

Islam for Eurojess

(First part: Input: the history and present situation of Islam in Germany)

Let's make a thought experiment: You come for a work experience in Ludwigshafen to help in the Heinrich Pesch Haus. Your institute director (or father superior) has the idea that he can profit from you being not involved in the German context. Because he has read the decrees of General Congregation 34 and now is absolutely convinced that one has to intensify interreligious dialogue he says to you to present him an overview over the topics being discussed in the German christian-muslim dialogue.

After protesting that you don't know anything about Muslims in general and Germany in particular and after not having slept for two nights you start to think:

Okay, some months ago, in June (23.06.), you already read in the newspaper that an important study of the ministry for home affairs has been published, observing that there are over 4 Million Muslims in Germany (much more than the estimated 3 Million), that 45 percent have German citizenship, 63 percent are from Turkey and that 75 percent are sunni, 13 percent alevi and 8 percent shiit. Social integration is better than supposed but in the question of education and access to higher education the study gave an alarming signal:

All this information you've got in your mind – but what does this say about the topics and structures of the interreligious dialogue? The best way to start your research is to ask Muslims themselves.

But the first problem occurs: How to get in contact with them? Your journey through German muslim life starts.

First Step: To get in contact – who is who?

You start a little bit old fashioned – by looking in the phone book. O.k., no entry with “mosque”

Next try: „Türk..“

Mister Adil and Missis Charlotte „Türk“, also a turkish association who cares for socially disadvantaged people but no sign of religious life.

Under „Churches“ – fortunately no entry

O.k. so you start to google Moschee Ludwigshafen and immediately you'll get plenty of information – perhaps a little bit too much: (list)

And now – who is who? Who can be helpful to contact?

Thinking of all you have learned about Germany you remember, that German life is always very structured. So there is a special form of organizing religious life in Germany. The German state of course respects the division between religion and state, but typically knows a special form of cooperation to achieve common goals. The highest judicial form is the “Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts” an organizational status that allows the religious community to have its own religious formation in public schools, to be respected in cityplanning, to receive taxes collected by the state and so on. Of course the muslim community wants to obtain this status – which means to build up a centralized structure, a little bit like a church. Therefore different umbrella organizations are built during the last twenty years (but no one is recognized as “Körperschaft”). Four are important and will help you in your reflection who you want to contact.

DITIB: which means Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği

The biggest association (800 mosques) claims to be the main contact person for the German state.

With regard to their understanding of Islam they represent the state controlled Islam of Turkey and although being a German association they have strong connections to the religious ministry in Turkey.

One characteristic is that DITIB Imams are employees of the Turkish state and can only stay for four years. The second characteristic is the strong link between Turkish culture and religion.

The DITIB is the association with the most developed connections to Churches – in the Moment they try to give formation to 2000 young people serving as guides in the mosques and contact persons.

IGMG/ Islamrat – Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş

For a long time connected to the political islam of Refah and Fazilet Partisi in Turkey with the aim of a muslim social order (connections to the International Muslim brotherhood).

Nowadays still conservative (regarding gender segregation), but also involved in the interreligious dialogue. Successful social, women and youth work, summer camps, student events. Developing their own muslim style. (style of Islam)

VIKZ

The oldest association, especially committed to education and student residential homes. Some critics mention their pedagogical methods and claim that they promote a parallel society.

Their background is the Süleymancı movement in Turkey.

On a national level very committed to interreligious dialogue, local experiences are different.

Not yet mentioned is the fourth association 4.association: **ZMD**

Ethnically wide spread, associations of German converts,

Good presentation in German media through the general secretary Aiman Mazyek.

KRM

On 16.04. 2007 the four umbrella organization founded a coordination committee to answer to the demands of the German state.

Regarding all associations the fact remains that those central organizations are only accepted by one of four muslims in Germany. How much centralization and how much diversity is possible?

DIK

The last organization on a national level is the German Islam conference. Founded in September 2006 by the minister of inner affairs, Wolfgang Schäuble, it invited the organizations but also non organized intellectuals and even critics of Islam. 4 plenum sessions took place during the last 4 years, dealing with questions of organization, the integration of muslim life in the German constitution and practical questions such as religious education in schools.

AABF

Federation of alevi “parishes” in Germany – centralized organisation of alevi cem houses, cultural centers and communities in Germany, (in conflict with the AKP promoted CEM foundation) in the moment an interesting discussion about the relationship to Islam in particular and to religion in general is taking place.

Second step: A short history of Islam in Germany

So now having an overview of the different associations you go on with your research project. You choose to contact one organization and immediately you receive a friendly invitation to visit the mosque for a short talk.

The happy feeling of being one step further does not last for a long time. You set out for the mosque but at the address which was given to you don't find any mosque. You only find a fuel station (where no one seems to understand your question), a ruinous industrial building and some old apartments with no doorbell name plates. Fortunately an old Turkish man takes your arm saying something like "Gel, arkadaş, gel" and brings you through the first apartment building in the backyard, two steps upward in a small room with a green carpet. Aha, you think, that's a mosque in Germany... But how is it possible, that you have to look for a mosque at such a hidden place?

You ask the man and after having asked you to have some tea he tells you

The short story of Islam in Germany (that's a dream, normally he won't talk your language)

Although the muslim life is inseparably connected to the job migration of the 50s and 60s the history of Islam is much richer and starts earlier:

First era:

Prisoners of war against the „Turks“ – some traces on westphalian cemeteries

In the 18. century in the Prussian army

1915 first place of prayer

1924 first mosque in Wilmersdorf (Ahmadija)

etwa 2000 Muslime in Berlin zwischen den Kriegen

no association endures the WWII

Era 2: recruitment agreement between Germany and mediterranean countries (1961 Türkei, 1963 Marokko, 1965 Tunesien)

Mostly men

Alone, for a limited time

-> only need a place to pray typical worker association

parallel to the job migration merchants/ business people from the Arabic and Persian world are founding Islamic centres (IZ München, IZ Aachen, IZ HH)

Era 3 End of the recruitment 1973:

The permanent living in two countries is becoming impossible; one has to decide for a permanent residence

Migration is changing into immigration

Women and children are creating new needs and new ways of contact to the German society; tradition is not automatically assured by the home country and the idea to return and to spend the rest of life in Turkey

Now a place to pray is no longer sufficient. The muslim community wants to have its own building to organize a broader religious life.

At this point two factors are intertwining in a problematic way:

On the one hand it is a characteristic of muslim religion that the mosque is no parish – but a place for a fundamental human request/ demand. Because of this the state does not provide the mosques in most home countries of the immigrants

On the other hand the German state sees itself as responsible for social aid but not for organizing religious life – the consequence is, that the immigrants were not seen as Muslims until the beginning of the second millennium

This situation is the reason for the typical conditions of muslim life which were characteristic until a few years ago.

-> places which are not in the centre of public life are serving as mosques, especially in cheap and not disturbing places

-> the mosque was built with the structure of a private organization (e.V.):

This structure has long range consequences:

a) the board of a muslim association is not necessarily qualified to answer religious questions – and the professional theologian is not capable to speak the language of the guests wanting to get information about Islam

b) it is difficult to say who exactly is a member of the mosque association (because only one member for each family will become real member – but all are using the mosque) (which is nowadays one of the biggest handicaps to accept the associations as a counterpart)

c) every association has a direct counterpart in the home country because it is built with their support

Era 4:

Since approximately 5 years the muslim life in Germany comes to a new stage. The signs of this new stage are:

- Islam is gaining visibility through building new, representative and more centrally located mosques (Mannheim 1995, Pforzheim 1993; Duisburg Marxloh; Köln Ehrenfeld). Most of them are still imitating the osmanic architectural language, but first steps to develop a creative new interpretation of the tradition are visible
- The new era shows a paradoxical development in two directions: on the one hand you can notice an increasing centralization (KRM), on the other hand a pluralisation and diversification of muslim life is clearly remarkable: Aside from the classical mosque associations more and more target group orientated associations are built (Frauen-/ Jugendvereine; Muslimische Hochschulgruppen; Muslimisches Sozialwerk; islamische Presse usf.)
- The new generation of home grown muslims sees themselves more and more as a part of the German society – but with a very different relationship: On the one hand a self conscious and economically successful group is developing. For those muslims Islam is a part of their identity as moral guideline. On the other hand a socially unsuccessful, not integrated group with no access to higher education and no social participation is developing (40 % does not reach the lowest level of school graduation!). For those Islam is the only strong identity marker

Some statistics datas color the new era (based on the studies of the „Zentrum für Türkeiforschung Essen 2005/06 and the study of the ministry for home affairs 2008)

1) general figures concerning the way of life situation (NRW Mehrthemenbefragung von 2006)

- 60 % don't want to go back – 33 % are not yet sure (no bigger change since 1999; surprisingly no connection between the age and the plan to go back– also 29% young people want to return);

- 40 % have close contact with Germans in their free time (daily- once a week), 20% once a month, nearly 20 % no contact
- 58% are living in quarters inhabited by Germans, 16 % in mixed, and 20 % in mostly turkish quarters; no big change since 2000 (no ghetto building as it is insinuated, but also no improvement)

2) data concerning religion:

- the majority qualifies itself as „more or less religious“ (55%)
- regarding the young: significant polarization: “not religious at all” is rising from 3% to 6%; “very religious” from 7,6 (2000) to 28,1% (2005)
- nevertheless the change is very differentiated with regard to the respective muslim association -> phenomenon of the “Friday muslim” (in comparison to the “Sunday Christian”)
- Religion is depending on sex: women see themselves with 10% more than men as “very religious”!
- Parts of religious practice is also culturally accepted: 55, 6 % of the non or less religious are accepting zakat; 33,9% of them even the fast (al-saum) (the average of all degrees of religiosness is 77,4% (zakat) and 74,3% fast)
- three quarters are accepting the division of religion and state – but also 18% disagree. Here a closer look is necessary:
 - ➔ On the one hand the acceptance/non-acceptance of the division is linked with religiousness: the acceptance of the division decreases with the level of religious – but not so dramatically as you may guess: 71,2% accept - 28,8% disagree.
 - ➔ On the other hand surprisingly also a significant number of explicitly non religious interviewees (19%) do not accept the division – which is a sign for the special Turkish background – of course they do not aim for an islamic state in Germany. By not accepting the division they want to express their wish for more control of religion through the state - as they suppose the Turkish way of “laicite” does.
- At least: regarding four topics which are typical for islamic religious conservatism (headscarf, acceptance of mixed marriage, mixed sport education and class trips) the study generates an index from 1 = “liberal” to 4 = “religiously very conservative”. It is interesting that the difference in religiousness (from not to very) is as significant (1,89 to 2,68) as the level of education(3,13 to 2,40)

PAUSE

(second part: some fields of action in Germany)

3 Step:

After three or four glasses of tea, the board of the association comes to see you (perhaps you're lucky and the Imam speaks some German words...)

After exchanging some friendly remarks you start to ask which topics have to be discussed from the muslim point of view.

After having assured that they have no problems with the German society and that the respect the laws of the country where they live is a religious obligation for a Muslim, the Imam may mention some discussion points:

Some typical questions asked in the dialogue from the muslim side:

- Why don't we get the support from the state as the Churches do?

- Why are we not allowed to do halal butchering?
- Why are muslim women discriminated against for wearing headscarves?
- Why does the teacher only recommend the lower secondary school at the end of the primary school for muslim pupils?
- Why do Germans not visit our mosque?

If the Imam is very intellectual and open he may ask you some theological questions:

- Why do the Christians want to evangelize (he means “proselytize”) the muslim world, especially Turkey?
- Do Christians also pray?
- Why do the Christians need priests as intermediators between men and God?
- Why the priests are not allowed to marry?

Maybe you are a bit surprised at the practical level of the questions and of the feeling of being discriminated.

Then you experience something very typical in the christian-muslim relationship:

a) Christians ask in the dialogue questions which are very different from those of muslims: Christians are interested in theological questions – the image and understanding of God in Islam, the way muslims give reasons for their attitude towards Christians, the understanding of Sharia, the question if and how the Qu’ran can be interpreted...

Muslims normally are questioning with very practical questions, often belonging to their own religious practices.

b) Normally the Christians are asking the questions and the muslims are answering

c) Mostly two groups with a different level of education are meeting

All this is an expression of **an asymmetric status of dialogue**:

The consequence of this asymmetric status of dialogue you always have to think of is:

For the muslim side the Dialogue is a means to attain social acceptance. Dialogue is therefore connected to representation

-> all this together can cause heavy misunderstandings

Being aware of the asymmetric status of dialogue it is nevertheless interesting to look in which fields of German society interreligious questions are arising.

(some pictures are given to the participants which represent the most common fields of christian-muslim discussions

Together with the picture two questions are given:

What do you think: What kind of interreligious questions are connected to the field of experience the picture shows?

What could be our contribution to promote a positive living together of Christians und muslims in this sector?)

1. School



What do you think: What kind of interreligious questions are connected to the field of experience the picture shows?

What could be our contribution to promote a positive living together of Christians und muslims in this sector?

2. Hospital, pastoral care at the end of life, pastoral care in emergency cases



What do you think: What kind of interreligious questions are connected to the field of experience the picture shows?

What could be our contribution to promote a positive living together of Christians und muslims in this sector?

3. Building of mosques



What do you think: What kind of interreligious questions are connected to the field of experience the picture shows?

What could be our contribution to promote a positive living together of Christians und muslims in this sector?

1) Muslims in schools:

- question of taking part in sexual education, swimming lessons with mixed sex and school trips.
- Question of teaching theory of evolution
- Are the teachers allowed to wear headscarves?
- Especially: Religious education at school

The discussion reflects very well the German way of dealing with religion – with all its advantages and disadvantages

On the one hand it shows the high degree of incorporation of religion in the public sphere: religious education is a typical “res mixta”, a cooperation between state and religious community. On the other hand it shows how complicated is the incorporation for a non-traditionally German religion is. This field rises the question of “Verkirchlichung” to a high degree.

The situation is as follows:

The state controls the religious teaching, pays the teachers, education is a normal part of the class schedule. On the other hand the state itself can not be responsible for what is taught, especially for the curriculum. It needs a organized religious counterpart. But which muslim organization is the counterpart for the state?

The problematic situation leads to different solutions:

The state organizes religious education itself – which is against the constitution, but if the state restricts to religious studies and only gives information from a point outside the religion it’s okay.

Or the state tries to find a provisional counterpart by accepting associations of parents or by privileging one of the muslim umbrella organization.

Only alevis have the real status of a institutionalized counterpart

An example: The experience with introducing Muslim religious education in Ludwigshafen:

2003/04 in LU-Pfingstweide started a pilot project at one primary school, initiated by the Land in cooperation with IGRA and CIG
in German language

with a specially developed curricular, underlining interreligious questions
controlled by the School supervisory board of the Land

a little bit more than 100 pupils have taken part in the lessons

Beginning with the school term 2009/10 at 10 secondary schools Islamic religion will be taught, the development of the curriculum is in progress; starting with the 5th/6th class
(with simultaneous scientific evaluation)

Questions:

- Balancing act between the expectations of the parents (classical Qu’ran lessons and introduction in practical dimension of muslim faith) and the state/ the population (modernizing the image of Islam, general overview/introduction in Islam)
- Formation of teachers (who is teaching Islam – Islamicists or already employed teachers with other subjects?)
- Methodology of teaching: student (pupil) orientation; competence orientation and content orientation – no catechesis
- Question of representation (parent organization, CIG, Islamforum at the level of the Land)
- Pupils have to apply for the lessons! Between 10 and 25 pupils

2) Muslims in care facilities like hospitals

in Islamic countries all these responsibilities are done by the family, there is no institutionalized pastoral care – therefore muslim theologians are very much interested in the way of organizing christian pastoral care

here Islamic and cultural traditions are clearly coming together

questions of language (dementia!)

food

place for prayer

of medical help by the same sex

the way of articulating and dealing with pain

(Islamic cemeteries

Still most of the first generation muslims are buried in their “homecountry”. Also the muslim organization are supporting the return.

But more and more muslims have their whole family in Germany – so that the wish is rising to be buried here.

Some communal cemeteries already responded to the new demand. The problems to be solved are:

The idea that the grave must be possessed for ever

The possibility of abdest, of ritual washing

The possibility of being buried without a coffin (casket))

An example:

Pastoral care in emergencies

A heavy train accident with three muslim young boys in December 2007 and the fire in Ludwigshafen 2008 showed the necessity of specially trained muslim emergency ministers.

The Mannheimer Institut für Integration und interreligiösen Dialog, together with the protestant academy and the UMTI started in November 2008 a special formation with a muslim christian board and instructors coming from both religions

The formation consists of 12 elements given in four weekend seminars. In between the seminars phases of internship in hospitals are planned. The formation comprehends theological questions (theological foundation of pastoral care, interpretation of human suffering and illness, religious obligations), psychological questions (counselling in grief, death of a child, trauma, depression, Suicide) and juridical elements. The aim is, to involve muslim ministers in the normal structure of emergency pastoral care and to establish a network service of professional contact persons for hospital, police.

The first round will be ended in 2010, followed by an evaluation.

<http://www.institut-mannheim.de/>

3) Conflicts around mosque building

First of all one has to underline **two general aspects**:

a) As Heiner Bielefeldt from the German human rights center Berlin emphasizes:

„The self understanding of a whole society becomes visible in the way how the society deals with minorities.”

b) I share the idea of Claus Leggewie, a German professor of political science:

the conflicts are positive conflicts, because conflicts are the motor of a social change. And negotiation processes are basics of democracy

-> not the conflict it itself is the problem but dividible conflicts becoming indivisible conflicts – a divisible conflict is a conflict where it is not the question to do or to die, where compromise and negotiations possible.

So it is necessary to transform undivisible conflicts into divisible.

For this it is necessary to analyse who is taking part in a conflict and which topics are an issue.

a) Persons playing an active role:

- Mosque organization
- Owner of the building site
- Local administration, esp. City building authority ([two possibilities to restrict the initiative: because mosques are not RG they have no right to build, so the authorities can put into question the necessity or they can impose certain conditions; beyond that the public order office (bei Teeausschank und Einzelhandelsläden) and the office for the environment are involved (immission control))
- politicians
- important actors of civil society
- residents
- press

b) What is the content of the conflict?

Because building mosques is a conflict about how you understand the society where you live, there are always two levels of the conflict

A conflict of interests Ebene **des Interessenskonfliktes**

- making or renewing of urban land-use plans (Bauleitplänen)
- dimension of the minaret
- call for prayer
- other sources of noise (children, cars, celebrations)
- parking place problems
- social structure of a quarter

the symbolic level:

from the non muslim side often unsaid following fears and topics are playing a role:

- question of transparency, financial resources, preaching
- the influence of the „home countries“
- the relationship and priority of religious law to state law
- fear of violence and terrorism
- theory of land-grabbing, land seizure; the question if a particular room of muslim law is arising

from the muslim side often following fears and topics are playing a role

Umgekehrt von muslimischer Seite:

- fear of loss of tradition; does integration means assimilation?
- Self understanding as victim
- The presumed hostility of the German society against Islam

Important: It does not make a big difference if the topics are based on reality or on ideas – they have real consequences in the way of acting of the actors!

An example:

In May 2009 we organized a first seminary with pupils with regard to mosque building conflicts. It combined information over Islam with political education. The main element has been a simulation game, simulating a local council meeting, prepared by studying the different roles.

Project **open mosque Mannheim**: Since 1997 connected to the opening of Germany's biggest mosque in Mannheim the project "open mosque" is established. It consists of a formed group of guides, being able to guide school classes, individuals and groups and to introduce in Islam. The guided tour can be booked via internet and is evaluated. Over 100.000 persons have taken part in the last years. Multi faith celebrations at the beginning and the end of the school term is taking place in the mosque.

<http://www.institut-mannheim.de/>

[Welche übergreifenden gesellschaftlichen Fragen sind Teil der Moscheebaudiskussion und können anhand von ihr thematisiert werden?

Allgemein:

- Mitarbeit an der Durchsetzung des Diskriminierungsverbots: Bei Islam handelt es sich um eine Religion im Sinne von Art 4 GG. (vgl. Mathias Rohe, Prof. Staatsrecht, Erlangen)
 - ⇒ die religiösen Ausdrucksformen des Islam sind Rechtsgüter, die unter dem Schutz des GG stehen
- Teil der Diskussion um Integration: Wie sollen Zugezogene und Einheimische Kulturen sich zueinander verhalten: Assimilation, Segregation oder Akkulturation?
- tieferes Verständnis von Religionsfreiheit – eben nicht nur Schutz privater Überzeugung, sondern auch Recht auf Öffentlichkeit – wie öffentlich darf eine Religion sein (-> Verbindung zu Kopftuchfrage)?
- Erkundung und Diskussion der Grenzlinie zwischen Islamophobie und Islamkritik – welche Kritik am Islam ist zulässig? Neben dem Schutz von individuellen Glaubensbekenntnis auch noch einmal gesellschaftlich: denn Islamophobie schreibt ja Menschen aufgrund ihrer Herkunft und Gruppenzugehörigkeit bestimmte Eigenschaften zu
- Blick auf die Instrumentalisierung des Rechts auf „political incorrectness“ – dagegen Fairnessgebot und Sorgfaltspflicht als Teil der humanistischen Tradition
- Zusammenspiel von Meinungsfreiheit und Religionsfreiheit – kein Gegensatz oder gegenseitige Begrenzung, sondern beides Freiheitsrechte
- „Zum öffentlichen Umgang mit der Angst vor dem Islam“ – Versachlichung der Debatte um den Islam – notwendig: 82% der Deutschen stimmen Aussage zu, Islam sei fanatisch; 75% sind der Auffassung, dass Islam nicht in unsere westliche Kultur passe]