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Immigration and Socio-Spatial Segregation – Opportunities and Risks of Ethnic Self-Organisation¹

Abstract: For decades there has been controversial discussion in Germany about the effects of the socio-spatial concentration of ethnic Turkish immigrants. Despite repeated and paradoxical urban and integration policy debates, empirical knowledge is lacking about the day-to-day internal life of the Turkish community, decisive in identifying the many-faceted transformation processes to which it is subject. These processes began with adoption of the family reunion policy and have continued to this day. With reference to an empirical study conducted in a deprived neighbourhood, the article shows what impacts transformation processes have on the most important rallying points – Turkish mosques and men's cafés. Confronted by global, national, and local conditions, the traditional institutions from the country of origin find their self-conception changing. The two institutions react in different ways to the social and economic decline of the neighbourhood. The result is the emergence of diaspora mosques and cafés. While mosques have developed into multifunctional centres, men's cafés take on more diversified forms. They reflect the local consumer culture of the excluded population where drugs, gambling, and prostitution also have their place.

Introduction

In recent decades, international migration has increased strongly owing to development in the economic and technological fields and in communication (cf. general treatment Han 2006). In Europe, transnational migration has led, especially in Germany, to the emergence of a pluralistic society (cf. Richter 2005, 3). The organised recruitment of labour migrants after the Second World War resulted in the development of relatively autonomous migration flows that have continued to this day (cf. Sassen 2000, 154 ff.). Germany has meanwhile become the third-largest host country in the world (cf. Deutsche Gesellschaft für die Vereinten Nationen 2006, 83).

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Migration processes are reflected in the cityscape, especially in large urban agglomerations (cf. *Beauftragte der Bundesregierung für Migration, Flüchtlinge und Integration* 2005, 11). Owing to economic policy decisions, discrimination (cf. Tissot 2007, 11), housing and local government policy factors, as well as individual preferences, the proportion of immigrants in socially and spatially disadvantaged residential areas is markedly higher. At the local level, the younger population is even tending to increase (cf. Krummacher/Waltz 2001, 5). The historical and social roots of these residential areas make it more difficult for social, cultural, and symbolic capital to accumulate there (cf. Bourdieu 1998, 159 ff). The social and economic integration of residents is a major challenge for integration and urban policy.

Ethnic Self-Organisation – Compensating Socio-Spatial Deprivation

In spite of socio-spatial deprivation, conditions in these residential areas cannot be compared either quantitatively or qualitatively with those prevailing in French, let alone American cities. The repercussions of deprivation are cushioned not only by the authorities but also through self-organised activities of the immigrant community. Co-ethnic systems are to be understood as an institutional response to the material and social challenges (cf. Heckmann 1992, 98 ff).

In the urban and migration sociology debates on the impacts and context effects of ethnic segregation on the integration process, paradoxical hypotheses are advanced. On the one hand, they are claimed to have an integrative function and on the other to play a negative role (cf. Häußermann 2007, 48 f.). The paradox cannot be eliminated by differentiating between the short and long-term effects of ethnic residential neighbourhoods, i.e., but drawing a distinction between functional and structural segregation (cf. Häußermann/Siebel 2007, 89). For this does not solve the problem. The number of people with an immigrant background is increasing, and shortcomings in systemic integration are apparent. That ethnic residential areas will not “go away,” that they exhibit a high degree of persistence is evident not only from economic and social developments in Germany but also from experience in all other immigration countries.

Shift in Perspective: The Dynamics and Functions of Ethnic Self-Organisation in Local Everyday Life

In view of this situation, it is the task of urban and migration research in Germany to examine the internal life of the community and, in particular, ethnic self-organisation in

everyday life in order to obtain a more comprehensive socio-cultural and urban-sociological picture. For the multifarious associational and organisational structures at the local level constitute a key component of the everyday social and spatial environment. This article concentrates on two Turkish infrastructural facilities in a district of Duisburg that are particularly important for societal integration: Turkish mosques and men's cafés. The origins, historical and current functions of these institutions in local everyday life and their transformation in the course of neighbourhood history are discussed on the basis of a stage model.

a) Stage of Recruitment: Partial Integration and Low Public Participation

The development of Turkish self-organisation in Germany has been accompanied by societal, local, and individual factors. Developments in the immigrants' country of origin have also played a determining role, since they accompany the process of ethnic self-organisation at all stages in the host country. With reference to the first stage, we recall that the country of origin of the ethnic Turkish immigrants experienced a first military putsch provoked by the deteriorating domestic political crises in 1960 (cf. Steinert 1995, 305; Hütteroth/Höhfeld 2002, 26). Under these conditions, the posting of labour abroad promised to bring foreign exchange transfers, to provide labour migrants intent on eventually returning home with new skills, and to obviate possible social conflicts in Turkey due to high unemployment (cf. Akkaya et al. 1998, 305). Measures to avoid or mitigate the social, cultural, economic, and societal problems facing compatriots abroad were not taken – an omission that ethnic Turkish labour migrants themselves sought to remedy in the course of the migration process. For no cultural and social care was provided for Turkish immigrants by the host country, either. The “guest workers,” it was assumed, were a merely transitory phenomenon without social follow-up costs. In the publicity and political “warm-up phase,” particular emphasis was placed on “economic necessity” and “temporary labour migration (flexibility reserves)” to avoid opposition in German society (cf. Herbert 2001, 202 ff.).

Since permanent settlement was not planned, no ethnic infrastructure developed in the neighbourhood during this early stage. Most important were job opportunities in industry, which also provided accommodation in unattractive company housing (cf. Eryilmaz 1998, 171). The poor quality of housing encouraged immigrants to gather in public squares, in railway stations² and on the street, and aroused a desire to escape irksome supervision and observation by hostel directors and other residents (cf. Reimann 1987, 176 ff.).

2 Duisburg main railway station is still a social venue for the first generation, since it has symbolic character.

Migration always means a change in the social and cultural frame of reference, and for pioneer immigrants it poses a risk of communicative and social isolation. Separation from one's social network, language barriers, and adjustment to different eating habits can be experienced as particularly oppressive (cf. Borris 1974, 68). In this first stage, the need for orientation and protection was hence very pronounced. Nevertheless, at first no co-ethnic systems were established to satisfy social and cultural needs, for immigrants intent on returning home integrate only to the extent "necessary to attain the goals that provoked migration and which appears acceptable in the context of the continuing ties with the country of origin" (Heckmann 1992, 109). This partial integration was reflected in the provisional prayer rooms in hostels. They offered an alternative for satisfying religious needs, being set up by Muslim immigrants in attics or cellars. There was no qualified, theologically trained imam. In spite of their educational limitations, pioneer immigrants with greater religious competence assumed this role.

b) First Structural Elements of Self-Organisation and Ostensible Homogeneity

On 12 March 1971, the Turkish military intervened for the second time (cf. Weiher 1978, 148 ff.; Bozdemir 1988, 145 ff). The unstable economic and political conditions in their home country influenced the plans of Turkish immigrants to return. Political developments were also an important reason for family reunion, since Turkish fathers wanted to keep their children out of political conflicts. With the implementation of family reunion from 1974, the accumulation of social capital in the host country proceeded apace (cf. Haug 2000). These family and neighbourly relations from the context of origin ensured the necessary communicative substructure for the establishment of associations among Turkish immigrants. Accommodation in company housing was brought to an end, and public socio-cultural life came to the fore. In the course of chain migration, new needs developed in the neighbourhood, such as the religious education of the children or recreational activities, for which solutions had to be found in the host country. Thus a conscious process of reflection began among pioneer immigrants which they would not have sought in single life.

The institutional answer to the new social, cultural, and material challenges in the Duisburg district followed in 1974 with the founding of a mosque. This institutionalised the norms and values of the home country. As historical immigration processes have shown, churches are among the first institutions to be set up in the new country (cf. Hertzberg 1996, 22 f). This depends among other things on freedom of religion being guaranteed by the host country, permitting immigrants to organise their religious life in accordance with their own wishes (cf. Bretting 1992, 135 ff.; Bade 2002, 17). The places of worship built symbolised the establishment of the immigrants in their new home. Their importance is not restricted to the religious aspect; they also

exercise an attraction on non-religious immigrants because of their social function. For immigrants to North America in the 18th century, for example, German churches performed an important function in helping pioneers to integrate (cf. Längin 1983, 30). The first community centre in the Duisburg district performed a similar integrative function. Ethnic Turkish immigrants rented a former restaurant and restored it at their own expense.

The demand for a social venue in the district was met at about the same time with the establishment of the first Turkish men's café. The café became an important meeting place for ethnic Turkish men, especially the young. Since the isolation and insecurity provoked by immigration often led families to restrict the flexibility and freedom of their children, the café offered parents an alternative (cf. Lajios 1998, 14).

The two new structural elements were, however, reduced to their protective and orientation functions; the politico-religious aspects were irrelevant. For the confrontation with an alien societal order provoked recourse to familiar cultural patterns and strengthened the identity of origin. The need for orientation and security was satisfied by establishing community structures (cf. Seufert 1998, 227). In particular, these structures had a self-help function in the early years of immigration, since immigrants needed orientation in almost all areas of life. In the face of unknown social structures, Turkish labour migrants huddled still closer together in this phase (cf. Sezer 1991, 49). For this reason, during the founding stage of ethnic institutions, (ostensible) homogeneity prevailed among immigrants in spite of the great diversity.

c) Stage of Segmentation and Differentiation

Owing to persistent political tensions, the Turkish military intervened for the third time on 12 September 1980 (cf. Dilipak/Dönemi 1991, 253 ff.; Steinbach 2000, 49 ff.). Conditions in the home country thus offered no real incentive to return.³

At this stage, German aliens policy made the cardinal mistake of failing to recognise the objective immigration process and adopted a restrictive and paradoxical course on integration. By failing to accelerate the integration process and political participation by immigrants, the government favoured a renewal of ethnization⁴ within the Turkish community. The renewal of self-description resulted just as much from the experience of exclusion in the home country and the host country, to compensate which those affected finally sought inclusion in other social systems. Depending on the systemic

3 Only recently, the Turkish military interfered in the presidential elections provoking new elections. This demonstrates that, despite reforms in Turkey, the military holds the reins of power. The military even constitute a caste of their own with its own business enterprises. Turkey is thus also described as a "military democracy."

4 The current Kurdish conflict in Germany is also to be seen in this context.

context, regional, national, or denominational origins have been emphasised (cf. Muti 2001, 82 ff.). This increase in the size of the immigrant group (chain migration) and fluctuation in the district contributed to the process in this phase, since there was now greater scope for internal differentiation.

The cleavages and internal differentiations from the context of origin were first of all reproduced in the unified religious community. This was provoked by a dispute between two Turkish organisations about control of the independent community. For from the end of recruitment in 1973, various Turkish associations sought to stop the gap in services for immigrants and to win them for their ideas (cf. Franz 1997, 139). The conflict in the independent unified community between a political grouping (Grey Wolves) and a religious grouping (Süleymancis) was decided by a vote in favour of the latter.

The conflicts also ran counter to the (ostensible) homogeneity in the first café in the district, which “dissolved” to begin with along political lines. Political polarisation was also furthered by political dissidents from Turkey who had fled the country after the putsch. The freedom to engage in political agitation in Germany and the ethnic colony gave them scope for continued involvement in politics. These actors exerted a decisive influence on the Turkish organisational landscape, focusing more strongly on the society of origin. For parties banned in Turkey, Germany offered new possibilities. Apart from exploiting the freedom of political agitation, they could tap new sources of finance.

In the course of the 1980s and 1990s, other distinguishing characteristics like regional origin, lifestyles, ethnic group (Turks, Kurds, West-Thracians) and denominations gained greater importance in the café milieu. Community social organisation on regional lines was also increasingly apparent in Germany cities. This phenomenon had a tradition in big Turkish cities like Istanbul in the aftermath of rural migration. After arriving in the cities, people preserved and cultivated the customs of their regions of origin and religious denominations by setting up associations and foundations. At the same time, the organisations provided their members with economic and political support (cf.): “... over 1,000 immigrant associations of Anatolians, including cultural and religious centres of the Alawites, associations of Romelians (East Thracians) and Crimean Tatars, cultural associations of the Khazars and Tatars, Circassians and other Caucasians, Albanians and Bosniacs. ... These ethnic communities, just like the various denominations (Sunnis, Alawites) and religious groups (Greek Orthodox and Armenians, Jews and Yazidi), seek to maintain endogamy” (ibid. 36). In the diaspora, these social community organisations have a primarily social function, since they perform important integration tasks (language promotion, etc.) and support the home town in Turkey with donations (ambulances, wheelchairs, etc.).

d) Stage of Accommodation and Normalisation

From the beginning of this stage, Turkish mosques and cafés increasingly opened up to local processes while the orientation of the context of origin weakened without quite disappearing. Various factors contributed to this process: social estrangement from the home country, fading identity of origin, and (unconscious) symbolic identification with the increasingly potent immigrant society (co-ethnic systems). Although government aliens policy scarcely promoted the integration of immigrants, local everyday life forced Turkish organisations in this phase to concern themselves more closely with socio-spatial conditions. In the Duisburg district under study, de-industrialisation, the rise in (youth) unemployment and the rate of social assistance recipients, and the arrival of further groups of immigrants (war refugees, ethnic German immigrants from eastern Europe, asylum seekers), educational difficulties among immigrant children, etc. brought a particular accumulation of problems. The consequences of this new social configuration, in the form of family conflicts, alcohol and drug consumption in public places, are “to this day to be seen as a clear indication of the loss of behavioural norms and rules characteristic of ‘normal’ social life in the district” (Hübner 2006, 16).

The cumulative decline of the district has now set a transformation process in motion in immigrant institutions, provoking changes in their self-conception. In the course of this process, the mosque associations have developed from purely religious institutions into multi-functional facilities. The Turkish mosques were able to develop such a new conception of themselves as grass roots organisations only in the diaspora. For, although immigration is a source of economic, social, and cultural innovation, the host country can play this role for immigrants, too. This shift in orientation in the third stage is not the outcome of any official “organisation line.” It is rather involvement at the local level that imposes a new institutional response to the accumulating material and social problems. The wish to emerge from the so-called backyard mosques and present themselves in the district in symbolic buildings is also a sign of this change. With such buildings, immigrants want to show that they regard themselves as a permanent part of society (cf. John 2000, 268).

The economic and social decline of the social space also affected the Turkish cafés, where the transformation process took on an even more varied form. The most striking characteristic was the far-reaching depoliticisation of the Turkish establishments. They are frequented not by political intellectuals and activists but largely by workers and the unemployed. Like the mosques, the cafés have opened their doors to local processes and have developed away from their traditional self-conception. Owing to their active concern with local conditions, café habitués adopted new coping strategies for mitigating their socio-spatial deprivation. Since integration also proceeds via collective processes, the café performs a special function in the social space. It is above all an information exchange (job opportunities, housing market), a place for discussion and

sociability. Since the cafés differ strongly in terms of a range of criteria and have accordingly integrated themselves in different ways into everyday life in the city, they offer both favourable and risky solutions. What is decisive is how, given the limited freedom of choice, groups themselves choose to make use of the material, social, and cultural resources at their disposal. If in precarious life situations, recourse is taken to regressive solutions like addiction, violence, uncontrolled hedonistic consumption, or illegal activities, this can have a destructive effect on family life and set in motion a negative life career that reinforces exclusion (cf. Hohm 2003, 61 ff.). In this context it is interesting to note that some establishments have not been run on traditional lines since the 1990s but have come to accommodate illegal gambling, dealing in stolen goods, and prostitution involving Eastern European women.

Although certain practices and extreme aspects in the café milieu have a destructive impact, the local social rationale should not be ignored (cf. Keim 2001, 68). It is overlooked that neighbourhood impacts force residents to develop their own local survival strategies in order to maintain their self-esteem (cf. *ibid.*). The experience of deprived population groups of being excluded from urban resources and thus from consumption opportunities can increase the potential for conflict in cities (cf., for example, Karstedt 2000, 23 ff.). In the Duisburg neighbourhood, conflict potential is cushioned by excluded immigrants setting up their own local consumer culture with gambling, petty crime, and Eastern European “waitresses.” Deprived groups bridge the gap created by social and economic exclusion that separates them from consumer society by satisfying their needs on illegal markets. The cushioning of economic and social exclusion processes by illegal markets therefore gives illegal and illegitimate activities an air of legitimacy (cf. Schweer 2002, 190 ff.).

The Future of Ethnic Self-Organisation

The four stages in the development of the ethnic colony – exemplified by Turkish mosques and cafés in Duisburg – show that, in the course of neighbourhood history, the colony emancipates itself from the context of origin and that its self-conception changes in interaction with local conditions. Immigrant institutions do not constitute closed systems; they are integrated into local, national, and transnational processes. Given the economic and social setting, the developments observed in mosques and cafés are to be seen as a “normalisation process.”

At present, ethnic institutions are in a transitional phase, and it remains to be seen what the next stage will be. Experience in all other immigration countries points to the high persistence of ethnic communities. Global, national, and local developments will continue to contribute to the topicality of this phenomenon in Germany. Owing to economic and social developments in financially weak cities, the demands made on

local authorities with regard to integration will increase, so that they will have to draw on all the integration resources available. Among the major challenges to be faced are the stabilisation of residential areas and the extension of residents' participation opportunities and scope for action on the socio-spatial level. For the residential environment is becoming increasingly important for integration in the face of societal disintegration. Two development scenarios can be conceived, depending on mutual opening, interaction, and learning processes: either the functioning of immigrant organisations will stagnate, so that they could in some cases even regress, or they will strengthen and thus be able to make a positive contribution.

The positive scenario depends essentially on three factors: recognition, reinforcement, and involvement. Recognition is the precondition for all measures, since it is the basis for stabilising the affected urban areas and their residents (cf. Krummacher/Waltz 1996). In Germany, community formation by immigrants is not understood as an important element in the integration process but rather as an obstacle to integration. Integration achievements and potentials are ignored. Since political and media discourses are very efficacious, their tone must change. So far the downside has been overemphasised. Targeted campaigns to improve images are to be recommended. Recognition also implies acceptance and support for the residential preferences of immigrants, since the networks promoting integration concentrate in certain neighbourhoods. In view of the assumed accumulation and the spatial concentration of immigrant organisations, integration measures must adopt a socio-spatial perspective. Local government integration policy has the task of reinforcing the integrative function of ethnic networks to enable them to become involved in and make a positive contribution to the development of the city as a whole. Important areas of action include political and cultural participation opportunities in the neighbourhood, youth and women's affairs, as well as senior citizens' work. The latter is important because ethnic concentration is becoming more important for older immigrants, in particular, owing to favourable access to the local infrastructure.

In future, local authorities will have to use this potential and these resources by stepping up civic engagement and the independent societal activities of immigrant organisations by integrating them into local government policy. Access to public political life can enhance the problem-solving capacity of immigrant organisations. Their part in service production at the local level and their participation in planning and decision-making, i.e., their client role, will increase (cf. Bogumil/Holtkamp 1999).

Integrative and disintegrative functions are to be identified as points of departure for reinforcement and for preventing counterproductive developments as in the café milieu. In particular, the stabilisation of marginalisation processes needs to be halted to ensure the spatial and social mobility of immigrants. A first step could be to achieve cooperation with local immigrant associations to reach deprived persons. The discussion to date on detaching immigrants from their self-help structures and

communities is approaching impasse. For one thing, such an individualization strategy requires ensuring that immigrants are integrated into the welfare state network. Under present economic and social conditions, however, this is by no means the case, since the relegation of immigrants to the underclass in areas characteristic for systemic integration is intensifying. Especially for children and young people and for immigrants who have lost their livelihood in the course of economic restructuring, ethnic self-organisation is becoming more important in social spaces with their social and functional mix. On the other hand, a shift in perspective is needed in Germany. Integration is still measured by, among other things, the degree to which people have become detached from their own community. Ethnic self-organisation is covered by the diffuse and ideological concept of “parallel society,” which is in essence a denigration of plurality and a pseudo-scientific refusal of integration (cf. Nowak 2006; 2007, 165 ff.) In pursuit of a “defensive policy,” social closure has been reinforced rather than the structural permeability of immigrant organisations. But cultural difference in the life world and structural integration are not mutually exclusive in a postmodern society. The role of immigrant associations as intermediary institutions is not to be reduced to religious and cultural aspects; they offer many paths to social, cultural and political participation. All local government policy conceptions should recognise and use these approaches.

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