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MODERNITY AND TRANSNATIONALISM.

THE TURKISH OPTIC

Paper presented at the conference on "Debating the immigration-integration nexus in Germany + Turkey: What to go from here ? ", September 23/24, 2011, Istanbul

Organized by Koç University, Boğaziçi University and Hamburgisches Weltwirtschaft Institut

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2012

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1. Introduction

The unbelievable speed of social changes going on in the last half century, forces us to scrutinize carefully our established concepts not only such as state, nation, constitution, border regime, citizenship, political participation are affected, but old and new social movements also are transforming the values and institutions of our societies. As Stephen Castles reminds us the transformation of capitalism and the demise of etatism, widespread surge of powerful expressions of collective identity are resulting in an interplay between technology induced globalization, the power of identity – gender, religious, ethnic, territorial, socio-biological – and the institutions of the state.

 More and more the discussion about "transnational social spaces" (T. Faist), "migration networks" (M. Castells), "social capital " (Bourdieu, Putnam), "transnationalism" (S. Vertovec) obliges us to re-analyze our working tools. Migration, which is ordinarily defined as the relatively permanent movements of persons over a significant distance, requires a new assessment and in many cases represents a new factor in a larger framework. Thus we can no more be satisfied with the concept that border-crossing expansion will over time definitely produce acculturation or integration.

 In the same way the formation of ethnic communities may produce a variety of   social groups, some determined to act as a diasporic new nation, others as influencing homeland politics toward regional autonomy, and again others solely trying to overcome exclusion by creating economic niches. Such major changes needs an overarching frame of reference. In order to clarify my thoughts I would like to refer myself to the theoretical explanation the German sociologist Ulrich Beck has developed in connection to the emergence of risk societies worldwide and the necessity to evaluate them through the lenses of multiple second modernities.

 Until recently in this world there appeared to be four "certainties":

1) Everyone has his place, 2) People could speak unrestrained about modern society, 3) The order of the world is based on clear borders, either-or decisions, 4) the belief in progress rules. Let's briefly look at these assumptions:

1) <u>Everyone has his place.</u> This order of human beings was not natural. In Europe it was the product of a violent process of a) colonization and imperialism of extra-European countries in the 18th and 19th centuries and of b) nationalization of societies in the 20th century.

Today it suffices to look at the streets of London and Paris to see the difference. How has the this territorial order begun to come adrift? One short answer is globalization. For the first time in history all ethnic and religious groups have become immediate neighbours of every other nation and upheavals on one side of the globe are communicated to the whole population of the planet with extraordinary speed. Serial murders in Oslo- Hurricane in Somalia – Famine in Somalia- Civil war in Lybia concerns all of us. The result is the imposed confrontation with the cultural "Other", the increase in interdependency and differences, which is called "cosmopolitanization". This process is not only based on the unbounding of cultural diversity but also on the unbounding of social inequalities. The more wealthy democracies bear the banner of human rights to the furthest corner of the world, the more migrants take the proclaimed equality as a right for mobility and demand admission.

2- <u>People could speak unrestrained about modern society</u>. In the past modernity was running on rational lines, it was assumed that modernity develops unilaterally toward prosperity and enlightment. Today science became so powerful that it can neither predict nor control its effects. In the areas of nuclear fission, genetic engineering, climate change and the neo-liberal market, society itself has become a scientific laboratory. Consequently modernisation needs to be modernized; it needs to become self-critical. This is what Beck calls "Reflexive Modernization". First modernity- nation state, industrial modernity was stamped by a deterministic understanding of technology. "Reflexive modernization" produces the risk society. This type of society realizes that shaping technology has its limits. Thus it is focussed on decision-making in double sense: compulsion to decide but also freedom to decide. It also means that predictability of future processes is questionable.

3- <u>The order of the world was based on clear and fixed borders and dichotomies.</u> The dual concepts of yesterday were society and nature, "Us" and the "Others", national vs. international. These premises have substantially changed. .

4- <u>Belief in Progress.</u> Modernity began with a promise of salvation; the culmination of the process of societal modernization was imagined to be a paradise on earth. This is no more the case. Radicalised modernity creates consequences it is unable to address.

Summing up the emerging new plural contours of "Second Modernity" may be grasped in their essential features as follows:

- Interweaving, interdependence and interaction of people and population across na-tion-state bounderies,
- Growing inequalities in the global dimension,
- The decisive role of supranational organizations in the economic/business sphere (multinational, transnational companies), politics (IMF,WTO,NATO, International Court of Justice), civil society (social movements, Green Peace, Amnesty Interna-tional),
- New normative concepts such as Human Rights,
- New types and profiles of global risks (climate change, global finance crises),
- -New forms of warfare, of globally organized crime and terrorism (Al Quaida).

The common conceptual denominator of these changes is "cosmopolitanization", that is the erosion of clear boundaries. The borders are blurring and becoming permeable to in-formation flows, capital flows and also people flows (tourists: yes. Migrants and refugees: no).

At every level, including the level of domestic politics, cosmopolitanization is occuring. Until the present social sciences operated on the assumption that social change will pro-gress on an universal, unchanged line. This is no more valid. New cosmopolitan pres-sures requires that all cultures and societies have new kind of obligations towards the only apparently excluded Others. They are bound in a new way to adopt a cosmopolitan tolerance of otherness.

2. From classical migrants to transnational migrants

The global outlook shortly summarized above – whether fully accepted or not – suggests that the available concepts with which we attempted to study migratory movements are insufficient. Whether all migratory movements tend to produce only transnational social spaces or are moving toward transnational social formations, it seems imperative to add to our future research projects three key terms taken from different realms of sociology. These three key terms are "social networks", "social capital", and "embeddedness".

Social networks. Global networks increasingly give organizational expression to corpora-tions, ethnic diasporas, professional bodies, NGO's, criminal groups, terrorists and social movements. In analyzing these networks size, density, multiplicity, clusters or degrees, strength of ties, durability readability, frequency and content are playing a determinant role (S. Vertovec).

Social Capital. A. Portes especially drawing on P. Bourdieu,. J. Coleman defines this term as "the capacity of individuals to command scarce resources by virtue of their membership in networks or broader social structures. ...The resources themselves are *not* social capital; the concept refers instead of the individual's *ability* to mobilize them on demand ". "In a neo-liberal economy to overcome manpower shortage it depends of available support systems or the acceptance of refugees. Social capital is maintained, for ex. by visits, communication by post or telephone, marriage, participation in events and membership in associations.

Embeddedness. First defined by Granovetter the term means that economic actions and other social actions are affected by the actors pairwise relations and by the structure of the overall network of relationships.

Later A.Portes developped this concept by describing two kinds of embeddedness: *relational* and *structural*.Migration studies of all kind have repeatedly utilized these three concepts. They also serve to explain the transformation which took place as a consequence of these links.

3. Variety of transnational formations

At this point before attempting to present a few Turkish examples, I think it will be useful to overlook the different kind of transformation which come about as the consequence of transnational ties.

They can be grouped under four headings: 1) Socio-cultural, 2) Political, 3) Economic and 4) Religious.

1) Socio-cultural transformations .In this sphere the most relevant ınfrastructure shaping transnational links is the telephone, especially mobile ones. They are enabling the most intensive growth of transnational life. Communication links have created a regular, in many cases daily – contact with family and associates.

 Migrant transnationalism has modified residential arrangements, budget management, intergenerational cultural reproduction, long-distance parenthood.

Position of women is equally positively or negatively affected. Women who migrates and perform given tasks can alter their social status, become more liberated. Migrant women

reduced to remain housewives are unable to escape the patriarchal grips due to perceived threats to cultural notions of feminine virtue.

In regard of identities, the situation of young members belonging to the second generation, indicates interesting developments. Levitt has found that transnational activism is mostly encountered at a particular life-stage. Young migrants positioned in multi-local-life world are presented with a wider set of conditions. In each case the parent's transnational habitus, a number of local conditions and the second generation youth's own hybrid or multicultural habitus creates a different reaction.

2) Political transformation. In this area the most relevant subject is which factors are determining the desire to acquire a new citizenship, which kind of activities are shared by those who own dual citizenship, in case of retaining the original citizenship what kind of interest is displayed toward the politics of the homeland, the amount of monetary contributions transferred, the intensity of regular membership in charity organizations, Next to these peaceful activities, eventually mass protests and conscious-raising as well as overseas support for insurgency and terrorism deserves substantial analyses.

3-Economic transformation. Transnational trade and entrepreneurship as well as remittances play in almost all emigration countries a vital role. Hometown associations who are interested in the development of their region represent also another facet of these transnational actions.

4-Religious transformations. Religious traditions in all religions are subject to deep changes and interpretations. In case of Islam we see that the global circuitry of modern telecommunication contributes to the formation of a *digitalized umma* within Muslims of different countries It is based on the idea of a more homogeneous *community of sentiments* Particularly young generations of Muslims are developing a kind of *pluralistic modernity* which permits them to construct their own hybrid and melanges identities. They are developing their own understanding of faith by shaping their ideas with help of the Internet and by discussing their understanding in cyber forums. These transformations are resulting on one side in the *individualization*, on the other side in the *institutionalization* of Islam.

4. Two concepts on which Germans and Turks have different ideas: Multiculturalism and Integration

So far I have attempted to show why the study of migration all over the world needs a new approach, a new perspective, a new appraisal. Now I would like to present a few examples related to the different point of views Turks and Germans are expressing.

Let me start with the concept of "Multiculturalism ". This concept bears very different characteristics according the country it is applied. Canada and partly Australia have recognized multiculturalism as a part of a national identity-building project, which includes the recognition of minority groups, bi/and or / multilingual education and affirmative action. In Europe with the exception of Sweden, the recognition of demands of ethnic groups in order to obtain favourable public policies has practically disappeared. At present the univocal demand of Germany in line with all European member states is based on "integration". It is in this sense that we have to interpret the declaration of chancellor A. Merkel and other relevant German politicians such as W. Schaeuble and H. Schmidt, who have repeatedly announced that multiculturalism is "dead", represents a "misleading " policy, results in "parallel societies", which are detached from the mainstream society and a burden on social welfare structures. Although Germany never recognized any claim concerning political group representation and to the present day refused to grant long established co-citizens of migrant origin the right to vote at local elections, municipal bodies and civic society associations continued to sponsor over the years art exhibits, fairs, folklore dancing, concerts, food festivals and alike. It is correct that the ideology of multiculturalism is based on a holistic notion of culture and assumes that cultures represent separate entities. In some cases they produce an exaggerated "exotic "effect. However a multicultural approach permits also the recognition of a lived history, common experiences, shared values.

Migrants of today request tolerance more than ever. They refuse to be publicly downgraded, stigmatized, classified. To cancel multicultural activities under the justification of being harmful, seems hard to understand at a point of migration history when creating new fields of sociability and identification seems more necessary than ever.

Transnationalism today demands a down-sizing of asymetric relations, a broader understanding of the new co-citizens whether they are nationalized or not.

Yet the insistence of the present day coalition partners (CDU/CSU and FDP) not only stress at all occasions the absolute necessity to integrate their co-citizens for decade ,

they also underline this integration to be understood as the adoption and internationalization of the "German Leitkultur". This request has generated a hot debate. It was generated by an academic discussion and culminated in the sale of over one million copies of Theo Sarrazin's book "Germany destroys itself". How did this conflict started?

A nationalized German sociologist of Syrian origin, Bassam Tibi, discussed in a book entitled "Multicultural values-relativism and value losses", the imperative need to create an overarching concept which would help to create an European identity. He called this concept "Leitkultur". We could translate it in "Transnational culture". Trying to overcome the major dissonances among European migrants B. Tibi built his concept on the recognition of individual human rights, separation of religion and politics and mutual tolerance. This proposal was sharply denounced by politicians such as Schönbohm and Merz – both from CDU/CSU – who argued that multiculturalism has to be replaced with the recognition of the "German Leitkultur". It is under the impact of these demands and the claim that Turks are unwilling to integrate, display an inherited low IQ in intelligence that the fronts have become solidified. On one side globalization and technological innovations have transformed the structure of German society, catapulted the mainstream in a psychological mode governed by fear and uncertainty, on the other side the German school system remains elitist, closes for many the doors to enter the university, and insists that the command of a perfect German and ecceptance that Germany's hegemonic culture based on the Christian-Judaic tradition has to be accepted. Although the majority of German educators have underlined that the teaching of mother tongue is a sine qua non for the acquisition of a new language, the majority of German Laender governments have abolished the teaching of Turkish in school and are refusing to introduce the Turkish language as an obligatory elective language. At the same time Chinese has been introduced in most of the school curriculums as an elective language since two years.

While German authorities use the concept of "Integration" they mean "Assimilation" and insist on the unilateral perfect knowledge of the German language .Yet highly qualified members of the second, third generation are meeting with great difficulties in obtaining an apprenticeship place or an adequate position. A recent survey among young Turks reveal that % 40 of naturalized young Turks intend to leave Germany, eventually to return to Turkey. The German public opinion is so far not willing to recognize that the distorted stereotypes about an unemployed, unintegrated young cohort of migrant youth ready for violent action is only a small part of the picture. Transnational ties have created large social spaces in which the young generation creates its own links and tries to construct "intercultural" bridges. In order to transform this energy into a creative input the recognition of new conditions and new policies is imperative.

5. No more Turks only Muslims

Turkish immigrants in the past similar to other minority groups tried to overcome the feeling of loneliness and uncertainty by creating strong links between members of their religious creed. Over time transnational ties have also lead to differential manifestation of Islam. Although the great majority of practicing Turkish Muslim are members of the Sunni community, migration enabled a sub-group, the Alevis to affirm and consolidate their existence and render it public. Alevism is a heterodox religious identity which is peculiar to Anatolia. These communities were concentrated in rural parts of the Mediterranean and Southeastern part of Turkey. Due to the strong supremacy of the Sunni majority, they were forced to conceal their identity. Both Turkish and Kurdish Alevis started to move toward the major cities of Turkey after 1950.In order to avoid racial attacks and discrimination they still had to conceal their existence. Relevant change came with migration to Europe in the 60's and 70's.In 1986 the European Parliament decided to subsidize associations that promote immigrant culture and identities. This permitted Alevis to coordinate their activities on a legal basis. After the tragic incidents in Turkey such as the massacre of 37 artists in a central Anatolian city (Sivas, 1993) and of a similar attack in an Alevi neighbourhood of Istanbul (Gaziosmanpaşa, 1995), the Alevis in Germany publicly condemned the slow reaction of the government at home. They also asked for public recognition in Europe and at home. At present a Turkish TV channel is regularly diffusing rituals and information about the Alevi community in Turkey and abroad.

The blurring of the boundaries between the Alevi community and the homeland has also created serious clashes in the domain of popular culture. In 2007 the state sponsored TV channel ARD portrayed in an episode the murder and incest within a modern Alevi family in Germany. The young woman, who was subject to the incest, left home and married a man of Sunni origin. Being veiled in her new family, the woman was portrayed as if she had found refuge away from home. Such representation fuelled an already existing animosity between the Alevis and Sunnis not only in Germany but also in Turkey. Thousands of Alevis demonstrated against the show in Berlin, Hanover, Hamburg and Cologne. Up to 20.000 Alevi Muslims in Germany gathered in front of Cologne cathedral on December29,2007 in order to protest the programme "Tatort ". Alevi leaders from Turkey were also involved in the debate stating that the show played on centuries-old prejudices against Alevis..

While the revival of Alevis is to be understood as the consequence of an enlarged inter-
pretation of human rights and the use of democracy, Islam has also become a major in-
strument for managing Muslim migrant population in Europe. In Germany these efforts
started in September 2006, when the federal Interior Minister W. Schaeuble organized a
big conference on Islam. From that date on the Christian Democrats in power decided to
reduce the identity of migrants and their children to their religious affiliation. National be-
longingness is no more reflected in statistics. Rather than initiating a dialogue with mi-
grants as individuals, the Christian Democrats decided to have dialogue with Muslims.
The coalition partner of those years, the Social Democrat Party also initiated a pro-
gramme which assumed that the major obstacle behind the problem of integration was
the distinctiveness of Islam. The result of these initiatives was the creation of the "Co-
ordination Council Islamic Affairs" (Koordinierungsrat der Muslime, KRM) in April 2007,
which was formed by four umbrella organizations: the DITIB (a branch of the Turkish Dir-
ectoratye of Religious Affairs), the VIKZ (the Association of Islamic Cultural Centres), the
IR (the Islamic Council) and the ZMD (the Central Council of Muslims).

This overarching organization includes neither the Alevis nor Shiites or Ahmadiya
Muslims. It has produced an essentializing of Islam, supporting only conservative Islamıc
associations. Cutting off the roots of their home countries by solely recognizing the con-
fessional denomination of Euro-Turks created serious discussions. Today it can be
claimed that .the increasingly growing Islamophobia in Europe and Germany is partly the
result of the insistence of public authorities to reduce the manifolded identity of migrants
to their religious identity. Studies in recent years reveal relevant changes in this area par-
ticularly from the standpoint of generations. The religiosity of young migrants can be
defined as an symbolic attachment which helps to resist exclusion poverty, institutional
discrimination. Ayhan Kaya defines it as the "*individualization of Islam* ". Particularly
young Euro-Turkish women are treating Islam within a pluralistic modernity framework.
For them Islam is a way of emancipation from the repression of both parental culture and
traditional institutions. Comparing the two antithetical processes of *individualization* and
institutionalization of Islam one may conclude that the former is likely to lead to the secu-
larization of individual and the latter is likely to bring about a clergy with a vested interest
in due process.

6. Transformation caused by diasporic communities

Similar to the different tendencies in religious behavior, political activities and actions of ethnic communities requires detailed anbd ungoing evaluation. While a large number of ethnic communities have been focussing on economic enterprises, others began to reach out in the field of party politics and international relations. Beginning from 1970 on Turkish migrants started to create associations and began to underline their ethnic origin by replacing "Turkish" with "from/of Turkey" (Türkiyeli), later by emphasizing to be Kurdish. From 1978 on ideological divisions became apparent. At this point the profile of this ethnic community started to transform itself into a diasporic community. Following the military intervention of 1980 the Kurdish migrants in Germany manifested continuously their political ambitions. They started with demanding for increased cultural and administrative autonomy in their homeland to be followed with aspiration of the recognition of an independent national state. These different aims were reflected in the formation of two organizations, PKK and KOMKAR. Following bombings, public demonstrations, occupation of highways in Germany the separatist PKK was outlawed in 1993, labelled as an terrorist organization in 2008. Judiciary investigation and court decisions have proved a number of time involvement in drug smuggling, money laundering, extortion from business men, human traffic and sex trade. However the conscious- raising activities and media supported struggle for the recognition of a separate Kurdish identity has continued to the present day through fifty different associations and organizations. These demands partly supported by interventions in supranational bodies such as the Council of Europe and the European parliament had their repercussions in the homeland. From 2004 on Turkey lifted the ban on printing books in Kurdish, publishing newspapers and magazines. The government owned TV channel TRT 6 is diffusing a daily program in Kurdish, in 2011 an institute for the teaching of Kurdish literature has been established in the university of Mardin. As Thomas Faist has demonstrated in detail, organizations such as the PKK and its successors achieved to transplant mechanisms of social control from Turkey to Germany and vice versa. T. Faist underlined the major difference between the two groups: the activists and supporters of the outlawed PKK are trying to build a sort of "refugee warrior diaspora". The members of the KOMKAR are developing transnational networks seeking autonomy instead of secession/independence and encourage the integration of Kurds in Germany.

An interesting research project carried out recently by K.Kissau and H.Hunger indicates that internet platforms play a key role in the retention or reawakening of identities and imagined homeland. Comparing German-post-Soviet, German-Turkish and German-Kurdish websites, the researchers found that while the first two groups maintained their last-

ing relationship through the agency of individual actors or associations, the Kurdish migrants used their online activity almost uniquely to enhance their diasporic identity.

7. Summing up

In a world which is facing on all fronts uncertainties, definite, sharp delimited, non-flexible rules seem utterly old fashioned. We have to adress ourselves a number of questions: Can immigrants who due to legalistic narrow conditions are not entitled to participate in the politics of the country they live and work, be left excluded? Is the condition to be obliged to choose only one citizenship at the age of majority compatible with the" emergent citizen of tomorrow", "the transmigrant" for whom blurred borders is natural? Does the integration model as applied in the majority of Laenders represent a sufficient attractive pole for the young generation considering that the world of today stretches beyond a given national border? What role should parents occupy in guiding their children considering that the best tool for intergenerational discourse – mother language – is no more taught and discouraged? Does the clustering of migrants according confessional origin such as in the case of Islam increase or decrease Islamophobia? How do transnational links initiated by migrant associations influence constitutional principles, legislation, administrative structures?