

The Institutionalization of Islam in Europe and the Diyanet: The Case of Austria

Zana ÇİTAK*

Abstract

The management of religious diversity has become one of the most significant issues facing European societies in the last few decades. The increasing use of religion as an instrument of immigration policies in Europe since the late 1980s has led to various trajectories of institutionalization of Islam in European countries. In an increasing number of cases, institutionalization of Islam entails, among other things, the establishment of Muslim representative institutions. On the other hand, as it has transformed itself, since the early 1980s, from a domestic instrument of control over religion to an external instrument to consolidate national unity among indigenous or immigrant Turkish communities beyond its borders, the organizations linked to the Turkish Directorate of Religious Affairs (the Diyanet) has become an important actor in various Muslim representative institutions in Europe. This article examines the case of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria with a particular focus on the role of the Diyanet in the Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich-IGGiÖ (Islamic Religious Community in Austria). An analysis of the Diyanet's role in and its perception of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria demonstrates both the advantages and difficulties that the Diyanet faces in promoting 'Turkish Islam' in Europe.

Keywords: Institutionalization, Islam, Austria, Turkey, Diyanet

Avrupa'da İslam'ın Kurumsallaşması ve Diyanet: Avusturya Örneği

Özet

Dini çeşitliliğin yönetimi meselesi son birkaç on yıldır Avrupa toplumlarının en önemli gündem maddelerinden biri olmuştur. Avrupa ülkelerinde 1980'lerden beri dinin göç politikalarında gittikçe artan bir şekilde bir siyaset aracı olarak kullanılması İslam'ın farklı kurum-

* Assoc. Prof. Dr., Department of International Relations, Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey.

sallaşma biçimlerine yol açmıştır. Kurumsallaşma pek çok durumda aynı zamanda ve artarak Müslüman temsil kuruluşları kurulması anlamına gelmektedir. Öte yandan, içerde kullanılan bir kontrol aracı olmanın yanısıra Türkiye'nin sınırları ötesinde, özellikle Türkiye kökenli göçmen toplumlarındaki milli birliği güçlendirmeyi amaçlayan bir dış kontrol aracı haline de gelen Diyanet, kendisine bağlı kuruluşlar aracılığı ile Avrupa'daki Müslüman kuruluşlarında önemli bir aktör oldu. Bu makale, Avusturya'da İslam'ın kurumsallaşmasını, özellikle de Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft-IGGiÖ'de (Avusturya İslam Dini Toplumu) Diyanet'in rolünü incelemektedir. Diyanet'in Avusturya'da İslam'ın kurumsallaşmasındaki rolü ve bu sürece bakışı Diyanet'in Avrupa'da 'Türk İslamı'nın sponsorluğunu yaparken sahip olduğu avantajları ve aynı zamanda karşılaştığı zorlukları örnekleme açısından önemlidir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: İslam, kurumsallaşma, Avusturya, Türkiye, Diyanet

النظام المؤسسي للإسلام في أوروبا ورئاسة الشؤون الدينية : النمسا نموذجاً زانا جيتاك أيتورك

الملخص :

إن قضية ادارة التنوع الديني اوضحت في العقود الأخيرة من السنين واحدة من أهم الموضوعات التي تتناولها المجتمعات الأوروبية. إن استغلال الدين كأداة سياسية في مجال سياسات الهجرة، والمتنامي منذ التسعينات من القرن العشرين في البلدان الأوروبية فتح المجال لتكوين أشكال متباينة للمؤسسات الإسلامية. ويعني مفهوم النظام المؤسسي – غالباً - زيادة تشكيل المؤسسات التي تمثل المسلمين ومن ناحية اخرى، فإن رئاسة الشؤون الدينية، بجانب كونها تستعمل كأداة للرقابة في داخل تركيا، فانها اوضحت أيضاً أداة رقابة خارجية في خارج حدود تركيا تهدف الى تقوية الوحدة القومية لدى المهاجرين من أصل تركي، فأوضحت بذلك أداة فاعلة مهمة لدى المؤسسات التي تمثل المسلمين في أوروبا. ويتولى هذا المقال دراسة وتمحيص نظام المؤسسات الإسلامية في النمسا، وبصورة خاصة دراسة دور رئاسة الشؤون الدينية في «المجتمع الإسلامي في النمسا» (Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft-IGGiÖ). إن دور رئاسة الشؤون الدينية في نظام المؤسسات الإسلامية في النمسا ونظرتها الى هذه العملية، مهم جداً لكي تصبح هذه المؤسسة نموذجاً بما تملكه من امكانيات وما تواجهه من مصاعب عندما تقوم برعاية "الإسلام التركي" في أوروبا.

كلمات مفتاحية : الإسلام، المؤسساتية، النمسا، تركيا، رئاسة الشؤون الدينية.

The management of religious diversity has become one of the most significant issues facing European societies in the last few decades. The increasing use of religion as an instrument of immigration policies in Europe since the late 1980s has led to various trajectories of institutionalization of Islam in European countries. Defined broadly as the accommodation and recognition of the religious rights and practices of Muslims within the framework of the established church and state relations models in Europe, institutionalization of Islam involves in many cases the establishment of Muslim representative institutions. On the other hand, the Turkish government, too, has extended its long standing use of its Directorate of Religious Affairs (the Diyanet hereafter)¹ from a domestic instrument of control over religion to an external instrument to consolidate national unity among indigenous or immigrant Turkish communities beyond its borders. The transnational dimension of this use of religion replicated almost exactly the Diyanet's domestic mission and activities. In Europe, as in Turkey, the Diyanet aims at providing religious services, 'enlightening' people about 'true religion', and demonstrating that Islam is compatible with democracy and modernity. It also promotes a version of Islam that is still rooted in Turkishness, and one that is perceived as a source of national unity. While the Diyanet has been actively engaged in various processes of institutionalization of Islam in different European countries, its aim of promoting 'Turkish Islam' in Europe creates a dynamic of tension when faced with official governmental initiatives to create European Muslims.

This article will examine the case of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria with a particular focus on the role of the *Diyanet* in the *Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich-IGGiÖ* (Islamic Religious Community in Austria). The Austrian case is important for a number of reasons: First, while many other European countries such as Spain, Belgium, France and Germany have engaged in establishing various kinds of Muslim representative bodies² only in

- 1 For the Diyanet, see İhtar Gözaydın , *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009); İhtar B. Gözaydın, "Diyanet and Politics", *The Muslim World*, Vol.98, No.2-3, 2008, pp. 216-227; İsmail Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam* (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2008); Amit Bein, *Ottoman Ulema Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).
- 2 For the institutionalization of Islam and establishment of Muslim representative bodies, please see Silvio Ferrari, "The Secularity of the State and the Shaping of Muslim Representative Organizations" in Jocelyne Césari and Sean McLoughlin (eds.), *European Muslims and the Secular State*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 11-23; Veit Bader, (ed.), "Governing Islam in Western Europe: Essays on the Governance of Religious Diversity", Special issue, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.33, No.6, 2007, pp.871-1016; Brigitte Maréchal,

the 1990s, IGGiÖ was established in 1979, the first of its kind long before the challenge of religious diversity pressed itself on many European societies. This, as this article shows below, was due to the historical legacy of a multi-cultural Austro-Hungarian Empire. Secondly, as many scholars have observed, Austria is interesting also for the paradoxical nature of the intertwined relationship between immigration and governance of religious diversity. While the immigrant integration policies of the Austrian state are very restrictive, its policies of religious accommodation are exceptionally inclusive.³ Thirdly, although the Diyanet, as in many other European countries, has been the largest Muslim association in Austria, the main Diyanet-linked umbrella organization of mosques, ATIB-*Avusturya Türk İslam Birliđi* (Turkish-Islamic Union in Austria), remained outside of IGGiÖ until recently, with no representatives in it, though this situation has changed recently. IGGiÖ is in fact headed, since 2011, by a president, Fuat Sanaç, who is an affiliate of the Milli Görüş, another Turkish-Muslim network.⁴ This situation stands in sharp contrast to the Muslim representative bodies in France (*Conseil Français du Culte Musulman-CFCM*) or in Belgium (*L'Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique-EMB*) in which the Diyanet-led Turkish associations can be said to have secured a disproportionately high significance and representation.

This paper will first examine the institutionalization of Islam in Austria and what role the Diyanet-linked ATIB plays within this process, as well as the current transformations in the attitude of ATIB towards IGGiÖ, based on field research in Turkey and Austria conducted between March and June 2009, including interviews with Diyanet officials and representatives of other Turkish-Muslim associations as well as Austrian government.

“Mosques, Organizations and Leadership” in Brigitte Maréchal, Stefano Allievi, Felice Dassetto and Jorgen Nielsen (eds.), *Muslims in Enlarged Europe*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp.151-82; Yvonne Yazbeck Haddad and Tyler Golson, “Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of ‘Moderate Islam’ in Western Europe”, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 49, Summer 2007, pp. 487–515.

- 3 Julia Mourão Permoser and Sieglinde Rosenberger, “Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration: The Case of Austria” in Paul Bramadat and Matthias Koenig (eds.), *International Migration and the Governance of Religious Diversity*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009).
- 4 Milli Görüş (National Outlook) is a political Islamist movement of Turkish origin, with intimate links to the line of political Islamist movement and line of political parties, led by Necmettin Erbakan.

Institutionalization of Islam and Austria

According to the 2001 Census, there were approximately 335.000 Muslims, constituting 4.2 % of the Austrian population (335.000).⁵ The estimates for 2009 are 500.000 Muslims, or 6% of the population.⁶ Turks make up the largest group, more than one third, while the Bosnian Muslims are the second largest group.⁷ About half of the Muslim community have Austrian citizenship.⁸ Austrian Muslim community is predominantly Sunni; Shi'is and Alevi constitute the second and third largest groups.⁹ Although most Austrian Muslims are of immigrant origin, Austria's encounter with Islam and Muslims is relatively old, going back to 1878, that is, the occupation of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Ottoman Empire, and the eventual annexation of these territories in 1908.¹⁰

It is, therefore, possible to talk about three historical turning points in the emergence of a Muslim community in Austria: The first is, as mentioned previously, the annexation of predominantly Muslim-majority Bosnia and Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The second is the wave of labor force originating mainly from Turkey in the 1960s. While the flow of guestworkers was discontinued in 1970s, Muslim community of immigrant origin continued to grow with family reunification after this date. The third is the arrival of a large number of Bosnian refugees fleeing from the war in Yugoslavia in the 1990s.¹¹ While the disintegration of a multi-national Austro-Hungarian Empire left few Muslims in the emerging Austrian nation-state, the imperial legacy manifested itself in various laws dating back from the empire and proved to be a juridical legacy for the eventual institutionalization of Islam and a Muslim community in Austria.

5 Sabine Kroissenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria: Socio-Political Networks and Muslim Leadership of Turkish Immigrants", *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol.22, No.2&3, 2003, p. 188; Nora Gresch et al., "Tu Felix Austria? The Headscarf and the Politics of 'Non-issues'" *Social Politics*, Vol.15, No.4, 2008, pp. 411-432.

6 Thomas Schmidinger, "Austria" in Samim Akgönül et al., (eds.), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Vol. 4 (Leiden and Boston: E.J.Brill, 2012), p. 28.

7 Kroissenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 188.

8 Schmidinger, "Austria", p. 28.

9 Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 260.

10 Ibid, p. 259; and Schmidinger, "Austria", p.27.

11 Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 260.

Established in 1979, IGGiÖ has been the first Muslim representative authority of national scope in Western Europe, long before such recent examples as *Comisión Islámica de España* (1992), *L'Exécutif des Musulmans de Belgique* (1999) and *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman-CFCM* in France (2003).¹² In the case of Austria, unlike in Spain, Belgium, Germany or France, it is above all the imperial legacy, and not immigration, that made possible this official institutionalization. While the demands of Muslims in Austria for the establishment of a Muslim representative body started in the 1960s, as a result of the influx of migrant workers from predominantly Muslim countries, under the leadership of the Bosnian Muslims (Muslim Social Service), these demands themselves were based on the Law of Recognition from 1874 and the Islam Law of 1912.¹³ While the former brought the general standards for the recognition of a religion or a religious community by the state and the principle of equal treatment of all recognized religions, the latter extended this recognition to Islam in 1912, with the annexation of Bosnia Herzegovina by the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1908. Combined, the two laws make the state-religion relationship an “inclusionary” one,¹⁴ which entails the inclusion of all recognized religions in the public realm.

Thus, the establishment of the IGGiÖ in 1979 was a natural result of the Austrian legal structure of church and state relations and the historical legacy of an imperial policy.¹⁵ As such, IGGiÖ has acquired the status of public corporation¹⁶ like other religions, which is accompanied by some rights and privileges. These include first material rights, such as the financing of religious instruction in schools with the state salaried religion teachers all the while leaving the IGGiÖ the autonomy to design the curriculum as well as to

12 Other well-known examples are *Contactorgaan Moslims en Overheid* (CMO) (2004) in Netherlands, and *Consulta Islamica Italiana* (2004) in Italy. The *Deutsche Islamkonferenz* (DIK) (2006), as a platform of dialogue between the representatives of the Muslim community and the German government should also be included within the framework of institutionalization of Islam in Europe.

13 W. Wieshaider, “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria” in R. Aluffi and G. Zincone, G., (eds.), *The Legal Treatment of Islamic Minorities in Europe*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2004), p. 31; Permoser and Rosenberger, “Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration”, pp. 264-265, 278.

14 Julia Mourão Permoser, Sieglinde Rosenberger and Kristina Stoeckl, “Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.36, No.9, 2010, pp. 1463-1481.

15 Kroisenbrunner, “Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria”, pp.191-192; Wieshaider, “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria”, p. 31.

16 Wieshaider, “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria”, p.37.

hire, train and supervise the religion teachers.¹⁷ Thus, instruction of Muslim religion in schools began in 1982-1983 and since 1998-1999, an Islamic Pedagogical Academy (IRPA) was established in 1998-1999 for the training of religion teachers. Secondly, also political rights emanate from the recognition of Islam and IGGiÖ as the representative of the Muslim community in the form of political consultation in the policy-making process in relation to issues concerning religion.¹⁸

Officially, IGGiÖ became the representative of the whole Austrian Muslim community as it was recognized by the bureau of religions (*Kultusamt*) of the Austrian Ministry of Culture and Education. However, this official monopoly has been challenged by a variety of factors: IGGiÖ can be said to represent a very small percentage of Muslims in Austria. In 2011 elections, a mere 5% of all Muslims were eligible to vote due to age, record of payment of registration fees or residency requirement for voting. At the same time, the growing diversity within the Muslim community has led to various demands on the part of some Muslims, most notably the Alevis, for official recognition of their community as a religious community on equal footing with the IGGiÖ.¹⁹ Lastly, as in the case of Diyanet-linked ATIB, IGGiÖ's claim of monopoly of representation has traditionally made the ATIB uncomfortable, as the latter emphasizes the significance of ethnic weight of Turks.²⁰

As such, though not the only one, IGGiÖ has certainly established itself as the most important actor in relation to questions and issues related to Islam²¹ and claims, despite various challenges, to be the only interlocutor for the Austrian state in matters related to Islam and Muslim community. There are several reasons for the centrality of the IGGiÖ: First, the Austrian legal structure allows only the representative body of a recognized religious community the rights and privileges that accompany the recognition. Thus, other Muslim

17 Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 271.

18 Ibid.

19 One success for official recognition has been obtained by one Alevi association, which is now recognized as *Religiöse Bekenntnisgemeinschaft*, which entails fewer privileges than that of "public corporation" but which nevertheless brings an official status. Schmidinger, "Austria", pp.29-30.

20 Author's interviews with ATIB officials, Vienna, June 2009.

21 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 200; Permoser and Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", p. 273.

associations and organizations are dependent on the IGGiÖ for the recruitment of religion teachers and issuing of visas for the imams, except for ATIB which, on the basis of a special treaty between the Austrian and Turkish governments, can recruit its imams on its own.²² In the same way, the political consultation in the policy-making process recognizes only IGGiÖ, hence making this body as *the* partner for the Austrian government in its relations with the Muslim community.

Secondly, representation in the IGGiÖ is based on individual membership, unlike other Muslim organizations which are quite often of ethnic nature. This means that even though, according to the Austrian law, all Muslims are natural members of the Muslim community and can thus benefit from all the services provided by the IGGiÖ, representation, in terms of right to elect and to be elected, is reserved for 'registered members' only.²³ The principle of individual membership also limits associational membership in that various Muslim associations are represented only in the Advisory Council, and not in the Shu'ra Council, the legislative organ or the Highest Council, the executive body.²⁴

Thirdly, because the Muslim community of Austria is predominantly an immigrant community, consisting of non-citizens or citizens of immigrant origin, and because the majority of immigrants are Muslim, the IGGiÖ has become also an organization representing immigrants, concerned with immigration-related issues.²⁵ Given the restrictive immigration policy of Austria²⁶ with rigorous standards for the acquisition of citizenship and which limits political rights such as voting and standing for elections to citizens only, political representation becomes possible almost only through religious organizations. Thus, both the state and the Muslim immigrants find in IGGiÖ a vehicle for dialogue.²⁷

22 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 196.

23 Author's interview with Amina Baghajati, Member of the Shu'ra Council of the IGGiÖ, Vienna, 15 June 2009.

24 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 193.

25 Permoser, Rosenberger and Stoeckl, "Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration", pp. 1466, 1469.

26 For an analysis of the contrast between a restrictive immigration policy and a pluralistic and generous policy of religious accommodation, see Permoser ad Rosenberger, "Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration", pp. 259-289.

27 The IGGiÖ, like other religious organizations, was consulted by the government in 2007 within the framework of *Integrationsplattform* to formulate new policies in relation to im-

Besides these what can be called as legal/structural reasons, there are also more contingent reasons for the central role played by the IGGiÖ: The process of Europeanization has transformed the role of the IGGiÖ. First, there has been a broadening of the issues subject to political consultation. Hence, IGGiÖ has been increasingly solicited for its mediating role in a wider number of issues.²⁸ Different governments, including the Austrian one, have found it valuable to demonstrate their respective form of religious governance as a model for the rest of Europe.²⁹ In doing that, the Austrian authorities have increasingly resorted to the consultation with the IGGiÖ. Secondly, rather than traditionally an almost always government-initiated political consultation process, one could increasingly see IGGiÖ taking the first step in initiating dialogue with the government in order to influence, in its turn, the values of what can be called as an emergent 'European Islam'. Hence, the activism of the IGGiÖ in relation to the question of headscarf, which emerged in 2004, can be understood within this framework.³⁰

The *Diyanet* and the IGGiÖ

As immigrant workers came to Austria in 1960s and 1970s mainly from Turkey, the immigrant community of Austria consists overwhelmingly of Turks, constituting the largest group within the Muslim community – about one third. Established in 1990 ATIB,³¹ in turn, represents the largest cluster of mosques within the Turkish community, again, about one third of all the Turkish mosques³² or some 62 mosque associations,³³ as opposed to about 26 of Milli Görüş and some unknown number of Islamic Cultural Center

migration. Permoser, Rosenberger and Stoeckl, "Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration", p. 1470.

28 Permoser, Rosenberger and Stoeckl, "Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration", pp. 1467-1468. A good example is when the IGGiÖ was consulted by the Commission established by the EU on the assessment of the needs to implement sanctions against Austria following Haider's anti-Semitic and xenophobic right wing party joining the ruling coalition in 2000. Ibid.

29 The two conferences of imams in 2003 and 2006, the latter during the Austrian presidency of the EU, organized by the Austrian government can be seen as an example of this attitude. Ibid., p. 1471.

30 For the activism of IGGiÖ in the headscarf issue, see Gresch, Hadj-Abdou, Rosenberger and Sauer, "Tu Felix Austria?", pp. 1-22) and E. Holzleithner and Sabine Strasser, "Troublesome Issues: Current Debates on Tensions between Gender Equality and Cultural Diversity in Austria", Working paper node cmc. (2006), pp. 6-7.

31 www.atib-hohenems.at. (accessed 19.12.2008),

32 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 195.

33 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

(Süleymançı).³⁴ Despite its importance within the Muslim community, ATIB remained aloof from IGGiÖ for a long time. The legal status of IGGiÖ as the representative of the whole Muslim community as well as IGGiÖ's own claim to represent the Muslims of Austria have been challenged, until recently, also by the striking absence of ATIB in this institution until June 2011 elections.

The status of public corporation gives the IGGiÖ all the due rights and privileges. This limits the political consultation between the government and the Muslim community to the mediating role of IGGiÖ only, hence excluding other Muslim associations although these associations of different ethnic groups or religious tendencies still are more important at the local level than IGGiÖ.³⁵ While this may be, however, true for all organizations including ATIB, the latter's particular absence, until the adoption of a new constitution in 2010, in IGGiÖ has been the result of IGGiÖ's pre-2010 constitution, limiting the representation of any ethnic group to at most 30% of the High Council (four seats)³⁶ no matter what the size of a given ethnic community is. This explains the disfavoured representation of Muslim Turks as a whole in this institution. On this, ATIB has fundamentally disagreed with IGGiÖ and has considered such a condition and form of representation, based on individual membership at the expense of ethnic/demographic representation as 'anti-democratic',³⁷ resulting in its self-isolation for a long time.

ATIB has also been disturbed by the increasing monopoly of IGGiÖ in the recruitment of religion teachers as well as imams. While ATIB can still recruit religion teachers from Turkey through some bilateral agreements signed between the Austrian and Turkish governments, it has disapproved of Islamic Pedagogical Academy's theological education of religion teachers. ATIB does not see this education as qualified as the theological education of religion teachers coming from Turkey.³⁸ Again, in terms of the recruitment of imams, ATIB has

34 The chair of the ICC gives the number of ICC mosques as 45. Author's interview with the ICC representative, Vienna, 18 June 2009. As Kroisenbrunner also suggests, this number seems exaggerated. Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 199. *Süleymançılık* is an Islamic order established by Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan.

35 Ibid, p. 198.

36 Ibid., p. 196 and Author's interview with Amina Baghajati, Member of the Shu'ra Council of the IGGiÖ, Vienna, 15 June 2009.

37 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

38 Kroisenbrunner, "Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria", p. 196. In the same way, IGGiÖ argues that religion teachers coming from Turkey are ill-qualified to teach as their language ability in German is rather limited. Ibid.

been uneasy of IGGiÖ's issuing of certificates and visas for imams coming from Turkey outside the Diyanet ticket. In fact, most Milli Görüş and Süleymancı imams have been recruited from Turkey by IGGiÖ certifying them and issuing visas. For ATIB, most of those imams recruited outside the Diyanet ticket have a religious education –from various religious centers in the Arab world such as Al-Azhar³⁹ - not compatible with the kind of Islam as the Diyanet has claimed to represent.

In that, ATIB is similar to other Diyanet-linked organisations in European countries in its claim to represent 'Turkish Islam', defined as harmonious with modernity and democracy, with a potential of presenting a model for the emergent 'European Islam'.⁴⁰ According to an official of the ATIB, there are in fact three understandings of Islam in the world: the understanding of Turkey, the Iranian one and the Salafi one represented by Saudi Arabia.⁴¹ The Diyanet-linked organizations such as ATIB or DITIBs or Diyanet foundations thus try to monopolize the Turkish representation, as they consider themselves the rightful representative of a rational and moderate Islam of the secular Turkish state. Diyanet's self-image is also one of an institution that has proved itself in carrying out religious services, which makes it uncomparable to other institutions in terms of historical experience.⁴² Thus, the Diyanet, both in terms of its understanding of religion and its institutional mission and capability, claims to be the true representative of Turkish people as well as an institutional model for European countries in their search for accommodating Islam in their existing state-religion structures.

It can be said that the Diyanet has both advantages and disadvantages in its claim to monopolize Turkish representation in Europe in general and in Austria, in particular. On the one hand, the Diyanet's position is one of embracing everyone as it claims to stand above

39 Ibid, p. 202. In fact, in Europe, including Austria, Milli Görüş recruits its imams in an important number from among the former Diyanet employees. As for the Süleymancı, Kroisenbrunner notes that they only recruit imams trained in their own religious training institutions. Ibid., pp. 202-203.

40 For an example of a similar attitude, see Zana Çitak, "Between 'Turkish Islam' and 'French Islam': The Role of the *Diyanet* in the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol. 36, No.4, April 2010, p. 619-634.

41 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

42 For a study of the Diyanet's self-image, see Zana Çitak, "D'acteur national à transnational: La Diyanet en Europe", *Cahiers de l'Obtic*, No.2, December 2012, pp.9-14. www.obtic.org.

all political ideologies and sects.⁴³ At the same time, it also appeals to the not very religious people, those who only seek for a minimum level of religious service.⁴⁴ The Diyanet-linked organizations like ATIB bring also the financial and organizational support of the state,⁴⁵ and hence preserving continuity.⁴⁶ On the other hand, however, this organic link of ATIB with the Diyanet, and hence, the Turkish state has led to a strongly entrenched and widespread image of the ATIB as an organization of the Turkish state. Thus, one could talk about a certain suspicion and fear on the part of both the other Turkish associations as well as non-Turkish associations that ATIB would act like the official spokesperson of the Turkish state in what is seen as an Austrian institution. At the same time, while other Turkish associations such as Milli Görüş and ICC have to train and mobilize their followers in order to survive, ATIB lacks in mobilization as it relies on the continuity of the state as a symbolic power and state support as material power.⁴⁷

Recently, ATIB has changed its long-standing self-isolation from IGGiÖ. It thus decided to actively participate in IGGiÖ by taking part in the 2011 elections. It even supported the election of an affiliate of Milli Görüş, Mr. Fuat Sanaç as the president of the IGGiÖ. This recent change in ATIB's long-standing attitude was due, according to a Diyanet official, to an increasing recognition by the Diyanet that isolation leads to a loss of any chance for shaping crucial processes which are under the legal monopoly of IGGiÖ due to Austrian constitution, such as designing the curriculum of religion courses in schools. At the same time, through negotiations, ATIB has also succeeded in changing that provision of IGGiÖ's constitution limiting the representation of any group to one third of the seats of the Highest Council to half of the seats, which ATIB considers as an incomplete but nevertheless considerable improvement from the previous 'anti-democratic' situation.⁴⁸ In fact, it seems like the Diyanet has markedly come to a realization that IGGiÖ is constitutionally the only interlocutor for the Austrian state and that it might have

43 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

44 Author's interview with an official of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Austria, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

45 Nicole Landman, "Sustaining Turkish-Islamic Loyalties: The Diyanet in Western Europe" in H. Poulton, H. and Taji-Farouki, S. (eds) *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), pp. 214-231.

46 Author's interview with the president of a Turkish organization, Vienna, 16 June 2009.

47 Author's interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

48 Author's interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

been a mistake to remain outside for such a long time. In fact, one interviewee stated that while the Diyanet used to think that “without Turks, nothing is possible”, it has realized that IGGiÖ can exist without it.⁴⁹ It is also aware of its image as the official representative of the Turkish state. In this context, one interviewee stated in relation to the representation of ATIB in IGGiÖ that “[it is true that] we don’t need a second ATIB after all”.⁵⁰ In that, ATIB also tried to smoothen its image and eliminate the fears of other Turks in particular and Muslims in general that it wants to dominate the IGGiÖ and hence emphasized that the new president after the elections does not have to be an ATIB member, but hopefully a person of Turkish origin.⁵¹ This compromising attitude itself, however, reflected ATIB’s caution that if it were to insist on an ATIB candidate, it might not get the support of the rest due to the image of the Diyanet. In other words, ATIB did not want to undermine its own position.⁵²

Similarly, Milli Görüş and ICC also point out that regarding the presidency of the new IGGiÖ, ability is more important than associational membership.⁵³ In emphasizing that an able Turkish candidate, no matter what his/her association might be, ATIB, Milli Görüş and ICC seemed to be more in solidarity with each other rather than in competition, in striking contrast to the situation in CFCM in France and the Exécutif in Belgium where competition especially between the Diyanet-linked organizations and Milli Görüş has been more explicit.⁵⁴ The impression of solidarity was reinforced also by their common emphases on the recent rapprochement among these different groups as in the example of the celebration of the Prophet’s Birth (*Kutlu Doğum Haftası*), which have been organized together by all three organizations or as when they underline the fact that they don’t mind going to one another’s mosques. Except for the ICC which does not refrain from putting accent on the existence of differences in their understanding and practice of Islam and the rest, there is also a deliberate effort to underplay any religious differences and to put on the forefront commonalities.⁵⁵

49 Author’s interview with a an ATIB official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

50 Author’s interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

51 Author’s interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 17 June 2009.

52 Author’s interview with an ATIB official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

53 Author’s interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

54 Çitak, “Between ‘Turkish Islam’ and ‘French Islam’”, pp. 619-634; Zana Çitak, “Religion, Ethnicity and Transnationalism: Turkish Islam in Belgium”, *Journal of Church and State*, Vol.53, No.2, 2011, pp. 222-242.

55 Author’s interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

It is possible to explain this solidarity by two factors: In the first place, the Austrian legal structure, by prioritizing one single interlocutor in terms of rights and privileges, seems to suppress open competition. There is a recognition on the part of all three major Turkish organizations that they have to act with and within the IGGiÖ. In the words of one interviewee, “there is in fact nothing to gain or lose”⁵⁶ as the IGGiÖ has increasingly monopolized the field of religious instruction and, even to some extent, the recruitment of imams.⁵⁷ Therefore, one could only hope to have a greater influence in, for example, shaping the curriculum of religious instruction. In the second place, a factor related to Turkish domestic politics –the coming to power of the Justice and Development Party in 2002 with roots in the Milli Görüş movement—seems to have brought about a rapprochement,⁵⁸ similar, in fact, to that taking place in other European countries as well.⁵⁹

Conclusion

The study of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria highlights particularities of as well as similarities between different examples of institutionalization of Islam in Europe and of the Diyanet’s activism in these processes. As this article tries to show, the Austrian case demonstrates that the role of the Diyanet in the IGGiÖ as well as its perception of the institutionalization of Islam in Austria demonstrate that there are two main factors that determine this role and perception. First, the institutional structure of the church-state relations in Austria. Second, the Diyanet’s self-image and its willingness to promote a ‘Turkish Islam’, whose contours it traditionally has claimed to represent. In that, the Diyanet has both advantages and disadvantages. As this article has argued, on the one hand, its claim to represent an Islam compatible with modernity and democracy has an important appeal both for the Muslim community and the Austrian state. On the other hand, however, its official status becomes a liability in the Austrian context of promotion of an ‘Austrian Islam’.

56 Author’s interview with an Austrian state official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

57 It can be said that ATIB has realized that it was wrong to believe that most Turkish pupils won’t follow religion classes in schools taught by non-Turkish teachers recruited by IGGiÖ as that did not happen. Author’s interview with an Austrian state official, Vienna, 18 June 2009.

58 Author’s interviews, Vienna, June 2009.

59 Çitak, “Religion, Ethnicity and Transnationalism”, p. 241.

Bibliography

Bader, Veit, (ed.) "Governing Islam in Western Europe: Essays on the Governance of Religious Diversity", Special issue, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.33, No.6, 2007, pp.871-1016.

Bein, Amit, *Ottoman Ulema Turkish Republic: Agents of Change and Guardians of Tradition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2011).

Çitak, Zana, "Between 'Turkish Islam' and 'French Islam': The Role of the *Diyanet* in the *Conseil Français du Culte Musulman*", *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.36, No.4, April 2010, pp. 619-634.

Çitak, Zana, "Religion, Ethnicity and Transnationalism: Turkish Islam in Belgium", *Journal of Church and State*, Vol.53, No.2, 2011, pp. 222-242.

_____, "D'acteur national à transnational: La Diyanet en Europe" *Cahiers de l'Obtic*, No.2, December 2012, pp.9-14. www.obtic.org.

Ferrari, Silvio, "The Secularity of the State and the Shaping of Muslim Representative Organizations" in Jocelyne Césari and Sean McLoughlin (eds.), *European Muslims and the Secular State*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), pp. 11-23.

Gresch, Nora et al., "Tu Felix Austria? The Headscarf and the Politics of 'Non-issues'", *Social Politics*, Vol.15, No.4, 2008, pp. 411-432.

Gözaydın, İştâr, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cumhuriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009).

Gözaydın, İştâr B., "Diyanet and Politics", *The Muslim World*, Vol.98, No.2-3, 2008.

Haddad, Yvonne Yazbeck and Tyler Golson, "Overhauling Islam: Representation, Construction, and Cooption of 'Moderate Islam' in Western Europe", *Journal of Church and State*, Vol. 49, Summer 2007, 487-515.

Heine, S., "Islam in Austria: Between Integration Politics and Persisting Prejudices" in Shadid, W.A.R. and van Koningsveld, P.S. (eds), *Intercultural Relations and Religious Authorities: Muslims in the European Union*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2002), pp. 27-48.

Holzleithner, E. and Strasser, S., “Troublesome Issues: Current Debates on Tensions between Gender Equality and Cultural Diversity in Austria”, Working paper node cmc, 2006.

Kara, İsmail, *Cumhuriyet Türkiyesi’nde Bir Mesele Olarak İslam*, (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2008).

Kroissenbrunner, Sabine, “Islam and Muslim Immigrants in Austria: Socio-Political Networks and Muslim Leadership of Turkish Immigrants”, *Immigrants and Minorities*, Vol. 22, No. 2&3, 2003, pp. 188-207.

____ ‘Muslims and the Islamic Community in Austria’ in *180 Degrees East and West*. Federal Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Landman, Nicole, “Sustaining Turkish-Islamic Loyalties: The Diyanet in Western Europe”, in Poulton, H. and Taji-Farouki, S. (eds), *Muslim Identity and the Balkan State*, (London: Hurst & Company, 1997), pp. 214-231.

Maréchal, Brigitte, “Mosques, Organizations and Leadership” in Brigitte Maréchal, Stefano Allievi, Felice Dassetto and Jorgen Nielsen (eds.), *Muslims in Enlarged Europe*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pp.151-82

Permoser, Julia Mourão, Sieglinde Rosenberger and Kristina Stoeckl, “Religious Organizations as Political Actors in the Context of Migration: Islam and Orthodoxy in Austria”, *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, Vol.36, No.9, November 2010, pp.1463-1481.

Permoser, Julia Mourão and Sieglinde Rosenberger, “Religious Citizenship versus Policies of Immigrant Integration: The Case of Austria” in Paul Bramadat and Matthias Koenig (eds.), *International Migration and the Governance of Religious Diversity*, (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2009), pp. 259-289.

Schmidinger, Thomas, “Austria” in Samim Akgönül et al., (eds.), *Yearbook of Muslims in Europe*, Vol 4 (Leiden and Boston: E.J.Brill, 2012), pp. 27-40.

Wieshaider, W., “The Legal Status of the Muslim Minority in Austria” in Aluffi, R. and Zincone, G. (eds.), *The Legal Treatment of Islamic Minorities in Europe*, (Leuven: Peeters, 2004) , pp. 31-37.