Chapter 8

The Role of Mosques in the Transformation From Transnational Spaces to Muslim Cultural and Consumption Spaces

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ABSTRACT

Migrations lead people with various ethnic origins, religions, and consumption cultures to live together. Religious places are special and of great importance in Islam, as in other religions. Turks experience a process of transformation into Euro-Turks in Western Europe, especially in Germany. Mosques have played a significant role in the process of migration and the transformation of migrants into Euro-Turks. In these countries, mosques have become institutions that provide cultural and social services as well as being sanctuaries. In Germany, mosques have been transnational spaces that provide spiritual and social services since their first appearance. Over time, these transnational spaces have become Muslim cultural and consumption spaces offering a wider variety of services. This study found that the generation of transnational spaces began with the establishment of Barbaros Mosque in 1969, and that the Muslim Cultural and Consumption Spaces became legitimate with the establishment of the DITIB Central Mosque (2018) in Cologne, Germany.

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INTRODUCTION

Migration has caused both historical and class-related shifts in today’s societies, and migrants have become permanent rather than temporary residents of their host countries (Başkurt, 2009). Whether the residence is permanent, temporary or changes have observed in migrants’ sense of belonging and its reflections. The sense of belonging in transnational communities and the transnational spaces they (Çağlar, 2001) generate have become permanent parts of migration and the host country. Faist (2010) indicates that transnationalism refers to migrants’ long-term connections to countries. Its more commonly known meaning, however, covers not only communities but also all social entities such as transnational networks, groups and organizations. Faist (2003) identifies four types of transnational social fields: small groups, private kinship systems, transnational problems or issues, and transnational communities and organizations. Migration establishes new connections between communities in these spaces. The transnational theory attempts to explain these connections, which go beyond the borders of nations and societies based on transnationalism and transnational communities. The human-oriented approach focuses on the virtual communities established by people who have to live in separate nations. Transnationalism was developed as an alternative to the unilateral perspective in studies of migration, and it includes third generation migrants, considering the migration experiences that connect ethnic origins and host countries above the level of nations. This approach focuses on transnational social spaces where migration occurs. Transportation and communication technologies facilitate and expand migration movements as well as allowing migrants to maintain relatively easier and closer relationships with their countries of origin (Castles & Miller, 2008).

The transnational social areas of migrants show that migration and remigration are not definitive and irrevocable decisions and that transnational life can be a strategy for survival and well-being. Even migrants and refugees who reside in foreign countries for a long time strengthen their transnational connections. These connections may have a more informal structure such as domestic or family ties or maybe industrialized as the political parties in various host countries (Faist, 2003).

Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004) used the concept of transnational social fields where new resources are produced and various international networks intersect, referring to Bourdieu’s concept of social fields. Transnational social fields emerge thanks to the existence of two main factors (Faist, 2003). The first is that transnational spaces are a direct result of migration, which means international migration creates transnational spaces with the contribution of globalization. The second is possible when there is a space between the origin and host countries where a circular transformation involving not only the migrants’ mobility, but also the goods, knowledge, symbols, cultural practices, and particularly, relationships and dynamics are reproduced (Mahler, 1998; Vertovec, 2004; Faist, 2003). Migration causes people with various ethnic origins, religions and consumption cultures to live together voluntarily or compulsorily. These compulsory or voluntary conditions directly affect the lifestyles of migrants and the people in the host country.

Migration and space are intertwined, and spaces are now regarded as the proof of migrants’ visibility in their host society. People feel the spaces beyond perceiving them physical realities. They become attached to them and define their sense of self through spatial variables. People bond with the places where they live, attach meanings to them, and their identities are determined by their environments. The cultures, lifestyles, products and consumption of migrants contribute to the evolving identities of the spaces where they interact socially and economically. As an important component of culture, religion plays an important role in migration and consumption.
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