

*Research Article***A Debate on the Translation of Islam into Secular Morality-The Example of Islamic Religious Textbooks in Germany¹****Kemal İNAL²****Abstract**

This study is based on the debate by analysing the selected texts from textbooks used in German Islamic religious education. The theoretical debate and basis of this analysis is Habermas's approach to translation. In the case analysis as a methodological tool, the terms used to translate various Islamic concepts into secular morality were reconstructed. It became clear that the Islamic religious textbooks are conducive to democratization in a pedagogical-didactic way, insofar as they enable the learning subjects to engage in self-reflection, criticism, and interpretation through this translation process. However, some contradictions, tensions, and dilemmas of these textbooks also became evident. This shows that there are various problems in the integration of different religions as identities into a secular education system in Germany, which is a society of immigrants.

Keywords: Habermas, Islam, Translation, Morality, Textbook

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Introduction

In a text from a German Islamic religious textbook, teachers and pupils discuss the Prophet Muhammad among themselves. The question is whether the Prophet Muhammad can still be a “role model” for people today after 1400 years. The Muslim student Milana asks: “Could the Prophet have known back then what problems I have today?” (Ucar, 2019: 21). The teacher says “no”, but still thinks that the Prophet can be a role model for people today. Milana describes her own problem and asks how Muhammad can be a role model for her. Milana says that she wants to go on a summer vacation with her friend. But at the same time, the volleyball team has an important tournament and if she doesn’t go, the team could lose. Milana says the Prophet doesn’t know how to play volleyball, nor does he have a summer vacation, so she asks how he can be her role model. Milana’s problem, which represents a modern consciousness because she asks questions and takes a critical approach, questions the functionality of a sacred figure from the past under modern conditions. So the question is how religion can be used under modern conditions.

According to Habermas, religious intuitions should be translated into secular reason, morality or language in order to use religion as a valuable semantic storehouse of possible truths, a powerful source of social solidarity, and an explanation of moral sentiments to reduce conflict, achieve reconciliation, and learn from each other in modern society (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2006; Welker, 2010; Habermas, 2005; Areshidze, 2017; Finlayson, 2018). Roughly speaking, Habermas considered the translation of religious intuitions into secular reason necessary and useful for strengthening democracy (Habermas, 2005). Based on Habermas’ approach, this paper analyzes how this translation is carried out through some exemplary texts in German Islamic religious textbooks. After a literature review, Habermas’ theory of translation is presented. After explaining the methodology of the study, an analysis is made using sample texts from the textbooks, and finally some general conclusions are drawn.

The State of Research on Islamic Religious Education

In Europe and the USA, Islamic religious education (IRE) was the subject of intense debate following the armed attacks by radical Islamists in the West in the early 2000s (Berglund, 2013, p.3). These debates (about state support, inclusion in curricula, content, type of teaching, etc.) led to various pedagogical and didactic works in Western schools, such as curricula and textbooks. In the same period, critical analytical studies have also been conducted in non-Western countries on how Islam is taught in schools, especially through textbooks (e.g. Ghazi et al., 2011; Waghid, 2011; Abdella and Starrett, 2006). Several studies on university didactics in the European context (e.g. Aslan 2011; Aslan and Rausch 2013; El Bouayadi-van de Wetering Miedema, 2012; Wiedenroth-Gabler, 2019) have addressed various problems, focusing on the way Islam is presented in education and textbooks, on its relationship to democracy and modernization, and on its connection to secularism: how can Islam be taught in a more tolerant and peaceful way at school, what role can IRE play in reducing prejudice, what

possibilities are there for coexistence? Various normative methods have been proposed to solve such problems. Velden (2011), for example, proposed pedagogical, hermeneutical and didactic standards for dialogical teaching, which are necessary to uncover the different understandings of truth in the holy books that underlie Christian and Islamic religious education in Germany and to promote rapprochement between the two religions. Englert et al. (2019), who questioned what should be taught in Muslim and Jewish religious education, argued that there is an urgent need for religious education to teach a diversity of knowledge, rules and skills as well as to treat and support students as individuals. Saada and Haneen (2021) argued that an uncritical paradigm and pious discourse dominate religious education in Islamic and non-Islamic countries and proposed an alternative paradigm of critical Islamic religious education and a rationale for its relevance to life in modern/democratic, multi-faith societies.

Islam has been problematized in the context of religious education in Europe in recent years, mostly on a descriptive level. For example, 14 European countries have examined how Islam is addressed and taught in schools against the backdrop of labor migration and the ongoing refugee crisis (Franken and Gent, 2021), how Muslims are portrayed and described in Swedish religious education textbooks (Berglund, 2013, p. 167), it has been shown that the image of Islam conveyed by Islamic religious education teachers in Austria has some shortcomings when it comes to certain topics (rule of law, religious fanaticism, religiously motivated violence, gender roles) (Khorchide, 2009). Although the aforementioned studies have described the various problems well, they have lacked an analytical approach and a didactic methodology on how Islamic values can be transferred to the secular/democratic structure of Europe. This is all too understandable because many questions about IRE in Germany are still unanswered as IRE is a young academic field and subject that is still in the process of self-discovery and positioning itself as a very new pedagogical practice in this country (Twardella, 2012; Ucar & Danja, 2010; Yaşar, 2013; Sarıkaya, 2011; Sarıkaya, Ermert, & Ögertunç, 2019). There is an intense academic discussion to give direction to this nascent field, to enrich the didactic discourse and to further develop both the theoretical and practical aspects of IRE; also, the concrete teaching of IRE is being explored from a variety of perspectives. For example, the main problems of IRE in terms of theory, empiricism and practice (Sarıkaya & Aygün, 2016), theological and didactic issues related to various topics chosen for teaching (creationism, evolution, Sharia, theology, media, images, evil, life after death, etc. Ulfat & Ghandour, 2020) as well as teaching texts and curricula (Mohr, 2006), the legal situation (Dietrich, 2006), the compatibility of Islam with democratic principles (Nagel, 2005), discrimination and recognition (Willems, 2020), possibilities and opportunities for cooperation in the context of Islamic peacebuilding and interreligious education (Schröder, 2020; Altmeyer et al, 2020). As Ulfat (2021) emphasizes, fundamental aspects of religious didactics were analyzed in the course of this development. According to Ulfat, IRE in Germany is based on students' self-development in the sense of developing their own, reasoned and responsible perspective on their worldview and questions of faith. The acquisition of ambiguity tolerance in IRE is fundamental to the development of one's own position. Such subject-oriented religious

education is reflected in the basic didactic principles. In this respect, there are parallels to Protestant religious education. Rothgangel (2011, p.300), for example, argues that one of the educational standards of religious education from a Protestant perspective in Germany is that pupils acquire a “self-image”. Students who develop a self-image can perceive their strengths and weaknesses in their own life situation and reflect on their own life path.

In all these studies, three objectives for religious education in general and IRE in particular emerge: the teaching of faith, the acquisition of good morals and the education of modern (critical and rational) people. How these three goals can be brought together and what perspectives on secular life can emerge from religion and in what way is the most important question awaiting an answer. Textbooks are crucial materials in this respect. “As the most visible aspects of a curriculum, textbooks are often considered the main script that shapes the teaching and learning processes” (UNESCO, 2017, p.7). Textbooks have the potential to educate, develop and promote, but the educational potential of textbooks requires the accurate reproduction of cultural values and the acquisition of intercultural awareness (Kodliuk et al. 2021, p.3). On the other hand, textbooks are effective in raising awareness of others’ beliefs and developing understanding and respect for diversity of beliefs. “Textbooks can help to combat prejudice, present pluralism as an asset, and encourage mutual understandings based on respect for the right to express one’s beliefs. They contribute to promoting tolerance, critical thinking in the face of divisive stereotyping and discrimination, and the independence of individual choice” (UNESCO, 2017, p.9).

Textbooks are linked to the curriculum, but have a much greater influence on religious education than the curriculum. Textbooks are the “calling cards” of religious education, with which pupils, parents and schools make the scope and concerns of religious education visible (Jäggle, 2011, p.292). A good textbook is therefore of crucial importance for religious education. A good textbook for religious education is not only a solid teaching tool, but can also have the potential to change students’ worldview in the area of religion (Buchanan, 2008, p.755). Religious education textbooks also help students organize religious data and critique religious knowledge (Engebretson, 2000). With the help of textbooks, students learn about the motivations behind other people’s actions and the principles that guide their lives (Shaposhnikova et al., 2021, p.816). Textbooks thus specify curricula, bring them to life and situate them in the experiences of everyday life. How textbooks do this, however, is a question of pedagogy and didactics. When it comes to religion, the question of how to translate a spiritual realm into everyday life, i.e. into secular language and morality, becomes even more important. This is an important question of education and concerns both the content and the methodology of religious education. The present study aims to add a new dimension to the didactics of religion by analyzing how the mechanism of translation (in terms of Habermas’ theory) is used in IRE- a hitherto unexplored issue.

Habermas' Theory of the Translation of the Religious

In his post-secular theory of religion, Habermas explains how religion can be used as “an important source of spiritual explanations” and “an articulation of moral sentiments and solidary intuitions” (Habermas, 2009, pp.76-77) for modern life and secularism. Although he takes a critical stance towards religion, he advocates a dialogical position that is open to learning from, contributing to and cooperating with religion (Habermas, 2005, pp.254-255). According to the philosopher, if religious freedom is guaranteed, it prevents the political danger posed by differing views on the one hand and, on the other, provides an institutional framework for religious communities seeking a place in the modern system to solve their own problems (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2006; Habermas, 2005, p.306; Areshidze, 2017). Habermas thus proposes entering into a dialog with religion and listening to it so that religious insights into the normative content of the communicative structure of socio-cultural ways of life can be absorbed and translated into secular language (Welker, 2010, p.469). To this end, it is necessary to think post-metaphysically. Post-metaphysical thinking, which remains agnostic towards religion, aims at mutual agreement and engaged learning between faith and reason; it therefore rejects a narrow understanding of scientific reason and the exclusion of religious doctrines from the genealogy of reason, but insists on the difference between certainties of faith and claims to validity that can be publicly criticized. Post-metaphysical thinking thus avoids the rationalist assumption of being able to decide for oneself which aspects of religious doctrines are rational and which are irrational, since the content that reason appropriates through translation should not be lost to faith (Habermas, 2005; Areshidze, 2017).

However, there are conditions under which this translation should take place: First, matters of faith must not come into conflict with the autonomous progress of secular knowledge (Habermas, 2005, p.143). Secondly, in order to avoid this contradiction, religious citizens should and can learn new modern epistemic approaches in the face of the cognitive challenges of modernity. To this end, secular citizens should also cooperate with believers and contribute to the “self-reflexive overcoming of a secularistically hardened and exclusive self-understanding of modernity” (ibid., p.145). In a sense, Habermas invites both sides to a common territory, namely the democratic public sphere, to reconcile on the basis of reason so that they can meet and agree in the epistemic world of knowledge of modernity. In order to meet and reconcile on this common territory, religious citizens must be able to overcome their cognitive incompatibilities, but secular citizens must also be able to communicate with believers by recognizing that secular consciousness is not enough to understand believers. Understanding is not enough, they must also participate in these translation efforts. Habermas says that a liberal political culture should also expect its secular citizens to participate in efforts to translate relevant contributions from religious language into a publicly accessible language (ibid., p.322). Thirdly, according to Habermas, under the conditions of the secularization of society and worldview pluralism, religion must give up its claim to comprehensively shape life. In order to ensure the political integration of its citizens, the liberal state should not be content with the cognitive conformity of the religious value system with the mandatory laws of secular society, but should

also take measures to ensure the adaptation of religious communitarization to secular socialization (ibid., pp.319-320). Fourthly, the liberal state should not make the necessary institutional separation between religion and politics an unreasonable mental and psychological burden for its religious citizens, but religious citizens should accept this “institutional translation proviso” without having to divide their identity into public and private as soon as they participate in public discourse. “They should therefore be allowed to express and justify their convictions in religious language even if they cannot find secular translations for them” (ibid., pp.135-136). Fifth, believers “must have learned to place their own beliefs in a reflexively insightful relationship to the fact of religious and ideological pluralism, and they must have reconciled the knowledge privilege of the socially institutionalized sciences as well as the primacy of the secular state and universalist social morality with their faith” (Habermas, 2005, p.10) Habermas speaks here of the importance of cognitive approaches that can be acquired as a result of collective learning, a process that involves the modernization of religious consciousness through an epistemic transformation in response to the challenges of religious pluralism, modern science, positive law and profane morality (Stoeckl, 2017, p.36). Habermas argues that the modernization of religious consciousness, i.e. the development of the self-reflexive “epistemic attitude” (Habermas, 2005, p.143) of the religious subject, involves three steps: First, the religious must leave their own universe of discourse and encounter other religions and worldviews. Second, the secular must become independent of sacred knowledge and the institutionalized monopoly of modern scientific experts. Thirdly, secular reasons (reason) must take precedence in the political sphere (Stoeckl, 2017, p.36). In return, however, believers can express themselves in their own language, provided they have the quality of translation, i.e. the ability to translate their views into secular language. On the other hand, without a successful translation, there is no possibility for the content of religious voices to be included in the agenda and deliberations of political bodies and to be heard in the political process (Habermas, 2005, pp.137-138). This possibility must be created because religious traditions have “a special power of articulation” (ibid., p.137) to articulate moral judgments, especially in regard to vulnerable forms of human coexistence, and this potential makes religious discourse in political debate a serious vehicle for possible truth content, which can then be translated from the vocabulary of a particular religious community into a generally accessible language (ibid., p.137). In short, for Habermas, the condition of translation involves the transferability of religious values into secular language, reason and morality in modern forms.

Methodological Approach

To identify the population, I first determined the German federal states in which IRE is taught in primary, lower secondary, intermediate and grammar schools (a total of 31 books in eight federal states). After a preliminary investigation, I found that many of the texts in all of these textbooks contained elements of Habermas’ translation. From these texts, I selected 10 texts from 7 books that had the most suitable characteristics for analysis, i.e. they were historical or contemporary, seemed to be typical of Islam, contained pedagogical lessons, and conveyed certain messages. I subjected the selected texts as a unit of case to content analysis in order to understand the

translation of the content from one concept to another. Although there is no universally accepted method for analyzing textbooks (Pingel, 1999), content analysis is used as a popular form of text analysis in religious studies to identify and explain the characteristics of the messages embedded in the texts (Badzinski, Woods, & Nelson, 2021). Although content analysis involves systematic procedures such as categorizing and coding texts, I did not create specific categories and codes in my study due to the specifics of the problem (translation). Instead, I identified the concepts or terms in the content of each text that represent the source and target of translation. When selecting the texts in the books, I made sure that they were didactic-pedagogical materials with a simple structure and message. For the content analysis, I first summarized the content of the texts and then determined what the translation was about. I then interpreted each text in terms of Habermas' translation theory. The interpretation shows between which groups of terms the translation took place. Using an exemplary text, I have also explained- in the following section- a case in which the translation failed.

Empirical Findings and Analysis

The issues in the ten texts I have analyzed in this paper, including the text on Milana, provide a picture of how transfer, which is about the relationship and transitivity between religion (values) and morality (norms), can take place in the context of "translation". Let us now look at how translation takes place using case studies from textbooks.

The text "The Straight Path" is about choosing the right path in life. The book in which this text is found (Coşkun, Kurtbecer, Kesici, & Dağaslanı, 2018, p.77) was written for third-grade students. Three children stand at a crossroads and walk in three different directions: Which way should they choose? There are no signs, information or addresses indicating the paths. But it does say that there is a signpost that shows the right way to choose the general path of life: "The Koran tells us how to become good people and how to live peacefully with one another". In a moral sense, the Koran shows the "right path" (ibid., p.77). Thus, the three paths do not point to pluralism, the celebration of diversity and the existence of different alternatives, but rather to what choice *should be* made in the process of choosing the right path. A verse from the Koran makes this clear: "You lead to the straight path with this Koran" (ibid., p.77). Thus, the only way to be a good person in society and to live in peace is to live according to the Koran. In fact, the Koran is more of a "moral guide" than a code of law (Aslan, 2013, p.52). In this text, Islam is translated into secular life as morality. The transition from Islam as a particular value (faith) to the normative moral sphere (the right way) becomes constitutive of the entire sphere of discourse (general life).

In the text of a book (Shakir, 2019, pp.36-37) for 6th grade students, they are asked to imagine that an angel visits them in human form and are asked how they would react in this case. As it is of course known that angels and djinn trigger fear and anxiety in people, the pupils are asked why there are so many "scary stories" about

djinn in circulation. By asking students to formulate their arguments (“collect your arguments”) and discuss them in class (“discuss”), students are not expected to simply dismiss the topic as an article of faith, but to generate knowledge, develop new approaches and unleash their creativity, creating the opportunity for students to develop their own autonomous, creative and interpretive subjectivity. This also fulfills Habermas’ claim that religious citizens develop an “epistemic attitude” (Habermas, 2005, p.143) towards modernity. According to Habermas, cultural traditions become reflexive to the extent that they lose their unquestioned validity and open themselves up to criticism.

The text “Abdulkadir and the Robbers” in a book for third grade students (Coşkun, Kurtbecer, Kesici, & Dağaslanı, 2018, pp.80-81) tells the story of Abdulkadir Geylani, who lived in Iran. Abdulkadir told his mother that he wanted to study in Baghdad. His mother gave him permission on one condition: He must never lie. His mother has sewn a bag of gold into Abdulkadir’s shirt. Abdulkadir sets off for Baghdad with a caravan, but is stopped by bandits on the way. A bandit comes to Abdulkadir and asks him if he has anything valuable with him, and he says he has 40 gold coins. However, the bandits were impressed by Abdulkadir’s truthfulness, were ashamed, repented and returned the gold. Following the text, a verse from the Koran states that a Muslim must keep his word because he is accountable to Allah. In this historical parable, telling the truth (keeping one’s Word) is explained in terms of the responsibility that arises from a promise to Allah and not in terms of a moral judgment. The act of telling the truth is defined by the promise made to Allah. In secular morality, “obedience to God” is translated as “telling the truth”. The ethical principle in Habermas’s normative field is trustworthiness: to be trustworthy is to tell the truth on a universal basis. But of course, this text also has a didactic character: students are taught the virtue of truthfulness and faithfulness to words and the need to repent when doing something bad. For a Muslim child living in a secular society like Germany, it is good to feel responsible to God and to keep his promises in order to benefit positively from the semantic store of meaning of religion. However, human self-interest can prevent us from always telling the truth. In one of the explanations below the text, the question is posed as to what lesson can be drawn from history (“Find the lesson of history”; *ibid.*, p.81). The “drawing of lessons” can be a didactic act that enables the subjectivation of the students. By drawing a lesson instead of taking a lesson, the subject determines the boundaries of the lesson itself.

In the text “ Give right - Take right “ (Kaddor, Müller, & Behr, 2020, p.130), a text for fifth and sixth graders, the reasons and perspectives of a grandfather who is in a difficult situation due to his old age and health and is taken in by his daughter are described. The grandfather, who has undergone brain surgery, needs to be brought home for care and his daughter takes on this task. The grandchildren are very happy about the arrival of their grandfather, as they used to play with him all the time. But their mother warns her children: Grandpa can barely speak and can’t use his right hand. That’s why he needs help, not a game. One of the grandchildren gives up his room for his grandfather. A special hospital bed is bought so that grandfather can sleep comfortably. The message

of the text is to treat (grand)parents well on the basis of tolerance and responsibility. Therefore, the rules and difficulties of living together are explained here. This is also emphasized in the explanations when the students are asked to formulate rules that “facilitate living together” (ibid., p.131) and to read the relevant Qur’anic verses, which state that the Koran provides information on how to behave in such a situation. According to this verse, it is not only enough to serve Allah, but also to treat one’s (grand)parents well. Therefore, “servanthood” towards Allah is translated in secular language as “responsibility” (respect, care, attention, maintenance, etc.) towards one’s parents. While servanthood is a divine duty, responsibility is a moral duty and a “right” in daily life.

In the text “I believe that I will meet Allah on Judgement Day” in a book for primary school pupils (Khorchide, Yilmaz, & Döbber, 2015, p.44), Bilal asks Sarah: “How do you actually imagine paradise?” Sarah replies: “When I meet Allah on Judgement Day, I want to be able to put a lot of good things in my scales” (ibid., p.44). The explanatory text reads: “We prepare for the meeting with Allah just as we prepare for a test or a class test. Those who study hard and well will be rewarded with a good grade. And it will be similar with Allah. If we do a lot of good and believe firmly in Allah, we will be rewarded with paradise.” (ibid., p.44) Educational achievements in school life are therefore linked to and implemented in preparation for the encounter with God in the hereafter. It is said that “the good deeds” done in this world will be rewarded both in this world (successful performance in school lessons) and in the next world (by God in paradise, i.e. with something good). The “things” (deeds) are human actions or behaviors. It is explained here that people’s good deeds and bad deeds will be weighed on the scales on Judgment Day, and if the good deeds predominate, they will go to heaven, and if the bad deeds predominate, they will go to hell. Paradise is therefore the greatest reward. It is emphasized that God is the “most just judge” who pronounces the reward. The subordinate questions ask what good and bad things are, and the class is asked to discuss why there is a day of judgment after death. There is thus a transfer from religion to secular moral (good) action. “The good” as a universally codified ethical value is raised to the level of a moral norm through justice. So if the (divine) “heaven” in secular life is translated as “reward” and “good” as “goodness” (just actions) and it is said that this is the main object of judgment and the final moment, the normative judgment of secular/worldly life is in a certain way reduced to the divine.

The theme of the text titled “The Reward” in a book (Coşkun, Kurtbecer, Kesici, & Dağaslanı, 2018, pp.26-27) written for third grade students is charity in the context of planting trees. One day in Baghdad, the Caliph Harun Rashid disguised himself as a commoner and went out into the streets to observe how people lived. He asked an old man he met what he was doing. The old man says he is planting a tree. The caliph is astonished because he thinks that the old man cannot taste the fruit of the tree he has planted and tells him so. The old man says that his father planted the trees whose fruit he is eating today. Satisfied with this answer, Rashid gives the old man a bag of gold. The old man thanks Allah and says: “A tree bears its fruit in 10 or 20 years. But I was able to reap the fruits of my tree immediately” (ibid., p.27). Here we are told that planting a tree, which is coded as

charity, is rewarded by Allah, for “Allah rewards every good deed” (ibid., p.27). But how? As follows: “If a Muslim plants a tree and people eat from that tree, then the Muslim gets the reward as sadaqah from Allah” (ibid., p.27). Sadaqah translates as: performing a righteous deed in everyday life. Sadaqah or zakat is one of the five pillars of Islam. The condition of sadaqah is usually fulfilled by giving money to the poor in order to gain Allah’s favor. In this text, a Muslim receives a reward from Allah in the form of sadaqah because someone else eats the fruit of the tree he planted. Sadaqah is thus a reward that can be given and received in various forms in daily life, from money to fruits; it is a reward for good, right and beautiful things in daily life. Doing good, right and beautiful deeds in today’s life is the translation of the religious understanding of charity.

In a book at primary school level (Khorchide, 2012, p.31), the text “Allah helps people through us” shows that some people help those in need. In the first picture, Bilal helps a visually impaired man to cross the road at a crosswalk. In the second picture, Sarah feeds the ducks in the lake by throwing them food. In the third picture, Sarah’s father is giving bread to a poor person. Underneath the pictures is written: “Allah wants us to help others” (ibid., p.31). In the captions, readers are asked to close their eyes and think about the pictures and which picture/situation makes them feel good. In a further explanation, we are asked whether we have ever helped others and how we feel about it. The last explanation is: “Think about how Allah gives us humans love and mercy. Create a poster about this in class” (ibid., p.31). Here, “divine mercy” is translated as “earthly love”. This religiously influenced love can also manifest itself in solidarity in secular life. Even if this translation reveals a form of help in the non- religious sphere, this help as an act of an autonomous individual comes up against various limits. Of course, the Koran, which contains the words of God, determines the limits, but how it is limited in secular life is also open to interpretation, and the people appointed by God as caliphs (Coşkun, Kurtbecer, Kesici, & Dağaslanı, 2018, p.37) exercise this right to interpretation.

In the text “The Koran-the Manual for Our Lives” in a book for 3rd grade elementary school students (Coşkun, Kurtbecer, Kesici, & Dağaslanı, 2018, p.86), a father buys a toy helicopter for his children, but after the children assemble the parts of the helicopter, the helicopter does not start and they ask their father for help. The father learns how to assemble the helicopter from the instruction manual and starts the helicopter. This situation is explained in the text as follows: “You couldn’t see that without the instructions.” (ibid., p.86). The father says: “A manual sometimes shows us step by step how to move forward so that everything works well. We also have a guide for our lives, a signpost, don’t we?” (ibid., p.86). In the explanatory section, students are asked to talk about this fictional story and think about what would happen if they did not have a “guide” in their lives. This text emphasizes the importance of guidance and direction (“signpost”) through a technical toy. The message is that if you want to do something, you have to follow the instructions. While it says that in life one should follow the rules of God who has imposed duties on people, “God’s signpost” is translated into secular life as “follow the signpost”. Indeed, in the explanatory section (ibid., p.86), students are asked to think about what would happen

if there was no guide in their lives, and the idea is that there is a power (Allah) behind everything that guides our actions. The Koran also has the characteristic mentioned in the title of the text: “The manual for our lives”. Just as the introduction of a helicopter manual makes life technically easier for people, accepting Allah’s guidance in their lives will make their lives easier and more meaningful.

However, there are also examples where translation fails, or more precisely, where it is not possible. For example, in the text “The Test” in a book for 6th grade students (Shakir, 2019, pp.34-35), God wants to test the God-consciousness of his servants based on their faith in him, so he sends an angel disguised as a man to three needy men (a leper, a bald man and a blind man) and measures with his angel the results of his help to the three men, namely charity and gratitude. As a result of the divine help, the leper is healed, the bald man gets hair and the blind man begins to see. And all three are given a herd of animals. He sends his angel to each of them, the leper, the bald man and the blind man, to measure the moral result of this wealth. The first two do not help the angel, but the third does. The first two are then made bald and leprous again, but the blind man passes the test and lives happily ever after. Here, the test of gratitude is about the appreciation of what Allah has given. The test is the test of the servant. This test begins with the Prophet Abraham. How Prophet Abraham passed the test in the face of God who tested him is described with his willingness to sacrifice his son for God if necessary (Erkan, Lubig-Fohsel, Solgun-Kaps, & Ucar, 2018, p.88). However, it is unclear how gratitude to God as a test can be translated into everyday life. How can gratitude to God as the fulfillment of a divine debt in the form of a moral duty be transferred to interpersonal relationships? In such religious history texts, it seems quite difficult for students to get a lesson in formulating and solving contemporary problems and to transfer knowledge, values and experiences from the religious sphere into secular language.

Despite these and similar negative examples, the textbook authors in all books strive as ethnopedagogical translators to translate Islam into the Western context on a normative level, namely into an ethics of contemporary correct behavior, framed in a secular language and argumentation, as proposed by Habermas. It can be said that this endeavor reinforces a kind of cultural translation achieved through positive examples, conclusions and formulas.

Discussion and Conclusion

Carl Schmitt claimed that all important concepts of modern state theory are “secularized theological concepts”, and as an example he gave that “the omnipotent God” was secularized as “omnipotent lawgiver” (Schmitt, 1934, p.49). The act of secularizing theological concepts is a typical act of translation and involves what Habermas envisages, namely the translation of religious intuitions into secular reason (Habermas, 2005). This is necessary because, according to Adorno, no theological content that is not translated can survive. Every content must undergo the test of being transferred into the secular, profane sphere (Gordon, 2013, p.173). This test involves

the transformation of consciousness that is necessary for modernization in general, and this is exactly what has happened in the West. Since the Reformation, traditions and worldviews such as Christianity have been transformed into rational comprehensive doctrines under the reflexive pressure of modern living conditions (Habermas, 1998). According to Habermas, the distinctive feature of Western culture is the transformation of religious consciousness, which has enabled the religious members of this culture to come to terms with the normative claims of the secular state and to deal with their own truth claims in a “self-reflexive manner” (Habermas, 2005, p.143). To the extent that cultural traditions, including religion, become increasingly reflexive, they lose their self-evident truth claims and open themselves up to criticism. Thus, individuals are increasingly equipped with an abstract self-identity, make autonomous decisions and pursue individualized life projects. For religious citizens, according to Habermas, this requires the epistemic ability to view their own religious convictions reflexively from the outside and to relate them to secular views. In other words, religious citizens and communities must engage in hermeneutic self-reflection in order to develop an epistemic attitude towards the claims of other religions and worldviews, towards secular knowledge, especially scientific expertise, and towards the primacy of secular justifications in the political sphere (Walhof, 2013, p.228). The normative expectations of democratic citizenship thus require a learning process in which religious and secular citizens engage together, so that religious citizens develop a self-reflexive attitude towards modernity, while secular citizens recognize that religions have a cognitive substance (Lafont, 2009, p.132). This learning process requires critical reflection on the assumptions underlying beliefs, discourse to justify what we believe, and action based on the agreed new knowledge (Fleming, 2012, p.120). This most often occurs through the mechanism of translation. In all the texts of the Islamic religious textbooks I studied, including that of Milana, the religious subjects are active agents in the process of translation and attempt to develop a self-reflexive stance.

Islam in Europe faces the challenge of being open to self-reflection and critique while trying to find its own position in the world (Aslan, 2011, p.27). The actions of various Muslim subjects in the texts I have examined, either in historical narratives or in solving the problems they face in everyday secular life, involve epistemic self-transformation in the cognitive sense necessary for the religion’s adaptation to modernization. The translation of Islamic concepts into the secular moral sphere in German textbooks for IRE develops into an ethical context in which different messages are conveyed to students in a didactic or pedagogical language. By translating from the religious to the secular moral sphere, IRE students build a reflexive bridge between divine power and democratic consciousness as they learn to question, criticize and comment simultaneously while reflecting on themselves. The example of Milana is significant and instructive in this regard.

However, there is a methodological problem here in the ontological context: religion and morality are often intertwined; all religious systems are based on moral principles that form the basis of law everywhere and regulate social behavior. In this respect, the notion that religion serves as a source of morality in some contexts and that religious education functions as a means of transmitting moral values is the subject of considerable

debate (Rausch, 2013a, p.24). Islam as a religion regulates the ethical foundations of 'human coexistence' in society (Aslan, 2013, p.52), and since the Koran is the 'moral guide', Muslims should follow this ethical guide in their lives (Aslan, 2013, p.52, 58-59). Islam offers a form of morality and proposes solutions to every problem. In other words, Islamic beliefs and ethical rules (morality) are intertwined. In this sense, Islam's characteristic of not having to separate religion and morality may make the act of translation superfluous, because Islam embraces morality, but it is not possible for fixed religious concepts and values, i.e. dogmas, to incorporate the ever-changing reality of modern life and offer solutions to every problem without referring to the secular sphere, which is different from itself, wide and flexible, i.e. without the need for an act of translation. This requires a certain cognitive and democratic flexibility. We have seen this flexibility in the questions posed in the texts, in the different solutions proposed and in the critical attitudes. The translation from the dogmatic realm of religion to the relativistic realm of secular morality shows the willingness of faith to compromise with reason, and the goal of agreement in the normative world is, as Rawls says, compromise achieved through the public use of reason (Rawls, 1985, p.230). However, reconciliation with reason, the ability to respond to criticism and to be open to interpretation, is not a simple matter.

For example, Milana's dilemma shows both the necessity and the difficulty of translation. However, the fact that even the Prophet Muhammad is discussed by religious subjects (teachers and students) in the context of translation is an important step towards the modernization of religious belief through the epistemic transformation at the level of consciousness. The possibilities of interpretation, criticism and innovation to solve the problems of modern secular life are manifold and open to discussion. Therefore, the question of how the absolute, determined and structured religious values of Islam (e.g. belief in destiny) can be transferred to secular ethical life in Western democratic orders is both a matter of debate at the epistemological level and a serious pedagogical-didactic practical problem with regard to the behavior of students in the school environment. The question of how students can learn their religion by internalizing democratic values is a serious pedagogical problem. In this context, religious education refers to the transmission of knowledge about the beliefs and practices of a religious tradition and behaviors based on the values of that tradition (Rausch, 2013b, p.103), in line with the cultivation of dispositions (Rausch, 2013a, p.24), and functions as a means of reinforcing moral values (Rausch, 2013a, p.24). Religious education is directly an education about one's own faith and own community and indirectly a lesson in human "getting to know" and "living together" (Dudić, 2011, p.227).

In the German IRE textbooks, we see that this context is taken into account through the mechanism of translation. The translation of unquestionable religious values into the open, criticizable and flexible secular moral sphere is a response to this challenge. Milana's questioning of the usefulness of the Prophet Mohammed's example in the context of her own problematic shows both a subjective, critical attitude that is open to interpretation and the necessity, but also the difficulty, of translating religion into the secular sphere. However, in the act of translation, the religious subject actively makes its own claim to validity in all texts, which illustrates the epistemic break

that is necessary for a change of consciousness beyond the basic concepts of conventional society (tradition, nation, descent, authority, loyalty, etc.) and reveals a tendency towards modernization, i.e. democratization. The dialog, discussion and interactions in the texts point to solutions that move towards compromise: In Milana's class, for example, the teacher and the pupils try to find solutions through joint discussions, the father and his two children exchange ideas about how to start the helicopter, Sarah and Bilal talk about the Day of Judgement and relate this divine day to pedagogical performance. The "rationality of action" (Habermas, 1981) that emerges through interaction, dialog and discussion between subjects, without them silencing each other, paves the way for questioning to find the best argument and thus the construction of the discourse. What is attempted to be found through questioning is the universal ethical principle with the establishment of "discourse ethics": the blind man's "justice" to the angel during the examination, Abdülkadir's "honesty" to the thieves or bandits and the "help" given to the needy grandfather by his daughter and grandchildren show the assumption of a universal ethical principle.

Secular citizens can also learn from this act of translation in order to improve democracy (Habermas and Ratzinger, 2006, pp.46-47; Fleming, 2012, p.117; Areshidze, 2017, p.724, 729; Pabst, 2012, p.1004). The act of translation can be read as an attempt at a semantic contribution and movement towards the support and development of Western democracy through religion, as the translation shows that religious and secular subjects are open to learning from each other, cooperating and dialoguing, which is an effort towards the development of democracy. One of the most important stages of the transformation of epistemic consciousness that takes place through this learning, cooperation and dialog is the subject's openness to self-reflexivity. That Milana questions and even rejects the possibility and probability that the Prophet Muhammad could be a role model for her in solving her personal problem in her dilemma (by claiming that the Prophet is irrelevant to her problem), rather than the incompatibility of two different contexts, shows the breadth, flexibility and openness of the secular realm to different perspectives. The secular moral context, which is open to communication, dialog and debate (argumentation), pushes the individual towards subjectivation in the sense of autonomous action, objection and critical thinking. These and other examples show that, as Aslan states, Islam is forced to self-reflection and criticism (Aslan, 2011, p.27) while finding its place in world society. Islam seeks its position at a point between "particular culture" and "European identity". In this context, the mechanism of translation, which is based on subjective interpretation, criticism and evaluation rather than simple cultural transfer, actually forces Islam to develop the ability to respond democratically to the challenges of Europe through the example of secular everyday problems. Pedagogical and didactic studies should reflect on how Islam can be better translated into secular, rational and democratic spheres and reflect on the possibilities, forms and contents of a modernization of religion through epistemic (consciousness) transformation using its semantic storehouse of meaning. The present study can be read as an attempt at such thinking.

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