labor force for its growing industry, the home country reduced unemployment by sending the labor force surplus and gaining foreign currency via remittances. Besides, these workers' stay in Germany was planned as a temporary one subjected to

a rotation system, which paved the way for naming these immigrants as 'guest workers' (Ünver 188). In short, Germany tried to block the way for immigrants to be permanent, while Türkiye was planning to draw from these workers' experiences in its infant industry. All policies neglecting other needs of immigrants in this period align with this rotation system. This economy-focused approach continued for a while, and both countries made the profit they planned to a degree. However, the rotation system became tainted after a couple of years, and the guest workers started to settle, which marked a milestone in the history of organized Islam in Germany. The neglect of home and host countries to the migrant population's growing needs caused the emergence of the first mosque associations, which are still the most prominent organizations in the Turkish community in Germany.

In the first place, the places converted to venues for religious practice were temporary due to the rotation system. However, the fear of losing women and children to a foreign culture pushed the society to establish permanent mosques with increased family reunions in the 1970s (Sirseloudi 813). The functions of these places for the immigrants struggling to create a new life in a foreign environment were way more than just providing venues for religious practice. Instead, the mosque associations have become a gathering place where they forget their differences and revive their connections with the homeland (Kastoryano 1237). As a result of playing such critical roles, these institutions had vital impacts on Turkish society in Germany that are felt even today. States' neglect of providing religious services created a gap in this frame and caused the most obvious influence of this period on the whole history of Turkish-Islam. Members of different religious groups and cults got organized quickly to fill this gap by establishing the first mosque associations and creating a multi-fractioned community.

Türkiye ignored the situation until the 1980s and could not go beyond sending temporary imams to Turkish-populated areas during Ramadan and Islamic holidays (Doomernik 50). The military coup d'état of 1980, a turning point for Türkiye in every sense, also had consequences for the Turkish community in Germany. Above all, there has been a massive influx of refugees from Türkiye to Germany, and people with a high level of political organization experience started to establish extensions of their home organization by taking advantage of the suitable atmosphere starting

from the late 1970s (Abadan-Unat 267; Sirkeci 77). The junta regime struggled with "undesired" organizations in the country, and naturally, it was also eager to expand it against formations in the diaspora (Mügge 32–33). In parallel, the idea of 'Turkish – Islamic synthesis' was developed against leftist and Islamist ideologies, and the state tried to spread it by increasing religious education in the country. Besides, the junta expanded the authorities of the Presidency for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) in a way to serve abroad by a constitutional amendment. This transformation paved the way for the establishment of the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (*Diyanet* İşleri *Türk İslam Birliği* - DITIB), with headquarters in Cologne just four years after the coup d'état.

From today's point of view, it is surprising that such an institution was established without causing widespread debates between countries. According to Baser and Féron (3), such institutions are generally not desired by host countries but tolerated when they are joint ventures. In parallel, Türkiye and Germany had shared interests in providing religious services to the community by a supra-political institution (Diyanet). The threat felt by fundamentalism in both countries due to the Iran Islamic Revolution was one of the reasons. Based on that, Türkiye tried to block the spreading of some 'undesired' Islamic organizations both in the homeland and the diaspora (Yükleyen 51). Besides, Germany had other reasons than the fear of fundamentalism for opting for this solution. Above all, the state's hands were tied in terms of interfering in religious organizations because of the secularism principle. Second, Germany's lack of appropriate human resources for providing Islamic religious services was another problem. Third, *Diyanet's* experience in providing religious services in a secular country made it favorable (Binswanger and Sipahioğlu 77; Sunier et al. 402). Fourth, these people were Turkish citizens, and for politicians of the time, it was Türkiye's duty to take care of their needs (Sydow 244). Fifth, the 'Germany is not a country of migration' discourse was prevailing in politics in those years, so Germany preferred an international solution instead of making the issue domestic (Beilschmidt 189). On the other side, there were also citizens in the Turkish community who did not want to receive religious services from organizations linked with some cults and political groups in Türkiye. These people organized and established independent mosques and wanted help from Türkiye with petitions, which was also a reason for the initiative.

All in all, the establishment of DITIB was in the interest of both countries, and the organization was welcomed at that time. Established under these conditions, DITIB committed to sending imams to affiliated mosque associations, around 300 at the beginning, to pay their salaries. This situation attracted the mosque associations struggling to survive with donations in a workers' populated community (Sunier and Landman 51; Yükleyen 49). The combination of these factors created favorable conditions for DITIB, so it snowballed by incorporating some of the members of rival organizations. Today, with approximately 900 mosque associations under its roof, it has become the largest Muslim organization in Germany.

Outcomes of this involvement began to be visible in the community, where several organizations, such as *Süleymancis* and *Milli Görüş,* were also active in the 1990s. The political and religious rivalries between these groups added more fractions to the already existing ones in the Turkish community in Germany. Although the situation seems a natural spillover of the one in the homeland, which is true to a degree, these groups' influence on the Islamic community in Germany is far more significant than theirs in the homeland. Moreover, the later establishment of DITIB as a precaution against others carried this rivalry to a higher level. This fractioned society will become more significant when the recognition issue comes to the fore.

Debates around Islam in Germany started to gather more attention, especially with the increase in naturalization in the 1990s. Meantime, Islamic organizations' building border-crossing relationships made 'transnationalism' one of the most frequently used words for the Turkish community in Germany. In brief, the notion of transnationalism focuses on immigrants' movements back and forth across borders, which became more accessible thanks to advances in technology. Accordingly, immigrants or transnationals are not only an issue for host countries anymore, so this concept offers a border crossing perspective consisting of factors in two countries to understand issues related to them (Bauböck 1673; Vertovec 453–56). Almost all the religious organizations established in the diaspora are proxies of the groups in the home country. Transnational linkages of these organizations are apparent in various areas, such as personnel, religious understanding, and lobbying activities. These transnational links transfer these organizations' traditional structures, religious understandings,

and political stances from bodies in the home country to the diaspora. For instance, imams employed in DITIB mosques are Turkish public servants sent by *Diyanet* for five years due to a protocol made with Germany (Document 1, 5). In this context, mosque associations are profoundly transnational structures, and their current situation, where these features are in the foreground, cannot be considered without these linkages.

Today, mosques in Germany are run mainly by umbrella organizations with strong transnational linkages. The ever-increasing recognition claims of these organizations and naturalized Muslim immigrants brought the issue of Islam in Germany to a whole new dimension. In the 2000s, efforts to integrate Islamic organizations into the existing structure and purify them from their transnational linkages have accelerated in Germany and other European countries. Thus, the issue of integrating Islamic organizations into the already established system and whether this 'foreign religion' is compatible with European values have become important on the agenda. In the following section, we will examine the reflections of the European Islam discourse on this country by assessing the issues that shape Germany's policies on religious organizations, its recognition system, and its policies towards Islamic organizations.

Religious recognition in Germany, Muslims, and reflections of 'European Islam'

No specific organizational structure is foreseen for religious organizations in Germany, so these organizations were established as ordinary associations. In this context, religious organizations can benefit from identical tax reductions and cooperate with local authorities in projects, like other associations. Financial-wise, mosque associations finance their services with donations and dues of their members. Therefore, many mosque associations still have units such as a market selling halal products, a tea shop, a travel agency, a bookstore, or even multi-purpose halls rented to the community to create additional sources for their budgets. These associations must complete the 'recognition process' to be equal with established churches in the country.

There is an official recognition system for religious organizations in Germany, and they must pass four more gradual stages to reach the status of full recognition. The process works in a frame primarily determined by

law, so it first brings legal recognition. In parallel, the recognition decision is under the jurisdiction of individual states' parliaments in all stages, so it has a political aspect, providing a kind of political recognition to the organizations. While two of the four stages of the recognition system that defines the relations between religious organizations and the state are defined in the constitution, the other two are agreements with state authorities. The first of the constitutional statuses is the status of the religious community (*Religionsgemeinschaft*), which is clearly stated in Article 7 of the German Basic Law. According to this article, religious education in public schools can only be given by religious communities (See: Document 2; German Basic Law §7). Although the issue of acquiring this status is not clearly defined by law (Documents 3, 9), it is possible to reach a framework from the court decisions on the subject and the reports prepared by the German Parliament. In this context, in order for an organization to receive the status of a religious community, it must have members from real persons, which must share the same religious understanding, and the organization must have an organizational structure that serves the purpose of realizing the goals set by that religion (Document 4). Additionally, religious communities should have clear hierarchical structures formed by members who come together to fulfill religious purposes only since the authority to teach religion requires a profound organizational ability (Document 5, 12).

The other status mentioned in the constitution is the status of *Körperschaft des Öffentlichenrects*. This concept was created by the abolition of the state church in the Weimar Constitution, defined in articles (137-141), and inherited in today's German Basic Law. Accordingly, religious communities that prove their permanence with their statutes and number of members will be entitled to receive the status of *Körperschaft des* Öffentlichenrects. However, court decisions on applications and reports prepared at the request of state parliaments show that the necessary conditions are much more complex. As a matter of fact, in various reports, it is stated that religious communities that want to receive this status must fulfill conditions such as complying with the law and the constitution, a clear organizational structure, the ability to represent the community to the outside world, long-term institutional stability and tolerance to other religions (Document 5, 10; Document 6, 7-8; Document 7, 6).

This status opens some of the broad rights formerly granted to the state church to other religious communities and gives them a chance to be equal. These rights cover a wide range, from separate cemeteries and prison chaplaincies to being featured on state television and the right to levy taxes collected by the state (Rohe 58; Spielhaus and Herzog 426). Although the efforts of Turkish-Islamic associations are continuing for recognition, it is hard to mention considerable progress. Only two organizations reached full recognition in Germany's Turkish and Muslim communities. First, the Ahmadiyya Community in Germany gained the status in 2013 as a Muslim organization, and then in 2020, the German Alevi Community (AABF) achieved full recognition as a separate religion from Islam.

In addition to these two constitutional statuses, religious organizations can obtain partial recognition through agreements with state authorities. The simpler of these involves the cooperation of the state and the religious organization in projects that serve the common good of society. This cooperation, mostly seen at the local level, can be in the form of mosque associations performing services financed by the state. The more complex of these contracts are called state agreements (*Staatsvertrag*), which provide a much more comprehensive and prestigious recognition status than the previous one. These agreements are approved by the state parliaments and provide a frame presenting the rights of an organization in that respective state. Some Turkish-Islamic organizations signed these agreements in Hamburg and Bremen in the 2010s, and negotiations were started in the same period for similar contracts in many other states.

The recognition processes generally proceed as establishing an association, cooperating with state authorities, gaining the religious community status, or signing a state agreement covering all of these, and finally reaching the level of full recognition with the attainment of *Körperschaft des Öffentlichenrects* status. Considering that the condition of having existed for a long time, which is one of the conditions for full recognition, is interpreted as 30 years, it is clear that the process takes quite a long time. Additionally, the process requires considerable organizational skills and management experience. Besides, the political balances in the state parliaments, which are the decision-makers in this frame, appear vital in achieving the recognition.

In all this equation, none of the mentioned Turkish-Islamic organizations have reached the status of full recognition. While institutions of many other religions have obtained the status, the first and only Muslim organization to have achieved the *Körperschaft des Öffentlichenrects* status is the Ahmadiyya Community in Germany (Gorzewski 140). Besides, many mosque associations collaborate with the state in the local context, but very few examples have attained the religious community status entitling them to give religious courses in public schools. The first was the Berlin Islamic Federation, which obtained this right due to a court decision in the State of Berlin in 2001 (Kastoryano 1248). After a decade, DITIB achieved this status in the State of Hessen in 2012 and started to organize religion classes. However, these lessons did not last long, and the state withdrew the right in 2020 due to the political debates focused on DITIB's transnational linkages. In addition to all these, the state agreements reached by DITIB and other leading Muslim organizations in Hamburg and Bremen appear as another remarkable development. However, these agreements are critical when the rights of the Muslim population living here are considered; these states have a system called "religion for all courses" instead of confessional courses, so the rights obtained are used only partially. To sum up, the recognition struggle of the Turkish-Islamic community in Germany is still quite far from the status of full recognition. The only organization that has achieved full recognition within the Turkish society in Germany has been the AABF, which defines Alevism as a separate religion from Islam, and obtained the status in 2020.

So, what are the reasons behind Turkish-Islamic organizations' failing in these processes? In his article, Muckel (104–10) pointed out the negative political environment and legal problems, including transnational ties, as the source of the main problems to answer this question. In parallel, it is possible to collect these problems under three headings: structural shortcomings, the politicization of Islam-related issues, and the effects of transnational linkages. The first of these is caused by mosque associations' initial structures, formed to meet various needs of the Muslim population living in Germany. Therefore, mosque associations and their umbrella organizations are complex structures that work not only for fulfilling the purposes of religion but also to respond to very different needs of society (Lemmen 317). This multi-purpose structure resulted from the first

generations seeking to resolve the more pressing and practical issues rather than the recognition while establishing these associations. This situation has changed recently, with the issue of religious recognition coming to the fore. As a result, managers more familiar with legal and administrative processes have recently taken office in these organizations, and the by-laws used for decades have been updated for the recognition conditions.

Another problem is the ethnic and religious division of the Muslim community in Germany and the rivalry between these structures. As mentioned, the most fundamental issue on which Türkiye and Germany agreed on the establishment period of DITIB in Germany in the 1980s was blocking the spread of undesired groups (Binswanger and Sipahioğlu 73; Sunier et al. 402; Yükleyen 51). The inclusion of DITIB in this competitive environment has exacerbated this situation, and different religious and political stances have prevented these organizations from coming together for decades. Politicians and officials have repeatedly stated the necessity of establishing a single platform because recognizing a single group may cause an over-authority situation to the detriment of other groups (Kortmann 6; Spuler-Stegemann 92). The issue's importance will be understood even more when organized Muslims comprise a tiny part of the total Muslim population and the difficulties of choosing only one of these organized structures to represent all Muslims are considered.

Another obstacle that we will briefly mention here is the negative environment created by the severe politicization of Islam in the recent period. This situation is primarily related to the concept of islamophobia, which relates to Islam and terrorism, which emerged as a result of the September 11 attacks (Yanarışık 2914). After these attacks, a security-oriented view toward Islamic organizations also developed in Germany. The clearest example of this situation is the National Vision Islamic Society (Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş - IGMG), one of the leading mosque umbrella organizations monitored by the domestic intelligence organization (Argun 161; Ewing 408). Again, the anti-immigration movements, which have existed for many years in Germany, have recently evolved into anti-Islamism has been one of the most critical factors in this hostile environment (Ceylan 81). Consequently, the political costs of the decisions to be taken on the recognition of Islamic organizations increase, and politicians avoid

taking risks in this regard. This situation naturally leads to prolonging or suspending the current recognition negotiations.

The last issue harming the recognition processes is the transnational linkages of Turkish-Islamic organizations. It can be claimed that these connections are the biggest obstacle to the recognition processes, both as a source of political debates and for being the root of the above-mentioned problems. First, these linkages directly impact many areas, such as belief systems and the structures of these organizations. Besides, it also causes legal problems regarding the secularism principle of the state in Germany, especially in the context of DITIB and religious community status. This situation is a result of the principle that the state cannot interfere with the religious courses given in schools; DITIB's ties to the Diyanet violate this situation, and it will not be legally possible for Germany to grant this right, which is not even in itself, to another state (Document 8, 14-15; Document 9, 6). However, this problem could also be overcome by establishing an organ independent of these ties, as DITIB did in the State of Hessen in 2012. Finally, the biggest problem is whether the political balances are suitable for recognition, and in recent years it has become primarily anti-Islamic. At this point, as claimed, transnational linkages have a binding effect. Hence, almost all the political debates about DITIB, the most assertive Turkish-Islamic organization in terms of recognition, have been shaped within these linkages' framework. Although the institution claims that these ties are only in the context of the Diyanet's acceptance as the higher religious authority and they do not have a political effect, almost all the states where recognition negotiations were ongoing have decided to cut or suspend their ties with DITIB, citing these ties as a reason.

This means that mosque associations formed and developed under the influence of historical conditions must undergo a serious and not pre-limited transformation process to adapt to the system. However, there are some serious problems in this frame. Initially, a hierarchical religious organization that takes the churches as an example and can cooperate with the state at all levels is foreign to the history of Islam. As a result, the three situations mentioned above need to be resolved for recognition. Moreover, the list of recognition conditions extended with the answers given to the applications includes many issues open to interpretation, such as respect for

the law, tolerance for others, loyalty to the state and the constitution, etc. (Document 5, 10; Document 10, 6). When the perception of Islam and these unclear conditions are considered together, questions like how much Islamic organizations can fulfill these conditions and how much of this will be accepted by the host states are open to discussion. This discussion brings us to the European Islam concept and its reflections in Germany. A scheme referring to these reflections can be drawn by evaluating the historical stance towards the organizations, incorporation initiatives, political parties' perceptions about the issue, and problems faced in recognition processes.

Historically, Islamic organizations with transnational ties have been debated in European countries since the beginning. During the establishment process of DITIB in the early 1980s, the possibility of such a formation's turning into a structure through which Türkiye could influence the Islamic community in Germany was emphasized (Sunier and Landman 47). As known, this perspective later became dominant, and efforts were started to clear Islamic organizations from these ties. According to Laurence (263), European states allowed transnational resources for the religious needs of Muslim immigrants in the early 1980s, but in the 1990s, a policy of de-transnationalization began with the efforts to incorporate these institutions. These efforts showed that European states were uncomfortable with the transnational linkages of the religious organizations of Muslim immigrants.

The concept of European Islam, which Tibi Bassam first put forward in the early 1990s, expresses an understanding of "Islam integrated with European values," which can only be achieved by Muslims adopting values such as "a European culture of tolerance, pluralism, and secularism" (Nielsen 35). One of the most visible results of the discussions around this concept was the attempts of European countries to create platforms to communicate with their Muslim populations. This situation can be read as a reflection of the debates on European Islam in other countries. Germany also joined this trend in 2007 with the German Islamic Conference (*Deutsche Islam Konferenz* - DIK), which was formed under the leadership of the Minister of Interior Wolfgang Schäuble. This platform, in which Muslims living in the country and representatives of the state participated, aimed to increase the communication between the parties, solve the problems that started to come to the fore, and naturally integrate Islam into the existing system. However,

the platform has been criticized due to discussions such as who will attend these meetings from the beginning. Hence, in addition to the country's leading mosque organizations, representatives of very small "liberal" Islamic organizations and people allegedly representing unorganized Muslims were invited. This situation naturally created the impression that the state tries to limit the effectiveness of leading mosque organizations on the decisions taken in the meetings of the platform.

Likewise, when we look at the manifestos of the leading German political parties in the recent elections, it can be claimed that the imagination of an Islamic society close to the mentioned features and values is shared by leading parties. For example, in the 2017 election manifesto of the Christian Democratic Union Party and the Christian Social Union Party (CDU/CSU), which have been in power for a long time, it is emphasized that being pro-peace and respecting democratic values are the primary conditions for Islamic organizations in the country to be addressed. Similarly, the 2017 election manifesto of the Social Democratic Party of Germany (SPD), known to be moderate in policies toward immigrants, emphasized that Muslims are a part of Germany but can enjoy some rights as long as they follow the rules. The views of these two parties, which are located at the center of the political spectrum, are similar enough to include just minor nuances. This situation gives us clues about the European Islam discourse in Germany. In addition, although these are universal values and there is no concrete evidence that Turkish-Islamic organizations reject them, this is important in showing how the issue of recognition is politicized and the prejudices of political actors in terms of Islam.

What kind of Islam Germany wants to integrate can be seen by looking at the problems faced by Turkish-Islam in the recognition processes. The first of these can be counted as the structure problem, which refers to the desired Islamic organization' having a similar structure to churches and having the ability to represent the Islamic society at all levels of the administrative system. As known, such a structure is historically foreign to Islam, so creating an institution in line with this could not be possible. Besides, there is a selective attitude based on prejudices regarding beliefs, even if it is against the state's neutrality principle, resulting from the negative concepts associated with Islam. This attitude is reflected in official documents by emphasizing the

importance of concepts such as values, respect for the law, tolerance of different religions, gender equality, etc., as conditions (Document 6, 10; Document 10, 6). As argued before, the traditions on which the Islamic society in Germany is based and the attitude toward Islam are conditions that can always be left on hold in the future.

The last problem in recognition processes results from the politicization of the issue and transnational linkages along with the crises in bilateral relations, especially in recent years. After years of neglect, Türkiye rapidly developed policies toward its emigrants after the Justice and Development Party came to power (Şahin-Mencütek and Başer). This change has also affected the type of organization expressed in European Islam and made transnational connections very visible, especially in the political sense. In parallel, the crises between the countries have also resulted in the recognition processes carried out by these organizations. Suspensions in recognition processes of DITIB in the period following these crises, especially after 2016, can be seen as an example. Thus, we can deduce that Islamic organizations that want to be incorporated into Germany must be "away from the political effects of the homeland." In this context, it can be argued that reflections of the European Islam discourse in Germany envisage a localized and transnational linkages free Muslim organization that adopts western values and can integrate into the existing structure by imitating the institutional structure of the churches. The fact that the organizations that cannot provide or reject this series of somewhat ambiguous features are in the majority constitutes the present problem of recognition and the conflict around it.

Evaluation of the Data and Arguments

Up to this point, we have examined the institutionalization process of Islam, the main problems at the point of recognition, and reflections of European Islam in Germany. The empirical data collected here points to two basic situations in the field. First, there is a vast and organized Muslim population in Germany today, and their claims for recognition will be one of the most critical political issues waiting to be resolved soon. The second is related to European Islam discourse, which developed gradually with these recognition claims and can be perceived as "what kind of a Muslim community the European states want." It is a fact that the increasingly localized reflections of this concept will come to the fore more frequently with the rising

xenophobia and Islamophobia in Europe. It would be a reasonable inference to think that the development processes of these two phenomena still have an ongoing impulse-reaction spiral and that the recognition crisis that has emerged at the point reached today is a result of the conflict between these two concepts. So, at this point, while Muslims' claims for recognition and the conditions put forward by Germany are known to a certain extent, how can we explain the lack of progress? In other words, the question of why we are at this point today is still unanswered. As previously claimed, the concept of "path dependence" helps reach a reasonable answer to this question.

In this direction, the aforementioned theoretical framework will provide arguments for understanding the causes of the problems experienced today regarding recognition in Germany. Accordingly, it is essential to look at the history of the institutionalization process of Turkish-Islam in Germany, especially the initial periods. To sum up, the first mosque associations were formed as extensions of the Islamic groups in the homeland due to Türkiye's indifferent attitude to the subject. Due to the lack of alternatives, some groups have reached areas of influence that do not reflect the homeland's situation. After 1980, Türkiye realized the damage of the authority gap in this field and pioneered the establishment of DITIB, which significantly impacted the largest Muslim organization in Germany. In this process, both home and host countries aimed not to create an institution that would gain equal rights with churches in the future but to narrow the sphere of influence of 'undesired' organizations by providing religious services.

These initial conditions and decisions have revealed three situations based on transnational connections. First of all, these organizations are extensions of the main structures in Türkiye and largely reflect many elements such as rituals, belief systems, traditional structures, and intergroup conflicts. This spillover of the homeland played an essential role in the failure of attempts to establish a single platform for recognition in the future. It is also not very reasonable to expect DITIB to be under the same roof with the "undesirable" Islamic organizations that it was established as a rival in a sense. Indeed, this was not possible for a long time. Also, it can be argued that the delay in establishing DITIB enabled other organizations to influence Islamic society in Germany more than they did in the homeland. In this context, it can

be seen how effective the initial decisions were at establishing a common platform for recognition.

The second situation created by the initial decisions is the dependency of Turkish-Islamic organizations on transnational linkages. In other words, these organizations need their homeland bodies to carry out their essential activities. The most important of these is the human resource because these religious organizations in the diaspora bring imams and even administrators from their main structures in Türkiye. It is a natural consequence of the fact that the Muslim society in Germany did not have alternative human resources with these qualifications in the first place. However, it continues despite all the time that has passed. It can be argued that bringing imams from Türkiye or paying off their salaries through the structures in the homeland, which initially had an advantage in terms of practical results, gradually became a phenomenon that blocked the localization in these matters. Hence, in the presence of such ready-made solutions, issues such as raising imams in Germany, financing the services from local resources, and raising managers with qualifications suitable for the local recognition systems were not seen as important issues by the majority of the Muslim community. Thus, many organizations' financial and human resources will not be enough to carry out even the simplest activities in the event of cutting their transnational linkages. From this perspective, it is seen to what extent the practical solutions put forward at the beginning can affect the issues that still exist today.

The third situation is the politicization of transnational linkages, which is especially valid for DITIB because its linkages to Diyanet are undoubtedly the most discussed in this frame. DITIB administrators have stated on various occasions, including our interviews, that these connections are only in the form of cooperation and the Diyanet being seen as the supreme religious authority and that it does not have a political impact. However, the fact that DITIB Presidents and imams are directly Diyanet's personnel, and the capacity of people in these positions to influence democratic decision-making through religious advisory committees, which are equipped with mighty powers in the statute, appears to contradict the claims of independence. As a result, DITIB's recognition processes become indexed to the course of relations between the two countries. The parallel between

the two issues can be seen in a distinction between before and after 2016. In the pre-2016 period, when the relations between the two countries were relatively positive, there were many projects in which DITIB cooperated with the state, and significant gains were achieved by signing state agreements in 2012. However, when relations between the two countries deteriorated after 2016, one of the most discussed issues was the organization's transnational connections. There have been disputes because of these linkages in many states, and almost all the progress made after years of struggle has been lost. Today's harmful politicization around the transnational linkages, once seen positively due to the planned scope of DITIB, shows how initial decisions influence the institution when the conditions change.

Conclusion

Incorporating organized Islam into the existing system will be one of Germany's most significant political issues. As detailed, the struggle for recognition of the Turkish-Islamic organizations has gained momentum recently, and the discussions on how to integrate them have also come to the fore. In this frame, the concept of path dependence explains why the Muslim communities in the country could not meet the recognition conditions and the reasons for the crisis experienced at that point. As the main findings of this article indicate, the initial structures of the organizations established in Germany resist the change and localization, which prevents them from evolving in line with the requirements of the recognition system. Thus, the transnational linkages formed with the initial decisions have become stronger over time and reached a point where they cannot be cut today. This situation has led to the indexing of recognition processes to the course of the relations between the two states. The negativities created by this situation were seen recently with the loss of the progress in the frame of recognition. In parallel to the main argument of this study, the role of rising anti-Islamism in these results is undeniable, but it is clear that the organizational structures based on transnational ties, which were created as a product of short-term interests in the initial situation, make this even more complicated. As a result, Turkish-Islamic organizations' structure contradicts legal requirements and provides ample material for the hostile political atmosphere. However, if the recognition processes had been foreseen at the beginning, situations that contradicted the basic norms in the structural sense would not have

occurred, and the problems related to the political atmosphere could have been overcome more easily. Nevertheless, Germany and Turkish-Islamic organizations cannot sustain the current situation. At this point, we can argue that the common platforms that mosque associations can establish are essential in recognition efforts, and thus they can be relatively exempt from the adverse effects of the past.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

There is no conflict of interest with any institution or person within the scope of this study.

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Avrupa İslamı Söyleminin Almanya'ya Yansımaları ve Almanya'da Türk-İslam'ın Tanınması Meselesi[*]

Mahmut Mazlum[**]

Öz

Türk-İslam bugün tarihte hiç olmadığı kadar Avrupa'nın bir parçası haline gelmiştir. Bu durumun temel sebebi olan Türk göçmenlerin dini kurumları ise özellikle Almanya'da bu durumu resmiyete dökmek ve eşit haklar ele edebilmek için uzunca bir süredir mücadele etmektedirler. Bu çalışma temel olarak mezkur tanınma sürecini, Avrupa İslamı şeklinde ifade edilen kavramın Almanya'ya yansımaları ile birlikte ele almakta ve tanınma süreçlerinin başarısız olmasının sebeplerini irdelemektedir. Her ne kadar İslam çevresinde oluşan siyasi atmosfer, olumsuz durumun ilk akla gelen sebebi olsa da, ortadaki tek sorun bu değildir. Bu bağlamda çalışmamız toplanan ampirik yığının işaret ettiği tanınmanın önündeki çok seslilik, yapısal yetersizlikler ve siyasal etkenler gibi sorunların temeline tarihsel kurumsalcı bir bakış açısı ile yaklaşarak özgün bir iddia ortaya atmaktadır. Buna göre Türk-İslam'ın Almanya'da tanınmasının önündeki engeller başlangıç durumunda oluşturulan transnasyonel bağlantıların sebep olduğu "izlek bağımlığının" bir sonucudur.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Türk-İslam, Almanya'da İslam, DİTİB, İslam'ın Tanınması.

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Размышления о европейском мусульманском дискурсе и вопрос о признании турецкого ислама в Германии[*]

Махмут Мазлум [**]

Аннотация

Турецкий ислам сегодня стал частью Европы в большей степени, чем когда-либо. Турецкие иммигранты и их религиозные институты являются основной причиной этой новой ситуации, и они пытаются легализовать свою принадлежность своими требованиями о признании, особенно в Германии. В статье в основном рассматривается этот процесс с акцентом на размышления о дискурсе европейского ислама на немецкой сцене и делается попытка понять причины нынешнего кризиса вокруг признания турецкого ислама. Несмотря на то, что нынешнее восприятие ислама в принимающих странах является основной причиной для многих, эта статья подходит к проблеме с исторической институционалистской (HI) точки зрения и развивает дальнейшие аргументы. Анализ эмпирических данных показывает, что отсутствие единого голоса в мусульманском обществе, структурная неэффективность исламских организаций и политизация вопросов, связанных с исламом, могут считаться препятствиями в рамках признания. Однако концепция HI, основанная на зависимости от пути, позволяет этой работе выйти за рамки данных лежащих на поверхности проблем и выдвигает на первый план транснациональные связи, созданные в процессах основания этих институтов, как основную причину неудачи.

Ключевые слова

Турецко-исламский, ислам в Германии, DITIB (Diyanet İşleri Türk-İslam Birliği), признание ислама.

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