

Transnational Linkages and Recognition
The Case of Immigrants' Religious Organizations in Germany

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	V
ZUSAMMENFASSUNG	VII
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	X
LIST OF FIGURES	XIII
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	XIV
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. THE PROBLEM, THE RESEARCH QUESTION AND VARIABLES	2
1.2. IMPORTANCE, HINTS FROM THE LITERATURE AND THE GAP	5
1.3. DEFINITIONS OF KEY CONCEPTS AND DIMENSIONS	11
1.3.1. Transnationalism and related concepts	12
1.3.2. Immigrants' religious organizations and the issue of recognition	17
1.4. TURKISH IMMIGRANTS IN GERMANY: THE CONTEXT IN BRIEF	20
1.5. AN OVERVIEW OF THE THESIS	25
2. RESEARCH DESIGN	27
2.1. COMPARATIVE CASE STUDY	27
2.2. CASE SELECTION FOR THE DESIGN	29
2.2.1. DİTİB	30
2.2.2. AABF	32
2.3. DATA COLLECTION AND METHODS	34
2.3.1. Qualitative interviews	35
2.3.2. Review of official and archival documents	37
3. THE CONTEXT WITH A FOCUS ON TURKEY	40
3.1. STRATEGIES OF SENDING STATES	41
3.2. THE TRANSFORMATION OF TURKEY'S POLICIES TOWARD ITS CITIZENS ABROAD	44
3.2.1. The early economy-focused phase	46
3.2.2. The transitional control-focused phase	53
3.2.3. Active engagement phase: rapid institutionalization and intensive policies	59
3.3. TURKISH MIGRANT COMMUNITY AND ITS ORGANIZATIONS IN GERMANY	70
3.3.1. Religious organizations in the Turkish migrant community	71
3.3.1.1. Islamic Community Milli Görüş	72
3.3.1.2. Association of Islamic Culture Centres	73

3.3.1.3. The Gülenist Organization.....	75
3.3.2. Political movements in Turkish migrant community	78
3.3.2.1. Left-wing Turkish political organizations in Germany	78
3.3.2.2. Right-Wing Turkish Political Organizations in Germany.....	79
3.3.2.3. Kurdish political organizations in Germany.....	81
3.4. CONCLUSION.....	82
4. THE CONTEXT WITH A FOCUS ON GERMANY	84
4.1. GERMANY AND TURKISH MIGRATION.....	84
4.1.1. The economy focused phase.....	85
4.1.2. ‘Guest workers’ who should have returned home.....	86
4.1.3. Acceptance of permanency: so what?	90
4.2. IMMIGRANTS’ RELIGIONS ORGANIZATIONS AND THE RECEIVING STATES.....	93
4.3. THE CASE IN GERMANY.....	98
4.3.1. Recognition of religious organizations in Germany.....	98
4.3.1.1. The right to associate	101
4.3.1.2. Temporal Partnerships and State Agreements (<i>Staatvertrags</i>).....	102
4.3.1.3. Religious community status	105
4.3.1.4. Corporation under public law status	107
4.4. TURKS IN GERMANY AND RECOGNITION.....	111
4.4.1. Lack of a unified voice.....	113
4.4.2. Functional and structural problems.....	116
4.4.3. Increasing politicization of Islam.....	123
4.5. CONCLUSION.....	125
5. DİTİB: RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS TURKISH - ISLAM UNION.....	129
5.1. DİTİB FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	130
5.1.1. The main body: Presidency for Religious Affairs.....	130
5.1.2. Diyanet in Germany: DİTİB.....	132
5.2. DİTİB FROM ORGANIZATIONAL AND RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES	137
5.2.1. Organizational structure	138
5.2.2. Religious understanding and representation	142
5.3. DİTİB FROM A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE	145
5.3.1. Transnational links of DİTİB	146
5.3.2. The attitude of Germany towards DİTİB’s transnational links.....	150
5.4. DİTİB FROM A RECOGNITION PERSPECTIVE.....	156
5.4.1. The way to recognition	156
5.4.2. Results of recognition processes.....	160
5.4.3. Localizing the recognition processes	163
5.4.3.1. Hamburg	164

5.4.3.2. Hesse	167
5.4.3.3. Bavaria.....	170
5.5. CONCLUSION.....	172
6. AABF: ALEVI COMMUNITY IN GERMANY.....	176
6.1. AABF FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE.....	177
6.1.1. What is Alevism?.....	177
6.1.2. Alevi institutionalization in Turkey	183
6.1.3. Alevis in Germany.....	189
6.1.4. AABF – Alevi Community in Germany	191
6.2. AABF FROM AN ORGANIZATIONAL PERSPECTIVE	195
6.3. AABF FROM A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE.....	199
6.4. AABF FROM A RECOGNITION PERSPECTIVE.....	202
6.4.1. The path to recognition	202
6.4.2. The results of recognition processes	207
6.4.3. Localizing the recognition processes	211
6.4.3.1. Hamburg	211
6.4.3.2. Hesse and Bavaria	212
6.5. CONCLUSION.....	214
7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	219
7.1. OBSERVATIONS ON VARIATIONS.....	219
7.1.1. Variations among organizations	220
7.1.2. Variations over time.....	223
7.1.3. Variations between actors	227
7.2. TRANSNATIONALITY AS AN EXPLANATORY FACTOR.....	232
7.2.1. The substance of transnationality.....	233
7.2.2. Legal framework and organizational factors	235
7.2.3. The politicization of the issue and contestations.....	239
8. CONCLUSION	244
8.1. TRANSNATIONALITY AND IMMIGRANTS’ INSTITUTIONALIZATION	244
8.2. TRANSNATIONALITY AND THE ISSUE OF RECOGNITION	248
8.3. TRANSNATIONALIZATION AND THE INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS.....	252
8.4. IMPLICATIONS AND POSSIBLE SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE	256
9. REFERENCES.....	261
9.1. LITERATURE	261
9.2. REPORTS AND DOCUMENTS FROM PARLIAMENTS.....	284

9.3. CONSTITUTIONS, LAWS, AND BYLAWS.....	290
9.4. INTERVIEWS.....	291

ABSTRACT

Migration and related issues have become amongst the most salient issues on the agendas of industrialized European countries in recent decades. Advances in communication and transportation technologies have increased the movements of migrants between their initial home countries and their host countries and have given growing prominence to the issue of transnationalism. Increasing naturalization and integration efforts in the host states are revealing new issues, such as how to deal with the migrant communities' differences. Against this background, this study aims to fill a gap at the intersection of literatures about the Turkish immigrant communities in Germany, transnationalism and religious recognition. The research question asks whether there is a causal relationship between the transnational linkages of Turkish religious organizations and the processes of their recognition in Germany. A comparative case study design based on the most similar cases model has been chosen to explore this question. In this frame, AABF and DİTİB, two transnational religious organizations that differ in terms of the 'substance of transnational links' were chosen and systematically analyzed based on data collected using qualitative methods.

Among the factors examined, the historical trajectory of the Turkish communities in Germany and the varying policies towards these communities of both home and host countries is found to be significant. While exploring this context, the recognition of religious organizations in Germany and the main challenges of Turkish organizations are explained. The analysis highlights structural deficits, representational problems and the increasing politicization of Islam and migration come to the fore as central elements.

The empirical core of the study is an in-depth exploration of the case. The empirical findings indicate that both organizations are the results of lengthy processes in the history of migration and the have both been influenced by both policy changes and transformations in their respective communities. An analysis of the organizations according to specific dimensions of the recognition issues provides the detailed observations needed for a comparative analysis. Organizational structures, transnational connections and changes in the German authorities' perception of these organizations are detailed, in addition to recognition processes in three German states - Hesse, Bavaria and Hamburg - to allow for a more fine-grained comparison.

The comparative analysis reveals important variations along three main dimensions: the recognition policy as applied to different organizations; attitudes over time; and the key actors involved. It shows that there is variation between the organizations as far as the results of

recognition processes are concerned, with AABF benefiting thanks to its better organizational structure. Similarly, German authorities' attitude towards AABF has been more stable, while variations are observed over time in DİTİB's case. Lastly, differences can be seen in the policies of actors involved in recognition processes in both the vertical and horizontal dimensions of the German political system. Again, there are fluctuations in DİTİB's interactions with different actors at each level, and these have harmed its recognition processes. In contrast, AABF's interactions with these actors have always been neutral or positive, with no major differences changes between the different levels of the German political system. Based on these observations, the nature of transnational linkages – the critical difference between the two cases – is offered as an explanatory factor. This difference directly or indirectly led to a better organizational structure, stable relations with German authorities, and protection against the rise of politicization in the case of AABF. These factors have worked in the opposite direction for DİTİB and have hampered its recognition process.

In sum, this study underlines that it is impossible to understand either the development of these two organizations or how they are perceived – both of which are decisive elements in the recognition process – without considering their transnational links. Transnationality is a concept that appears at all stages of the recognition process, from the institutionalization to the unification of the communities and perceptions about their organization. Therefore, there is a clear connection between transnationality and recognition policies, depending mainly on the substance of transnational links. Furthermore, the effects of transnationality can be extended to the issue of integration. Even though transnationality is generally evaluated as being harmful to incorporation efforts, the adaptation of a moderate definition of integration could turn transnationalism into a useful tool for a successful integration policy. All things considered, the likely future of the recognition of Turkish immigrants' religious organizations, especially Islamic ones, does not seem optimistic. However, there are no non-transnational alternatives that can replace the existing organizations in the field. Therefore, attempts to create joint platforms and to improve organizational structures are the only ways in which Islamic organizations can win their struggle for equal recognition in Germany.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Migration und eng mit ihrem verwandten Fragen sind in den letzten Jahrzehnten zu zentralen Themen auf den Agenden der industrialisierten europäischen Staaten geworden. Fortschritte in Kommunikations- und Verkehrstechnologien haben die Verbindungen von Migranten zwischen Herkunftsstaaten und Aufnahmestaaten intensiviert und so das Problem des Transnationalismus zunehmend in den Mittelpunkt der Aufmerksamkeit gerückt. Die zunehmenden Einbürgerungs- und Integrationsbemühungen in den Aufnahmestaaten werfen dabei neue Probleme auf, beispielsweise den Umgang mit den Unterschieden zwischen den Gemeinschaften. Vor diesem Hintergrund zielt die vorliegende Studie darauf ab, eine Lücke an der Schnittstelle der Literaturen über die türkische Einwanderergemeinschaften in Deutschland, Transnationalismus und die staatliche Anerkennung religiöser Gemeinschaften zu füllen. Die Forschungsfrage ist, ob ein kausaler Zusammenhang zwischen den transnationalen Verknüpfungen türkischer religiöser Organisationen einerseits und ihrer Anerkennung in Deutschland andererseits besteht. Die Studie untersucht dabei AABF und DiTiB, zwei transnationale religiöse Organisationen, die sich hinsichtlich der „Substanz transnationaler Verbindungen“ deutlich voneinander unterscheiden. Diese beiden Organisationen, ihre transnationalen Verbindungen und die Entwicklung ihrer staatlichen Anerkennung in Deutschland werden dabei vergleichend untersucht.

Unter den untersuchten Faktoren ist die historische Entwicklung der türkischen Gemeinschaften in Deutschland und die unterschiedlichen staatlichen Politiken gegenüber dieser Gemeinschaft sowohl im Heimatland Türkei als auch im Gastland Deutschland von großer Bedeutung. Bei der Untersuchung dieses Kontextes werden die Grundzüge der Anerkennung religiöser Organisationen in Deutschland und die Hauptherausforderungen, denen sich türkische religiöse Organisationen gegenübersehen, erläutert. Strukturelle Defizite, Repräsentationsprobleme und die zunehmende Politisierung des Islam und der Migration erweisen sich als zentrale Elemente, die auf den staatlichen Anerkennungsprozess in Deutschland einwirken.

Die empirischen Fallstudien stellen den empirischen Kern der vorliegenden Studie dar. Die Untersuchungsergebnisse belegen, dass beide Organisationen das Ergebnis langwieriger Prozesse in der Migrationsgeschichte sind und beide von politischen Änderungen in der Türkei und Deutschland und Transformationen in ihren jeweiligen Gemeinschaften beeinflusst wurden. Eine Analyse der Organisationen entlang dreier Hauptdimensionen des Anerkennungsproblems erlaubt die notwendigen detaillierten Beobachtungen.

Organisationsstrukturen, transnationale Verbindungen und Veränderungen in der Wahrnehmung dieser Organisationen durch die deutschen Behörden werden im Einzelnen beschrieben. Diese Beobachtungen werden um die Untersuchung der Anerkennungsprozesse in drei Bundesländern - Hessen, Bayern und Hamburg – ergänzt, um noch detaillierte Beobachtungen möglich zu machen.

Die vergleichende empirische Analyse zeigt wichtige Variationen in drei Hauptdimensionen: die Anerkennungspolitik für verschiedene Organisationen; Einstellungen im Zeitverlauf; und die beteiligten Akteure. Es zeigt sich, dass es offensichtliche Unterschiede zwischen den Organisationen hinsichtlich der Ergebnisse der Anerkennungsprozesse gibt, wobei AABF aufgrund seiner besseren Organisationsstruktur hiervon profitiert. In ähnlicher Weise war das Verhältnis der deutschen Behörden gegenüber AABF stabiler, während deutliche Unterschiede im Fall von DİTİB im Laufe der Zeit zu beobachten sind. Schließlich finden sich auch offensichtliche Unterschiede in der Politik der an Anerkennungsprozessen beteiligten Akteure sowohl in der vertikalen als auch in der horizontalen Dimension des deutschen politischen Systems. Auch hier gibt es Schwankungen in der Interaktion von DİTİB mit verschiedenen Akteuren auf jeder Ebene, die die Anerkennungsprozesse beeinträchtigt haben. Im Gegensatz dazu war die Interaktion von AABF mit diesen Akteuren meist neutral oder positiv. Basierend auf diesen Beobachtungen wird die Art der transnationalen Verknüpfungen - der kritische Unterschied zwischen den beiden Fällen - als Erklärungsfaktor betont. Diese Unterschiede führte direkt oder indirekt zu einer besseren Organisationsstruktur, stabilen Beziehungen mit den Behörden und einem Schutz gegen die zunehmende Politisierung im Fall von AABF. Demgegenüber wirkten für DİTİB die Faktoren in die entgegengesetzte Richtung und behinderten den staatlichen Anerkennungsprozess.

Diese vorliegende Studie zeigt, dass es unmöglich ist, die Entwicklung dieser Organisationen und ihre Einschätzung durch deutsche Akteure zu verstehen, ohne ihre transnationalen Verbindungen zu berücksichtigen. Transnationalität ist ein Konzept, das von der Institutionalisierung bis hin zur Vereinigung der Gemeinschaften und zu den Wahrnehmungen über die Organisation in allen Phasen des Anerkennungsprozesses von Bedeutung ist. Daher besteht ein klarer Zusammenhang zwischen Transnationalität und Anerkennungspolitik, der hauptsächlich von der Substanz der grenzüberschreitenden Verbindungen abhängt. Darüber hinaus können die Auswirkungen der Transnationalität auf das Thema der Integration ausgedehnt werden. Alles in allem scheint die Zukunft der Anerkennung der religiösen Organisationen türkischer Einwanderer, insbesondere der

islamischen Organisationen, wenig Anlass zu Optimismus zu geben. Es gibt aber keine nicht-transnationalen Alternativen, die die bestehenden Organisationen vor Ort ersetzen könnten. Versuche, gemeinsame Plattformen zu schaffen und Organisationsstrukturen zu verbessern, sind daher die einzigen Möglichkeiten, damit islamische Organisationen ihren Kampf für gleichberechtigte Anerkennung in Deutschland gewinnen können.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

EU: European Union

USA: United States of America

UK: The United Kingdom

DİTİB: Religious Affairs Turkish Islam Union (*Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği*)

AABF: Union of Alevi Associations in Germany (*Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu – Almanya Alevi Cemaati*)

PKK: Kurdistan Workers Party (*Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan*)

AfD: Alternative for Germany (*Alternative für Deutschland*)

DPT: State Planning Agency (*Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı*)

NGO: Non-governmental organization

IGMG: Islamic Community Milli Görüş (*Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş*)

IMO: International Migration Organization

TMO: transnational migrant organization

VIKZ: Association of Islamic Culture Centers (*Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren*)

YTB: Presidency for Abroad Turks (*Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı*)

YEE: Yunus Emre Institute (*Yunus Emre Enstitüsü*)

JDP: Justice and Development Party (*Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi - AKP*)

TIKA: Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency (*Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı*)

RPP: Republican People Party (*Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi - CHP*)

FETO: Terrorist Organization of *Fethullahcıs*

DP: Democrat Party (*Demokrat Parti*)

JP: Justice Party (*Adalet Partisi*)

TPP: True Path Party (*Doğru Yol Partisi*)

GO: *Gülenist* Organization

DHKP-C: Revolutionary People's Liberation Party/Front (*Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi – Cephesi*)

MLKP: Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (*Maksist-Leninist Komünist Partisi*)

NMP: Nationalist Movement Party (*Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi – MHP*)

ADÜTDF: Federation of European Democratic Idealist Turkish Associations (*Föderation der Türkisch-Demokratischen Idealistenvereine in Deutschland - Almanya Demokratik Ülkücü Türk Dernekleri Federasyonu*)

ATIB: Europe Turkish Islamic Union (*Avrupa Türk İslam Birliği*)

UETD: Union of European Turkish Democrats (*Union Europäisch-Türkischer Demokraten*)

ADD: Union of German Democrats (*Allianz Deutscher Demokraten*)

PDP: People's Democracy Party (*Halkların Demokrasi Partisi*)

KOMKAR: Union of Organizations from Kurdistan in Germany (*Verband der Vereine aus Kurdistan in Deutschland e.V.*)

YEKKOM: Federation of Kurdish Associations in Germany (*Kongress der kurdischen demokratischen Gesellschaft in Europa*)

NAVDEM: Germany Democratic Kurdish Society Centre (*Navenda Civaka Demokratik A Kurd Le Almanya*)

CDU: Christian Democratic Union of Germany (*Christlich Demokratische Union Deutschlands*)

CSU: Christian Social Union in Bavaria (*Christian Social Union in Bavaria*)

SPD: Social Democratic Party of Germany (*Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)

FDP: Free Democrats Party (*Freie Demokratische Partei*)

NPD: National Democracy Party of Germany (*Nationaldemokratische Partei Deutschlands*)

DVU: German People's Union (*Deutsche Volksunion*)

PDS: Democratic Socialism Party (*Partei Des Demokratischen Sozialismus*)

DLP: Democratic Left Party (*Demokratik Sol Parti - DSP*)

DIK: German Islam Conference (*Deutsche Islam Konferenz*)

KRM: Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (*Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Deutschland*)

PEGIDA: Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamisation of the Occident (*Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes*)

SCHURA: Council of Islamic Communities (*Rat der Islamischen Gemeinschaften*)

AKD: Alevi Culture Associations (*Alevi Kültür Dernekleri*)

ABF: Alevi - Bektashi Federation (*Alevi – Bektaşî Federasyonu*)

AVF: Federation of Alevi Foundations (*Alevi Vakıfları Federasyonu*)

PSAKD: *Pir Sultan Abdal* Culture Associations (*Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Dernekleri*)

ABTM: Council of Alevi – Bektashi Representatives (*Alevi Bektaşî Temsilciler Meclisi*)

YB: Union of Patriots (*Yurtseverler Birliği*)

HBVA: *Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli* Associations (*Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dernekleri*)

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 1: Interactions between actors shaping recognition policies. (p. 4)
- Figure 2: Phases of Turkish Migration to Europe (p. 22)
- Figure 3: Germany's policies towards Turkish migrants. (p. 126)
- Figure 4: Scale for recognition of religious organizations in Germany. (p. 127)
- Figure 5: Timeline and transformations in components of the research (p. 135)
- Figure 6: Organization Scheme of DİTİB (p. 140)
- Figure 7: Actors and transformations in DİTİB's recognition process. (p. 173)
- Figure 8: Transformation of the Alevi Movement in Germany. (p. 215)
- Figure 9: Organizations and their current recognition levels. (p. 222)
- Figure 10: Germany's attitude to DİTİB and AABF in selected periods. (p. 226)
- Figure 11: The recognition status of both organizations and their relations with local policymakers. (p. 230)

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1. INTRODUCTION

Migration and related issues have been climbing up the agenda of almost all European countries as a result of growing immigrant communities and the enormous refugee flows of recent years. The crisis is causing debates in the European Union (EU) and is seen as one of the most severe challenges of its history. While discussions in the EU harm the integrity that it has achieved since World War Two, the results of the crisis can also be seen in the domestic politics of member states through the rise of far-right and extremist political parties. Even though these issues have become common today because of the problems mentioned above, migration has existed in Europe for decades. According to World Bank's *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*,¹ almost 250 million people are living outside their country of birth, and a considerable part of this immigrant population lives in Western countries such as the USA, Canada, Germany, the UK and France. Most of these immigrant populations are still growing, mostly due to labour-related migration and refugee flows from impoverished and war-torn areas of the world.

One of the most frequently mentioned immigrant groups in migration studies literature is the Turkish migrant community, which is among the most prominent immigrant groups in European countries. This study, which concentrates on Turkish migration to Europe, aims to fill a gap at the intersection of transnational studies, Turkish migration literature and the issue of the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations in Germany. Thus, the central question of this research is, in basic terms: what do Turkish migrant communities' transnational links mean for them in the context of their religious recognition in Germany? Within that frame, the comparative research focuses on the recognition processes of Turkish immigrants' religious organizations differentiating in transnational links.

The research design and methods are assessed in Chapter 2, but the work is based on a comparative case study. Two specific transnational religious organizations – namely DİTİB (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği or Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs) and AABF (Almanya Alevi Dernekleri Federasyonu or the Alevi Community in Germany) – have been selected for comparative analysis. These organizations, including their structures, histories and recognition processes, as well as the changing policy environment in their home and host

¹ World Bank Group. 2016. *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016*. Washington DC: World Bank. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/23743>, accessed 25 August 2019.

countries surrounding both the community and the organizations, are examined in depth. In conducting this investigation, qualitative techniques are used to understand why these two organizations ended up with different results with regard to the issue of recognition. It can be seen that state-associated transnational linkages are perceived negatively by the host states, and that these links can cause problems in the context of the recognition of these migrant organizations. It is also possible that the analysis will lead to further explanations for the effects of transnational links on the institutionalization and integration of immigrants.

After this brief introduction, the next section sets out clearly the main question, variables and possible hypotheses. Later in this chapter, a brief literature review reveals the gap this study aims to fill and explains the importance of this research. As a result, it will be seen that the core of this research relates more to transnational studies, Turkish immigrants in Germany, immigrants' religious organizations and the issue of recognition. In the sections that follow, these essential notions will be defined, together with brief outlines of the related literature.

1.1. The problem, the research question and variables

The puzzle that created this research idea was shaped by reading on the history of Turkish migration to Europe and the author's observations in the immigrant community in Germany. The literature that relates to these issues is sizeable and includes a lot of detail about the history of Turkish migration, different groups in the community, and transnational spaces created by the cross-border relations of these people. Briefly, migration from Turkey to Europe started with workforce recruitment agreements with Germany and other Western European states in the 1960s and has continued through a variety of channels, creating a vast Turkish community in Germany. Different factors have boosted migration at different times during this period: for example, the labour demands of European industries, refugee flows as a result of the politically turbulent 1970s in Turkey, family reunions, and clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces and the terrorist organization PKK in the 1990s (Partiya Karkerên Kurdistanê or Kurdistan Workers' Party). All of these instances caused transformations in the Turkish immigrant community in Europe, including in Germany. The combination of these factors with the changing policies of Turkey and Germany towards these people created a very fragmented Turkish community in Germany and played a critical role in the institutionalization process of immigrant organizations. Today, there are several migrant organizations with transnational links to different groups and actors in Turkey. These organizations started to build relations with the authorities in Germany as a result of their members pursuing a life there. These transformations and interactions brought further needs onto the agenda of the community, and

their organizations, specifically the religious ones, have been making claims for their religious and related rights to be recognized. This context – of Turkish immigrants in Germany, their transnational organizations and the issue of religious recognition – paved the way for this research. This study therefore combines these aspects and aims to create a design that helps us identify the dynamics of the recognition processes that apply to Turkish religious organizations and the role their transnational linkages play in these processes.

The relationship between immigrants' religious organizations and their host state can take many different forms, and recognition can be defined as a frame covering all of their interactions, from primary to upper levels. The issue of recognition, the most critical concept in this study, mainly refers to the recognition of religious organizations in Germany. This issue has its roots in the history of the church – state relations, and it has formal procedures with conditions set out in legal documents, including the constitution. In short, there are five dimensions to the recognition of religious organizations in Germany: the right to associate; project partnerships; state agreements; the status of religious community; and the 'corporation under public law'. Due to reasons explored later, Turkish immigrants have been seeking religious recognition since the 1990s and have been trying to fulfil a list of conditions in pursuit of that aim. There is a variety of rival organizations making claims for recognition due to the fragmented outlook of the community. Also, it is possible to find differences between the recognition policies enacted in relation to these organizations. Some organizations are successfully fulfilling the conditions and obtaining recognition while others are failing in this process. These differences – at all levels – in recognition policies towards organizations created the initial puzzle and became the 'dependent variable' of the study.

The second component of a hypothesis is an independent variable, which is held to be in a causal relationship with the dependent variable. In this research design, the independent variable is the nature or substance of transnational links, which is what tends to differentiate the selected cases. The nature of transnational links could be defined with a focus on the home country correspondents of organizations' cross-border relations. Within that frame, the use of this concept refers to the question: 'What kind of link has what kind of effect on recognition policy?' In other words, the study is designed to look for the relationship between the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations (dependent variable) and their transnational linkages (independent variable). This concept, which is not covered thoroughly in the literature, is a critical dimension that differentiates the examples chosen. The comparative analysis built upon these pillars leads the study to further explorations in related issues, such as the

relationship between transnational links and institutionalization and the integration of immigrants.

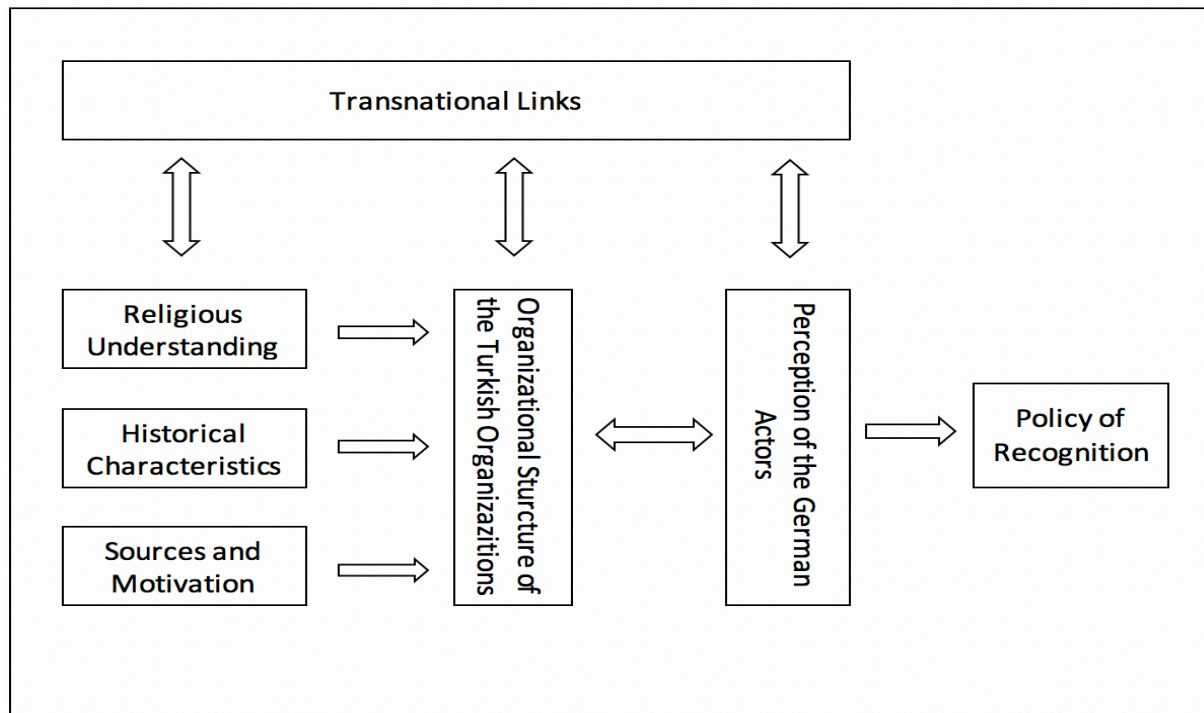


Figure 1: Interactions between actors shaping recognition policies (arrows show the direction of influence).

Another component of research is a hypothesis on or scientific prediction of the results of the analysis. In this research, producing a hypothesis is quite challenging because the main subject is not well debated in the literature. However, it is not impossible to find at least some clues about the situation, even if it has not been studied directly, because scholars have argued that European host states do not welcome transnational activities and that they are trying to find ways of reducing such dependencies (Laurence 2006, 2015; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003). Therefore, a prediction can be made based on the existing literature and recent incidents involving the religious organizations of immigrants in Germany. The initial projection could be, for example: ‘If a transnational migrant organization has transnational links to a state agency, these links could be seen as obstacles for its recognition by the host states. On the other hand, these transnational links to official institutions could be seen as positive or negative depending on changes in the transnational links and the political conjuncture created by the policies of host and home countries.’ As seen in Figure 1, the preliminary hypothesis presumes a relationship between transnational linkages and recognition processes. Based on that assumption, the influence of the different natures of transnational links could have a determining effect on the recognition policy. This research is designed to test this hypothesis.

This research aims to understand the patterns of recognition policy and the impact of transnational links on this process. Hence, in addition to two different (civil society and state-related) organizations, the changing approaches of Turkey and Germany to the immigrant community will be examined, with a focus on their influence on the organizations and transnational linkages. In addition, the perceptions of host state authorities about migrant organizations at different levels of the administrative system and their links to the transnational linkages of those organizations will also be analysed to provide more comprehensive results. The relationships between different types of transnational links, the institutionalization of immigrant organizations and the issue of integration will also be assessed more broadly. In this way, it will be demonstrated whether the recognition patterns for these two similar organizations correlate with the substance of these links. As a result, it will be possible to answer the question as to how and under what circumstances transnational linkages affect the responses of host states to the recognition efforts of Turkish migrants' religious organizations. One would predict transnational links to have an adverse effect on public institutions, but it is hoped that further explanations and causalities will be provided by the research.

1.2. Importance, hints from the literature and the gap

Migration is one of the most important social phenomena in history because of its effects on various aspects of people, communities and states. Therefore, subjects relating to migration are associated with many disciplines within the social sciences and have attracted the attention of scholars. Initial studies mostly focused on the causes and effects of migration; therefore, they mostly had a historical perspective. The issues relating to migration multiplied when immigrants settled in their host countries and began new lives there. This paved the way for studies relating to the integration issues of immigrant populations. Advancements in transportation and communication technologies made both migrants' movements across borders and their links to their country of departure easier than they had been for their previous generations (Sheffer 2003, 181; Vertovec 2004). These movements back and forth have created transnational links, which are one of the key concepts in this research and will be explained in detail in the following sections. Another outcome of these advances and the new life of immigrants was the new institutions established in transnational spaces. The links and transnational activities that took place in such environments were often contested, so transnational studies evolved to understand this new phenomenon.

Today, immigrants and their communities have become a challenging issue because of integration problems. As noted above, many European countries have problems with and

debates on immigration. It is possible to see hints of these discussions in the election processes of these countries. In recent years, elections in primary immigrant-populated countries such as France, the Netherlands, Austria, Germany and the USA have had at least one right-wing party or candidate criticizing or opposing migration policies.² The rise in the support for them from voters in Europe is evident from the election results, and it shows that migration-related issues are taken seriously by the public. This trend has also affected other, more traditional parties in European countries: almost all of them devoted a significant part of their election campaigns and bulletins to the issue of immigration. In Germany, for example, all the major political parties that took part in the 2017 general elections made statements about Turkish migrants and their citizenship issues and transnational organizations. While, AfD (Alternative für Deutschland or Alternative for Germany) openly discussed DİTİB and criticized its transnational relations, the Greens and Free Democrats opposed or criticized any foreign-related or -funded religious organizations in their election manifestos.³

As well as being a domestic issue in European countries, immigration has sometimes become a serious international issue and has led to diplomatic problems in recent years: for example, the ‘wall’ polemic between the USA and Mexico, and the diplomatic crisis between Turkey and the Netherlands after a Turkish minister was blocked from giving a speech about Turkey’s 2017 referendum to the Turkish migrant community in Rotterdam and police intervened with the Turkish protesters.⁴ In addition, police raids on some DİTİB *imams*’ homes because of alleged espionage activities was one of the incidents that increased the tension in relations between Turkey and Germany.⁵ As a result of all these incidents, it is possible to claim that issues relating to migration and transnational migrant organizations have climbed up the agenda of countries with significant immigrant populations and have become more critical in recent years. Therefore, research focusing on the issue of Turkish migrant organizations’ transnational links could play an essential role in understanding what these relations mean for migrant organizations, host countries and home countries. Based on these assumptions, the aims of this research include the following:

² Information about far-right movements in Europe is available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/far-right> and <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-36130006>, accessed: 20 October 2017

³ Information about election manifestos of political parties in Germany was taken from Migration Studies Foundation’s reports. Available (in Turkish) at: <http://gocvakfi.org/2017-federal-secimleri-parti-programlari/>

⁴ ‘Turkey referendum: clashes as Dutch expel minister’, BBC News, 12 March 2017. Available at: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-39246392>, accessed: 21 October 2017

⁵ Esther King, ‘Germany investigates *imams* over alleged spying for Turkey: report’, Politico, 15 February 2017. Available at: <http://www.politico.eu/article/germany-investigates-imams-over-alleged-spying-for-turkey-report/>, accessed: 21 October 2017

- updating the existing literature on Turkish organizations, especially DİTİB and AABF;
- showing the relationship between the recognition of religious organizations in Germany and transnational links;
- elaborating Turkey's and Germany's changing approaches in the history of Turkish migration to Europe;
- explaining the recognition process for immigrants' religious organizations, the conditions for recognition, and problems faced by Turkish migrant organizations in Germany;
- comparing the histories of the two case study organizations to find empirical evidence to explain the different outcomes of their recognition processes;
- exploring the effects of transnational linkages on the institutionalization and integration of immigrants, which are ultimately linked to the issue of recognition; and
- contributing to the debates around Islam in Europe and the attempts to incorporate Islamic organizations in European countries.

This list of objectives is based on readings of the literature and its shortcomings. When the literature relating to Turkish migration to Germany is considered, it is possible to see the same sequence in the evolution of research as in the migration studies mentioned above. Therefore, when reviewing the related literature, it can be divided into three parts. The first wave includes state-funded researchers and their descriptive and historical, mostly report-like, elaborations. The second wave consists of more specific issues relating to Turkish migration, such as the Kurdish problem, political refugees, Islam and integration. The final category focuses on transnational studies concerning the Turkish migrant community's transnational space and its organizations. Pioneering works from these three waves will be reviewed to draw an overview of the literature and show the gap left for this study.

Turkish migration to Europe began in the 1960s with labour-force recruitment agreements between Turkey and some Western European countries, including the Federal Republic of Germany, the Netherlands and France. In the beginning, academic interest in the subject was quite low compared with today. A considerable number of publications on the issue appeared after the 1970s, mainly about the conditions of these migrants and their problems.

Nermin Abadan-Unat, one of the pioneers, conducted the first research with the support and promotion of Turkey's State Planning Organization (Devlet Planlama Teşkilatı or DPT) into Turkish guest workers in Europe (mostly in Germany). Abadan-Unat has published several works on the issue, and one of her most recent books, *Bitmeyen Göç: Konuk İşçilikten Ulus-Ötesi Yurttaşlığa* (2017), tells the story of Turkish migrants from their first arrival, covering almost all aspects of the community. It is a descriptive analysis of Turkish migration, mostly to Germany, with many details about its history. However, her Laicist-Kemalist Turkish point of view could be criticized (Wright 2012). This viewpoint is especially evident in her assessment of Turkish religious organizations, which she accused of being the enemy of secular Turkey. Other key publications appeared in the following years: Martin and Khalatbari's *The Unfinished Story: Turkish Labour Migration to Western Europe* (1992) and Akgündüz's relatively late historical research project *Labour Migration from Turkey to Europe, 1960–1974* (1993) could be considered essential publications on the history of Turkish migrants' journey to Europe.

After these history-focused publications, the second wave started with transformations such as migrants settling down in their country of arrival and refugee flows from Turkey. In this phase, many publications focused on Kurdish migrants from Turkey, Islam and Islamic migrant organizations, and integration-related issues such as naturalization and dual citizenship. Among these publications, Sirkeci's *The Environment of Insecurity in Turkey and the Emigration of Turkish Kurds to Germany* (2006) examines Kurdish migration to Europe from Turkey as a result of clashes between PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces as well as the economic context of the Kurdish-populated regions of Turkey. Turkish migration to Germany was a key feature of one of the other subjects covered in this wave: Islam in Europe. For example, Ahmet Yükleven's works, primarily *Localizing Islam in Europe* (2012), can be considered among the most prominent descriptive publications about Turkish-Islamic organizations in Germany and the Netherlands. In addition, Al-Hamarneh and Thielmann's book *Islam and Muslims in Germany* (2008b) can be seen as another essential work that analyses many Islamic organizations in Germany and provides details of them. Gökçe Yurdakul is a key name in the field of Turkish migration due to her many publications; her book *From Guest Workers into Muslims: the transformation of Turkish immigrant associations in Germany* (2009) is a particularly crucial contribution to the literature because of its information on Turkish worker federations founded by political refugees after the 1980s, alongside its analysis of the transformations that Turkish migrant society has undergone since the beginning of their

journey. She also explores the leading Turkish non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Berlin and explains the contestations and differences between them.

Kerstin Rosenow-Williams is another notable name in the literature on Muslim organizations. Her book *Organizing Muslims and Integrating Islam in Germany* (2012) provides detailed information on DİTİB and many other Turkish and non-Turkish Islamic organizations. She also examines the relations between Islamic organizations and the German state and provides brief details on the recognition of these organizations. Aysun Yaşar's *Die DİTİB zwischen der Türkei und Deutschland: Untersuchungen zur Türkisch-Islamischen Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V.* (2012) also provides critical information about the organization and its transnational links. This book is probably one of the most detailed work, but it still omits any reference to the organization's recognition processes, probably because of its publication date. There are other similar studies, such as Gorzewski's *Die Türkisch-Islamische Union im Wandel* (2015), which includes a bit more detail about recognition processes. However, recognition is not the main subject of this latter study, nor does it cover the relationship between recognition and transnationalism.

There are also publications about specific religious groups within these migrant communities, such as Alevi, *Süleymanîs*, and *Gülenists*. Almost every publication about Turkish immigrants in Europe mentions the Alevi community which is the most important for this study among others. One of the most holistic research studies was conducted by Martin Sökefeld, who has investigated the recognition struggle of Alevi in Germany in many of his publications (Sökefeld 2008a, 2008b). In addition, works by Kaleli (2000), Kaplan (2004), Massicard (2003, 2006, 2013, 2017) and Gorzewski (2010) could be listed as influential publications on this religious group. These books tend to provide information about Alevism and the institutionalization of Alevi in Turkey and Europe. All of the publications mentioned here hint at the transnational links and political affiliations of the community. Furthermore, these books also include information on the recognition processes of the community, but they do not view the issue through a transnational lens.

Alongside the literature about Muslim organizations within the Turkish migrant community, there were also publications about integration-related issues, with significant contributions including especially Lisa Mügge's works on dual citizenship and Turkey's changing relations with its transnationals (Mügge 2012a, 2012b). Her article (Mügge 2012b) on Turkey's relations with its citizens abroad describes the history of the country's changing

policies. Even though it does not go up to the present day, it provided an important clue for the initial idea of this research.

In the final category of literature about Turkish migrants in European countries, there are transnational studies linked to this issue. One of the most cited scholars in the field is Eva Østergaard-Nielsen, the author of *Transnational Politics: Kurds and Turks in Germany* (2004) and related publications on the issue. In this book, she describes the transnational political activities of Turks and Kurds in detail and makes a comparison between them. Also, this research includes a detailed assessment of Turkey's policies and strategies towards Turkish and Kurdish immigrants in Europe. Similarly, Betigül Ercan Argun's book *Turkey in Germany: The Transnational Sphere of Deutschkei* (2003) is another extensive study of Turkish migrant communities. In this book, she describes the transnational space of Turkish migrants and its components, including the Alevis, Kurds, Islamists and Turkish nationalists. This book focuses mainly on defining these groups in great detail, even including their activities in cyberspace, but it neglects these organizations' transnational links, the effects of these links on them, and their interactions with their host states. In addition to these descriptive and holistic studies, there are also some articles from the journal *Turkish Studies* (Aksel 2014; Avcı 2005) on transnational Turkish subjects in Europe. Among these, Avcı (2005) compares Diyanet (Directorate of Religious Affairs of Turkey) and Millî Görüş (known in Germany as Islamische Gemeinschaft Millî Görüş (IGMG) or Islamic Community Millî Görüş) according to the origins of their structures (arising out of political opportunities in the host country and in the sending state) and describes the contestations between two groups.

Many other scholars have contributed to the literature, with many books and essays relating to Turkish migration to Europe, and it is not possible to mention all of them here. A further review of the literature on more specific subjects will be provided in the relevant sections. However, it is possible to make two claims based on this brief literature review. First, documentation on the issue is quite extensive and is increasing, as shown by the growing number of publications in recent years. Second, it is possible to see that there is a gap in the literature on the subject of the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations in Germany and specifically the relationship between these organizations' recognition processes and transnational links. As seen from this brief literature review, most of the publications about the issue are either historical or descriptive, while comparative analysis is rare. This shortcoming in the literature reveals the gap that this project aims to fill and supports the reasons for its importance.

1.3. Definitions of key concepts and dimensions

In this part, frequently used concepts in the research are defined and operationalized, starting with transnationalism and related terminology. A brief background to the term and its determinants will be given. Following transnationalism, dimensions of recognition are explained briefly to understand the components of the research question. However, to make the subjects under discussion clearer, some fundamental concepts should be defined first. These are mostly the concepts used routinely in this work – and even in our daily lives. The first term is ‘migrant’. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) defines the term as any person who moves across an international border or within a state away from his or her permanent place of residence regardless of place, cause or consequence.⁶ Parallel to this definition, this study evaluates Turkish migrants in Germany as the people who moved from Turkey to Germany, regardless of the reason behind the migration. Turkish migrants in Europe comprise a heterogeneous group due to their reasons for migration, religion and ethnicity. Therefore, the term ‘Turkish migrants’ will include guest workers, different sects such as Alevis and Sunnis, and refugees who escaped to Germany for various reasons. Kurdish migrants will be referred to as ‘Kurdish-originated migrants from Turkey’ to avoid conceptual confusion. Based on these definitions, the ‘home country’ refers to the migrants’ homeland, country of origin or country of departure, while the ‘host country’ indicates the migrants’ country of arrival or the destination in which they permanently or temporarily settle. In this study, these terms will be used occasionally to refer to the home and host countries.

Another group of terms relates to migrant organizations, which can be defined as foundations created by migrant groups with various aims, such as strengthening solidarity, preserving the culture, supporting sports clubs or providing religious services. These organizations are founded according to the legal structures of the host countries and recognized as legitimate members of civil society. Transnational migrant organizations (TMOs) will be understood better after the section on transnationalism, but they can be defined as migrant organizations with relations across borders, possibly with a state or civil society organization (CSO) in the migrant group’s homeland. According to Bauböck (2003), migration is a simple international issue as long as it includes a replacement of people between territories, but it becomes transnational when it generates overlapping memberships and affiliations to two

⁶ This definition was taken from IOM website: <https://www.iom.int/who-is-a-migrant>

countries. In parallel with this, migrant organizations are regarded as transnational organizations when they have links relating them to communities and groups abroad.

The migrant organizations that are the subject of this thesis are umbrella organizations that have several local organizations as their members. They generally come into existence as a result of the aggregation of several small and local migrant organizations. Umbrella organizations unite these small groups and provide a way in which they can cooperate to regulate and support their activities and strengthen their claim-making efforts. Alongside DİTİB and AABF, there are plenty of other similar Turkish religious organizations in Germany, such as VIKZ (Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e.V. or Association of Islamic Culture Centers) and IGMG. Within this context, the concept of the umbrella organization will be used when referring to these organizations. The examples in this study and related organizations are all transnational religious organizations in the Turkish community, so it will be stated explicitly when an organization does not fit this definition.

Some of the key terms relating to immigrants and their organizations explained here will be used according to these definitions in this section: however, it should be noted that this section provides a brief overview of only some of the notions that are used in this study. It is not possible to define all the concepts here, so some will be explained in the relevant sections. However, transnationalism and related concepts such as transnational linkages and transnationality are the most relevant keywords for this study, and they need a particular focus. The next part therefore focuses on the definition and operationalization of these concepts.

1.3.1. Transnationalism and related concepts

As briefly mentioned above, migration and related studies have transformed significantly over time alongside the movement of people itself. It could be claimed that transnationalism is one of the most recent perspectives in the history of migration studies (Vertovec 2001). This relatively young point of view was first developed in the USA because of its enormous immigrant population. Therefore, the first substantial publications, and the first definitions of the term, were American. Even though the term has been debated decades now, there is still no consensus among scholars about its definition; this has led to the use of a variety of terms, such as transnationalism, transnational perspective and transmigrants, for the same phenomena (Dahinden 2017). For instance, one of the very first publications in the literature explained transnationalism as the process through which immigrants, via their daily activities, establish and sustain social, economic and political relations that link them to their home societies (Portes 2001). In another article, Portes (1999) defines transnational activities as

movements taking place on a repeated basis across national borders. Transnationalism therefore mainly refers to links and movements of immigrants across borders that relate them to their home countries. According to these definitions, transnationalism includes two main elements: immigrants who move across borders and links built to the home country via these activities.

Critics of these definitions claim that migrants and their relations with their homelands have existed for hundreds of years. This critique argues that if these relationships have existed for hundreds of years, then there is nothing new that transnationalism can bring to the literature. Accordingly, Waldinger (2013) defines transnationalism as follows: ‘once known as the uprooted; immigrants are now often called as the transnationals’. In other words, terms such as immigrants and transnationals suggest the same thing in the field. Even though the close relationship between these two notions is mostly agreed upon, some authors focus on the phenomena from another perspective. According to Portes (2001), instances of immigrants’ cross-border activities already existed in the past, but until the concept of immigrant transnationalism was created, the character and significance of these phenomena remained unclear. Similarly, Levitt and Jaworsky (2007, 33) claim that the relation between today’s migrants and their homelands is vastly different from relations in the past because recent improvements in technology have made these movements far more straightforward, which in turn has boosted the flow of everything related to them. Therefore, one can accept that immigrants in the past were also transnationals, but the potential effects and sustainability of the links were not as significant as they are today.

In addition to these debates on the basic elements of transnationalism, there are different definitions from several scholars. In one, transnational communities are described as migrant communities; these share the situation of being rooted in their host country but maintaining multiple linkages to their home country (Argun 2003, 5). In a more simplistic description, transnationalism generally focuses on migrants’ links to home countries and their movements across borders. Therefore, the term ‘transnational’ could be used for human activities and institutions extending across borders (Bauböck 2003). In other words, transnationalism broadly refers to persistent multiple ties and interactions connecting people or institutions across the borders of nation states (Bauböck 2010, 1673; Vertovec 1999). Based on these different definitions, transnationalism could be defined as repeated activities and links of different actors who (or which) are settled in their host states but still maintain links to actors in their home countries.

These movements and links create a space: namely, a 'transnational space'. This is a term in migration studies literature used to refer to the web of links set up by immigrants to their home country counterparts, which enables repeated back-and-forth movements across national borders (Pence and Zimmerman 2012). This transnational space, located in host countries, consists of elements from both home and host countries and includes dynamic transborder links with the state of origin. This transnational space has many functions – selling goods from the home country, holding religious services such as funerals, providing religious education, and even supporting a home country political party via donations or mobilizations. Therefore, these spaces could include institutions that work in a transnational manner. In other words, these establishments stand on the border and their transnational identity is an integral part of them. These institutions are usually immigrant organizations that are founded in a host country but their actions, aims, principles and discourses are always linked to both countries, making them a site of intense transnational activity.

Questions that need to be answered include: what are these transnational activities? And which actors are participating in these activities? The first reaction to these questions could be a categorization of these cross-border links depending on the fields in which they exist. According to this view, there are broadly up to five types of transnational activities that are mentioned in the literature: political, religious, cultural, social and economic (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007). Similarly, Portes (2001) divides transnationalism into three subdivisions and describes them as political, economic and socio-cultural transnational activities. As one would expect, transnational economic activities could be in the form of remittance transfers, while socio-cultural cross-border activities can be carried out by humanitarian or cultural associations. When these immigrants maintain their political affiliations after their arrival in the host countries, it is simply called political transnationalism (Boccagni, Lafleur, and Levitt 2016, 1–2).

Similarly, cultural or social transnationalism could occur in the form of special events or aid organized by associations or specialized institutions in the sending states. The final subdivision in the list – religious transnationalism – is distinctive because religion, in most cases, has a borderless nature. Usually, immigrants continue to practise their religion in their host countries, and, as in many cases, it can become a shared value that binds people around the world. Therefore, religion can link immigrants to people who share similar ideas and beliefs in both the sending and the receiving countries (Levitt and Jaworsky 2007, 140). Naturally, this creates a fertile ground for transnational activities that can take place as aid campaigns to co-

religionists, movements of clerical staff and followers back and forth across borders, and support to activities on either side of the border (Levitt 2004, 5). As a result of these features, today's religious communities are among the leading groups creating transnational societies and undertaking transnational activities (Rudolph and Piscatori 1997, 1). The two main cases studied here can also be listed in this category, even though they sometimes perform activities that fall under other categories.

Having given definitions of the term, it is time to focus on the motivators of transnational relations. According to Portes (1999), there are three main determinants for transnational activities as the push factor in migration, conditions in the host country, and the policies of sending states. According to him, if emigration is motivated by political reasons in the homeland, people may remain linked to communities left behind. The second determinant tends to be caused by conditions in the host country, such as xenophobia or discrimination: if a foreign group is uniformly rejected and confined to a permanently inferior status, they could be more likely to be involved in transnational activities (Abadan-Unat 2017, 105–6). Finally, home state policies towards these migrants could mobilize them to be transnationally active. Sending states could adopt such strategies to increase remittance flows or to find support for their policy objectives. Similarly, immigrants could seek the economic support of their home country to receive services. This happened in the case of DİTİB in Europe in relation to the salaries of its *imams*, which motivated mosque organizations to cooperate with Turkey transnationally (Yükleyen 2012, 49). These explanations for the motivation behind transnational activities could be observed in our case studies too, and will be discussed in the relevant chapters. Besides, these incentives especially the push factors and the situation in the homeland are also accurate when the reasons of Alevis for going transnational considered.

Additionally, there are other specific determinants for different kinds of transnational activities such as naturalization, an interest in politics, the level of education, the role of gender and the context of migration (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003). According to the claim made by Guarnizo, Portes and Haller in their article, naturalized migrants are less interested in the politics of their home countries. However, personal characteristics such as education level, a particular interest in politics or the context of migration (refugee flows or coming from rural areas, for example) can increase participation in transnational political activities. In sum, it could be argued that there are many factors motivating actors to become involved in transnational activities, such as economic gains, the political situation in the host country and

policies in the home country, and these can vary depending on naturalization status, gender and level of education.

Lastly, in order to understand the concept fully, the effects of transnationalism need to be explained. As mentioned repeatedly, transnational phenomena take place in perhaps just one country, but the reasons for and effects of them are related to at least two nation-states, as well as many non-state actors as individuals and institutions. Therefore, these phenomena could lead to transformations in both the sending and the receiving states. Sending states possibly account for the most significant share of influence because transnational activities could change their economic and political structure, as well as their culture, through remittances; this is the subject of many studies in the literature. In line with this fact, there are two types of remittances mentioned in the literature: economic surpluses that migrants send back to their home countries; and social remittances, which are defined by Levitt (1998) as any kind of social capital that flows from the receiving to the sending country. These remittances and the increasingly diversified demands of migrants and their families can lead to transformations in every aspect of the social order (Portes 2001). On the immigrants' side, transnational activities could enhance the feeling of belonging and their national identity, which could be transmitted to the next generation (Portes 1999; Vertovec 2001). Such effects could cause problems in the receiving countries in relation to citizenship, political rights and integration (Vertovec 2001, 575). Therefore, it is no secret that transnational activities are not always welcomed by states hosting vast immigrant populations. However, the effects of transnational activities on receiving countries and their interactions with already settled systems have not been thoroughly assessed by scholars. This study will therefore try to fill that gap by focusing on the influence of transnational activities on the recognition of religious organizations in Germany.

After exploring transnationalism, some related concepts used frequently in this study should also be assessed – among them, transnational links or linkages, which refer to border-crossing relations of immigrants or their organizations. These links could be political, financial, social, cultural or religious, but, in all cases, they are durable. Therefore, when an organization is defined as transnational, it means that it has links relating it to counterparts in the homeland. Being transnational can sometimes be expressed as transnationality. In addition to these concepts, the 'substance' of transnational links is also a critical term for this study. As stated above, the types of transnational link were mainly defined according to their content and objectives. However, it could be claimed that the subject or place of transnationality cannot be the only factor that differentiates this term. Therefore, this research uses different terminology

and focuses on a more fundamental and general distinction: the counterparts of the transnational links. As a result, two concepts – ‘transnational links to state institutions’ and ‘transnational links to civil society’ – feature as new categories under transnational links, and these will be used in the comparative analysis to understand their different influences on transnational organizations. The study examines two migrant organizations that have cross-border connections with Turkey, and, naturally, the main difference between these two groups is the nature or substance of their links to Turkey. As discussed in the section on the hypothesis, this distinction between transnational links arguably affects critical trajectories in their structures, political position and recognition policies.

1.3.2. Immigrants’ religious organizations and the issue of recognition

As can be seen from the explanations and definitions above, transnational activities do not have just one specific actor. States, public institutions, NGOs, commercial organizations and even individuals could be an actor in transnational activities. Among these, migrant organizations are the most debated actors in the transnational relations literature (see, among others, Argun 2003; Lacroix and Dumont 2012; Rosenow-Williams 2012; Yükleven and Yurdakul 2011). These organizations are founded by migrants for a variety of purposes – offering religious services to migrants, increasing the solidarity between immigrants, protecting the traditional culture, or providing support to homeland political movements, for instance. Alongside these features, immigrant organizations are places where several migrants come together and share their ideas or learning about new developments in their lives, in both their home and host countries. These migrant organizations can function as a bridge between the countries of origin and settlement of their members, and they can act as a spokesperson for the interests of their members (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 106). Therefore, it is possible to claim that these organizations have vital functions in an immigrant society, and one can view them as crucial actors in transnationalism. Due to these features, immigrant organizations are the main actors analysed in this study. Even though they were active in many fields in the past, the examples studied here are religious organizations. Therefore, terms such as ‘immigrants’ religious organizations’ and ‘transnational religious organizations’ refer to these organizations. In addition, the term ‘Islamic organizations’ is also used in relation to all Muslim groups except the Alevis, who define themselves as a separate religion.

The second concept that should be clarified here is the issue of recognition. It is known that these migrant organizations are providing services, are active in transnational spaces and interact with the authorities for all these activities. It should be noted that all of these interactions

and activities start with recognition, which includes complex processes and a variety of levels, and achieving recognition can change by country and over time. Due to historically shaped religion–state relations, while some states isolate themselves from religious organizations, others cooperate or support religious organizations under certain conditions (see Avcı 2006; Koenig 2005; Tol 2009). In this respect, Germany is a more cooperative state than others and builds partnerships with religious communities in specific areas such as religious education, as set out in the constitution. Naturally, such critical rights cannot be given to any organization claiming that it represents a religious community. In this regard, this study will use a scale of recognition that divides the process into five stages.

The first stage of recognition could be termed legal recognition (the right to associate) because organizations need to be established in the first place. Thus, this first dimension is mostly juridical and relates to the conditions for establishing organizations, and the legal procedure is different depending on the country (Doomernik 1995; Koenig 2005; Yükleven 2010). This legal procedure could facilitate or impede the recognition of migrant organizations, but today it exists to a greater or lesser extent in any country with an immigrant population. This level of recognition could grant some rights to religious organizations, but these rights are limited to those given to any ordinary association.

The second stage could be the organization being perceived as a partner by the state and being involved in joint projects. At this level, the state can cooperate with an organization on a specific issue. This is not limited to religious organizations: the cooperation could be a partnership for improving people's awareness of sports or the dangers of smoking, which concerns the common good of the public. In the German case, the state tries to cooperate with CSOs in many areas to support them and enrich society by providing services. These partnerships and joint projects include funding and bring visibility and prestige to the organizations involved. It is not possible to find a detailed list of conditions that need to be met to gain the status of a partner, but a positive outlook, local contacts and human capital for undertaking such objectives are probably key requirements.

Additionally, some states make agreements with religious organizations to solve problems in areas that are creating urgent issues for immigrants, such as pastoral care, funerals and cemeteries. In Germany, the most significant form of these contracts is the state agreement (*Staatsvertrag*), which is more comprehensive than joint projects on specific issues and brings significant prestige to organizations. These contracts tend to set out the rights of the religious community but they address only the issues specified within them, and they may not confer the

exclusive rights that would come with constitutional status. Therefore, these agreements are more important than project partnerships in the recognition scale, but they could be more or less important than religious community status depending on the issues addressed.

The forth stage of the recognition issue is the status of the religious community; this is unique to Germany. This status is defined in Articles 7 and 140 of the German Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) and given to religious organizations upon their application. Unlike the previous stages, this status is given only to religious organizations – it is not possible to be recognized as a cultural organization and receive the privileges set out in the constitution, so this relates mainly to immigrants' religious organizations in Germany (Sökefeld 2008b, 194–95). According to Article 7, paragraph 3: 'without prejudice to the state's right of supervision, religious instruction shall be given by the tenets of the religious community concerned'.⁷ On this basis, the status provides the right to religious instruction in public schools, and the state cannot interfere due to the principle of secularity.

Furthermore, this status provides the organization with prestige and accountability and opens the way for further recognition. While almost all traditional religious communities in Germany have this status, immigrants' religious organizations are generally still struggling to achieve it. Muslim organizations are taking this issue seriously because achieving this objective would not only signify approval of their existence in Germany but also provide them with a chance to pass on their religion to younger generations via religious instruction in public schools. Efforts to this end have had some results in recent decades, and some Muslim organizations can achieve this status in some states, but there are still intensive debates around the issue. Details about these processes and status will be given in the relevant sections of this study.

A religious organization that passes through all these stages could reach the fifth and final level of recognition: the status of a 'corporation under public law' (*Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts*). This status is also described in Article 140 of the German Basic Law, which is inherited from the Weimar Constitution. Until 1919, only the Lutheran Church had 'state church' status; this was changed by the Weimar Constitution, and three communities (Evangelical, Catholic and Jewish) were granted the status of corporations under public law, which has since been given to 26 other communities (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 107). It could

⁷ See the German Basic Law website for details about religious education in schools. Available at: <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80201000.pdf>, accessed 23 March 2020.

be said that the status has been shaped by church–state relations in the past, and therefore it provides extensive rights to recognized communities that recall those of historical state churches.

This status is therefore part of the recognition struggle of immigrants' religious organizations in Germany. If a transnational religious organization becomes a corporation under public law, as did the Catholic Church in Germany, it could receive funding from the taxes of the Muslim population, among many other benefits (Yurdakul and Yükleven 2009). Above all, this status means that Muslims would have equality with other traditional religions in Germany. Today, only one Muslim organization has obtained this status in Germany: the *Ahmadiyya*, one of the smallest and most marginal groups in the whole Muslim community. According to Article 137, the corporation under public law status can be achieved by communities applying for it, but they get approval only if 'their constitution and the number of their members give assurance of their permanency'.⁸ However, according to Rosenow-Williams (2012, 159), there are some other expectations on Muslim organizations in Germany: for example, following the law, denouncing terrorism, rejecting parallel societies, promoting integration and adopting German values. The list of conditions can be extended if court decisions and political discourses are added to them. Thus, it could be said that there are ongoing ambiguities and debates surrounding this status. Further details are given in Chapter 4 where the issue of recognition is discussed. In the following section, there is a brief introduction to the history of Turkish migrants and Turkey's approach to them.

1.4. Turkish immigrants in Germany: the context in brief

In the last century, European and North American countries became new homes for large immigrant societies. These people mainly came to these countries in search of a new and better life as workers or as asylum seekers escaping wars or authoritarian regimes. Although they started their new life in an entirely new environment, they could not give up their former habits, cultures, ideologies, traditions and religions. Improvements in information technologies and transport enhanced their transnational links to their homelands. When they grow enough to affect the sending or receiving countries' politics or society, migrant populations became visible and important parts of the society of the receiving countries and affect the foreign policies of

⁸ For more details about recognition as a corporation under public law, see Articles 140 and 137 in Deutscher Bundestag. 2019. *Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany*. Translated by C. Tomuschat, D. P. Currie, D. P. Kommers and R. Ker. Berlin: Deutscher Bundestag. Available at: <https://www.btg-bestellservice.de/pdf/80201000.pdf>, accessed: 20 March 2020

their sending countries. In this section, a brief history of Turkish migrants' journey to Germany and the transformations of their communities is provided, with a focus on the changing context that surrounds them.

One of the most significant migrant communities in Europe is that of Turkish migrants, the subject of this study. Today, it is estimated that more than 5 million Turkish people are living abroad, including almost 4.5 million in EU countries (Abadan-Unat 2017, 2; Kaya 2011; Köser Akçapar and Yurdakul 2009). Germany has the most prominent Turkish migrant population, which is estimated at around 3 million. France, the Netherlands, Austria, Belgium, the UK and Sweden follow Germany with smaller but significant numbers of Turkish residents. Turkish people are also one of the longest-settled migrant groups in the post-war period in Europe, together with immigrants from the Caribbean and India in Britain (Odmalm 2009). Turkish societies in Europe have been well studied in migration and transnational studies literature, with most studies focusing on issues such as Turkish migration, migrants' integration in the host society, and their involvement in the receiving or sending countries' politics and economy (Abadan-Unat 2017; Aksel 2014; Argun 2003; Kaya 2007, 2011, 2012; Mügge 2012a, 2013; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001, 2004; Yükleyn 2009; Yükleyn and Yurdakul 2011; Yurdakul 2009).

The journey to Europe of Turkish people began with labour recruitment agreements between Turkey and industrialized West European countries in the 1960s. The Federal Republic of Germany (West Germany) was the first country that started to recruit workers from abroad after it had reached full employment in 1960 (Castles 1986). The agreement signed on 30 October 1961 was followed by contracts signed with Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands in 1964, France in 1965, and Sweden and Australia in 1967 (Yıldız 2015). Unskilled workers were recruited from Turkey as a result of these agreements, and they emigrated to be employed in industrial areas as 'guest workers' (*Gastarbeiter*). This name implied that they were temporary; it was expected that they would go back to their countries of origin after their contracts expired. In contrast to these expectations, most of them preferred to stay and settle in their new environment. Even though some states tried to stop migration by suspending the agreements and supporting workers' return, the flow continued in different forms.

The first phase of immigration ended when European countries decided to suspend recruitment agreements to ease the effects of the 1973 oil crisis (Sayari 1986). The decision to halt the immigration of workers began to have a noticeable impact on the flow of immigrants in 1974 and caused a slight decline in their number in Germany. However, according to Rist

(1978), while a third of Italian and Spanish workers left the country, there was almost no change in the number of Turkish migrants. This point marked the beginning of the second phase, which involved family reunification in the Turkish migration to European countries. The majority of Turkish workers decided to stay and bring their families to their country of settlement when they were faced with leaving Europe with no possibility of return (Kartal 2009; Kaya 2007). The political and economic conditions in Turkey were a significant factor in this choice and continued to be so during the following years. The tumultuous years of the 1970s and the military coup of 1980 also changed the reasons for migration from economic to political. These incidents triggered a flow of refugees from Turkey to European countries. This flow has continued since then, with ups and downs in the numbers because of clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces and PKK, which is recognized as a terrorist organization by many countries.

Years	Phases
1960–63	Single male workers who left family behind
1963–65	First-stage family reunions
1966–73	Single women workers (priority given to women)
1973–81	Second-stage family reunions (recruitment stopped in 1973)
1981–	Political refugees and asylum seekers from the eastern areas of Turkey

Figure 2: Phases of Turkish migration to Europe. Sources: (Abadan-Unat 2017, 258; Soysal 1997)

Changes in migration channels led to some significant shifts in the Turkish communities and transnational spaces in the country of residence and in the policies of Turkey. Family reunifications brought women and children to foreign environments and triggered the founding of religious and cultural organizations to protect their traditional identities (Sirseldoudi 2012). As happened in the case of immigrants in the USA, religion became a unifying base for immigrants and religious institutions centered to efforts for keeping the link with the old life in homeland (Kastoryano 2004, 1236). This explains why mosques have become the focus of institutionalization in the diaspora and shaped the new life in the host country (Abadan-Unat 2017, 258). The second change followed the refugee flows and caused some specific transformations. Those migrants who escaped from Turkey because of political repression carried their ideologies, movements and fights to the migrant communities they joined. As a result, many political factions, including left-wing organizations, banned Islamist movements,

Kurdish nationalists and religious sects such as the Alevis, found new blood in this liberal environment (Lyon and Uçarer 2001; Özyürek 2009; Sirkeci 2006, 77).

The migration from Turkey to Germany and its different phases changed the outlook of the transnational space and of migrant organizations. Turkish migrants have been establishing social, religious, cultural and political organizations since the beginning of their story in European countries. As one would expect, transformations in the type of migration and the demography of Turkish migrant communities in Europe have influenced the organizations founded by those communities. The very first organizations focused on workers' rights because the most important thing that they were worried about at the time was earning more money and going back to Turkey. However, the arrival of women and children with family reunifications and the idea of settling in this foreign land changed this focus, and the organizations became religious and cultural. As already noted, the fear of losing their religious values or their children being estranged from them in this new environment motivated Turkish migrants to found faith-based organizations (Kastoryano 2004; Sirseloudi 2012). The first religious groups to become active in Turkish migrant societies in Europe were Süleymancılar (VIKZ) and Millî Görüş (IGMG); these are still active in Germany and in many other European countries (Doomernik 1995). The third phase of migration started after the so-called Wilderness Years in Turkey, which ended with the 1980 military coup (Mügge 2010, 149–55) and started the flow of political asylum seekers from Turkey to European countries. As mentioned above, these people brought their movements and ideologies to the Turkish migrant societies of Europe. This changed the outlook of migrant organizations and started the age of political organizations.

Both transnational spaces and immigrant organizations in Germany have undergone dramatic changes depending on variations in the nature of migration. These structural changes also affected the policies of sending and receiving countries. The guest workers who were expected to go back to their country of origin have become residents, shop owners, entrepreneurs and even citizens in Germany (Kaya 2011). In addition, the increase in unemployment paved the way for policies that aimed to stop migration or even encourage returns. Naturally, this new atmosphere pushed the receiving countries into drafting more regulations and policies concerning the migrant communities. However, the permanency of the migrant community in Germany became evident in the 1980s. Therefore, a series of policy transformations – from reducing the migrant population to integrating them and finally changing citizenship and naturalization laws to allow dual citizenship – took place in Germany (Avcı 2006, 77; Kaya 2012). Unsurprisingly, migrant organizations in the community and their

relations with their host states have also been influenced by this process. Today, for instance, religious migrant organizations in particular have begun to act as official contacts to represent the point of view of organized Muslims in Germany (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 1). Therefore, it is to be expected that transnational links and their effects on the community and on organizations have also changed through this very dynamic process.

In parallel to these transitions in the community and in Germany's policies, Turkey's policies towards its citizens abroad have also been changing. In the initial phase, exporting the surplus workforce was seen as a way to reduce unemployment rates and increase sources of remittances by Turkey (Abadan-Unat 2017, 3–7). The discourse of 'our workers abroad' in the past evolved into 'Euro-Turks' or 'our citizens abroad' over time (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 77). According to Mügge (2012), immigration became an issue to be governed actively in the 1970s, but the most significant changes took place after the 1980 military coup. Turkey tried to control its citizens abroad and set up organizations accordingly. The most well-known organization established in this period is DİTİB, known as Diyanet's organization abroad (Ewing 2003). Turkey changed its approach once again in the 1990s and started to encourage migrants to stay abroad but to keep in touch and support the homeland with remittances and lobbying activities, and by being good representatives of Turkey in their country of settlement (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004). This policy has been followed since the 1990s, especially with regard to issues relating to Turkey's candidacy to the EU. However, Turkey's efforts to mobilize its citizens abroad mostly failed.

Turkey's policies towards its citizens abroad have become quite active since 2000; and, it has tried to remove obstacles causing the failure of policies and efforts to mobilize these citizens. It could be argued that most of the regulations and the most significant reforms relating to Turkish citizens abroad have been made since 2000. Emigrants' rights and obligations, such as voting and conscription, have been revised according to contemporary needs for them. The Pink Card (Pempe Kart), which was used by former citizens to claim certain rights in Turkey, was replaced by the Blue Card (Mavi Kart) in 2009, and there were also amendments expanding the powers of dual and former citizens (Mügge 2012b). Also, the Presidency for Turks Abroad and Related Communities (Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı or YTB) was founded under the Prime Ministry in 2010 for issues relating to citizens abroad. As a result, political parties in Turkey are developing a new perception about the migrant community in Europe in order to get a more prominent share of the vote from those living abroad.

It could be said that there is a noticeable increase in the tendency towards transnationalization based on the factors in the field noted above. However, although almost 5 million Turkish people live in Europe and despite the Ottoman heritage in the Balkans, the Caucasus, the Middle East and North Africa, Turkey is new to the field of transnational politics. Today, Turkey has four institutions involved with transnational issues or soft power and public diplomacy that are directly or indirectly connected to transnationalism: the Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı or TİKA), Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı), YTB and Yunus Emre Institute (Yunus Emre Enstitüsü or YEE). The last two were founded in the past ten years to create more space for a relatively independent and active foreign policy concept of Turkey.

In sum, this part of the chapter has drawn a framework for the context that has shaped today's immigrant organizations and their claims. These factors paved the way for a transnational space filled with many different religious, cultural and political organizations with transnational links to groups already existing in Turkey. These transnational organizations were established, have evolved and have almost become representatives of Turkish society in Germany. Furthermore, the relationships between the organizations and their host state have also changed. This study therefore aims to understand why there are differences between the recognition processes of organizations that evolved within the same context.

1.5. An overview of the thesis

Following this initial chapter, details are provided on research design and methodology, including the comparative case study and qualitative methods. After dealing with the 'what' and 'how' questions, the Chapters 3 and 4 focus on contextual issues, with background information on Turkish migrants, transnational organizations, conditions of recognition in Germany and Turkey's policies towards these migrants. Chapters 5 and 6 include an in-depth analysis of the case studies. Data are presented on DİTİB's and AABF's including their transnational links to the homeland and their interactions with Germany in the context of recognition. Thus, details of recognition processes are also included in these chapters. Also, the critical phases that coincide with the turning points in Turkey's policies will be considered. Following the chapter on data gathering, Chapter 7 focuses on the comparative analysis, looking at differences and similarities under specific dimensions to understand the patterns of the recognition policy. Lastly, the concluding chapter presents the findings of the research and tries to reach some generalizable assumptions about the main question and related issues. This

chapter also includes concluding remarks and possible trajectories for the future of this issue. Appendices and a bibliography complete the thesis.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

Critical criteria of empirical inquiry include its design and methods, which lead it to reach credible results. Therefore, after the exploration in Chapter 1 of the ‘what’ and ‘why’ questions related to our study, this part tries to answer the question of ‘how’. The idea behind this research is built on the existence of two similar organizations with different outcomes within the same system of recognition, while the hypothesis focuses on the influence of transnational linkages. The most relevant research design for this inquiry is therefore a comparative case study; different aspects of the two examples are explored in detail, with a focus on the changes in transnational links and recognition status, an approach discussed in the section below. The main tools used are derived from qualitative methodologies, such as interviews, observation, and a review of existing documents and literature, and the second part of this chapter explains these methodological tools and justifies their usage in this study.

2.1. Comparative case study

An inquiry needs to fulfil specific conditions in order to be considered scientific, and only by being considered scientific can its results be accepted as valid. In essence, there are two primary scientific research approaches: experimental and observational. While the former aims to control and isolate variables and specific cases, the latter accepts the world as it is and tries to uncover causal relations between variables through observation (Kellstedt and Whitten 2018, 93). It is reasonable to expect that the results of experimental design are more reliable and generalizable than those achieved by the observational approach, due to the level of control and isolation. However, it is not always possible to experiment, especially in many branches of the social sciences, and so observations are more frequently used to build causal inferences (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2016, 209). The observational approach has various subcategories, including the comparative case study (CCS). Especially in political science, the CCS approach to the real world provides an excellent opportunity to understand whether theoretical assumptions work – or do not work – in practice (Peters 2013, 3; Seha and Müller-Rommel 2016, 424). In other words, the CCS takes real-world systems or processes and analyses them comparatively either to reach scientific conclusions or to evaluate existing theories.

CCSs include two main components: a case study and a comparative analysis. A case study can be defined as a research strategy that aims to create or test theoretical explanations via a detailed analysis of one or more cases (Seha and Müller-Rommel 2016, 420–21); these could be, for example, countries, processes or institutions. CCSs are designed to reveal causal

relations based on a comparison of cases explored in detail. This emphasis on detail limits the number of cases that can be covered by a CCS, so this type of research tends to be ‘small-*N* design’. Due to the small number of cases, the researcher can focus on specific phenomena and create a strong narrative that notes the similarities and differences among those cases (della Porta 2008, 202). Therefore, comparative research designs tend to focus on a small number of cases that are not randomly chosen (Peters 2013, 38). Although this limited focus can be criticized in terms of the generalizability of outcomes, the strength of CCS’s detailed narratives about real-world phenomena means that it is favoured by researchers.

There are two analysis strategies in CCS: *most similar cases* and *most different cases* designs. The most different cases design, which is used less frequently, tries to understand why different cases or processes produce the same results (Seha and Müller-Rommel 2016, 426). In contrast, the most similar cases design compares a few cases that are highly similar in context and background (independent variables) but differ in outcome (dependent variable) (Rich et al. 2018, 209; Seha and Müller-Rommel 2016, 425). The small-*N* design and the most similar cases strategy are both popular in the social sciences. In a comparative analysis based on the most similar cases design, the primary causal assumption between the variables relies on concepts created by John Stuart Mill in his pioneering work *A System of Logic* (Lijphart 1971, 687–88). Among other concepts, his ‘method of difference’ claims mainly that ‘if dependent variables are varying and all of the independent variables are the same except one in one case, then that one variable is the main result of the difference in the dependent variable’ (Peters 2013, 30; Powner 2015, 105). Even though controlling independent variables and scaling their similarities are difficult tasks, the ‘method of difference’ provides an opportunity for CCSs to understand why similar phenomena lead to different outcomes.

In sum, CCSs are one of the essential research designs of the social sciences, a field in which experimental methods are not always feasible. Such designs tend to focus on a small number of cases and analyse them in detail, providing enough material for comparative analysis and to build causal inferences between the variables. Our research question, which includes two similar immigrant organizations (cases) with varying recognition status (dependent variable), is therefore suitable for a CCS, a small-*N* design, and a comparison of the most similar cases. Context is critical both for this type of research design and to understand the recognition processes, so historical details will be included in the following chapters. Also, to give more weight to the narrative, this focus on history will provide control of the independent variables by demonstrating similarities between the cases.

2.2. Case selection for the design

The CCS design was chosen because careful analysis and comparison of a small number of cases may suggest possible general explanations for the recognition processes of immigrant religious groups in Germany and different outcomes of them from the processes. This type of design also allows us to examine many aspects of the cases and recognition processes and provides in-depth insights. As a small-*N*, most similar cases design, the small number of cases needs to be selected intentionally rather than being random (Peters 2013, 38). Selecting cases according to the dependent variable is a valid option in CCSs (della Porta 2008, 212). Therefore, researchers should select cases that are representative of the population being studied and confirm the chosen hypothesis (Seha and Müller-Rommel 2016, 424). According to Powner (2015, 112–15), the selected cases should differ in their key variables but should represent the phenomenon or population that is the focus of the study. In the most similar cases design, the selected cases must vary in terms of the outcome of the recognition process. Accordingly, some criteria could be suggested for the case selection phase of the research design.

Based on the details already mentioned, there should be at least two cases, and these should differ in terms of the dependent variable while being similar in many other aspects. Considering our main question and research field, the following features could be used in the selection:

- The selected organizations should be Turkish, transnational and well-managed religious organizations in Germany.
- These organizations should have similar aims (religious, political and cultural).
- They should be leading organizations in the migrant society that they claim to represent.
- The two organizations should claim religious recognition in Germany, but the results of their claims must differ.
- In addition to having these similar independent variables, the organizations should also have one aspect in which they differ. In this research, this is the substance of transnational links. Therefore, one organization should have links to a state agency, while the other has linkages to civil society organizations (CSOs).

Following these criteria, the two cases chosen for the CCS were DİTİB (Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği/Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs/Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V.) and AABF (Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu/Alevi Community

in Germany/Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland). In the following sections, the reasons for this choice are clarified, but it should be noted that this selection fulfils all of the criteria listed above. These two organizations are transnational, religious, Turkish immigrant organizations that have recognition and representation claims. Both have gone some way in achieving their claims for recognition, but AABF has been the more successful of the two. The critical difference between these two organizations is hidden in their transnational linkages, and this is what the comparative analysis focuses on.

2.2.1. DİTİB

DİTİB is probably the most prominent Turkish Islamic organization in Germany. It was founded in 1984 in Cologne as an initiative of Turkey's Directorate of Religious Affairs (Diyanet) in conjunction with more than 200 independent mosque associations. The religious needs of the Turkish immigrant community had always been neglected, but a political conjuncture created by both domestic and international policies opened the way for Diyanet to provide religious services in Germany. Like other groups, it has been organized in Germany as an umbrella institution for mosque associations. It grew quickly and became the largest umbrella organization in the Turkish migrant community, with a membership of more than 950 mosques. Today, its headquarters are still in Cologne, and it still provides religious, cultural and social services via their member associations to Turkish and other Muslim groups.⁹

As noted above, DİTİB was established with the direct involvement of a Turkish state agency. Diyanet was one of the first institutions of the young Turkish Republic in the 1920s and aimed to respond to the 'religious needs and services' of Turkish society (Aydın 2008). In parallel to the republic's secular and nationalist state formation, Diyanet has become a religious institution with a distinctive religious identity – it is often referred to as the representative of Turkish Islam or a secular Islam (Doomernik 1995; Şenay 2012; Yurdakul and Yükleven 2009). Although it has had its rivals and critics, among both the religious and the secular, ever since its foundation, Diyanet has been the most influential religious authority in the country.

After large numbers of Turkish people started to migrate to Western Europe in the 1960s, their need for religious services appeared on the agenda of the Turkish state. These emigrants were mostly from the rural parts of Turkey and were conservative, and they needed religious services. A gap in these services could quickly be filled by other organizations, some of which were seen as threats to the state's principle of laicism. However, Diyanet did not act

⁹ For more on DİTİB and their aims, see <http://www.DİTİB.de/default.php?id=5&lang=de>.

until the 1980s, while many other Islamic groups had been active since the 1970s. Its activities were limited to sending imams just for the holy month of Ramadan, but even that was a rare occurrence. The 1970s were turbulent years for Turkey, and tensions between the different groups remained high. In addition to the leftists and nationalists, Islamist groups came under pressure too, and the gap in providing religious services in the diaspora provided them with an excellent opportunity to organize (Ewing 2003; Sirkeci 2006, 77). These transnational organizations were able to support their branches at home and could shelter political refugees, the number of whom increased in the 1980s. Therefore, while Diyanet aimed to provide services to the migrant community in its own way, it was also prevailing the others to gain ground in there at the same time (Mügge 2012b; Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 65; Yükleven 2012, 51). Such aims paved the way for transnational linkages, and DİTİB became transnationally dependent on Diyanet in many ways, as will be discussed in Chapter 5.

While Diyanet and the Turkish state were aiming to fulfil these objectives, Germany was interested in establishing a moderate form of Islam. It thus welcomed Diyanet's engagement during this period due to its experience in providing such services in a secular state (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 190). However, Germany's approach to DİTİB has changed over time, and the organization has recently become one of the most debated actors in the field because of its links to Diyanet. Especially since the 1990s, European states have had a negative attitude to transnational Islamic organizations, and therefore they have tried to establish different, more localized institutions.

As the representative of Turkish Islam in Germany, DİTİB has always been in competition with similar organizations, just as it is in Turkey. While this competition focused on the number of mosques controlled in earlier times, the objectives of the organization have changed along with transformations in the community. In the beginning, the main aim was to provide religious services to the diaspora in a politically neutral environment. However, with the permanency of the community in Germany, the issue of recognition appeared on the organization's agenda. As a result, these rivalries have mostly vanished and DİTİB has been focusing on making claims for recognition as a religious community rather than competing with other organizations. Due to DİTİB's size, it is the organization that most closely represents the community today, and some platforms on which it has significant influence were formed with its former rivals. However, it is still far from achieving recognition, and today, in 2020, almost all of its partnerships with state authorities have been suspended.

2.2.2. AABF

The second organization that features in the comparative research is AABF, the umbrella organization of Alevis living in Germany. Alevis constitute a sizeable religious group in Turkey, and, as a result of workforce recruitment and refugee flows, they moved to Germany along with other groups. Their belief system, Alevism (*Alevilik*), is defined mainly as ‘love for Ali’ (the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad) (Argun 2003, 102); the term ‘Alevi’ etymologically indicates a person who reveres Ali and his descendants, who are regarded as the legitimate successors to the prophet (Şirin 2013). Although it is not within the scope of this section to provide an in-depth analysis of Alevism, it should be noted that it constitutes a different system both culturally and in religious terms.

According to many sources, Alevis constitute 30 per cent of the population in Turkey and a similar percentage of Turkish migrants in Europe (Argun, 2003, p. 107). Alevism is not part of Sunni Islam, which is followed by the majority of the Turkish population. In the Ottoman Empire, as a result of wars between the Ottomans and Iran, Alevis were forced to practise their religion in secret or to live in the distant rural areas of Anatolia, which most of them still did until recent decades (Delibaş 2017, 105–6). As a consequence, the foundation of the secular Turkish Republic in 1923 was welcomed by Alevis. They eventually became a secularist and non-Islamist community as a counterweight to the Islamists, arguing for the preservation of the secular state (Sökefeld 2008b, 11). Therefore, it is unsurprising that the ‘Alevi revival’ coincided with the rise of political Islam after the 1980s and a series of attacks on Alevis (Çakır 1998, 44; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001). However, their organizational revival first started in Europe and affected their institutionalization process in Turkey in the 1990s, as will be seen in the following paragraphs.

According to Argun (Argun 2003, 107), Alevis applied to become guest workers largely because of their unrecognized minority status in Turkey. When they arrived in Germany, they started to express their differences more openly than they could in Turkey. As a result, they began to organize around their places of worship, which are called *cemevi* (meeting houses or *djemevi*), and to establish associations, just as the Sunni groups were doing. According to Şen (2008), they were more organized than the Sunni Turks, probably because their traditional minority culture helped them organize quickly and effectively. Originally, the organizations were established under various names that did not refer to their Alevi identity. However, seven of these local organizations came together and created the Federation of Alevi Associations in

Germany (AABF) in 1989 (Halm et al. 2013). This organization has changed its name several times and is now known as the Alevi Community in Germany.¹⁰

AABF established transnational links to other Alevi organizations across Europe and in Turkey. The Alevi Community in Germany has become a pioneer for the whole movement and has helped Alevi organizations elsewhere flourish via funding, ideas, lobbying and organizational experiences (Özyürek 2009; Rittersberger 1996, 77). Alevis have also been active in the political life of Turkey. Traditionally, they have voted for leftist and secularist parties (Kaya 2007), but the leadership of European Alevism was involved in the formation of Alevi political movements such as ‘Peace Movement’ – which later became the Peace Party (Barış Partisi), which stood in the 1999 Turkish elections. However, it could not be elected to parliament because of the national threshold that a party has to get a certain number/proportion of the vote (Argun 2003, 113–17). Some prominent members and representatives of AABF were elected as members of parliament from the lists of the centre-left secularist Republican People’s Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi or CHP). In addition to these political links, AABF’s transnational connections have had a tremendous impact on the formation of Alevi organizations in Turkey (Özyürek 2009; Rittersberger 1996). The most prominent Alevi organization in Turkey, the Union of Alevi–Bektashi Organizations, was founded in 2000 and presided over by AABF’s president (Argun 2003, 108). AABF has also established several transnational linkages with Alevis who have formed CSOs in Turkey.

AABF’s similarities with DİTİB are not only limited to the existence of transnational links to Turkey; also, they have both been influenced by the transformations in the Turkish immigrant community. Like DİTİB, AABF started to make claims for recognition in the 2000s after a series of failures in its initiatives in Turkish politics. In contrast to DİTİB and other Islamic religious organizations in Germany, AABF has been highly successful in its recognition processes (Yükleyen 2012, 160). In 2002, the local government in Berlin recognized Alevism as an official religion and allowed the Alevi community to provide religious education on Alevism in schools (Özyürek 2009). In 2008, Alevism was recognized as a distinct religion as a result of two reports, giving momentum to their fight for recognition in Germany (Halm et al. 2013, 67–68; Rosenow-Williams 2012, 109). As a result, AABF is now accepted as a religious community in most of the German states where Alevis live. AABF has also managed to negotiate state agreements (*Staatsvertrag*) with some of these states, and the organization is

¹⁰ According to their website, they use ‘Alevi Community in Germany’ as their organizational name, but they also use the acronym AABF in their logo. See <http://alevi.com/de/>.

getting closer every day to achieving full recognition. There is therefore a substantial difference between AABF and DİTİB, even though they are similar in many respects.

The shared traits of these two organizations include being transnational Turkish religious organizations, providing religious services, aiming to achieve recognition in their host states, and being affected by transformations in the immigrant community. In contrast to these similarities in ‘independent variables’, there is an obvious difference in the results of their recognition processes, and so this forms the ‘dependent variable’ in this study. Following John Stuart Mill’s method of difference in most similar cases, this study compares these two cases, looking at the influence of transnational linkages to the recognition process. This in-depth analysis of the two organizations, including their histories and recognition processes, provides us with the opportunity to isolate our favoured variable by showing the similarities and differences, while a comparative analysis of a specific aspect allows us to gauge the influence of the dependent variable.

2.3. Data collection and methods

While the research design draws a framework to answer the ‘how’ question, data collection methods fill that framework by showing the ways in which the data can be explored and empirical evidence gathered. As the CCS design suggests, the data collection chapters provide information on the background to and context of transformations and recognition processes. The strength of the narrative depends on the depth of the assessment, so it is critical to describe all the recognition-related aspects of the two cases. The data here are mostly descriptive and historical, so qualitative methods are the main tools of inquiry: methods such as interviews, observations and reviews of existing documents are often used in CCSs, as can be seen in the literature (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2016, 196). The complicated nature of these cases and the requirements of the research design mean that all these methods have been used in this research. The application of different methods of data collection is a particular strengths of case studies (Yin 2017, 170–71).

While the current literature and archival documents supply information on the histories of these organizations and Turkish migration, key informant interviews help us clarify technical issues relating to the recognition process. In addition, a review of official documents published by state authorities and by the organizations themselves provides insights into the perspectives of the actors involved and into the structural transformations of immigrant organizations. Lastly, participant observation enables us to understand the views of these immigrants on the

issues being debated. These methods and justifications for their use are detailed in the following sections.

2.3.1. Qualitative interviews

Research in the social sciences involves a variety of qualitative and quantitative methods to gather and analyse data. For a CCS design, there is a need to create a historical context, explore the organizations' structures and examine the recognition process. When collecting data about these topics, there are three main qualitative methods in the social sciences: observations, interviews and a review of relevant documents (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2016, 244; Mebry 2008, 208). Among them, written sources can provide data on the historical context and the organizations' structure. However, since the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations is a new topic both for researchers and for the organizations themselves, there is a lack of secondary data on this issue; this study has therefore interviewed some of the key figures. Because the recognition process is largely technical, the main focus here is on the quality of interviews.

Interviews include direct and indirect questions and can be carried out via different channels, such as in person and over the phone or computer-based applications (De Leeuw, 2008, 314). The methodology literature mentions two primary forms of interview: structured and semi-structured. In structured interviews, the same set of questions is asked of all attendants; it is therefore similar to survey research. Semi-structured interviews, which are more common among researchers, include a few draft points but the interviewer may choose to direct the conversation (Johnson, Reynolds, and Mycoff 2016, 343). The former aims to detect different responses by asking the same questions and limiting the answers, while the latter tries to examine the issue in more depth without the boundaries of standardized interview questions (May 2001, 121–23). During the interview, the researcher can motivate the interviewee to give more general information about the issue and can ask questions depending on the context. When dealing primarily with key informants or elites, the overarching issues or questions could be decided on before conducting semi-structured interviews, and detailed questions could be chosen during the interview (Ercan and Marsh 2016, 314). The outline is called the 'interview guide' and indicates what needs to be covered, but the sequence and wording of the questions can be altered during the interview (Patton 2002, 280–88).

Interviews can provide insights and information through direct communication with important actors, and so the choice of interviewees is critical. Qualitative interviews aim to obtain in-depth data, with a focus on quality rather than quantity, so interviewees should be

knowledgeable, willing to talk and able to represent perspectives on the issue (Rubin and Rubin 2005, 66). These criteria can increase the efficiency of the method and can reveal crucial empirical evidence. There are different types of respondents or interviewees defined in the literature, such as key, special or representative respondents, and elites (Gorden 1975, 187–88; Rich et al. 2018, 320–21). Each of these categories is different, but informants can be defined as people who can give detailed insights about an issue due to their position in a group, or they could lead the researcher to other respondents. According to Gorden's (1975, 187–88) definitions, their naming differs according to their position in the group. However, Rich et al. (2018, 320) suggest that elite status can be given to a respondent only if they are important for the issue at hand. The interviews conducted for this research aim to gather empirical data that is not yet reflected in the literature. Therefore, the interviewees are representatives of the organizations being analysed, or people who are important for the issue. In this study, they are therefore called key informants, representatives and elites.

In addition to the selection of interviewees and interview methods, the interview processes and analysis of the collected data are important issues. In this, Rich et al.'s (2018, 323–26) list of suggestions for conducting elite interviews is followed. Among the key issues, before the interviews, informants' consent for use of the data is requested after a short explanation about the research. Consent is also given for the recording of the interviews. Recordings are saved and secured on the researcher's computer. Consent includes issues about confidentiality, and the interviewee's name is not shared unless they give permission. The useful parts of the recordings are used in the relevant sections with their context. The information gathered from respondents is compared with data derived from the literature and official documents to check validity.

Based on these definitions, face-to-face and semi-structured interviews were conducted within the framework of this research. The interviewees are key informants from transnational Turkish migrant organizations and transnational Turkish institutions, both in Turkey and in Germany. In addition, political figures, such as members of the Turkish parliament, who are concerned with Turkish migrant issues are possible interviewees. As stated above, interviews are used for filling the gaps in the existing data. The CCS requires as much detail as possible about the cases to make the analysis accurate, so interviewees need to be well informed and to have experience of the issue. As the recognition processes are little known, people who are responsible for these highly technical issues are suitable interviewees. Interview guides are prepared on the topics to be covered in the face-to-face meetings, with the two primary guides

focusing on Turkey's changing policies and the recognition processes of immigrants' religious organizations. Interviews are recorded, and relevant parts translated into English by the researcher.

2.3.2. Review of official and archival documents

Along with interviews and existing literature, official documents are one of the most important sources of information in this study. Document analysis is one of the most common methods of data collection; this could be in the form of reviewing sources or could be conducted as content analysis or archival research (Powner 2015, 144–48). Content analysis looks for patterns or changes in the language and content of documents, while archival research focuses on documents from official institutions. Documents and archival records could include service records, formal evaluations, administrative documents, news reports, media articles, survey data produced by agencies, meeting minutes, and so on (Yin 2017, 156–60). All of these sources can be analysed to enrich the detail about the cases studied.

Initially, the existing literature can supply a great deal of information about the history of both Turkish migration and the organizations being studied. However, the literature review has shown that there is a shortage of data on the organizations' recognition processes and on their interactions with German actors, as well as on the attitude of authorities such as state governments and political parties. The shortage of data for comparative analysis is addressed through a review of parliamentary minutes from both countries and from some state governments in Germany. These can supply data on the histories of the organizations and on both countries' policies relating to them. Reports published by the two parliaments on issues relating to the subject of this study are also used to provide details on the organizations, perceptions of them and their recognition processes. In addition, 'expert opinions' (*Gutachten*) prepared by people commissioned by the parliament(s) during the recognition processes are essential sources of information. Lastly, official documents such as laws, constitutions and court decisions are used in specific contexts.

Another critical issue for this research is obtaining detailed insights about the inner workings of the organizations. For this, official publications and press releases are a source of information, while an analysis of the organizations' by-laws helps us understand any internal changes. In most cases, by-laws are publicly available on official websites, but administrative courts (*Amtsgericht*) can provide copies of documents and previous versions. The information gathered from these documents allows us to understand changes made as a result of the

recognition process as well as differences between the structures of the two organizations, especially regarding transnational linkages.

Additional sources, such as news reports and media articles, the organizations' official websites, political parties' election manifestos and surveys from a variety of organizations are also used. The recognition of immigrants' religious organizations is a new issue in Germany, and debates around it in the media and in society more widely have increased, particularly since 2016. Therefore, many reports and articles were published during the data-gathering period of this study and were used to add more detail and context. In addition, statistical data and survey results about public opinions on specific points increase the validity of the arguments presented in this study. Documents and literature are listed in the bibliography, while online sources are included in footnotes.

This research project started in early 2017 with a literature review on the topic of Turkish migration to Europe and evolved over the following three years. The sources and methods mentioned above were used systematically during this period and supplied most of the data for this comparative analysis. In addition to these official sources, my life in Germany during these years has also provided me with a chance to be a part of the community under discussion. I have visited several mosques and organizations of almost every faction in the community. I also attended some of the internal meetings of religious and political communities, which allowed me to observe those communities as well as communicate with members and administrators. Outside the meetings, I talked with countless people about the problems of the community and the future of immigrants' religious organizations. In short, my life as a member of the Turkish immigrant community during this research provided an essential insight into the cases studied. Even though this observation was not systematic, and therefore it cannot be counted as one of the methods discussed above, having the opportunity to draw parallels between the study and the field was a great experience. Therefore, some of these insights are used as supportive evidence from time to time in this study, depending on the context.

In conclusion, this research is designed to help us understand the relationship between the transnational linkages of immigrants' religious organizations and their recognition processes. A comparative design with two most similar cases varying in their transnational linkages was therefore selected. The validity and strength of CCS mainly depend on the details of the cases analysed. On that assumption, qualitative methods such as interviews and document analysis were chosen for collecting the necessary data. Due to the wide range of data sources

and the contemporary status of the issue, these methods were used in a complementary way, with the aim of providing evidence for the main argument of this study.

3. THE CONTEXT WITH A FOCUS ON TURKEY

Migration itself and related issues have transformed dramatically along with technological advances and globalization. As these problems become more important day by day, their place on the agenda of states rises higher and the policies and approaches of both sending and receiving countries change in response to the transformations. Countries with emigrants seek ways to engage with their citizens abroad, with the aim of earning economic and political advantages in both domestic and international politics. In line with this, there is a growing literature on the strategies adopted by sending countries to engage with their transnationals: for instance Delano and Gamlen (2014), Gamlen (2008), Levitt and de la Dehesa (2003), Østergaard-Nielsen (2003), Ragazzi (2009, 2014, 2017). These studies categorize states according to their policies and institutions relating to their citizens abroad and their migrants and theorize the motives behind these policies. Therefore, the first objective of this chapter is to answer the following question: ‘How do states engage with their transnationals?’

Explanations of states’ policies of engagement form a base for assessing the Turkish context. As an important sending country, Turkey is one of the more interesting states due to its transnational policies, especially for its long neglect of and then sudden interest in such policies (Şahin-Mencütek and Başer 2018). Early publications about Turkish migrants tended not to mention Turkey’s policies, but these policy changes have recently become more visible in the literature. Some holistic studies, such as Abadan-Unat (2017) and Østergaard-Nielsen (2001, 2004) have only hinted at the changes in Turkey’s policies as well as the changes in the migrant community itself. However, there has recently been an increase in the number of publications on this issue, as can be seen from the works of Artan (2009), Mügge (2012b), Şahin-Mencütek and Başer (2018), İçduygu and Aksel (2013), and İçduygu, Erder and Gençkaya (2014). In the second part of this chapter, these policy shifts are evaluated. The data gathered in this section are used to understand the change in the transnational links of the organizations studied.

As the first data-gathering chapter of the thesis, this section mainly explores the history of Turkish migration to Germany with a focus on the Turkish perspective. There are three main objectives. First, the literature on sending states’ strategies is reviewed and an overview of the strategies given. This information provides the basis for an evaluation of Turkey’s policies towards its emigrants in Germany; Turkey’s policies in different phases and the causes of any changes in those policies are also explained. Lastly, there is a brief overview of the Turkish transnational space and a mapping of major organizations. By the end of the chapter, it will be

apparent that there has been a sequence of shifts in Turkey's policies towards its emigrants in Germany, a sequence consisting an extended period of neglect followed by a sudden interest in active engagement.

3.1. Strategies of sending states

Migration-related issues have always been regarded as pertaining to receiving countries, and therefore the literature has mostly focused on the policies and integration problems of these countries (see, for example, Avcı 2006; Mueller 2006; Østergaard-Nielsen 2001). However, according to the World Bank's *Migration and Remittances Factbook*,¹¹ in 2016 more than 250 million immigrants were living around the globe and their remittances had a total value of US\$600 billion, meaning that there is a massive flow of capital to the sending countries from the receiving countries. This phenomenon creates an area that countries are eager to control. Therefore, today almost half of the United Nations' member countries have at least one institution dealing with their emigrants; in some cases these institutions have been in existence for almost 200 years (Gamlen 2014). As a result, there has also been an increase in the number of publications dealing with the sending states' policies (Collyer 2013; Délano and Gamlen 2014; Gamlen 2008, 2014; Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2017; Ragazzi 2009, 2014).

Migration is a prominent issue for both receiving and sending countries because of the high economic and political potential involved in the movement of capital and people between countries, a potential that has increased due to advances in technology in recent decades. Therefore, it would be natural for states to seek ways in which they can control an area with such significant potential profits. In one of the earlier publications related to this issue, Østergaard-Nielsen (2003) mentions two types of sending states. The first type focuses on the return of emigrants in its policies, while the second (global nation states) seeks to encourage emigrants to settle abroad but to stay in touch. This categorization is expanded upon by Ragazzi (2009), who offers three types of state: those that concentrate on policies that, for example, focus on the return of 'good citizens' after migration; those that see the diaspora as an enemy and surveil their citizens abroad; and those that export their national culture to 'friendly' groups within migrant communities abroad. In a similar vein, Levitt and Schiller (2004, 1023–24) classify states according to their engagement policies under three headings: transnational nation states, strategically selective states and disinterested states. In the first type, similar to the global

¹¹ World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016: see <https://www.worldbank.org/en/research/brief/migration-and-remittances>, accessed: 20 January 2018

nation states, they treat their emigrants as members of the state abroad and see themselves as responsible for their protection and representation. In the second, countries want to maintain the long-distance membership of the state, but they also try to control what their emigrants can or cannot do. In the last category, states treat their emigrants as if they were no longer members of the homeland.

All of these concepts focus on specific elements and therefore do not cover the whole picture when it comes to the categorization of states according to their engagement policies towards their emigrants. However, Ragazzi (2014) tries to map states' diaspora engagement policies in a detailed and comparative manner. According to his article 'A Comparative Analysis of Diaspora Policies', there are five types of government based on their strategies. The first is the *expatriate state*, which focuses on cultural and educational policies. The second type, the *closed state*, tightly regulates and limits the movements of its emigrants and observes them abroad. The third group, *global nation states*, implements the broadest range of policies towards its transnationals; the author lists Mexico, Ireland, Greece, Russia and India as examples of this kind of state. Their strategies include providing documents that emigrants can use in the homeland after changing citizenship and establishing language and cultural programmes, rather than controlling schools completely or extracting resources in return for providing social and political rights. The last two groups are *managed labour states* and *indifferent states*. While the former focus on the economic side of migration, try to control workforce flows and prepare investment projects for returnees, the latter show almost no interest in their emigrants.

Ragazzi's (2014) categorization is used in the next section as a basis for an analysis of Turkey's changing policies. This has been chosen for two specific reasons. First, as stated by Ragazzi (2014, 76), the other taxonomies tend to focus on a single criterion (for example, attitude towards emigrants in Levitt and Schiller, 2004), and therefore do not cover all aspects of the issue. Second, Ragazzi (2014) gives a more detailed and synthesized version of all the previous categorizations.

While states can be classified according to their primary motivations in their engagement policies, they also use specific regulations or tools to improve the current context. Levitt and Dehesa (2003) divide these policies into five types: 'administrational reforms, remittance focused strategies, expansion of political rights, extensions of state protections and symbolic moves'. It is possible to see from the existing literature that many countries, including India, Mexico, Greece, China and Russia, have used such policies to engage with their emigrants (see, for example, Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2017; Collyer 2013). Alan

Gamlen (2008) has classified these efforts under two headings: diaspora-building and diaspora integration strategies. According to Gamlen, policies such as consular reforms, celebrating national holidays and providing specialized visas can be called diaspora-building policies, while those extending rights and extracting obligations from emigrants are diaspora integration policies.

As can be seen from the explanations above, states can use a variety of tools to engage with their transnationals depending on the motivation behind their policies. For instance, if a government seeks to channel the economic gains and surpluses of its emigrants, it can adopt policies such as starting special investment projects and facilitating money transfers, and it could provide exclusive rights in exchange for these financial resources. On the other hand, a government could seek the political support of its citizens abroad in elections and might choose to create a supportive group within the immigrant community by labelling opposing groups as enemies. Or states might prefer to behave like a ‘global nation state’, with the primary aim of reinforcing the national loyalty of its citizens abroad; in this case, it can adopt policies such as sponsoring events, supporting student exchange or providing funding to promote a particular ideology in favour of the sending state (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 17). States could also institutionalize their efforts and establish specific offices or ministries, as 27 countries had done by 2012 (Gamlen 2014).

There is another issue relating to the question of why some countries are more active than others in this regard. In a pioneering work in the field, Bauböck (2003) argues that states see their citizens abroad as a population to be controlled or connected to the homeland because of three reasons: ‘human capital upgrading with return migration, currency flows as remittances and lobbying in favour of sending country governments’. A state could find it attractive to reach out to its citizens abroad because of these reasons, but why are some states more eager to do this than others? Bloch (2017) answers this question with a cost–benefit approach, claiming that states calculate the economic and political costs of such policies. Therefore, one would expect countries that need remittances or human capital to be more active. However, in her article comparing Turkey’s and Suriname’s strategies as sending states, Mügge (2013) finds the cost–benefit concept to be inadequate and suggests that ideologies of nationhood are another reason.

The relevant departments and ministries are an essential component of a sending state’s strategy, and the number of them has soared in recent decades. According to Gamlen (2014), these institutions represent state-led transnationalism and allow emigrants settled abroad to

remain involved in domestic issues. Gamlen has also examined the motivation behind such strategies and behind the founding of these institutions. He has conceptualized a theoretical approach to the issue (Gamlen 2008, 2014) and, in a more recent article, he offers an improved version of his system of classification (Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2017). This article sets out three reasons behind the increase in such institutions: tapping, embracing and governing (Gamlen, Cummings, and Vaaler 2017). In the ‘tapping’ category, states generally focus on the economic gains to be achieved from their emigrants and thus form institutions to channel remittances. In ‘embracing’, countries try not only to focus on financial gains but also to embrace their emigrants as extraterritorial or transnational citizens. The governing aspect indicates that states establish such institutions as a response to the international demand for global governance of migration.

In sum, it is possible to draw parallels between state policies, tools and motivations relating to transnational institutionalization. The relatively rich literature covers the strategies and motivations of states in some depth, and the approach and arguments examined here will be used in the following section, which deals with the transformation of Turkey’s policies towards its emigrants. Ragazzi’s (2014) categories will be used to classify the different periods in Turkey’s interactions with its emigrants, while Gamlen’s (2008, 2014) terminology will be used to understand the motivations behind Turkey’s transnational institutionalization.

3.2. The transformation of Turkey’s policies toward its citizens abroad

Turkey has a long history with regard to migration and related issues, from mostly inward migration during the late Ottoman Empire as centuries-old territories were lost, to waves of emigration in the 1960s due to labour recruitment agreements with developed countries in Western Europe. Similarly, various wars and the assimilation policies of Bulgaria led to 11 major migration waves following the 1877–78 Russo-Turkish War, which made Turks in Bulgaria one of the key topics for Turkey throughout the twentieth century (Atasoy and Soykan 2011). Thus, issues relating to emigration to Europe and the Turkish migrant community in Europe could be seen as just a small part of Turkey’s vast migration history (see, for example, Icduygu, Erder, and Gençkaya 2014). However, these issues are one of the most debated topics in the literature, probably because of Turkey’s economic and political relations with the EU and its member countries. In addition, the increasing number of Turkish migrants in Europe – around 4.5 million today – makes them a significant issue for Turkey (Aksel 2014).

Due to the importance of the issue, this section focuses on the history of Turkish immigrants in Germany and of Turkey's policies towards them. Data are gathered from the available sources in the literature, reports of the relevant institutions, parliamentary minutes, some key informant interviews, and the author's participant observation in Germany. As a result of the analysis, this section aims to achieve three objectives. The first is to detect the critical junctures and periods in the history of Turkish migration to Europe; this will enable us to draw parallels with the transformations in the cases. Also, this initial step will pave the way for a further assessment of the changing nature of transnational links subjected in this thesis. The second objective is to understand the reasons behind these policy transformations; this will enable us to categorize Turkey's policies according to Ragazzi's (2014) taxonomy. The third aims to understand the goals and effects of these changes to transnational links, and especially of recent developments.

As summarized in Chapter 1, high levels of Turkish migration to Europe started with labour recruitment agreements and continued through family reunions and refugee flows. As a result of the many changes in the process itself, the context around Turkish migration to Europe has been very dynamic. The key transformations mentioned in the literature include changes in the duration of migration, the starting of settlements, family reunions, political refugees from Turkey and transnationalization (Abadan-Unat 2017; Kartal 2009). These transformations have triggered some fundamental processes in the community and have influenced migrant organizations, mosque associations and political establishments, as well as competition between them. It is possible to find traces of these changes and dynamism even in the titles of publications in the field: for example, the title of Abadan-Unat's (2011) *Turks in Europe: From Guest Workers to Transnational Citizens* reflects the evolution of the issue, while Yurdakul's (2009) *From Guest Workers into Muslims* emphasizes the development of Turkish religious organizations in Europe. Another example is Artan's (2009) thesis 'From Village Turks to Euro Turks', which refers to the changing perceptions of the Turkish state towards Turkish migrants in Europe. In sum, the last 60 years of Turkish migration to Germany have witnessed many changes that have left marks on the community and have led Turkey to adopt different policies towards its emigrants in Germany at different times.

Turkey's policies were not the only things that changed during these years; factors relating to migration and states' approaches to emigrants and their diasporas have changed more widely. It is possible to draw parallels between global trends and Turkey's policies towards its emigrants, and some authors have already commented on the classification of Turkey's policies.

For example, Levitt and Schiller (2004) categorize Turkey as a *strategically selective state* because of its control-focused policies, whereas Ragazzi (2014) places Turkey at the top of his list of *global nation states* based on its recent policies. As can be seen, it is possible to detect changes in Turkey's categorization even over a short period of time, and so this part of the chapter aims to identify these changes and their motivations in order to reach a more holistic analysis. In doing so, the history of Turkish migration will be divided into three periods according to critical changes. This concept has been used in the literature by other authors too: for instance, Artan (2009) and Şahin–Mencütek and Başer (2018) use a similar approach to analyse the history of Turkey's policies towards its emigrants. The two studies use almost the same dates to mark the different periods: 1960s–1970s, 1980s–1990s and 2000s. These periods will also be referred to as the early economy-focused phase (1960s–1970s), the control-focused transition phase (1980s–1990s) and the actively engaged phase with rapid institutionalization (2000s).

3.2.1. The early economy-focused phase

Turkey the 1950s, as a country whose economy depended on agricultural production, Turkey struggled to create enough work for its rapidly increasing population. This economic difficulty eventually became the primary reason behind the waves of migration to Western Europe. Therefore, in the initial phase, Turkey tried to benefit in the most efficient way from emigrants' savings and remittances and their return as skilled workers. It therefore implemented policies to attract and channel these savings, as well as trying to regulate and rotate migration while sending more workers abroad. It could thus be said that Turkey's policies at this time focused mainly on the economic aspects of migration and that it tended to ignore other dimensions of its growing emigrant community. According to Ragazzi's (2014) categorization, Turkey could be classified as a *managed labour state* due to its policies during this initial period.

Turkey enjoyed some comparatively stable years after World War Two, but a *coup d'état* in 1960 interrupted this stability and the following years were the most turbulent in the political and economic history of the young republic. Therefore, it is no coincidence that workforce migration intensified and became official during these years. According to different sources, people started to migrate to find better jobs in West European countries in the 1950s. This migration was mostly of individuals and the number of migrants was quite small (İçduygu, Erder, and Gençkaya 2014, 186). Restrictions on having a passport were among the main obstacles to migration, but the army's intervention in government and the 1961 constitution,

which allowed any citizen to obtain a passport, were catalysts in increasing these numbers (Abadan-Unat 2017, 84).

In the receiving country, West Germany was experiencing an economic boom with substantial growth rates in production, but unemployment was quite low and there was a risk of labour shortages at the end of the 1950s. As a result, Germany started to look at ways of recruiting labour from countries such as Spain, Italy, Yugoslavia, Greece and Turkey, which all had a labour force surplus (Rist 1978). Turkey's massive surplus and liberal attitude towards exporting highly skilled workers were attractive to Western European countries (İçduygu, Erder, and Gençkaya 2014, 191), and so Turkey signed labour recruitment agreements with Germany (1961), Austria (1964), Belgium (1964), the Netherlands (1964), France (1965) and Sweden (1967) (Abadan-Unat 2017, 85). These agreements also made the de facto migration official, and numbers reached around 100,000 people in Germany alone (Akgündüz 1993, 3). As a result of these contracts, recruitment offices were established in big cities in Turkey to handle applications, but there were thousands of applications and long waiting lists throughout the 1960s.

Germany's main motivation for this agreement was that it needed to fill positions in its factories and maintain production. Therefore, most of the workers were unskilled. The primary qualification for employees was that they were healthy, and doctors were sent from Germany to the recruitment centres to ensure this. In addition, employers generally preferred single male candidates. In contrast to most other nationalities moving to Germany under similar agreements, Turkish workers were not granted the right to take their families (Abadan-Unat 2015, 264). The selected workers were transferred to Germany by train and housed in workers' dormitories (*heims*); first-generation workers commonly stated that these were poor-quality places to live. There are novels, documentaries and even famous films about the life of Turkish workers in the early years of migration.¹² After they arrived in Germany, most Turkish workers lived between their dormitories and the factories. Their main aim was to earn and save enough money so that they could afford to return to Turkey and open a small business in their home towns (Wets 2006, 87). Consequently, they worked as much as they were able to and saved as much money as possible to send back to Turkey.

¹² See, among others, the 2015 novel by A. Ağaoğlu *Fikrimin İnce Gülü* and Tunç Okan's 1992 film *Mercedes mon Amour*.

Motivations on the Turkish side were also economic, paralleling those in Germany. Its main concerns were reducing the unemployment rate, educating unskilled workers and using remittances to narrow the trade deficit (Pusch and Splitt 2013, 138; Document (41) 1967, 302). Exporting the unemployed workforce surplus was also suggested in the State Planning Agency's *1st Five-Year Development Plan* in 1963.¹³ In his parliamentary speech in 1967, member of parliament (MP) Şaban Erik defined unemployment as a social disaster for Turkey and the signing of the Development Plan as the main reason behind state-led emigration to West European countries (Document (41) 1967, 302). Therefore, the government's central policy was to send as many workers as possible to reduce the unemployment rate during these years.

On the other hand, there was an industrialization process in Turkey that needed skilled workers. Turkey therefore regarded labour migration as an opportunity to educate its unskilled labour force. A rotation principle was thus put into the agreements which foresaw the return of workers at the end of their contracts (Abadan-Unat 2017, 85–86). Furthermore, Turkey was struggling to finance its projects, especially those needing foreign currency. Thus, policymakers planned to channel the foreign currency arriving from these workers as remittances.

During one of the first discussions about Turkish immigrants in Germany, which was held in the National Assembly in 1963, Minister of Labour Bülent Ecevit pointed out some difficulties that these workers faced. However, his main point was to emphasize the importance of exporting the Turkish labour force to reduce unemployment, while expressing concern about sending highly skilled workers (Document (40) 1963, 295–7). Based on these concerns, Turkey maintained its policy of sending workers but tried to reduce the proportion of highly skilled workers. When official recruitment was halted in 1973, there were 865,000 Turkish workers in Germany, and, although it had taken some measures to guard against this, Turkey had lost 17 per cent of its highly skilled workers (Başkurt 2009). According to Abadan-Unat (2017, 96), even though some politicians and state institutions criticized the sending of skilled workers, Turkey was unable to impose any restrictions. Therefore, one could argue that policies relating to education through migration never worked.

While the migrant community in West Germany grew, so too did awareness of their problems. Early issues were mostly related to conditions imposed on migration, such as limitations on one's time in Germany and on bringing one's family. The temporary status of

¹³ *1st Five-Year Development Plan* (in Turkish), State Planning Agency, Republic of Turkey, 1963, p. 456: see http://www.sbb.gov.tr/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Birinci_Bes_Yillik_Kalkinma_Plani-1962-1967.pdf, accessed 29 June 2020.

workers caused by the rotation principle paved the way for a lack of policies aimed at these migrants in both countries (Mügge 2012a). Thus, strategies mostly focused on the return of migrants and the continuity of strong ties to Turkey (Mügge 2012b, 24). Turkey did not pay much attention to the social problems of its emigrants in Germany, even if it had some awareness of them from the very beginning. For instance, in his speech in parliament in 1963, Bülent Ecevit stated that Turkey had only one attaché to deal with the problems of workers in Germany due to Turkey's economic difficulties (Document (40) 1963, 296).

One of Turkey's first initiatives for dealing with the problems of Turkish immigrants in Germany involved sending an academic (Nermin Abadan-Unat) to prepare a report with the support of the State Planning Agency (SPA). The report was published by the SPA under the title *Turkish Workers in West Germany and their Problems*, but policymakers mostly ignored its findings. Moreover, in response to censure in parliament on its release in 1967, Minister of Labour Ali Naili Erdem accused the research of being prepared behind a table, not in the field, and thus not reflecting reality (Document (41) 1967, 309). In his speech, he pointed out two issues that Turkey was addressing: the question of remittances and communist propaganda among workers.

Communist propaganda was one of the prime concerns of policymakers in Turkey during this time. While they were struggling against such propaganda in the homeland, they did not want similar ideas being spread by returning workers. This problem appeared on the government agenda in the early years of migration and continued to be an issue throughout the 1960s. In his parliamentary speech in 1963, Bülent Ecevit indicated that the government had started to act against the communist propaganda of Russian radio broadcasts. However, they could not agree with the German authorities on special programmes for Turks on German radio stations (Document (40) 1963, 297). An MP, Ali Cüceloğlu, noted the religious and ideological propaganda of foreigners and criticized the government for neglecting the issue (Document (41) 1967, 296). In response, Minister of Labour Ali Naili Erdem stated that 14,000 books had been sent to workers' associations to fight the communist threat (Document (41) 1967, 311). In addition to these precautions, Artan (2009, 43) claims that Turkey even sent security officers to consulates to 'hunt out' communists among Turkish workers in Germany.

Turkey's second concern at the time related to economic matters and remittances; these were a dominant theme of many speeches in parliament. Abadan-Unat (2015, 265) emphasizes that, while it may have ignored other issues, the Turkish government, and especially the SPA, was interested in remittances and their use. Turkish workers were working and saving as much

as possible, but there was a problem with the flow of these payments to Turkey. According to Argun (2003, 33), the main issue was Turkey's currency policy, which gave a lower rate than the market price. Therefore, migrants tended to choose foreign banks offering better rates or bought goods to sell in Turkey when they returned for their annual leave. Policymakers often complained about this, and therefore two central policies were adopted: to provide better rates for remittances and to encourage migrants to invest their money in projects such as village development cooperatives and worker companies (Pusch and Splitt 2013, 138). Turkey's aim was to channel these funds to the home towns of workers and prepare these towns for their return by creating new jobs and raising infrastructure standards. However, this strategy did not work as planned. Most of the workers did not pay their monthly share into the cooperatives after their arrival in the host country. In addition, the returning workers' investments were often unsuccessful because of their lack of experience in running businesses or the state's decreasing interest in and support for them.

Another issue relating to emigrants in Germany was the institutionalization of Turkey to solve the problems of its citizens. The one attaché sent to deal with workers' problems in 1963 was not sufficient for a community whose number had reached 1 million by around 1970. Therefore, this was one of the issues that Ali Cüceloğlu criticized in his speech to parliament. He stated that sending countries such as Greece, Spain and Italy all had offices in almost every major German city to help their workers (Document (41) 1967, 296). The primary reason for this problem was financial, but even though Turkey was struggling with economic difficulties, the first office focusing on workers abroad was established under the Ministry of Labour in 1967. The primary responsibility of the General Directorate for Foreign Relations and Workers Abroad was to protect and enhance the rights and interests of Turkish workers in foreign countries (Bilgili and Siegel 2013, 282). However, as could be seen in the following years, the Directorate generally just recorded statistics.

In the 1970s, the migrant community and Turkey both faced new and more general problems. First, Turkish migrants in European countries were one of the groups that were most affected by the economic crisis at the beginning of the decade. Many workers lost their jobs, and some returned to Turkey. At the same time, there were signs of the first immigrant settlements in these countries. According to Bilgili and Siegel (2013, 278–79), the reasons behind migrants' decision not to go back to Turkey in these years included the impossibility of returning to Europe via the earlier rotation system and the economic and political turbulence Turkey was experiencing. Therefore, migrants either stayed in their host states or moved to

another country when they lost their jobs. These first settlements led Turkey to adopt new policies and provide new services. The issues of religion, culture and education had been underestimated in Turkey's policies relating to its emigrants throughout the 1960s. As a result of the new conditions, in 1971 the first imams and teachers were sent to Europe from Turkey to protect Turkish migrants from assimilation (İçduygu and Aksel 2013, 174).

Host countries decided to halt recruitment because of the economic stagnation caused by the Oil Crisis in 1973, which marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Turkish migrants in Germany (Aksel 2014, 202). Although the formal recruitment of workers had stopped, the flow of people did not; it just shifted to migration through family reunions, marriage and, later, refugee flows (İçduygu, Sirkeci, and Muradoglu 2001, 40), thereby transforming Turkish migrant communities in European countries.

The first change was the arrival of women and children via family reunions. This process led to a rapid increase in the population and triggered new educational and religious needs, fields that had been underestimated before. As a consequence, Turkey started to send teachers to provide classes on the Turkish language and on Turkish history and politics (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 108). These lessons took place in schools after the end of the normal school day or at the weekend, so attendance was not as high as expected. Also, there was some controversy within the Turkish migrant community about the content of these classes, with some people accusing them of serving Turkey's alleged assimilationist policies towards Alevis and Kurds. In addition, teachers employed by the Turkish Ministry of National Education had no preparation to teach classes in a foreign environment (Abadan-Unat 1976, 40–41). As a consequence, Turkey's policies with regard to the education of its emigrant children in Europe were not entirely successful.

The second change linked to transformations within the Turkish immigrant population concerned religious services. As noted earlier, Turkey was already trying to solve this problem through temporary solutions such as sending imams for the holy month of Ramadan. Among Turkish migrants, who were typically traditional and conservative, religion was an important issue. Especially after their children arrived in the host countries, they started to worry about losing young people to a foreign culture and religion, and so the first mosque associations were established at the beginning of the 1970s (Sirseldoudi 2012). Those that were established first were proxies of existing Sufi orders or religious organizations in Turkey. Süleymancılar (followers of Süleyman H. Tunahan), known in Germany as Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren e.V., was the first Sufi order to become active and set up places for worship and

religious education in the migrant community (Çağlar 2016; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 55). This was followed by other groups aiming to fill a gap in the community. However, all of these groups followed specific sects and ideologies, and some immigrants were suspicious of them. This suspicion created a demand for the Turkish state to provide religious services in the diaspora, but Turkey and Diyanet showed little interest in the issue and continued their temporary solutions (Doomernik 1995, 50). The ‘religious market’ was therefore established by mosque associations of different groups in the migrant community, without and before the involvement of Turkey.

Another dynamic in the 1970s was the steady increase in political instability in Turkey. There was stark rivalry between different ideological groups (communists, nationalists and Islamists) and street protests and clashes occurred daily, with many casualties. This insecure environment and the state’s harsh response forced people to migrate, and refugee flows intensified. The number of refugees from Turkey to Europe climbed to 57,913 in 1980 from 809 in 1976 (Abadan-Unat 2017, 96). Naturally, these people affected the migrant community, especially in institutional and political areas, because of the organizational skills they had developed through their experiences in Turkey.

As a result, the number of workers’ associations increased significantly during the 1970s. Also, some political groups started to organize in the migrant community by forming associations to support their ideological movements back home (Abadan-Unat 2017, 95–96). They tried to gain supporters in the migrant community and channel their contributions to the central bodies in the homeland. Meanwhile, as Turkey was experiencing economic and political turbulence, it could not pay enough attention to these new issues. The period ended with a *coup d’état* in 1980, which marked the second turning point in the history of Turkey’s policies.

To sum up, this period in the history of Turkey’s migration and policies had two specific characteristics: economic interests and the expectation of temporariness. Financial reasons were behind the state-led migration agreements, and, in parallel, Turkey wanted to make as much profit as possible. The expectation that migration would be temporary was also built into the contracts, with Turkey aiming to educate its low-skilled workers via this process. However, the rotation mechanism did not work well and most workers decided to stay abroad. Also, policies on using remittances and returnees for rapid industrialization failed because the government made the wrong decisions and its plans were short-lived. For example, in a parliamentary debate in 1978, MP İhsan Karadayı criticized the former governments:

We started to send workers abroad almost 15 years ago. In this period, some of them stayed there, and some of them returned to Turkey. Unfortunately, in this period governments did not think about their return and how they would find a job here. Also, they did not use remittances efficiently to create employment for them. In my opinion, all of the former governments are responsible for what we have today. (Document (42) 1978, 301)

Besides these failures in the government's economic aims, the expectation of temporariness meant that some of the solutions to the problems that arose in the migrant community were also temporary. The issues of education and religion were two of the most prominent, as reflected in the parliamentary speech by MP Fehmi Cumalıoğlu:

Unfortunately, the state could not fulfil the religious, spiritual and cultural needs of our citizens working abroad. 300,000 children who should be at school are waiting for their families on the streets to come back from work. These pupils do not know anything about their religion, history or mother tongue. (Document (42) 1978, 297)

Therefore, one could claim that Turkey failed in almost all of its aims relating to migration, and that the state was unable to keep up with the transformations in the migrant community. As has been shown, one of the leading reasons behind these failures was Turkey's lack of economic capacity: it was not even able to send officials to deal with workers' problems. Also, the human capital of the Turkish state was not adequate to deal with all of these issues, as can be seen in the complaints about officials who could not even speak the language of the host country. As a consequence, we can define Turkey as a *managed labour state* according to Ragazzi's (2014) categorization, because it was concerned about remittances and returnees in this period. Turkey showed little interest in long-term policies or creating transnational links, probably because of the difficulties discussed above and the comparatively small number of active migrant associations. The existing associations in this period were mainly small political organizations and workers' unions that tried to help workers solve their problems with their work.

3.2.2. The transitional control-focused phase

The year 1980 is one of the most important in late Turkish history because of the military coup on 12 September. Throughout the second half of the 1970s, street clashes between different ideological groups and even bombings were daily occurrences. Even small towns in Anatolia were divided into zones by these groups. Under such conditions, people wanted a 'saviour' – and this saviour was the army, as had always been the case in Turkish history. However, after the military had taken control of the country after the *coup d'état*, it started a

relentless witch-hunt that ended in thousands of cases of torture, disappearance and death in custody of opponents from both ends of the ideological spectrum. In the end, thousands of people escaped Turkey and sought refugee status in European countries. The coup brought a new constitution and had a powerful influence on the politics that dominated the following years.

This new environment had three new effects on migration. First, the refugees politicized the migrant community further. Second, the influence of the military forced governments to take measures against ‘undesirable’ groups and ideologies both within and outside Turkey (Mügge 2012b). And third, the permanency of Turks in Europe was accepted by Turkey and a new set of policies was inaugurated based on this realization. The primary indicator of this change was a shift from temporary solutions to long-term plans. As a result, this period was a transition period between the periods of neglect and active engagement.

The military coup of 12 September 1980 began a new page in the history of migration while halting the democratization of Turkey. Many people who feared investigation because of their ideology or ethnicity fled from Turkey to European countries (Abadan-Unat 2015, 267); the number of people migrating to Germany alone reached more than 200,000 in 1980 (Pusch and Splitt 2013, 134). These years saw the foundation of many of today’s prominent political organizations. Expelled left-wing groups found new blood, while Islamic groups discovered an amenable atmosphere for their political organizations in Germany (Sirkeci 2006, 77). Even after several decades, some of the organizations established by these refugees are still seen as terrorist groups by Turkey today (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 49–50). Unsurprisingly, the military junta fought against those groups in Turkey after it took control of the country, but those that escaped organized freely in the Turkish migrant communities of Europe. Therefore, as had happened in an earlier era in the fight against communist propaganda, the state tried to stop the organizations’ activities. Surveillance was the first method used, as revealed by parliamentary minutes. In 1982, in an early debate in parliament after it came under the control of the army, MP Vahap Güvenç mentioned ‘some specialists employed by the Ministry of Labour’ in workers’ unions who were working together with Turkish consulates on activities against Turkey. However, he also indicated the state’s financial difficulties in funding these people (Document (43) 1982, 460).

In the years that followed, Turkey put in place measures such as confiscating passports and removing citizenship from people who had escaped abroad using a citizenship law (Artan 2009, 67). According to Articles 25 and 26 of Citizenship Law 403, Turkish-born citizens could

lose their citizenship under certain circumstances, mostly related to compulsory military service and acting against Turkey's interests.¹⁴ In response to a parliamentary question, Minister of Interior Affairs Yıldırım Akbulut said that '9,434 people have lost their citizenship according to Article 25 of the Citizenship Law'. He emphasized that nobody had had their citizenship removed because of their beliefs, ideologies or thoughts, but rather because they had refused to return to Turkey following court summons because of their involvement in activities against the state (Document (44) 1987, 350).

On the other hand, there were also initiatives to provide services to the migrant community, because of the need for long-term strategies caused by the settlement of Turkish workers abroad. Some of these changes were laid down in the 1982 Constitution, which has many amendments that have consequences for migrants (Mügge 2012b). For example, Article 62 of the 1982 Constitution states that:

The State shall take the necessary measures to ensure family unity, the education for children and social security and fulfil the cultural needs, and the social security of Turkish citizens abroad, and to safeguard their ties with the home country and help them on their return home.¹⁵

This article required new measures and institutions to provide the provisions mentioned and so the state started to make the necessary arrangements. For instance, the state continued to send teachers, as it had done in the previous period, for the education of the children of its emigrants. However, critics accused Turkey of following control and surveillance policies in the immigrant community, which eventually caused problems between Turkey and Germany. For instance, in 1982, Germany accused Turkey of collecting information about different organizations and mosques via teachers sent for the education of Turkish children (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 118).

Turkey's other initiative involved providing religious services to its emigrants. Since the 1970s, the religious market had been occupied by different religious and political groups that supported their main organizations in Turkey (Abadan-Unat 2017, 259), but the Turkish state did not welcome the activities of these groups in the community. Like other ideological groups, the Islamists were subjected to the state's increased control and tracking (Al-Hamarneh and Thielmann 2008a), while the increase in the state's *laïcité* under its military administration intensified the fear about these Islamic groups. This fear had existed since the foundation of the republic but concerns about an Islamic revolution in Turkey similar to the one in Iran made the

¹⁴ The Citizenship Law of the Turkish Republic, Directorate for Population and Citizenship Affairs, Law No. 403.

¹⁵ The Constitution of the Turkish Republic, Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Constitution (1982), Article 62.

Islamists a more significant threat to the regime in these years. Mirroring that fear, in a parliamentary session in 1987, MP Arif Toprak complained about Diyanet's inability to control the mosques in Germany. According to him, because of a gap in the field, 80 per cent of mosques in the community had become a proxy of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini (Document (44) 1987, 306). In the same session, the Minister of State was asked a parliamentary question about what Turkey was doing against the propaganda of such radical groups (Document (44) 1987, 299). In his response, Minister of State Hasan Celal Güzel said that the government was taking the issue of religion in the diaspora seriously and was sending sufficient religious consular staff and attachés to Germany. He said that Turkey had also established the Turkish Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (DİTİB) in Germany and similar associations in some other countries to provide such services to citizens (Document (44) 1987, 301).

As can be seen from the Minister's speech, Turkey's first significant initiative – an initiative that is still debated in European countries – was born out of the need to regulate the religious market. Before the appearance of Diyanet, each mosque was controlled by its local administrators, who raised funds for the salary of the imam and the costs of the mosque. Diyanet offered to send imams and pay their wages if the mosque agreed to be under its control. Turkey's aim was to counterbalance 'undesirable' religious and political movements while promoting national solidarity and loyalty to the Turkish state (Al-Hamarneh and Thielmann 2008a; Ewing 2003; Yükleven 2012, 49–51). While this aim was evident, and there were many allegations about surveillance and control mechanisms, Germany welcomed the foundation of DİTİB. According to Rosenow-Williams (2012, 190), even though there were debates, Germany was interested in establishing a moderate Islam in the country and thus welcomed Diyanet's engagement.

Throughout this period, other aspects of the migration issue – such as remittances, returnees and further institutionalization – appeared on government agendas. According to Argan (2009, 64), the issue of remittances became less important in these years. However, after the 1980 coup, the volume of remittance flows increased and played an essential role in reducing Turkey's trade deficit (Abadan-Unat 2017, 109). Meanwhile, in Germany, immigration became a critical issue in the 1980s. During the election campaigns, Helmut Kohl explained his policy towards migrants as 'integration, restriction, and promotion of repatriation' (Avcı 2006, 69). After he became chancellor, the *Bundestag* passed a law to encourage migrants to return in 1983. Under that law, Germany offered 10,500 DM to migrants plus 1,500 DM for each of their children to return, in addition to paying out all of their savings in retirement funds

(Ertürk 2012, 50). Return migration exceeded the migration from Turkey to Germany for the first time in its history, and the numbers of returnees peaked after the promotion of the 'Return Law' in 1983 (Pusch and Splitt 2013, 134). Around 250,000 workers returned to Turkey, but, in contrast to Turkey's expectations at the beginning of the migration, only a small number of these workers were employed in industry (Abadan-Unat 2017, 99). Therefore, one could claim that the aim of industrializing Turkey via return migration failed.

However, most Turkish migrants chose to stay instead of taking the money and returning to the homeland. Such a tendency was a strong indication of the permanency of the Turkish migrant community in Germany. Therefore, Turkey tried to adopt more long-term strategies. For instance, an amendment was passed by parliament on the voting rights of citizens living in foreign countries in 1987. This bill allowed emigrants to vote in ballots at airports and on the border for a period starting before the actual election day (Şahin-Mencütek and Erdoğan 2016, 178). As mentioned earlier, almost all of the political parties had contacts and proxies in the migrant community and voting rights for these emigrants had been desired for a long time. This amendment could be seen as an indication that Turkey was changing its understanding of the temporariness of migration.

Other essential debates and amendments took place in the 1990s. A prominent issue was Turkish migrants' citizenship in their host countries; some countries, such as Germany, did not allow dual citizenship, which is what Turkish migrants preferred. As a result, Turkish migrants were under-represented, especially in German politics. In a parliamentary session on the Citizenship Law in 1995, MP Abdullah Gül (later prime minister and president) stated:

Today, the number of Turks in European countries are more than the populations of some countries, and it could be considered a huge potential ... [However] Our citizens living in European countries are not eager to change their citizenship to their host countries' because of their nationalist emotions. We appreciate that, but our people could become a political force in their host countries like the diasporas of Armenia and Israel. Hence, we should promote their naturalization and ease the process.
(Document (46) 1995, 90–1)

In this speech, he suggested the promotion of naturalization among Turkish migrants in order to gain political rights and representation in their host countries. Following similar statements in the session, regulations were accepted on migrants giving up Turkish citizenship and being provided with a 'Pembe Kart' (Pink Card) which allowed them to enjoy many rights, except voting (Mügge 2012a, 7). The date coincided with a period when attacks by extremist groups in Germany against Turkish immigrants were intensifying. Eight Turkish citizens were

killed in incidents in Mölln and Solingen in the 1990s, leading Turkey to realize that Turkish citizens could be adequately protected only if they became German citizens. As a result, Turkey abandoned its policy of discouraging Turkish naturalization in Germany, while intensifying its efforts to keep the links alive (Bauböck 2010, 301). Therefore, as Aksel (2014, 204) points out, the introduction of the Pink Card could be said to have been linked to rising xenophobia in Europe.

In addition to these regulations, there were some efforts to form individual offices to deal with the problems of Turkish migrants. Although most of the ministries had already established departments to deal with such issues, all of the political parties in parliament agreed on the need to establish a specific ministry that would strengthen the identity of migrants and their links to the homeland (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 109–10). They did not manage to establish a state department, but the Consultancy Board for Citizens Living Abroad was founded in 1998 to provide public relations-related services to emigrants (Bilgili and Siegel 2013, 287). This was evidence of Turkey's interest in enhancing the links between citizens abroad and the homeland. However, the board became dormant after meeting in 2000 (Mügge 2012b, 27). Even though it was a failure in terms of its aims and results considered, this did not indicate a decrease in Turkey's interest in the issue. Active engagement and the most effective policies followed in the 2000s, a period that is assessed in the next section.

To sum up, the 1980s brought three new dynamics to Turkish migration. The first involved political refugees escaping to European countries, while the state tried to control and block their activities using different measures. The second was the gap in the religious market in the migrant community, which offered an optimal ground for 'undesirable' religious groups. This resulted in the first and most significant example of transnational institutionalization: namely, DİTİB being founded in Germany and in other European host countries. Turkey's aim was to strengthen its emigrants' identity and sense of belonging to their homeland while controlling and regulating the sacred space against 'radical' groups. Lastly, Turkey understood that most emigrants would not return to the homeland. This change caused a shift from temporary problem-solving policies to long-term ones and institutionalization. Also, as can be seen in parliamentary statements, the political potential of emigrants was realized in this period. It could be argued that the approach of 'be a good citizen to your home countries but stay connected to us' was born in the late 1990s (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 109).

All left- and right-wing political movements agreed about strengthening links via institutionalization and active policies during the 1990s. While these debates were taking place

in Turkey, Østergaard-Nielsen, who was preparing her thesis on the issue in the late 1990s, indicated that she '[did] not know how Turkey will achieve those objectives' (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 110). When one considers the deep-rooted economic, political and social problems with which Turkey was struggling during these years, this could be seen as a logical inference. Hence, most of the suggested projects could not be carried out or failed after a short time, as seen from the Consultancy Board for Citizens Living Abroad case.

In conclusion, in the 1980s, Turkey changed its policies from managing migration and remittances to controlling and regulating its migrant community. By the 1990s, its plans focused more on identity and belonging. Therefore, it could be said that, in the 1980s and to some extent in the 1990s, Turkey showed properties of *the closed state* and *the expatriate state*, according to Ragazzi's (2014) conceptualization. Institutionalization and a broader approach to the issue are signs of *the global nation state* that is observable in the 2000s. A more detailed analysis of the transnational links between Turkey and migrant organizations are provided in the respective chapters. However, Turkey's control and surveillance efforts and institutional initiatives to consolidate its relations with migrants could be seen as indications of stronger transnational links, at least compared with the previous period.

3.2.3. Active engagement phase: rapid institutionalization and intensive policies

The 2000s saw the beginning of significant changes in Turkey's history. At the start of the new century, Turkey faced a massive economic crisis under the rule of a coalition government. The economic failure of the government brought about an early election in November 2002, when a newly founded centre-right party, JDP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or Justice and Development Party), came to power with a large majority in parliament; this was considered a significant change after the short-lived coalition governments of the 1990s. As expected, Turkey underwent substantial reparations and transformations during the following years. The focus of the first JDP government was mostly shaped by the country's financial situation and by the need to solve the problems of the lengthy journey towards EU membership. According to World Bank data, Turkey's GDP increased from US\$235 billion to US\$675 billion during JDP's first term in office.¹⁶ JDP also made reforms to Turkey's legislature, bureaucracy and human rights to achieve the goal of EU membership during these years. The period between 2002 and 2005 is known as the 'Golden Era of Europeanization' because of these efforts (Aydın-Düzgit and Kaliber 2016).

¹⁶ See World Bank data on Turkey: <https://data.worldbank.org/country/turkey>, accessed 20 March 2020.

In this period, JDP governments tried to undertake many initiatives in both domestic and foreign affairs relating to Turkey's chronic problems: these included the issue of minorities, Cyprus, and relations with neighbouring countries and historically neglected areas (such as Africa and South America). Debates about such policies are beyond the scope of this research project, but it is undeniable that active policies relating to foreign relations and economic growth in particular had an effect on policies towards Turkey's emigrants. According to Özcan (2017), in parallel with economic growth, JDP governments tried to diversify the tools of foreign policy. This diversification consisted of active participation in international forums and in humanitarian and developmental aid projects, and investments in soft power and cultural diplomacy. As a result of this active engagement policy, there was an increased interest in Turkey's emigrants. Moreover, such new initiatives brought new institutions into the field, such as TİKA (Turkish Cooperation and Development Agency or Türk İşbirliği ve Kalkınma Ajansı), YTB (Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities or Yurtdışı Türkler ve Akraba Topluluklar Başkanlığı) and YEE (Yunus Emre Institute or Yunus Emre Enstitüsü). As a result of such rapid institutionalization and the growing interest in almost all aspects of emigrant-related issues, during this phase Turkey can be categorized as a *global nation state* according to Ragazzi's (2014) concept.

Going back to the 2002 elections, the issue of emigrants received almost no attention from political parties; the election manifestos of the two main parties that passed the 10 per cent threshold barely mentioned policies relating to Turks abroad. For example, there was only one sentence about Turks abroad at the very end of the election manifesto booklet of JDP.¹⁷ On the other hand, RPP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi or Republican People's Party), the main opposition party since the 2002 elections, paid more attention to the issue, with a single page pointing out some of the general problems of citizens living abroad.¹⁸ However, after dealing with the problems relating to the economy and foreign affairs, the JDP government started to show more interest in the topic, as can be seen in its election manifesto for the June 2015 elections. In this booklet, policies concerning emigrants and Turks abroad covered six pages and there was information on what had been done so far and on plans for the future.¹⁹

The first catalyst for this interest was Turkey's journey towards EU membership. As noted above, the early years of JDP rule were known as the 'Golden Era of Europeanization',

¹⁷ JDP election manifesto (in Turkish), November 2002, p. 93: see <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/dosya/59647>.

¹⁸ RPP election manifesto (in Turkish), November 2002, p. 94: see <https://www.chp.org.tr/Public/0/Folder/52608.pdf>.

¹⁹ JDP election manifesto (in Turkish), June 2015, pp. 344–50: see <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/dosya/59647>.

which reflects the government's motivation for membership. Şahin–Mencütek and Başer (2018) divide the JDP period in two – before and after 2007 – based on the effects of these policies on emigrant-related issues. JDP tried to use emigrants in Europe as ‘our representatives in the EU’ and asked them to be good ambassadors for Turkey. In parallel, in a parliamentary session regarding the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ali Aydın Dumanoglu (from JDP) stated:

Today, as we have passed through the EU doors, Turkey should inform its emigrants as soon as possible about its goals and use them in the global international relations arena. Surely, this will contribute to Turkey's EU membership process. (Document (49) 2004, 411)

However, the slowing of the Europeanization process as a result of negotiations stalling on problematic issues such as Cyprus caused a shift in this policy. This shift was in line with Turkey's assertive foreign policy approach and the diversification of its foreign policy tools (Özcan 2017). Thus, after 2007, JDP governments promoted policies towards its emigrants that were designed to improve Turkey's image as a regional or even a potential global power (Şahin–Mencütek and Başer 2018, 88). The role of emigrants in this context was similar to their earlier position as representatives, but with a few new side-lines such as lobbying for Turkey and increasing its soft power.

Even though they were barely mentioned in the election manifesto, emigrants appeared on the agenda in the first months of the government in 2003. In response to a question about government policies relating to citizens abroad, Minister of Foreign Affairs Yaşar Yakış summarized their approach:

First of all, our citizens in countries abroad are not our workers any more. They have settled there, and most of them have initiated businesses ... As a government policy, we have never seen our citizens abroad as financial resources, and we are dedicated to keeping this approach. Our aim in organizing our people abroad is solving the integration-related problems and making their integration easier for their host communities. (Document (47) 2003, 11)

This speech showed that the new government differed from previous ones on two points. First, the permanency of emigrants in foreign countries was accepted. Second, policies focusing on remittances were changed to an approach that concentrated on emigrants' problems in the host countries, such as integration.

One of the first initiatives was the formation of an investigation commission under parliament to look into the issues and needs of citizens living in foreign countries. Two MPs

who had lived in the immigrant community, Ali Rıza Gülçiçek (RPP) and Eyüp Fatsa (JDP), made speeches about the importance of the commission and the main problems faced by Turkish citizens living abroad (Document (48) 2003, 467–78). The issues could be summarized under four general headings: education, dual citizenship, voting rights and problems with the embassy and consulates. Among the problems of the community, they complained about the high numbers of Turkish pupils who had been sent to *Sonderschules* (Special Schools) because of language deficiencies, a problem often mentioned in the literature (see, for example, Argun 2003, 47; Avcı 2006, 76). Issues relating to dual citizenship mainly concerned the slowness of the bureaucratic process and the problems of the Pink Card, which was considered useless and impractical by emigrants living in countries where there was no dual citizenship. On the other hand, according to these speeches, being able to vote from abroad came to the fore as a long-desired wish among emigrants. Lastly, the attitude of the staff of Turkish consulates and embassies towards Turkish citizens living abroad was mentioned as a problematic issue. Even though this has barely been discussed in earlier literature (Başer 2014), many emigrants felt this way. In a similar vein, Mustafa Yeneroğlu, a leading figure among the Turkish migrant community in Germany and an MP from JDP, expressed the situation as follows:

In the 1990s, we knew that our day would be ruined if we needed to go to the consulate to handle some procedures, because the staff treated us in a rude and pejorative way. (Interview 1, 2018)

Following these comments and speeches, the founding of a parliamentary commission investigating the problems of citizens living abroad was approved. The commission prepared a detailed report that covered almost every aspect of the issue and offered solutions and improvements for every relevant institution. The most crucial suggestion was the founding of a new institution with expertise in such matters that would be responsible for coordinating all the related state agencies and services (Document (51) 2003, 146–47). In line with these suggestions, Turkey adopted a new approach to the issue that covered various aspects, such as social/religious policies, economic policies, bureaucratic improvements, and institutional and symbolic policies (Mencütek and Baser 2018, 93 - 94).

These policies naturally brought about some reforms and improvements both in the life of Turkish citizens living abroad and in Turkey's institutions in the transnational field. First of all, Turkey tried to expand its former citizens' rights and remove their obligations. The primary issue here was dual citizenship, which was commonly mentioned as a problem by the migrant community. Some countries, including Germany and Austria, did not accept dual citizenship, and so naturalization rates were quite low in these countries. Turks were not willing to lose their

Turkish passports because of Turkish regulations that would mean they would lose property and inheritance rights if they forfeited their citizenship (Kaya 2012, 165). The Pink Card had been introduced by the previous government to solve this problem but was regarded as impractical by emigrants because they were still regarded as ‘foreigners’ and lost some of their rights. Therefore, amendments made in 2009 led to it being replaced by the Blue Card and the associated rights expanded.²⁰ According to these amendments, if a Turkish citizen changed their citizenship to that of a host country, the Turkish authorities would grant them a Blue Card (*Mavi Kart*) that provided them with almost the same rights as a Turkish citizen; the exceptions were voting rights and the right to work in the public sector.²¹

Several other improvements regarding the rights of emigrants were made during the JDP government period: for example, making consular services easier and faster to access and removing or reducing obligations such as military service. In addition, Turkey made amendments to expand emigrants’ political rights relating to voting: voting from foreign countries via consulates and specific voting centres became possible. Citizens living abroad were able to participate in Turkish elections from their host countries for the first time in the 2014 presidential elections, and voter turnouts steadily increased over subsequent elections.²² During the election campaigns, parties and their representatives held meetings in Turkish immigrant communities in the host countries. Even though there were already many examples of these practices, especially in the USA (Guarnizo, Portes, and Haller 2003, 1214), such campaigning by Turkish politicians, especially those from JDP, was not always welcomed by European host countries. The reasoning behind the timing of this amendment to electoral law is a debated issue, mostly because of its political results. Zeynep Şahin–Mencütek and M. Murat Erdoğan (2016, 183) mention three factors behind the approval of voting from abroad: the lobbying of the diaspora, the possible advantage for the governing party (JDP), and the presence of active diaspora engagement policies. The first factor relates to groups in the diaspora that were close to the governing party; the article claims that their lobbying on the issue was a push factor for the amendments. Second, political support was expected from citizens abroad who tended to be close to the ideology of JDP; the party has received visible support from abroad in every election since the amendments were made, with a higher voting share than it achieves in

²⁰ See the website of MFA of Turkey (in Turkish): <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/mavi-kart-eski-pembe-kart-uygulamasi-tr.mfa>, accessed 27 March 2018.

²¹ Turkish Citizenship Law, No. 5901, 29 May 2009, Article 28 (in Turkish): see <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5901.pdf>, accessed: 27 March 2018.

²² See the website of Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities (in Turkish): see <https://www.ytb.gov.tr/yurtdisi-vatandaslar/turkiyedeki-secimlere-katilim>, accessed: 28 March 2018.

Turkey. Lastly, the changing approach to emigrants during this period also had an effect on this issue. Thus, these changes in voting from abroad could be considered part of ‘diaspora integration’ policies, as set out in Gamlen’s (2008, 845) concept.

In the sphere of cultural and symbolic policies, YEE was founded and TİKA reactivated, possibly in the frame of the diversification of foreign policy tools. While the latter was established in 1992 to provide economic and technical support to newly established Turkic republics in Central Asia after the end of the Cold War,²³ the former began in 2009 in order to promote Turkish culture and language – areas that TİKA was not specialized in (Güzel 2016, 357). YEE could be seen as an equivalent of the Goethe Institute of Germany or the British Council of the United Kingdom. Like these institutions, YEE organizes events to promote Turkish culture, history and the arts abroad as well as teaching Turkish language and supporting Turkology faculties by sending academics and research materials (Özkan 2015, 40). Today, YEE has more than 50 cultural centres around the world, some in countries with Turkish migrant communities. One can thus assume that these institutions can indirectly strengthen the Turkish identity of emigrants via language courses and cultural events. In an interview, Hasan Kocabıyık, a YEE director, stated:

When the duties of YEE drawn up by the law are considered, we do not have a direct mission like enforcing the ties between Turkey and its diaspora. This mission is mostly the responsibility of YTB. However, there is a massive demand from Turks living in countries like Germany, where the new generations do not speak their mother tongue. They were asking YEE to do something about this issue. Therefore, we cannot stay unresponsive because they lobby against us to the politicians here. Thus, we are doing some indirect projects like producing language learning-materials and educating language instructors who are recruited locally because of problems about sending teachers from Turkey. (Interview 3, 2018)

Therefore, it could be argued that the direct involvement of YEE in transnational politics is limited to language instruction with younger generations who barely speak Turkish. However, it could also be claimed that their cultural activities in countries with significant Turkish populations can indirectly enforce the transnational links of Turkish immigrants. According to Gowricharn (2009, 1635), a dominant home-state culture could reinforce the cross-border connections of immigrants by providing cultural products.

In addition to YEE’s indirect involvement, TİKA has been revitalized since JDP came to power in 2002. According to JDP’s 2015 election manifesto, TİKA carried out more than

²³ See TİKA’s website: http://www.tika.gov.tr/en/page/history_of_tika-8526, accessed 30 December 2016.

13,000 projects in 2002–14, six times more than the number of projects in 1992–2002.²⁴ In addition, TİKA has a significant role in Turkey's provision of humanitarian aid. In 2016, Turkey became the second most significant contributor to humanitarian issues after the USA and was the most generous country according to its aid/GNI index.²⁵ This makes TİKA an essential component in Turkey's soft power and puts it in a similar position to YEE in the context of diaspora policies. In addition to the activities of these institutions, Turkish embassies and consulates have organized events on important days as part of Turkey's symbolic policies: for example, they held meetings in Germany in 2011 and then in other host countries to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Turkish labour migration. Referring back to Gamlen's (2008, 845) definitions and concept, these efforts could be categorized under the heading of 'diaspora-building' policies.

Another area in which JDP governments made reforms in the context of active engagement policies was institutionalization. In line with the suggestions of the parliamentary report, YTB was established in 2010 as a specific institution under the Office of the Prime Minister. According to Aksel (2014), YTB has emerged as an expanded version of the Advisory Committee for Turkish Citizens Living Abroad and the High Committee for Turkish Citizens Living Abroad, which was founded under the Office of the Prime Minister in 1998. The founding aims of the institution focus on three points: Turks abroad and their problems, the coordination and relations between Turkey and its migrant communities, and issues relating to international students in Turkey.²⁶ According to YTB's budget, most of its expenditure goes on assisting international students because of the scholarships it provides.²⁷ Therefore, it could also be considered as an institution that contributes to the soft power of Turkey.

On the other hand, YTB aims to improve Turkish NGOs in emigrant communities through training and the funding of projects. This policy is a critical component of the strategy that aims to strengthen and mobilize the Turkish diaspora (Pusch and Splitt 2013, 145). Notably, projects such as 'capacity improving' seek to provide training about the host state's and the EU's regulations regarding NGOs and to create plans for them to apply for funding from the

²⁴ AKP election manifesto (in Turkish), June 2015, p. 347: see <https://www.akparti.org.tr/site/dosya/59647>.

²⁵ Global Humanitarian Aid Report 2017: see <http://devinit.org/post/global-humanitarian-assistance-2017/>, accessed 30 December 2017.

²⁶ Law about Organization and Duties of Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities, No. 5978, 24 March 2010: see <http://www.mevzuat.gov.tr/MevzuatMetin/1.5.5978.pdf>, accessed 29 March 2018.

²⁷ Budget of Presidency for Turks Abroad and Relative Communities, Reports of General Directorate of Public Accounts (in Turkish): see <https://www.muhasibat.gov.tr/content/merkezi-yonetim-kesin-hesaplari>, accessed 25 March 2018.

EU and host state agencies, thereby increasing the capacity of emigrants' NGOs to use already available resources rather than financing their activities directly.

As has been seen, YTB was organized to coordinate services that were previously provided by other institutions with a focus on the diaspora, as suggested in the 2003 report. In parallel with this, in an interview, an expert from YTB described the situation as follows:

We could say that there is not an exact limit for the services that we are providing. In general, we are trying to respond to all of the needs and demands in the field ... Actually, YTB is not an implementing agency, as seen from the Blue Card issue. We just detect the necessities and do research about the improvements, and then coordinate the implementing institutions during the process. (Interview 4, 2018)

Therefore, YTB works as a research and coordination agency, bringing together various aspects of diaspora engagement policies. More importantly, it is the first specific and multi-faceted organization in Turkish history concerned with the diaspora (Siegel and Bilgili 2011, 11). In a parliamentary speech, MP Mustafa Yeneroğlu noted the importance of the YTB:

With the foundation of YTB, Turkey's approach to the issue has transformed into an era of progressive diaspora policies, and has progressed a lot since then ... YTB is one of the primary institutions that need an increase in their budget and human capital. YTB is an agency that invests in people. Thus, it is opening Turkey's way into international politics. (Document (50) 2017, 169–73)

As seen by this speech, YTB is regarded as an institution that has marked a change in Turkey's policies. Also, the discourse of diaspora policies could imply a rupture with Turkey's traditional immigrant policies.

In addition to the improvements made during the JDP government era, there were debates in parliament about establishing a foreign election district with its own MPs, something that had been demanded by voters around the world. Interestingly, the proposal came from RPP (the main opposition party), and MP Tekin Bingöl suggested a change that would create such a district that would send ten MPs to Ankara in 2015 and again in 2017.²⁸ Although these proposals were retracted, the issue is still being debated. Also, these suggestions show that not only JDP but also RPP is interested in diaspora engagement policies.

²⁸ Legislative Proposal – 1: Legislative Year 26/1, No. 2/538, 17 December 2015; Legislative Proposal – 2: Legislative Year 26/3, No. 2/2009, 12 December 2017: see https://www.tbmm.gov.tr/develop/owa/kanun_teklifi_s_sd.uye_ilk_imza_sahibi_teklifleri?p_donem=26&p_sicil=6381, accessed: 20 October 2019

To sum up, there was a significant transformation in Turkey's policies regarding the diaspora in the JDP era, with changes in almost every aspect of Turkey's engagement strategy. According to Gamlen's (Gamlen 2008, 844–50) concept of diaspora integration and diaspora-building policies, Turkey can be defined as a country that has applied both policies and has taken action in almost all subdimensions of the concepts. The policy change and new approach witnessed in this period could be considered as a transition to a '*global nation state*' in line with Ragazzi's (2014) systematization, which defines such countries as those that encourage lobbying while expanding rights and extracting obligations. However, the question of *why* such a policy change took place still needs to be answered.

Turkey faced severe financial depressions at the beginning of the 2000s, and JDP came to power in a climate where expectations of the government were mostly related to economic issues. JDP therefore focused on these issues in its domestic policy, while the primary aim of its foreign policy was EU membership. As a result of successful strategies and reforms, in addition to political stability, Turkey's GDP soared. Economic growth could thus be among the main reasons behind such a policy change: for instance, during these years, while Turkey's interest in its emigrants grew, remittance flows to the country plummeted.²⁹ There could be many reasons for this, but the increase in Turkey's GDP could be linked to a decline in the need for remittances. As a result, Turkey started to channel its interest to other aspects of diaspora policies, such as lobbying, instead of trying to attract more remittances via specific projects or in return for increased rights. For example, Zeynep Şahin–Mencütek and M. Murat Erdoğan (2016, 176) eliminate the economic interests of Turkey as a motive for giving voting rights to its citizens abroad because remittances constitute a very small proportion of its GDP today. Also, this shift in the economy enabled Turkey to fund activities and new institutions supporting its policies – primarily, the establishment of YTB and YEE (and its branches in over 40 countries) and Turkey's generous humanitarian aid budget. In an interview, Ünal Koyuncu from the Turkish Migration Foundation in Ankara said:

Turkey is just doing what it stated in its constitution about providing services to its citizens regardless of place. Thus, it should have carried out these initiatives long ago, but it could not because of political and economic problems. Politically, Turkey was a rough country that had internal disputes and fights. Besides, it was an economically bankrupted country. How can you look

²⁹ Profile of Migration and Remittances: Turkey, 2012, World Bank: see <http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/498191467993167937/Profile-of-migration-and-remittances-Turkey>, accessed 1 April 2018.

outside when you have such problems inside your country? Naturally, when you have economic means, then you can spare some money for such policies. (Interview 2, 2018)

However, finance was not the only factor behind the political activism of the JDP period: JDP's political stance and foreign policy should also be considered to understand the motivation for the changes. First, there were clear foreign policy goals such as the diversification of tools and arguments. This approach brought about policies on soft power and a focus on lobbying, both of which are underestimated in the history of Turkey. As a result, soft power agencies such as TİKA and YEE were either established or became active in this period. The Turkish political elite became aware of the effects of lobbying after several countries took decisions against Turkey's version of the Armenian issue as a result of the Armenian diaspora's efforts. After almost every decision, there were discussions in newspapers and on television about how relevant and useful the diaspora could be in these issues and about Turkey's failure with regard to such policies.³⁰ This experience also channelled Turkey's interest in the lobbying potential of its diaspora, which was significant but relatively ineffective. This problematic issue could also be seen as a factor that affected Turkey's change in policy. Hints of this attitude could be seen in the education and training projects that aimed to improve migrant NGOs' capacities and to create a more powerful diaspora that could make its voice heard when required both for lobbying and in meeting the diaspora's own needs.

On the other hand, the policy change could be linked to the political understanding and gains of the JDP. According to Mencütek and Başer (2018, 96–99), JDP governments shifted their diaspora policy because of two reasons: they saw lobbying as an asset in international relations and considered the diaspora as a source in terms of political support in elections. According to this claim, the political views of JDP and the majority of emigrants' were similar, and this paved the way for such policy changes. Besides, most of the Turkish migrant community, especially the older generations, were trying to live an isolated and traditional Turkish life in their host states, which meant that they were interested in Turkish politics and Turkey's relations with the West. Emphasizing this point, Mustafa Yeneroğlu stated in an interview:

When I was a teenager, there were matches [boxing or other sports] between a Turkish and a German that we were so eager to watch. Even in these matches, we were always seeing them as an

³⁰ See Yılmaz, Tülay. 2009. 'Türkiye'nin Kullanamadığı Stratejik Güç: Lobicilik [The Strategic Power that Turkey Cannot Use: Lobbying]', Turkish Asian Centre for Strategic Research: http://www.tasam.org/tr-TR/Icerik/1109/turkiyenin_kullanamadigi_stratejik_guc_lobicilik, accessed 3 April 2018.

opportunity to show that we are powerful too, or at least Turkey is not inferior to Germany.

(Interview 1, 2018)

This perspective of Turkish people in Germany and other countries makes Turkey's engagement with the diaspora easier. As in the case of Sweden, issues relating to Turkey can mobilize Turks in their host countries (Başer 2014). Therefore, these engagement efforts should not be seen as the fundamental basis for mobilization or lobbying activities but as a complementary tool that answers a need in the field. In addition, relations between Turkey and Germany or other host states could be a similar issue in the context of political mobilization and the success of engagement policies. The relationship between Turkey and Germany has always been regarded as asymmetrical, with Germany making the decisions. This has been apparent especially with issues linked to Turkish migrants, such as dual citizenship, but Turkey tried to use its economic growth and its new tools to challenge this understanding during the JDP period (Şahin-Mencütek and Erdoğan 2016). Therefore, Turkey's growing power and interest in the diaspora were welcomed by Turkish emigrants.

In the literature, the most criticized issue relating to Turkey's policies is its selective approach to the diaspora (Mügge 2012b). As in the 1980s, when its approach was based on the surveillance and control of 'undesirable' groups, the Turkish state has always viewed groups of people as 'good' or 'bad' according to the mindset of the ruling elite. For instance, during the 1990s the state was ultra-secular and did not welcome religious groups (Şenay 2012), or in an earlier period it was nationalist and 'hunted communists', as seen in the previous chapters. As a result, Turkey is criticized because it supports specific groups, while other groups – such as secularists, Alevites or Kurds – protest against this support (Şahin-Mencütek and Başer 2018). This issue was put to interviewees during the research, but the claims of selective support were rejected by the representatives of official institutions.

To conclude, Turkey increased its efforts with regard to diaspora engagement policies after JDP came to power. While economic resources allowed these policies and institutionalization to be financed, there were three motives behind such policies. First, in parallel with the diversification of its foreign policy tools, Turkey tried to operationalize its diaspora in accordance with its foreign policy aims. Second, JDP enjoyed political gains due to the similarity between its own political stance and that of the majority of emigrants. And third, the readiness of the migrant community was an essential factor in the development and success of these policies. Migrants' interest in and sensitivity to Turkish politics and Turkish issues in their host states constituted a further factor in this process. Eventually, Turkey became a *'global*

nation state', using both diaspora engagement and diaspora-building policies in relation to its emigrants.

3.3. Turkish Migrant Community and Its Organizations in Germany

Turkish migration cannot be separated from the community and NGOs it created because of their role in its history. Today, there are Turkish organizations involved in almost every aspect of daily life in Germany. On their journey to this point, these organizations have improved a lot, especially in the junctures that also affected Turkey's and Germany's policies. Even though the literature does not offer a detailed categorization of the phases of civil society involvement since the start of migration, some parallels can be drawn with the policy phases discussed above. Therefore, in the history of Turkish migrant organizations, there are three possible stages: an early phase with practical solutions and the appearance of traditional religious groups; a transition phase with political organizations founded mostly by refugees; and finally, a transnationalization and localization phase in which the situation of these organizations became more complicated.

In the early phase of migration, the primary determinants were the temporary status of migration and the desire to work to earn more money. Therefore, the early organizations reflected this situation. When immigrants started to settle and bring their families to the host country, the organizations changed too. The first organizations were established to provide essential services that workers could not find in Germany, mainly due to religious or cultural differences and a lack of knowledge about the system, rights and language (Başkurt 2009, 83). Thus, there were small places of worship where workers could come together, and workers' associations to defend the rights of Turkish guest workers. Both of these types of organization could be seen as practical solutions to problems in the field. The primary cause of these practical and short-term solutions was probably the feeling of temporariness in the host state. Thus, they did not try to form permanent associations and some deep-rooted Turkish religious groups did not start to organize in this early period. However, with the start of settlements and the arrival of families, the first religious organizations began to be established. The first mosque associations were linked to traditional orders such as Süleymancılar and Milli Görüş (Nationalist View). The arrival of these groups in the community in the 1970s was not coincidental: conservative workers feared losing their children to foreign cultures and the religions of the host states (Sirseldoudi 2012). In addition to providing religious services, these organizations became a meeting place for migrants where they could share their problems and look for help.

The second phase started with the increase in the number of political refugee in the second half of the 1970s. These refugee flows brought educated people with organizational skills to the immigrant community. Most of these people preferred Germany as their relatives were already there and it was comparatively easy to obtain refugee status. Thus, almost every group in the Turkish political spectrum, from extreme right to extreme left, have been present in Germany since this time (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004), even though some of them have vanished from the political arena in Turkey.

Finally, there was a transnationalization and localization phase, although it is difficult to pinpoint an exact date when it began. As a result of technological advances, people and ideas became more mobile and were able to move quickly across borders in recent decades. Also, in the Turkish immigrants' case, the dream of returning to the home country faded, especially among younger generations. This meant that more local problems were raised on the community's agenda, and so organizations started to debate issues such as recognition, rights and education rather than supporting their parent organizations in Turkey. Consequently, immigrant organizations tended to become institutions dealing with both transnational and local issues. This transformation, together with some other factors, paved the way for today's umbrella organizations introducing themselves as the representatives of different groups in the community. In the following sections, these different groups are introduced to provide a context for the two case studies.

3.3.1. Religious organizations in the Turkish migrant community

Turkish migrants have established places for prayer ever since their arrival in Germany. While the first places were just small areas for worship, after the 1970s their uses changed, and they grew in size. As mentioned before, the arrival of children and women paved the way for this shift. Also, most immigrants came from rural areas that were more traditional and pious than urban areas in the western parts of Turkey. These people maintained their beliefs in Germany and wanted to pass them on to their children. Mosques also became a place where they met friends who shared the same problems and cultural values and they functioned as a second home rather than merely a place for prayer (Sirseldoudi 2012).

The early movements that started to establish mosques and associations were mainly Milli Görüş and Süleymancılar, which dominated the religious market in Turkish migrant society until the 1980s (Doomernik 1995). Also, Gülenists (also known as Gülençiler, Cemaat and FETÖ) have been active in the community with a religious basis but with almost no religious institutions; they were among the last to arrive in the 1990s (Pashayan 2003). In

addition to these Islamic groups, there is also DİTİB, which was founded in 1984 and has become the most prominent mosque organization in Germany, and the Alevis, who also constitute a considerable group in the immigrant community.

3.3.1.1. Islamic Community Milli Görüş

As mentioned above, Milli Görüş was one of the first movements to expand into the Turkish migrant community in Germany. The movement was founded by Necmettin Erbakan, an engineer with a degree from a German university and a renowned politician. He was the prime minister of Turkey between 1995 and 1997 as the leader of Welfare Party (Refah Partisi), one of several parties of the movement that has been banned during its history (Yurdakul and Yükleven 2009, 219). Therefore, Milli Görüş could be regarded as a religious-political movement and it is organized around party centres and associations across Turkey. In Germany, however, their structure is based on mosque associations, like many other similar movements. The organization started to establish its mosques in the early 1970s and formed its current umbrella organization, Islamic Community Milli Görüş (Islamische Gemeinschaft Milli Görüş or IGMG), in 1995. Today, it runs more than 300 mosques in Germany, which makes it the second largest religious organization in the Turkish community after DİTİB.³¹ Its headquarters are located near Cologne, like other prominent Turkish organizations, and it also runs hundreds of mosques in other European countries (Yükleven 2010, 446).

As a mosque association, IGMG provides services similar to other organizations in the field, including a place for daily prayers, funeral services and pilgrimage tours to Mecca. In addition, the umbrella organization represents its members on important issues such as the headscarf debates in Germany (Yurdakul and Yükleven 2009). Compared with DİTİB's orthodox Turkish Islam, IGMG is more conservative with regard to religion in daily life, and, as in Turkey, it had clashes with secularists living in the migrant community in Germany in the 1980s (Andrews 2011, 516). As a result, it has been considered a threat to constitutional order in Germany and therefore, following 9/11, it came under observation by the Agency for Protection of the Constitution (*Das Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*) and was accused of having extremist connections (Ewing 2003, 410–15). Unsurprisingly, this led to a decrease in the number of members and a reduction in its activities, but it is still one of the most effective Turkish religious organizations in Germany.

³¹ See IGMG's official website (in Turkish): <https://www.igmg.org/tr/hakkimizda/>, accessed 9 April 2018.

As noted, the movement emerged initially as both a political and a religious organization. Therefore, IGMG in Germany has supported Necmettin Erbakan's parties in Turkish politics by creating an extensive network of mosque associations. It has helped its main body by sending money and even by taking people by plane to Turkey to vote for its parties in the 1990s (Kaya 2012, 158). However, Yükleven (2010) argues that the organization increasingly distanced itself from politics and started to seek a path as a European Islamic organization in the 1990s when most of its members became permanent settlers. This claim can be verified by looking at the votes for the Saadet Partisi (Felicity Party), the main party of the movement, in the 1 December 2015 elections. According to the results, the Milli Görüş party gained only 0.51 per cent of the votes in Germany.³² This can be explained in two ways: first, it could be a result of its efforts to distancing itself from Turkish politics; and second, it could be argued that its supporters voted for JDP, the party of Erdoğan, who had previously been a leading figure in the movement.

This history of IGMG also shows the transnational character of the organization. It has strong cross-border links to the Milli Görüş movement in Turkey and has raised funds and political support for the movement's parties during its history. However, these transnational connections caused problems for IGMG, as seen from the accusations after 9/11. In addition, it was in competition with DİTİB in the last few decades due to Turkey's negative view of the organization, but a change in these relations can also be seen. Especially on specific issues relating to Muslims in Germany, the organization has been cooperating with DİTİB and other pioneering organizations in recent years.

3.3.1.2. Association of Islamic Culture Centres

Another religious group that is active in the Turkish migrant community in Germany is Süleymancılar and their umbrella organization the Association of Islamic Culture Centres (Verband der Islamischen Kulturzentren or VIKZ). The group could be classified as a more traditional and Sufism-based community: it is more traditional than DİTİB and less political than Milli Görüş. It was founded by the late Ottoman Sufi and scholar Süleyman Hilmi Tunahan, who was also a preacher. After the foundation of the Turkish Republic and the introduction of the secular education system by the new regime, he started his religious and educational doctrine and created a movement based on this traditional understanding (Çağlar 2016). The movement began its religious activities in the early 1970s and in 1973

³² For more detail, see '1 October 2015 Election Results' (in Turkish): <https://sonuc.ysk.gov.tr/module/ssps.jsf>, accessed 9 April 2018.

Süleymancılar established VIKZ as the first Turkish Islamic organization in Germany, with its headquarters in Cologne (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 55). Today, it has a web of around 300 mosque associations.³³ Even though VIKZ is not as visible as Milli Görüş or Diyanet, it is one of the most prominent Turkish religious organizations in Germany. The organizational structure of the group, based on mosque associations, is similar to that of the other groups in Germany. However, its links to the deep-rooted Sufi order Naqshbandiyah affect its teachings and some rituals (Argun 2003, 162). VIKZ provides almost the same services as similar organizations, but families tend to prefer it for the traditional Qur'an recitation courses it conducts (Yükleyen 2012, 78). It finances its associations and services through monthly dues and donations collected from its members, which is how most other organizations fund themselves.

Like other Turkish faith-based groups in Germany, VIKZ also has transnational links with its central body in Turkey and with the order's other associations around the world. Even though the exact relationships are not detailed in the literature, it is expected that it also supports the order elsewhere financially. In addition, like other Turkish political groups, Süleymancılar supported a specific political party in Turkey; the movement has never declared this openly, but its support of political parties is known. Also, some leading figures of the movement have repeatedly become candidates in centre-right parties since the beginning of multiparty elections in Turkey. The most prominent party they supported was Süleyman Demirel's Justice Party (Adalet Partisi) in the 1970s. When Demirel became president of the republic in 1993, the movement maintained its support for the successor party: the True Path Party (Doğru Yol Partisi or DYP) (Çağlar 2016). Even though the movement continued its support of DYP and its successor, the Democrat Party (DP), these two parties vanished from the political arena, losing their place to Erdoğan's JDP. VIKZ still exists as a religious movement in both Turkey and Germany, but it does not have a significant effect on elections.

As is the case for all the groups in the religious market both in Turkey and in Germany, there are contestations between Süleymancılar and the others. Even more than Milli Görüş, Süleymancılar have a particular understanding of Islam and do not follow Diyanet's secular Turkish version of Islam. While this could be seen as something they have in common with Milli Görüş, they do not work together. For instance, Süleymancılar were pioneers in founding Council of Muslims (Muslimrat), an official umbrella organization representing all Muslims, and Milli Görüş joined to the organization in the initial phase. However, VIKZ left the

³³ See VIKZ website (in German): <http://www.vikz.de/index.php/ueber-uns.html>.

organization because it did not want to be in the same organization with Milli Görüş, which was a political party-oriented group (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 56). As can be seen, transnational links and transnationally inherited characteristics could be decisive factors behind the failure of unification efforts in the broader community.

3.3.1.3. The Gülenist Organization

The third group explored is Gülençiler (Gülenist Organization or GO). The movement was established by M. Fethullah Gülen, who was a preacher in a small mosque in İzmir in the 1960s. He started to spread his ideas via public sermons and his preaching, and people began to gather around him. His following reached an incredible size in the 2000s in both the number of members and financial resources. For instance, the movement had more than 1,000 schools in 130 countries in 2012 (Weller & Yilmaz, 2011, p. xxi). In the literature, this organization is probably the most compelling example as well as the most debated and scrutinized among Islamic organizations and movements. However, there are different views about it, ranging from it being an armed terrorist group to a new Islamic community. This significant variation in perceptions of the organization is caused by its activities, which range from education and inter-religious dialogue to a military coup attempt in July 2016 where its leader was accused of masterminding the action. We will return to this later, but this part of the section provides details on the Gülenist Organization in Germany, which has been known in the past as Fethullahçılar, Gülençiler, Cemaat (The Religious Society), the Parallel State (in Turkey), and lastly Fethullahçı Terör Örgütü (FETÖ or the Terrorist Organization of Fethullahçis).

GO has some unique features as a religious movement compared with other Islamic groups. First of all, it has not organized around mosques or religious associations. Instead, the movement was organized as a web of education-focused institutions including private schools, private universities, dormitories and preparatory courses around the globe. Furthermore, it owned a massive media and finance network in Turkey in addition to establishments in the education sector, which made it the most influential and extensive movement in the country's history (Kirdis 2016, 250). Yurdakul and Yükleven (2011) claim that Gülen's ideas about education are the reason why the GO favours this type of institutionalization rather than mosques or Qur'anic schools. According to them, Gülen reinterpreted the *zakat* (giving 2.5 per cent of all income as a compulsory form of worship for wealthy Muslims) and advocated the view that spending *zakat* for educational purposes is also an act of worship. In that way, he was able to collect donations from people and built an empire for his followers. In the end, the group became not only an educational giant but also a significant player in many other sectors,

including the media, where it owned newspapers, television stations and magazines (Document (4) 2008, 5-7). All of these initiatives were financed via local groups that came together on a regular basis to pray and to collect money to devote to such services (Ebaugh 2010, 111–12). As a result of the hierarchically loose organizational structure of the group, it was not possible to discover the real owner of assets funded by the organization. However, everyone knew whether educational or financial institutions were loyal to the group.

On the other hand, the group claimed to distance itself from everyday politics and tried to show that it was above party politics. However, in reality, it was not possible for such a large organization to stay away from politics. However, unlike other groups, GO did not show unwavering support for one political faction; in fact, it was entirely pragmatic and helped many political parties, ranging from radical nationalist ideologies to centre-left parties, as long as the parties allowed the religious, educational and financial activities of the group (Kirdis 2016, 258; Yavuz 2013, 199). As a result of such a realistic view of politics, GO became a powerful organization via its political contacts. Notably, it has become a ‘power network’ that enables its members to rise in the hierarchy, get positions in prominent public cadres, and make profits in the private sector (Yavuz 2013, 91).

The effects of these strategies became visible in Turkey after 2008 when large-scale investigations started against secular cadres of the state and the Turkish Armed Forces in particular. Many high-ranking generals and individuals were sentenced to life imprisonment by the cadres close to the organization. However, these people were released from prison in 2014 when sentences were overturned when it was revealed that evidence had been fabricated by police chiefs and prosecutors loyal to the GO (Tee 2016, 163–68). The enmity between GO and the state hit a peak on 15 July 2016 with the failed coup attempt, which killed 248 people and injured more than 2,000. GO was behind the coup attempt, according to evidence including the capture of high-ranking GO affiliates who organized and executed the attempt on military bases and using military vehicles on the night of 15 July (Çalışkan 2018, 6–7). This coup attempt united almost all groups in Turkey against the organization, and Turkey intensified its efforts to block GO’s activities both inside and outside the country. The failed coup attempt is still under investigation, and several court cases are being held around the country. In addition, a vast number of people were investigated, suspended from public services and sent to prison after the attempt (for details, see Document (10) 2018). Such moves by Turkey were criticized by Germany and led to crises when the impact of these actions spread to the immigrant community.

When it comes to its position in Germany, GO is not as visibly organized as the other Turkish religious groups mentioned in this section. Even though GO is religious, its members in Germany have tended to set up three types of establishment instead of mosques. The first are learning centres that offer after-school courses (the first was established in Stuttgart in 1995). The second type are intercultural dialogue associations that organize cross-cultural exchanges and promote religious dialogue. And the last category is entrepreneurial organizations of Turkish businesspeople who financially support the movement (Pashayan 2003). Although GO began its activities in Germany much later than the other groups, it has a considerable web of learning centres and private schools. According to Demir (2011), Gülen-inspired associations run more than 100 learning centres and three private high schools in Germany. Also, in contrast to the other Islamic organizations, which are members of umbrella bodies, Gülenist establishments are loosely structured and there is no single parent organization or federation. Therefore, it is difficult to estimate the size of their groups or the number of members, or to detect the links between them (Document (8) 2008, 15). However, when the educational level of supporters, media outlets and links to different business associations are considered, it could be said that GO is one of the most influential groups in the Turkish community in Germany. Also, their emphasis on secular education and discourses such as ‘religious dialogue’ and ‘seeing Western civilization not as an enemy’ makes Gülenists naturally more favourable for European societies compared with other religious and fundamentalist organizations (Tetik 2012). Therefore, GO had more active interactions with the host community compared with other religious organizations in the diaspora.

Lastly, like other migrant groups in the migrant community, GO has transnational links to its main organization both in Turkey and around the globe. Even though this cross-border relationship has no visible evidence due to the loose organizational structure, it clearly exists. Also, these links became even less visible after the failed coup attempt in 2016 because of the pressure applied by Turkey and the migrant society itself. As mentioned, today almost every group in Turkey has problems with GO and people are avoiding anything that could link them to the group. As a result of such an atmosphere, GO closed down its newspaper, *Zaman*, in Germany. In addition, some of its private schools announced that they were bankrupt and closed because of Turkish migrants’ reluctance to send their children to them.³⁴ Also, several members

³⁴ ‘Almanya’da FETÖ’ye ait lise iflas etti [High School Belonging to GO Bankrupted]’, *Hürriyet*, 4 April 2018: <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/gundem/almanyada-fetoye-ait-lise-iflas-etti-kapisina-bu-ilani-asti-40794706>, accessed 12 April 2018.

of the organization escaped to Germany and asked for asylum status. This issue has become one of the most significant problems between Turkey and Germany in the last few years.

3.3.2. Political movements in Turkish migrant community

The Turkish community in Germany is a miniature version of the population of Turkey in many respects, including politics. It is even possible to find in Germany a branch or association linked to a small political party that is not yet known in Turkey. The founding of political organizations accelerated after the military coup of 1980, when members of many Turkish political movements fled to Germany as refugees and established organizations, especially left-wing groups, in the migrant community. Argun (2003, 41) claims that approximately 80 per cent of more than 2,000 Turkish NGOs in Germany have a political orientation. Naturally, it is beyond the scope of this study to discuss them all, but the major ones are summarized below under three political groups in Germany: right-wing, left-wing and Kurdish.

3.3.2.1. Left-wing Turkish political organizations in Germany

The Turkey originated left-wing groups in Germany range from orthodox communist and Maoist groups to more centre-left organizations related to the social democratic parties in Turkey. Most of these leftist groups were founded in Germany after the military coups of 1971 and 1980, when they were prohibited in Turkey (Mügge 2010). Some of the far-left movements represented in Germany, such as DHKP-C (Devrimci Halk Kurtuluş Partisi – Cephesi or Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party/Front) and MLKP (Marxist-Leninist Komünist Parti or Marxist-Leninist Communist Party) were recognized as terrorist organizations in Turkey (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 49–50). These movements are still active and organize public events in Germany.

In addition, there are groups that focus on workers’ rights that were also established in the Turkish community. One of these is the Federation of Democratic Workers’ Associations (Demokratik İşçi Dernekleri Federasyonu or DİDF); this was founded by Turkish Revolutionary Communist Party (Türkiye Devrimci Komünist Partisi or TDKP) members who escaped from Turkey to Germany where they sought refugee status. Today, although DİDF is still active in Germany, it could be argued that their ideology and discourses are closer to those of the Kurdish movements.³⁵ In parallel, Yurdakul (2009, 49) claims that the rise of the PKK

³⁵ This claim is based on news and statements on the official website of the organization (in Turkish and German): see <http://www.didf.de/tr/>, accessed 10 June 2020.

and the Kurdish Nationalist Movement marked a decline in Turkish leftist organizations in Germany in the mid-1990s. As a result, many of these organizations vanished or merged with other organizations.

Most of these leftist organizations are very small and they have almost no effect on general elections in Turkey. The main centre-left parties such as RPP tend to get votes from secular, social democrats and Alevi members of the Turkish population living in Germany. RPP's vote share was around 15 per cent in the 2015 elections, which made it the third largest party in the Turkish community after HDP. Like other groups, these political organizations also have transnational links to their leading organizations in Turkey. As well as having close connections, they can also vote for them as a result of amendments on voting from abroad in operation since the 2014 elections. Leftist groups transnational links to organizations such as DHKP-C or MLKP, which are active terrorist groups in Turkey, makes them suspicious in the eyes of the Turkish state and most of the Turkish migrant community.

3.3.2.2. Right-Wing Turkish Political Organizations in Germany

There are not as many active right-wing movements as left-wing groups in the Turkish community in Germany. In my opinion, there are three reasons for this. First, right-wing movements have rarely been considered terrorist organizations by the state in Turkey and so there have been fewer refugees. Milli Görüş could be an exception, as it came under pressure in Turkey for a while in the 1990s, but this pressure was not based on an assumption that it was a terrorist organization. Second, there is no right-wing party with a traditional stance and ideology in Turkey – except for the nationalists and, to some extent, the Islamists. Therefore, they could not organize abroad and sustain this structure for an extended period. Lastly, voting was quite difficult for Turks living abroad, and foreign branches of political parties were prohibited until 1995 by the Turkish constitution. Thus, it could be argued that deeply divided, weak and legitimate right-wing parties were not concerned with organizing for the small number of votes of Turks in Europe. However, as already noted, there were some exceptions to this, including the nationalists.

The Turkish nationalist movement was one of the first political organizations to be founded in Germany and was established through local associations to preserve the 'Turkishness' of the migrant community. These organizations followed the ideology of NMP (Nationalist Movement Party or Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi) and were transnationally linked to it (Østergaard-Nielsen 2001). They came under the aegis of the Federation of European Democratic Idealist Turkish Associations (ADÜTDF), also known as the Turkish Federation

(Argun 2003, 141), which had an ideology of ‘Turkish-Islamic synthesis’, with the emphasis placed on Turkishness. A group separated from the ADÜTDF in 1987 and established a more religious version of the organization, named ATIB (Avrupa Türk İslam Birliği) (Şen 2008). According to the 2015 Turkish general election results, NMP obtained around 8 per cent of the vote in Germany, 4–5 per cent lower than its share in Turkey.

Another right-wing political organization that was established recently in Germany is the Union of European Turkish Democrats (UETD). This group was founded in 2005 in Cologne, with an opening ceremony attended by both Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder. There is no academic article or study on this organization, so most of what is known about it comes from newspapers and UETD’s website and brochures. Newspapers with different political spins have made mixed comments about the group but there are two things all sides agree on: it is a lobby group and was founded with the encouragement of JDP. It seems that UETD was established to carry out lobbying activities in European countries and that the organization has a similar ideological stance to JDP, something that is easy to observe in all its activities. Today, UETD has branches in almost every major European country where Turks are living as migrants. It hosts open public meetings and mobilizes immigrants in protests, for example against the 15 July 2016 failed coup attempt. Also, it organizes JDP’s meetings abroad, including one in Cologne at which Erdoğan gave a speech to almost 20,000 Turkish migrants in 2014. In addition, its leaders appear on television debates and defend JDP’s policies. Despite this, UETD defines itself as an NGO and denies being a kind of proxy for JDP.

In addition to UETD, there are two Turkish political movements that are trying to be political parties in Germany: BIG Party (Bündnis für Innovation and Gerechtigkeit or Union for Innovation and Justice) and ADD (Allianz Deutschen Demokraten or Alliance of German Democrats). Based on observation and conversations with some of their members, these two parties’ views are close to those of UETD – there are even debates in Turkish society about why they do not merge. Due to this divided scene and the small number of voters in Germany with a Turkish background, these political parties will not be successful in the short term. Furthermore, naturalization rates are still lower among conservatives than in other sections of the community, and right-wing Turkish groups seem more interested in politics in Turkey than in Germany.

3.3.2.3. Kurdish political organizations in Germany

Migration from Turkey to Germany was not limited to Turks: many Kurds also migrated from the south-eastern parts of Turkey to Germany for economic reasons. Rising tensions between Kurdish nationalists and the Turkish army increased insecurity in the region, which also boosted migration to Germany (Sirkeci 2006; Sirkeci, Cohen, Jeffrey, and Yazgan 2012). As a consequence of this migration, it is estimated that approximately 500,000 people of Kurdish origin live in Germany today (Lyon and Uçarer 2001). The main pro-Kurdish and leftist party in Turkey, HDP (People's Democracy Party or Halkların Demokrasi Partisi), got 17 per cent of the votes (83,227) in the 2015 Turkish general elections in Germany, which made it the second largest party among Turkish migrants.

Kurdish separatists found an optimal place for their political beliefs, which had come under pressure in Turkey. Therefore, they organized in European countries and managed to establish more stable umbrella organizations than the Turkish ones in there. The oldest and most well-known Kurdish group is PKK (Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan or Kurdistan Workers' Party), which is recognized as a terrorist organization by many states and international organizations. This group started mobilizing migrant workers in Western Europe in 1978 and set up a Europe Bureau to organize fundraising activities and to recruit guerrillas in 1981 (Argun 2003, 123). Its activities mostly relate to the clashes between the Turkish Armed Forces and PKK in Turkey, and it has mobilized Kurdish immigrants to protest against the Turkish state many times since its foundation.

Meanwhile, Turkey has criticized Germany and other European countries because of PKK's activities and those of related organizations and has pressured Germany to ban these groups' activities. In 1993, Germany banned ERNK (Eniya Rizgariya Netwa Kurdistan or National Liberation Front of Kurdistan), PKK's organization in Germany, and announced that it is a terrorist organization (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 61). However, a change in the balance in the war between PKK and the Turkish Armed Forces changed PKK's strategy in Germany. After the ban, tensions between PKK and Germany calmed down and the decrease in violence led to Germany declaring that PKK was not a terrorist but a criminal organization (Lyon and Uçarer 2001). Debates surrounding the group continue and are still causing tension between countries.

There are two leading Kurdish organizations that are still active in Germany: KOMKAR (Union of Organizations From Kurdistan in Germany) and YEKKOM (Federation of Kurdish Associations in Germany). KOMKAR is the oldest Kurdish organization; it began its activities

in the 1970s and was officially founded in 1979.³⁶ This organization has 11 branches in European countries and organizes discussions and activities relating to the whole of Kurdistan, not just Turkey (Mügge 2010, 115). This is probably what differentiates it from YEKKOM, which was founded following the banning of PKK in 1994 (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 61). Also, there are claims that YEKKOM is an umbrella organization that brings together pro-PKK Kurdish associations (Lyon and Uçarer 2001). YEKKOM changed its name to NAVDEM (German Democratic Kurdish Society Centre) in 2014 and recently organized a *Newroz* celebration in Frankfurt at which Salih Muslim, the leader of the Syrian Kurdish movement, gave a speech.³⁷ This incident increased the level of tension that already existed in Turkey–Germany relations.

Like other similar organizations, such as DHKP-C and MLKP, these Kurdish organizations' cross-border links to PKK puts them in a difficult position. While their activities intensify the tension between Turks and Kurds in the diaspora, they could face a severe response from the German state, as happened in the past when they were declared terrorist organizations. Also, these transnational links have put these organizations in a vulnerable position linked to the relations between Turkey and Germany. Turkey has been trying to block their activities via diplomatic pressure, and the groups' activities largely depend on the political consequences of the relationship between the two countries.

3.4. Conclusion

In sum, this chapter has set out the context surrounding the issue, first with a brief historical background to Turkish migration. Details of the dynamics and transformations of the Turkish migration process are essential in helping us understand the different recognition efforts, experiences and conflicts among the groups, in addition to their position vis-à-vis Turkey, and allow the research to make a more accurate analysis in the following chapters. The chapter has also provided a broad mapping of Turkey's approach to the issue of Turkish migration to Germany. This is crucial because it reveals the changes in Turkey's policy, enabling us to draw parallels between the nature of transnational links and these changes. Consequently, these details help this research analyse the connection between the recognition process and the nature of cross-border connections. Lastly, the brief introduction to the leading

³⁶ See KOMKAR's website (in German): <http://www.komkar.org/wer-wir-sind/selbstdarstellung/>, accessed 8 April 2018.

³⁷ See 'Frankfurt'ta Nevruz kutlaması [Newroz Celebration in Frankfurt am Main]': <http://www.dw.com/tr/frankfurtta-nevruz-kutlamas%C4%B1/a-38009239>, accessed 9 April 2018.

transnational organizations active within the Turkish community in Germany has provided a wider perspective on the universe in which the research takes place. Naturally, the groups mentioned here are not the only ones in the field – today, there are possibly thousands of Turkish organizations in Germany – but this chapter has included the comparatively large and active organizations in the religious and political fields. Chapter 4 follows a similar path for the German side of the story, with details of Germany’s migration policy and its attitudes towards Turkish migration and immigrants’ religious organizations.

4. THE CONTEXT WITH A FOCUS ON GERMANY

According to its dictionary definition, migration is a phenomenon that includes at least two parties as sending and receiving countries. While Chapter 3 looked at the story as it relates to the sending state, this chapter aims to deal with issues in the receiving country, including giving a brief background of migration to Germany and exploring its policies towards migrants. Also, the issue of recognition, a crucial component in this project, will be detailed as part of the context.

4.1. Germany and Turkish migration

Germany's history with labour migration started to be significant at the beginning of the twentieth century with the arrival of Polish and Italian workers who worked on East Prussian estates and in heavy industry (Odmalm 2005, 27). In line with this, Mueller (2006, 419) claims that this migrant population reached 1.2 million in the 1920s, which could be accepted as a sign of considerable immigrant community. In contrast to these claims, both West and East Germany were predominantly homogeneous countries in 1950 when they were founded (Hess and Green 2016, 316), but the immigrant population of Germany (particularly what was West Germany) has grown since then. According to the Federal Statistical Office,³⁸ Germany hosted 10.6 million immigrants in 2017. In addition, there were 18.6 million inhabitants with a migrant background in 2016, which constitutes 22 per cent of the total population. Even though the endless discussions about whether Germany is a country of immigration or not is still going on, in 2016 Germany's immigrant population was the third largest in the world, after the USA and Saudi Arabia.³⁹

This section briefly explores the story of Turkish migration to Germany since the 1950s and Germany's approaches to Turkish migrants. Although it is not possible to establish specific periods, as in the previous chapter, there are some examples of categorization in the literature. For instance, one study divides this history into three periods based on the following incidents: the end of recruitment in 1973; the unification of the two Germanys in 1990; and the federal elections of 1998 (Hess and Green 2016, 317–18).). Although it is possible to draw some parallels between these periods and Germany's policies towards Turkish migration, there were also other incidents that affected Turkish migrants. Therefore, a history of these will be given

³⁸ Federal Statistical Office of Germany: see <https://www.destatis.de/EN/Homepage.html>, accessed 1 June 2018.

³⁹ World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook 2016, p. 1: see <https://siteresources.worldbank.org/INTPROSPECTS/Resources/334934-1199807908806/4549025-1450455807487/Factbookpart1.pdf>.

to understand the dynamics of this process, which also had an impact on the recognition of religious organizations. In the following paragraphs, Germany's changing approach and its effects on the Turkish community and organizations will be examined in order to provide a better understanding of the evolution of these organizations from temporary groups to more complex mosque associations, of the improvements to their structures, and of their claims for recognition.

4.1.1. The economy focused phase

After World War Two, Germany once again faced the results of defeat just 25 years after the first Great War. The war's devastating effects were visible throughout the country, the economy had collapsed, and industrial capacity had been ravaged. In addition, German unity was once again disrupted by the establishment of different occupation districts by the winners of the war. Moreover, there were various plans to deindustrialize Germany in order to tame the country. While the USA was planning to turn Germany into an agricultural country, the Soviet Union was dismantling whole factories and moving them to its territories by train as war damage compensation (Erb 2003, 22; Roberts 2003, 395). However, just ten years later, Germany's economy was even better than it had been pre-war. This period, when Germany was rebuilt from the ruins of the war, is generally called the 'economic miracle'. Starting from the early 1950s, unemployment rates swiftly decreased, dropping to 7 per cent in 1954 and 5 per cent in 1955 (Comte 2018, 43). As a result, labour shortages became a critical issue for the country. Germany therefore instigated 'guest worker' recruitment agreements to overcome the problem and to sustain the economic miracle (Çelik 2015, 1647); ten years after the start of migration, there was an event in Cologne to celebrate the one-millionth guest worker arriving in Germany. In his speech at the event, the Federal Minister for Labour Affairs emphasized three points about the guest worker programmes: that they had kept prices stable, maintained production growth and ensured Germany's reputation in world markets (Joppke 1996, 466).

Germany started its labour recruitment programme later than other pioneering European countries. However, it was therefore able to draw on these countries' experiences as well as its own during the early 1900s and the Nazi war economy in order to create the most efficient labour recruitment tool (Castles 1986, 768). Following Germany's agreement with Italy in 1955, labour recruitment agreements were made with Spain (1960), Greece (1960, renewed in 1962), Turkey (1961, revised in 1964), Portugal (1964) and Yugoslavia (1968). In addition to these, labour agreements were also made with Morocco (1963), Tunisia (1965) and Korea (1970, for miners only and for comparatively small numbers) (Avcı 2006).

In Germany, workers recruited between 1955 and 1973 were expected to return to their homeland and family unification was not foreseen (Castles 1995, 295). The basic idea behind the programme was to rotate workers after they had been in Germany for a set period. Possibly because of these features, they were called ‘guest workers’ (*Gastarbeiter*) to emphasize their temporary status in Germany (Ünver 2012, 188). Furthermore, they were expected to accept lower wages, more punishing conditions, and limited access to social welfare systems – as summarized by Castles (2006, 742): ‘Germany, like other European states, was trying to import labour but not people.’

The most significant proportion of guest workers came from Turkey; this has sometimes been linked to the historical relations between the two nations (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 100). Also, sending more workers to Germany was a way of reducing the high unemployment numbers in Turkey (Comte 2018, 104), while economic conditions in Turkey led people to seek a better life and income in European countries. Therefore, the population of Turkish workers in Germany increased steadily while the guest worker recruitment agreements were in force, and Turkish nationals became the second biggest ethnic group in Germany.

4.1.2. ‘Guest workers’ who should have returned home

The economic miracle of these years ended in the early 1970s with the Oil Crisis, which caused a significant decrease in demand and in turn affected the labour force requirements of industry. This stagnation in the economy forced governments to take measures against unemployment, as some firms started to lay off personnel (Odmalm 2005, 29), and one of the first measures taken by receiving countries was the halting of immigration flows from non-European Community countries. Germany took this decision on 23 November 1973, while France and the Netherlands continued to recruit labour for a couple of months into 1974 (Akgündüz 1993, 4). The initial – and visible – cause behind this decision was a desire to reduce unemployment levels and create positions for young German nationals entering the labour market (Rist 1978, 86). This indicates that the decision was not only triggered by the economy but was also a political consideration, and so many employers were initially opposed to it (Castles 1985, 523). Moreover, (Castles 2006, 743) claims that the realization that European industries were becoming dependent on imported labour and were recruiting ‘temporary workers’ for permanent positions, thereby ignoring the ‘rotation’ principle, were among the real reasons behind the end of formal recruitment.

As a result of these factors, the decision was made to halt official migration to Germany. This dramatically influenced the number of Turkish migrants, and finally 1975 marked the end

of official labour migration (İçduygu 2012, 14). Although employed workers were allowed to stay in Germany, they were advised to return (Abadan-Unat 2017, 89). Germany expected the surplus immigrants would return to their home countries following this policy change (Castles 1995, 295), an expectation that affected the attitude of both government and the public towards migrants. In other words, at the same time as the government was trying to reduce immigrant numbers, discrimination and xenophobia were increasing in society.

In the first phase after the end of formal labour recruitment, many workers were expected to return to their homelands without any additional encouragement. Unemployment rates were climbing, and immigrants were affected by this more than others. The renewal of employment contracts and residence permits was made more difficult for immigrants and new conditions made immigrant workers employment less favourable for employers (Rist 1978, 83). As a result, a decrease was observed in the number of foreign workers for a short time until 1977 (Castles 1985, 519). Also, opposition parties suggested measures such as offering money to migrants to encourage them to return, thereby opening up positions for German nationals. However, most Turkish workers decided to stay rather than return to Turkey. The decision to remain permanently or for an extended period led to a new influx of immigration via family reunions, and so the immigrant population grew instead of decreasing as planned (Yıldız 2015, 1181). The immigrant population peaked at 4.7 million in 1982 with the arrival of immigrants' dependants and due to children being born in Germany. According to Castles (1986, 769), this was an unplanned and unexpected situation which became a political issue that none of the major political parties were willing to face.

The SPD (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands or Social Democratic Party of Germany)–FDP (Freie Demokratische Partei or Free Democratic Party) coalition ruled Germany between 1969 and 1982 after a similar period of CDU (Christlich-Demokratische Union Deutschlands or Cristian Democtaric Union of Germany)–CSU (Christlich-Soziale Union in Bayern or Christian-Social Union in Bavaria) governments. Compared with the conservative CDU and CSU, SPD could be described as the party of the working class, and Turkish immigrants traditionally had close links to SPD and to other ideologically left-wing parties (Aktürk 2010, 68–69). However, even in these years, German decision makers did not recognize that the country's guest workers were now immigrants and that further steps were necessary in the context of integration. The main parties preferred to maintain the status quo and stuck to the 'Germany is not a country of immigration' discourse, which dominated debates on migration for an extended period (Aktürk 2011, 139–40; Brubaker 1992, 174; Castles 1985,

525). The primary concern of policymakers was to reduce the immigrant population, and so, in addition to the measures mentioned above, further obstacles to family reunions were put in place (Comte 2018, 172–73). In 1974, a new regulation stipulated that work permits would not be granted to dependants who arrived via family reunification after the key date of 1 December 1974. Child benefits were reduced for immigrants' children if they were living in the homeland with relatives (Castles 1985, 524). Moreover, a new decree was announced forbidding migrants from settling in specific areas of cities if the foreign population reached more than 12 per cent (Topal 2011, 800).

Although the regulations were expected to decrease family reunions and encourage migrants to return, the immigrant population continued to grow. According to Castles (2006, 743), the main reasons for deciding to settle in Germany were: changing expectations as a result of starting a family; worse economic recessions in their homeland; partial integration in the host country's welfare system; awareness of the legal protection available in liberal democracies thanks to the law against expulsion from the country; and, finally, the lobbying of the government by pro-immigrant groups. Also, they were eager to stay because, even though their earnings were low by the host country's standards, the money was enough to make them rich in Turkey (Katzenson 2016, 36). In addition, many regulations established in this period could not be maintained or properly executed during the Oil Crisis because of the decrease in population numbers and the economic needs of industry (Comte 2018, 131–36). However, the growing of the immigrant community and the insistence of policymakers on retaining the status quo in such policies have triggered many social problems in the future.

While the debates about decreasing the immigrant population continued, a new wave of migrants in the form of refugee flows started as a result of the turbulent atmosphere in Turkey. Therefore, reducing the immigrant population became a key issue for politicians to campaign on. At the beginning of the 1980s, the SPD–FDP coalition was losing power, which eventually resulted in the collapse of the alliance, and CDU–CSU and FDP formed a new coalition under the leadership of Helmut Kohl, who became chancellor in 1982. During his election campaign, Kohl emphasized three aims: integrating immigrants, stopping further migration and refugee flows, and promoting the return of immigrants (Abadan-Unat 2017, 98). Even though NGOs and public institutions protested about this emphasis, a law passed in 1983 that offered 10,500 DM plus 1,500 DM per child, as well as their total pension savings, to immigrants who decided to return (Abadan-Unat 2017, 99–102; Avcı 2006, 69). Some immigrants chose to return, but the numbers were small and fewer than expected (Aktürk 2011, 140). The population of Turkish

immigrants thus declined, but the decrease was relatively small and did not make much difference (Abadan-Unat 2017, 99–102).

Another significant development for immigrants in Germany was the Alien Act of 1990. In accordance with Kohl's aims, the Minister of the Interior formed a commission for migration policies; the commission first reported in 1983 and provided more than 80 recommendations, largely about tightening conditions for the renewal of residence permits and facilitating the deportation of immigrants who were unable to meet those conditions (Castles 1985, 529). Castles (1984, 49) heavily criticizes these reports and the policies of Helmut Kohl's government. According to him, their primary aim was to divide the immigrant population into those who were to be assimilated and those who would be sent back. Furthermore, Castles claims that most Turks were part of the second group, because CDU–CSU considered it impossible to assimilate or even integrate the Turkish community and regarded these migrants as a threat to the German nation. In this atmosphere, a draft version of the Alien Act was leaked in 1988 and caused heated discussions and protests, leading to the resignation of the Minister of the Interior in 1989, but an amendment was passed in 1990 and the Act came into force in early 1991, while the public was focused on unification (Avcı 2006, 69). The new Act abolished two main conditions for naturalization: the discretion of the state and cultural assimilation (Joppke 1999, 638). These changes created an upward trend in naturalization, but the debate about the amendments continued throughout the 1990s.

In parallel to these discussions and debates, discrimination and racism were also on the rise. In an early study on this issue, Castles and Kosack (1973, 98–116) provided a detailed mapping of restrictions and discrimination faced by foreign workers in European countries, ranging from rude jokes to ongoing discrimination in public places (for an extensive study of such jokes, see Koçak 2015). The arrival of immigrants' wives and children and then of political refugees throughout the 1980s only worsened the situation. In addition, as seen in the political discussions of the time, foreign migrants and especially Turks became the primary target of extremist movements. Castles (1984) gives a series of examples of this treatment of Turkish workers and discusses the rise of political movements such as the National Democracy Party of Germany (Nationaledemokratische Partei Deutschlands or NPD) and the German People's Union (Deutsche Volksunion or DVU).

While these acts against Turkish workers were strongly criticized and Germany's integration efforts were seen as inadequate in the publications of the time, Turkish official publications, such as the report by Keskin and Özar (1973) that was prepared by Turkey's

Ministry of Foreign Affairs, did not even mention them. Moreover, this report evaluated Germany's integration efforts as dangerous for Turkey's economic and diplomatic interests because they could lead Turkish immigrants to naturalization (Keskin and Özar 1973, 78). As discussed in Chapter 3, Turkey's interests were focused on the economy at this time, hence the country's approach to the issue. However, the discriminatory treatment of Turkish workers had increased over the following years and peaked during the 1990s; the neo-Nazi attacks in Mölln (1992) and Solingen. (1993) that killed eight Turkish citizens are still remembered as two of the most tragic events in the history of Turkish migration to Germany (Aksel 2014, 204; Bauböck 2010, 301). Also, because of the endless investigations and trials relating to these attacks, which still continue today, there is a widespread distrust of German institutions among Turkish immigrants. Although the trials of the neo-Nazi organization officially ended on 11 July 2018 and the main suspect was sentenced to life in prison, Turks and the Turkish media are not satisfied with the results, mainly because the organization's connections have not been clarified.

In the end, it became clear in this period that the guest workers who had been expected to return home were not going to go back; moreover, they brought their families too. The acceptance of this fact brought about a new series of policies, and these have also influenced the recognition claims of the community and the position of the state with regard to this area.

4.1.3. Acceptance of permanency: so what?

As stated at the start of this chapter, another decisive turn in Germany's policies towards migration occurred with the unification of the two Germanys in 1990. These years raised some new issues on the immigration agenda. First, there was increased movement of ethnic Germans from the former Eastern Bloc countries, mainly due to Germany's open-door and instant-citizenship policies; soon, this process became a problem (Hess and Green 2016, 318). Another issue was the flow of refugees from south-east Europe as a result of the Yugoslav Wars and due to Kurds escaping the conflict between the Turkish Armed Forces and the terrorist organization PKK. These incidents led to a deterioration in Germany's power to regulate migration (Angenendt 1999, 166) and changed the focus of Germany's policies from reducing the number of immigrants to reducing refugee flows to avoid uncontrolled migration.

In addition to these factors, a new political movement had been emerging in Germany since the 1980s: The Greens (Die Grünen). The party attracted attention because of its focus on environmental issues and immigrant-friendly policies, and it had a structure that allowed immigrants to take positions within the party without being naturalized. Hence, most well-

known Turkish political figures, such as Cem Özdemir, made their first appearance in this party (Aktürk 2010, 67). Together with SPD, which had been politically attractive to immigrants in Germany, the Greens managed to form a majority coalition in parliament after the 1998 federal elections. Small parties such as FDP and PDS (Democratic Socialism Party or Partei des Demokratischen Sozialismus, later the Left Party or Die Linke) were also in agreement with the Greens on some policies, including making naturalization easier for immigrants (Aktürk 2011, 141–42). Such a combination laid the foundation for changes in the attitude towards immigrants.

The citizenship issue was vital for Turkish migrants in Germany because the naturalization process was challenging under the old system, which emphasized descendants (*jus sanguinis*) rather than place of birth (*jus soli*). This older system was a product of the Wilhelmine era and had been inherited by Federal Germany (Brubaker 1992, 164; Joppke 1996, 465). Foreigners faced difficulties in getting German passports, and the children of immigrants were not automatically granted citizenship even if they were born and raised in Germany (Kaya 2012, 162). Also, dual citizenship was not allowed in Germany; this was one of the critical reasons behind Turks' lower naturalization rates. The amendments in 1999 brought some improvements to the requirements for naturalization, such as reducing the time of residence, abolishing the need to identify with German culture, formalizing the German-language condition, and requiring an oath of loyalty to the German *Grundgesetz*, all of which accelerated the naturalization of Turkish migrants in the following years (Avcı 2006, 60–79; Ersanilli and Koopmans 2010, 177). These changes brought about a new phase in the lengthy debates about dual citizenship, which was granted to the children of immigrants on the condition that they chose one citizenship until the age of 23 (Diehl and Blohm 2003, 141). The number of Turkish citizens who chose a German passport tripled in the following years (Kaya 2011, 506–7). However, the dual citizenship of immigrants is still a hot topic in German; the easing of the process to acquire dual citizenship has been opposed by far-right movements, and debates seem to intensify when their parties gain political power.

The 2000s could be seen as the most challenging period for Germany's policies towards Turkish migrants. First of all, the active diaspora policies of JDP governments and Turkey's relations with Germany and the EU became essential factors. Also, it became evident that Turkish immigrants were now a part of Germany, and this fact started to be accepted by policymakers. Although there are still debates on the integration process, plans for reducing the numbers of Turkish immigrants, for example, are no longer either contested or proposed.

Additionally, the transnationalization of migration through new technologies brought new dimensions to the issue that affected both sending and receiving countries. Last but not least, the 9/11 attacks carried out by Al-Qaeda in New York changed the political atmosphere and feelings about Islam in Germany, as in many other countries. Therefore, Islam and Muslims were faced with high levels of securitization and politicization, which had adverse effects on the Turkish immigrant society.

The first factor, the rule of JDP, had both positive and negative effects for Turkish migrants. While JDP tried to improve Turkey's relations with the West and the EU in its first years in power, its policies were welcomed by Germany. Turkey's policies towards immigrants who supported the integration and naturalization of Turkish citizens and its speeches on this issue were also welcomed. As an example of these good relations, when the UETD was founded – today a 'suspect' Turkish organization⁴⁰ – both the Turkish prime minister and the German chancellor attended the event to mark the occasion. However, this golden era did not last long and the relationship deteriorated over the years. In particular, crises were caused by Turkey's amendments to allow voting from abroad and related demands by receiving state governments with regard to election campaigns and rallies. These crises worsened when Europe became the destination of choice for GO members who were accused of being responsible for the incidents of 15 July 2016. The tense relations between the two countries were reflected within the Turkish community in Germany, and organizations with tense transnational links became a focus of criticism, as happened with DİTİB and the footballers Mesut Özil and İlkay Gündoğan.⁴¹

The 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center in New York affected perceptions of Muslims and immigrants throughout the world (Castles 2006, 747; Ebaugh 2010, 1) and West European governments realized that many terrorists were living in their countries. In line with other countries, Germany changed some of its migration policies due to security concerns and brought in rules to restrict immigration and political asylum (Fetzer and Soper 2003, 255). The effects of such policies affected not only the Turkish community in general, which was organized around mosques and Islamic organizations in Germany; the attitude of the government brought intense suspicion to bear on specific Islamic groups (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 771). Among these groups, IGMG came under the surveillance of the Verfassungsschutz

⁴⁰ News from DW stating that UETD was observed by the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution (*Verfassungsschutz*) (in Turkish), 24 July 2018: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/alman-i%C3%A7-istihbarat%C4%B1-uetdyi-izliyor/a-44810486>, accessed 15 September 2018.

⁴¹ News from German media on the issue (in German): see <http://www.spiegel.de/sport/fussball/mesut-oezil-und-ilkay-guendogan-treffen-recep-tayyip-erdogan-a-1207631.html>, accessed 15 June 2018.

(The Agency for Protecting the Constitution) and started to receive pressure, which led to a decrease in its membership (Ewing 2003, 408). Even though the effects of the 9/11 attacks receded over time, other terrorist groups continued to fuel fear and debates on the issue.

To sum up, the crucial developments in this period reflected Germany's stance on migration. Many of the immigrants who had been invited as 'guests' to sustain the growing economy decided to settle in Germany, but it took time for German policymakers to address this. Meanwhile, immigrants faced problems including discrimination, xenophobia and the threat of being sent back when Germany wanted to reduce the number of immigrants. This attitude changed in Germany with the SPD government and the rise of the Greens, while a limited liberalization of citizenship regimes and Turkey's incentive policies brought an upward trend in naturalization rates – a considerable proportion of Turkish citizens in Germany have been naturalized since the 1990s.

New generations adapted to German society thanks to their improved language skills and education levels (S. Şahin 2012, 10). The immigrant society of guest workers turned into a vast, complex, transnational community with members at every educational and economic level (Argun 2003; Kaya 2007). This new community established its own organizations to fill gaps in the host society; today, there are thousands of different Turkish migrant groups around Germany, ranging from sports clubs to radical political organizations. The largest, however, are religious organizations, hence the focus of this study. Their growing importance in the immigrant community and their permanency in their host country have laid the foundations for new issues such as recognition. Therefore, in the following section, we assess the recognition of migrants' religious organizations around the world.

4.2. Immigrants' Religions Organizations and the Receiving States

Immigration is a phenomenon that has affected societies, cultures and eventually state policies in various ways and over a very long time. These influences – on both sides – have become more visible in liberal nation states over the last decades. According to Castles (1995, 293), states' experiences of migration follow five standard stages: migrants changing from being temporary to permanent; socio-economic marginalization and ghetto settlements; the founding of parallel ethnic societies; increasing interactions between migrants and hosts; and, lastly, states adopting policies regarding ethnic and religious diversity in society. The order of these developments can follow different paths in different countries. However, the growing

visibility of immigrants' different identities in society inevitably makes recognition of these differences a contemporary and crucial issue (Koenig 2007, 911). But what is recognition?

The basic answer to that question comes from dictionaries. According to *The New Oxford American Dictionary*, recognition is 'acknowledgement of something's existence, validity, or legality'. This definition could be used for every group of people struggling for recognition – from national and religious minorities to gender-focused groups. In the same vein, when this definition is applied to this research, it could refer to the acknowledgement of migrants and their identities, the validity of their rights, or the legality of their actions and institutions. The implications of this definition start with the acceptance of immigrants' existence, followed by the provision of rights to different immigrant organizations, so recognition takes place in many dimensions depending on the immigrants involved.

Among these dimensions, this study focuses on a specific type of recognition: the recognition of immigrants' religious umbrella organizations in Germany. There are three reasons for this choice. First, after the acceptance of migrants as permanent members of German society, the most crucial debate regards the struggle of migrants to have their identity recognized, an identity that is often based on religion in the Turkish case. Second, the most well-organized institutions in the Turkish transnational space are the umbrella organizations of mosque networks, which are often the only place where ordinary Turkish migrants can come together. And third, religion is the only area where the German administrative system opens up space for immigrants' recognition. This research therefore looks at the recognition of religious migrant organizations in all its dimensions. The scales and forms of recognition in Germany will be detailed in the following sections, but first a brief mapping of the different systems around the world is beneficial in order to understand the issue.

The recognition of immigrant organizations is basically a legal issue and therefore depends on the legal structures of the host states. Castles (1995, 294) mentions four general approaches of host states towards their immigrant populations – total exclusion, differential exclusion, assimilation and pluralism – based mainly on the different integration policies of states and their attitudes towards immigrants. Similarly, Fuess (2007) classifies states according to their relationship with religion and religious organizations as *laïcité*, religion for all, official recognition and total disregard. According to him, this choice is determined by the state's relationship to the church and the proportion of religious people in the population. In a similar study about states' responses to the recognition of Islam in different European states, Marcel Maussen (2015, 100) classify countries according to their approaches to the issue. While the

first category comprises states that are trying to allow Muslims (immigrants) to reach an equal position by supporting them, the second tries to avoid a pro-Islam or pro-Christianity bias by strengthening secularism. The last type generally attempts to perpetuate the status quo by claiming that the existing structure is fair, and it is up to newcomers to adopt the state religion or integrate.

In all of these studies, states are categorized according to their attitudes towards Islam and Muslims, which almost equate with immigrants in most European countries. Therefore, a combination of these three studies is used to assess different recognition structures. Those that are mentioned most often in the literature are the British, Dutch, French and German models, which represent the religion for all, *laïcité* and official recognition approaches. The ‘total disregard’ category is excluded here because it implies that the structure has no recognition framework for religions other than the official one.

The first model is the one that operates in the UK, a country that is notably different from the states of continental Europe. The UK has one of the longest colonial histories in the world and is also the country where the Industrial Revolution started. The labour shortages that came with industrialization led to immigration mainly from former colonies and, later, member states of the British Commonwealth (Tatari and Shaykhutdinov 2014, 22). In addition, the imperial and colonial history of the UK makes it a ‘multicultural’ country whose identity is not based on a particular ethnicity and that is open to new ethnicities (Joppke 1996, 490). According to Fetzer and Soper’s extensive work *Muslims and the State in Britain, France, and Germany* every new group arriving in the UK has been recognized after a period of struggle for such rights, although they have not been given automatically throughout history (Fetzer and Soper 2004, 34).

Political actors in the UK usually try to reduce conflicts in society. The basic recognition claims of immigrant groups could lead to tensions, and so the UK’s approach to the recognition of migrants – and especially to Muslim immigrants – could be evaluated as being relatively liberal (Soper and Fetzer 2007, 934). Also, religion tends to be considered a civil issue and the state refrains from intervening in negotiations on religious policies (Koenig 2005, 224). Evidence of this liberal approach can be seen in the treatment of Muslim immigrants in the UK: for example, mosque building is not a controversial issue, as it is in other European countries, and related problems are solved under local jurisdiction (Soper and Fetzer 2007, 47). As a result, there are mosques with minarets in London, while these would be the subject of serious debate in other European countries.

In religious matters, the principles mentioned above are still valid, even though the UK has a state church governed by the monarch and represented in the upper house of parliament. As a result, the issue of the equal treatment of Islam is different here compared with states without official religions because the state openly privileges one religion over others. For other religions, the UK follows a 'religion for all' policy that provides wide-ranging rights to religious communities (Fuess 2007, 218–19). Moreover, on essential matters that are still highly debated in other countries, such as religious education, mosques, wearing the hijab, halal slaughter and pastoral care in prisons and hospitals, the UK tends to have reached a compromise (Soper and Fetzer 2007, 935; Vertovec 2002, 30–32). Another critical issue is religious organizations that are an essential part of immigrant life as well as providing a place for meeting and worshipping. In the UK, associations do not have to register with the public authorities, but those that do get tax benefits, which encourages most of them to register (Peach and Gale 2003, 477).

The second model is the French one; this was also examined in the German parliament's reports prepared for the planning process of the German Islam Conference (see, Document (5) 2006). France, like Turkey and the USA, is a country where a strict type of secularism, *laïcité*, has a very visible effect on politics (Maussen 2015, 86) – and on migration-related religious issues. Such a clear separation between the state and religion in France is largely due to historical conflicts between the state and the church in the nineteenth century (Koenig 2005, 224). This understanding of secularism can be problematic for immigrants, especially those with different religions.

As a country with a long history of colonization, especially in North Africa, with its large Muslim population, the most prominent immigrant groups are Muslim. In addition, although the background of colonization is similar to that in the UK, multiculturalism is not as visible in France. As a consequence, France tends to be against the accommodation of Muslim religious practices such as wearing headscarves in schools, funding Islamic schools and building mosques (Fetzer and Soper 2004, 63; Soper and Fetzer 2007, 935). Similarly, claims for religious recognition could be seen as a challenge to the *laïcité* of the state. And as France has been a significant target of terrorism in recent years, perspectives on immigrants, Islam and asylum seekers have changed negatively. Thus, debates about immigrants and Islam still cause tension in the contemporary politics of France.

In contrast to its strict policies on religions, France has one of the most liberal approaches in Europe in naturalization. The *jus soli* principle forms the basis of the French citizenship regime and facilitates naturalization for immigrants (Brubaker 1992, 176).

Residency requirements for naturalization are comparatively flexible, and France allows dual citizenship, which is a key issue for many migrants (Ersanilli and Koopmans 2010, 779). On the other hand, France has developed a system for recognition of immigrants' religious organizations that could be said to have influenced other countries. As in other countries in Europe, the Muslim community in France is fragmented, especially along ethnic lines, and so there are many organizations active in the religious market claiming to represent Muslims. In 2003, the Islamic Council of France was initiated by the Ministry of the Interior to unite all Muslims under one roof and create a point of contact for the state (Document (5) 2006, 3-4). This initiative could be regarded as one of the factors that influenced a similar process initiated by Germany's Ministry of the Interior to solve this issue. However, as a country representing the *laïcité* model, France does not have any official recognition system, and the state ignores all religions, which, in theory, provides equality (Fuess 2007, 217).

The third model is the Dutch *pillarization*, which is quite close to the 'religion for all' category. Similar to the two models mentioned above, this too has a historical and sociological background unique to the country. Historically, many religiously and ethnically different groups have lived together in the Netherlands. These groups are organized in a system whereby each group had its 'pillar' and they negotiate with each other because none of them are in the majority (Avcı 2006, 84; Doornik 1995, 54). Every religious or ideological group – Catholics, Protestants, socialists, etc. – has its own health, education and media institutions, which are supported financially by the state (Doornik 1995, 55). Also, the ruling elites of these institutions act as representatives for these groups in political negotiations, which helps the system restore the balance of power (Yükleyen 2010, 453). This historical structure creates opportunities for immigrant groups and their religious organizations in society. According to Fleischmann and Phalet (2011, 323), this system not only creates an optimal ground for Muslim immigrants to have their own institutions but also grants them formal equality with other groups.

As a result, one can argue that immigrants are well organized and in contact with the state via their representatives. However, there is no official recognition mechanism for immigrants' religious organizations; the state encourages communities to put forward a communication partner in each crisis, which leads to de facto recognition (Yükleyen 2010, 455). There are many partner bodies in the Netherlands, including the Consultative Council of Turks in the Netherlands (Inspraak Orgaan Turken or IOT), which provides a platform for all Turkish organizations to express their views on critical issues (Doornik 1995, 57). Furthermore, the

Netherlands has a relatively liberal citizenship regime and voting system at the individual level. Immigrants are allowed to vote in local elections after five years of residence, and they also have easier naturalization opportunities and the right to dual citizenship (Tol 2009, 139). There is also more tolerance of immigrants' differences, such as religious symbols (Maussen 2015, 86). These conditions provide an optimal basis for immigrants to organize and integrate into the host society. Therefore, it could be argued that the Netherlands has the most advanced accommodation structure for immigrants' claims among the countries examined here (Fleischmann and Phalet 2011, 323). Even though it does not provide official recognition for immigrants' religious organizations, their religious and political practices and rights are generally accommodated in this model.

In the different countries examined, the terms 'immigrants' and 'Muslims' are used almost interchangeably because they often refer to the same thing. All of these three countries have considerable Turkish immigrant communities and also share points in common that are rooted in their histories of colonization, due to which they have a comparatively long history with immigrants and related issues. Germany, however, has a relatively short history with immigrants and lacks an extensive colonial context. Thus, it has a unique system for the recognition of immigrants and their organizations, which is examined in the following section.

4.3. The case in Germany

Like the countries mentioned above, Germany also has its unique system relating to the issue of recognition of immigrants' religious organizations. In this section, the features of this unique system will be explored, with a focus on the following points. First, the legal aspect will be examined, including the evolution of laws, together with the historical background of the recognition of religious organizations in the country. Recognition structures in the German system will be discussed according to five stages, ranging from primary associations to religious organizations as corporations under public law. This classification will be based on the related literature, legal texts, reports of the German parliament on the issue, and first-hand information gathered via interviews.

4.3.1. Recognition of religious organizations in Germany

As has been seen, recognition of immigrants' religious organizations is closely related to the countries' history with religions. The state's relations with such organizations in today's Germany are based on a long history of church–state relations and experiences that shaped the recognition processes that are currently in use (Fuess 2007, 226). As the country where the

Reformation began, Germany witnessed clashes both between different Christian sects and between the state and the churches. At the end of the long period of religious wars in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the *cuius regio, eius religio* principle was accepted, meaning that whoever rules the land rules the religion (Moltmann 1986, 111). As a result, princes who ruled the German principalities also became heads of the churches in their territories. This was a turning point for church–state relations, because states started to rule the churches; in other words, the era of state churches in Germany began at this time.

This state church status continued with Prussia and the German Empire, but state–church relations were not the same as they had been in the seventeenth century. Secularism had been increasing, and church property began to be seized by states. As a result, churches that relied on these assets became impoverished and needed state assistance to maintain their services (Wells 1938, 39). This situation changed church–state relations because the funding of churches by the state was accompanied by state supervision. For instance, in Prussia, churches were categorized according to their relations with the state: free churches were those that were not supported or supervised by the state, while other churches were monitored by the state in return for privileges and financial support (Wells 1938, 37). On this basis, the Lutheran Church maintained its state church status, although other religious institutions also cooperated with the state (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 107).

The official state church ended with the Weimar Constitution in 1919, which drew the German Empire to a close and founded the first German democracy (Sydow 2013, 421). The termination of state church status was explicitly set out in Article 137 of the constitution.⁴² This article, which became part of German Basic Law without any alteration, led to necessary changes in religious organizations too. In the negotiations regarding amendments to these articles in the Weimar Constitution, two sides – right-wing clerics and left-wing atheists – opposed each other. While the former pushed for the continuation of the status quo and the privileges of recognized churches, the latter demanded French-style laicism and the separation of religious and state matters (Joppke and Torpey 2013, 50). The resulting compromise included the continuation of privileges to two established churches, which is what the conservatives wished for. However, a new part was added that granted status to other religious organizations (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 422). This status was the ‘corporation of public law’, which

⁴² Weimar Constitution, Article 137, 1919: available in English at http://www.zum.de/psm/weimar/weimar_vve.php#Third%20Chapter%20:%20Religion%20and%20Religious%20Communities, accessed 10 January 2020.

provides extra rights and a prestigious position to any religious organization meeting the criteria to apply for it.

The articles in the Weimar Constitution that related to religious organizations (Articles 136, 137, 138, 139 and 141) were incorporated in the German Basic Law.⁴³ While abolishing the state church and guaranteeing the state's neutrality in religious matters, these articles also maintained cooperation with religious institutions and opened up this status to other religious organizations in order to consolidate the neutrality of the state. According to these articles, the state can cooperate with qualified religious organizations in many fields, such as welfare, education and health, for the common good of society. In other words, instead of the formal separation of state and religious institutions, the German type or 'corporatist model' includes the work of religious communities in public spaces and cooperation between them and state institutions (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015a, 13).

Cooperation in this model is based on mutual advantage to the two parties and on the consent of religious communities. As a consequence of such collaboration, Catholic and Protestant churches in Germany own education, health and welfare organizations, including hospitals, nurseries and schools; this makes the two churches among the largest private employers in the country (Odmalm 2005, 96). Such cooperation between religion and the state could be evaluated as the last phase of recognition, since a religious organization has to meet specific conditions in order to pass every stage and become a body that is able to undertake state-like functions and cooperate with the state.

In the German system, religion and religious organizations are seen as a natural part of the community and therefore the state cooperates with them at various levels for the common good. The state takes an unbiased position with regard to all organizations and cannot intervene in their inner structures because of its neutrality principle. In addition, the state cannot cooperate with all communities or organizations. A frame for these relations was drawn up in the constitution, but it does not provide detailed criteria for the selection and recognition of organizations. Also, the increasing number of faiths among the population as a result of migration has brought the recognition of religions other than Christianity and Judaism onto the

⁴³ German Basic Law: available in English at <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/StatischeSeiten/breg/basic-law-content-list.html?nn=447370#doc94410bodyText1>, accessed 10 January 2020.

agenda of public debate. Islam in particular, which is the most prominent immigrant religion in Germany, has been the subject of such disputes in recent years.

As stated before, there are different forms of recognition in Germany for religious organizations, and these could be schematized under four or five general hierarchical categories. The journey to recognition starts with an organizational form, often an association, that can interact with the state at the local or federal level. There could also be some partnerships and funding for specific projects. There are also ‘state agreements’ (*Staatsvertrag*) that consolidate partnerships as well as drawing a framework for the rights of communities and gives a higher prestige to the community compared to basic partnerships in projects. Therefore, the position of organizations in the hierarchy depends on the content of such agreements, but these raise them at least to the second level. After these two stages, associations could be recognized as religious communities, which brings additional rights such as being able to provide religious instruction in public schools. At the end of the process, the community could apply for the status of ‘corporation under public law’ (*Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts*), which gives it an equal status with other traditional religious structures in Germany and provides a variety of rights. Naturally, the process is not short; it can take decades depending on conditions, regulations and political debates. Therefore, the following section focuses on these stages in the recognition process and provides details of the context for further analysis in subsequent chapters.

4.3.1.1. The right to associate

The initial element to be discussed here is the legal right of migrants to form religious organizations. The German legal system does not allow for a distinct type of structure for religious organizations: religious and other associations are all based on the same laws (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 424). The German Civil Code deals with the issue of associations in Articles 21–80,⁴⁴ in which associations are categorized under two main categories: registered and unregistered, with the former subdivided into for-profit and non-profit associations (İkizler 2008, 413). Although an association is not required to register, only a registered association can have a legal identity and the rights and responsibilities that come with this. Associations can apply to the local court for registration by presenting their by-laws, which should contain the criteria for becoming a member or for leaving the association, the value of contributions (if contributions are required), the composition of the board, and information about the conditions

⁴⁴ German Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, BGB*): available in English at https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_bgb/englisch_bgb.html, accessed 23 August 2018.

for general meetings.⁴⁵ When an association is registered as a non-profit association, its name takes the abbreviation e.V. (*eingetragener Verein*) at the end. Registered organizations enjoy a series of tax exemptions as well as rights concerning property ownership and legal identity. These rights and tax concessions make this type of organization the most common in Germany. Most charity organizations and even political parties adopt the structure of registered organizations.

When it comes to migrants' religious organizations, mosque associations and umbrella organizations are relevant. The mosque associations consist of Muslim immigrants who come together to own, build or rent a place for Islamic practices such as daily prayers and gatherings. Umbrella organizations are created from a network of like-minded mosque associations (Gutknecht 2014, 11). Both of these types of organization are generally formed as registered associations, mainly because of the advantages, but also because it is easy to establish them (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 424). Therefore, the most prominent immigrant umbrella organizations are all structured in this way, and they have been making recognition claims in Germany to progress to the next levels since the 1970s.

To sum up, religious organizations are founded and managed under the same laws of the German Civil Code as other groups. These laws allow for four types of association, among which registered non-profit organization is the most commonly used type by welfare, political and religious organizations – including nearly all of the religious organizations of immigrants. Both mosque associations and umbrella organizations choose this form, but even though Islamic organizations have been claiming recognition since they first appeared, there are still debates about whether they are religious communities.

4.3.1.2. Temporal Partnerships and State Agreements (*Staatvertrags*)

The legally founded religious organizations began to provide services such as places for praying, funerals, religious instruction for children and special events on holy days. These organizations usually include women, and youth branches focus on events and programmes for these age groups. Their activities range from women's meetings on holy days to sports and picnics for young people; these organizations play a multitasking role in migrant society, as will be seen in Chapter 5. To finance their activities, they mostly rely on subscriptions from

⁴⁵ Articles 58. and 59 of the German Civil Code (*Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch, BGB*): available in English at https://www.gesetze-im-internet.de/englisch_bgb/englisch_bgb.html, accessed 23 August 2018.

members, occasional contributions and donations. However, they can also cooperate with federal and local administrations on particular issues and receive funding for this.

This type of recognition comes somewhere between the right to associate and wider recognition by the state as a religious community. In this type of recognition, states (*Länder*) or state institutions can make agreements on specific issues such as religious education, cemeteries and prison chaplaincies with religious organizations that are not recognized as corporations under public law. Fully recognized religious communities receive these rights automatically, but the lack of such organizations in the Islamic community in Germany has led administrations to find alternative solutions. Thus, these agreements create a structure of cooperation between the state and religious organizations that are struggling to obtain full recognition (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015a, 17). The number of these partnered projects and contracts are increasing, and some states have begun to make agreements with newer immigrants' religious organizations (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 433–34).

Nevertheless, this type of recognition could be defined as a temporary solution because these partnerships are formed on a short-term basis to solve a critical problem at a specific time. Also, it is difficult to draw up a list of criteria for organizations that are eligible for such partnerships. Individual states in negotiation with religious organizations act selectively, while the sensitivity of the issue and the politicization of Islam make these partnerships beyond the reach of some organizations. On the other hand, this approach can be advantageous for some smaller groups with good representation and a close link to the authorities. The importance of this partial recognition should not be underestimated: it can encourage state authorities that are hesitant about cooperating with such organizations (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 434) and these partnerships can increase cooperation and the prestige of the organizations involved.

These religious organizations can work on projects that are funded by state institutions, including ministries. However, most of this financial support is provided for projects on specific topics that are designed to improve integration and harmony (White 2018, 57). These funds do not directly help the organizations maintain religious services as they can be used only in the context of the project and cannot be transferred to other activities. In an interview, Aykan İnan, vice president of DİTİB's South Bavaria branch, responded to a related question:

the state supports these organizations only in specific projects which are providing services that are customarily given by the state, such as running a kindergarten ... DİTİB has also received funding from the federal budget, and it has become a subject for the media. However, all of the money was

used only for a project about refugees. Therefore, it is not direct financial support for the organization. (Interview 5, 2018)

It could therefore be argued that money coming from the state at this level does not directly support an organization's budget, but the organization benefits from the partial recognition that comes with the funding. Also, these local partnerships can be fragile and affected by international relations, which has been the case with DİTİB: when relations between Turkey and Germany worsened, North Rhine-Westphalia suspended its cooperation with DİTİB⁴⁶ and DİTİB's projects have not received any funding from the federal budget since 2016.⁴⁷ However, despite the issues outlined here, these partnerships between states and religious organizations can benefit the reputation of these organizations and pave the way for more critical cooperation in the future.

Another type of agreement with the authorities are state agreements (*Staatsvertrag*). Under these contracts, German states (*lander*) and religious organizations (or groups of organizations) sign a document listing the rights of these groups and their areas of authority. These agreements have been signed in a couple of states with immigrants' religious organizations as well as with other groups, such as Jewish groups. They may include religious education, religious holidays, the property rights of the organizations, further cooperation possibilities, and so on (see, Document (31), 2012; Document (32), 2013; Document (52), 2012; Document (53), 2014; Document (54), 2014), and are thus much more extensive than the other partnerships evaluated here. Instead of solving a few specific issues, these contracts may cover almost all of the problems of the community. However, the rights that come with these agreements obscure the current status of the organization in the respective state: instead of granting extra rights, as foreseen in the constitution, these agreements put all the issues relating to the organizations into one document. In addition, some of the rights granted through these documents could be part of religious community status, such as rights relating to religious education or public broadcasting, which are given with full recognition. Therefore, these agreements could be positioned at various points on the recognition scale depending on their content, because there is no standard form. However, religious organizations are keen to sign

⁴⁶ 'NRW beendet Kooperation mit Islam-Verband [NRW ended its cooperation with DİTİB]', *Der Westen*, 5 September 2016: see <https://www.derwesten.de/politik/nrw-beendet-kooperation-mit-islam-verband-DITIB-id12166011.html>, accessed 10 April 2020.

⁴⁷ 'Bund stellt Förderung von DİTİB-Projekten ein [Federal government stops funding DİTİB projects]', *Die Welt*, 30 August 2018: see <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article181366656/Umstrittener-Moscheeverband-Bund-stellt-Foerderung-von-DITIB-Projekten-ein.html>, accessed 10 April 2020.

such contracts with states, because collecting all their rights within one clear framework is efficient and having such contracts brings prestige to the community.

4.3.1.3. Religious community status

The statuses or recognition levels discussed above are the same for almost all associations. However, when it comes to religious organizations, the German Public Law mentions two specific types of status in Articles 7 and 140 (which contains Articles 136–41 of the Weimar Constitution): religious community and corporation under public law.⁴⁸ Article 7 is about religious instruction and sets out which actors are eligible to provide it, while the inherited Article 137 from the Weimar Constitution is about the corporation under public law status, which provides advantages to religious communities or organizations. According to these two articles, being a religious community is the main requirement for providing religious instruction in public schools, and for applying for corporation under public law status. Therefore, religious community status could be regarded as a stage prior to recognition as a corporation under public law and a crucial requirement for that recognition. Religious organizations and religious communities are separate, and so we first need to define what constitutes a religious community and the consequences of having such a status.

The German Constitution mentions religious communities as groups authorized to give religious instruction and able to apply for corporation under public law status. However, ‘religious community’ is not explicitly defined in the constitution. According to the German Federal Ministry of the Interior, religious communities are understood to be associations that devote themselves to the practice of their religion and aim to cultivate a common religious confession.⁴⁹ Another definition was given by the Federal Administrative Court when it ruled against two faith-based organizations’ applications to provide religious instruction in public schools in North Rhine-Westphalia because they did not fulfil the requirements for a religious society. According to the court, religious communities could be defined as ‘organizations uniting the members of one creed or several related creeds to fulfil all the tasks assigned by the common belief’ (von Ungern-Sternberg 2013, 214–15). In other words, religious communities fulfil all the tasks required by their religion, whereas, according to the German Federal Ministry

⁴⁸ See Document (28), 2016 for related acts and the German Basic Law: available in English at <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/StatischeSeiten/breg/basic-law-content-list.html?nn=447370#doc94410bodyText1>, accessed 10 April 2020.

⁴⁹ The definition of a religious community and its differences from religious associations is derived from the website of German Federal Ministry of the Interior (in German): see <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/heimat-integration/staat-und-religion/religionsverfassungsrecht/religionsverfassungsrecht-node.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

of the Interior, religious associations deal with only some aspects of spiritual life.⁵⁰ The core of the association should be about religion and practices linked to it, but this does not mean that these organizations cannot have a political or economic aspect (Document (1) 2018, 6). Religious community status thus seems to have become more precise but also more complicated.

Similarly, the criteria for being a religious community are not set out explicitly. In a report prepared by the German parliament (*Bundestag*) on religious communities, it states that there is no legal definition of or conditions for the term (Document (29) 2016, 9). An older document prepared by parliament adds that a religious community should have the authority to lead its members in religious matters and it should have a hierarchical structure (Document (3) 2008, 12). If this is combined with the definition above, we could therefore say that, to obtain religious community status, an organization should have the simple aim of practising the objectives of its religion and uniting all the members of the sect or religion.

Finally, a recent parliamentary document on the legal status of DİTİB lists three conditions for being a religious community (Document (1) 2018, 6–7): it should have individuals as members (although legal entities can also be members, which is crucial for umbrella organizations); its members should have a consensus on religion, or at least on fundamental principles; and it should serve the complete realization of the tasks set by the religious doctrine including having an organizational structure.

However, there are still unanswered questions. For example, neither legal texts and reports nor the literature mentions the authority that confers this status or details this process. It is stated that, if necessary, a court can decide whether the association deals with religion (Document (29) 2016, 9). And even though there is no information on who grants this status, it is possible to ascertain that this status is usually given by government ministries when organizations apply to provide religious instruction in public schools. Thus, not only structural but also political issues determine whether this status is given to religious organizations. This point makes the recent debates on Islamophobia and xenophobia more critical for the process of recognition. Furthermore, the organizational structure mentioned above and some of the conditions required are foreign to Islam associations or are impossible to fulfil by immigrant

⁵⁰ The definition of a religious community and its differences from religious associations is derived from the website of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior (in German): see <https://www.bmi.bund.de/DE/themen/heimat-integration/staat-und-religion/religionsverfassungsrecht/religionsverfassungsrecht-node.html>, accessed 1 December 2018.

organizations. The key point in this respect is that the authorities know about these issues (Document (3) 2008, 8–9; Document (16) 2006, 6–7; Document (5) 2006, 9). Even though solutions have been proposed, current debates ignore these divergences, thereby demonstrating the politicization of the issue.

Although it is not clear how an organization achieves this status, the majority of migrants' religious organizations are striving to do so. There are two reasons for this: first, this status gives the right to religious instruction in public schools, which is a long-desired right for Muslims in Germany. Second, this stage is a requirement for further recognition – namely, corporation under public law status, which brings both responsibilities and rights. In interviews, administrators of such organizations emphasized that they are not claiming full recognition at the moment because the tax and related rights are foreign to Muslims and therefore challenging to apply in the Muslim community. However, recognition as a religious community is crucial for the permanency of Islam in Germany, which is assured via its instruction to younger generations in public schools (Interview 5, 2018). Therefore, this status is one of the most important goals of migrants' religious organizations in Germany.

4.3.1.4. Corporation under public law status

On the recognition scale, the last type is full recognition. As discussed before, the corporatist model of state relations with NGOs in Germany is also reflected in the state's relationship with religious organizations. In the corporatist model, almost all NGOs are organized under an umbrella organization with branches at nearly every level that interact and cooperate with the state on specific issues (Zimmer 1999, 40). Similarly, the state's relationships with religious organizations are based on the same principle: cooperation. Therefore, the system creates a win–win structure for both parties. The legal basis for this status – known as corporation under public law – comes from Article 137 of the German Public Law, which was also inherited from the Weimar Constitution.⁵¹ This section describes the legal basis, privileges and conditions of this status, which has been highly debated in recent years with reference to Muslim immigrants. Discussions about the unwritten requirements will also be explored.

Corporation under public law status (*Körperschaft des Öffentlichen Rechts*), the final level of recognition for religious organizations, is mentioned in Article 137, which states that

⁵¹ See Article 137 of the German Basic Law: available in English at <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/StatischeSeiten/breg/basic-law-content-list.html?nn=447370#doc94410bodyText1>.

religious societies can achieve this status upon application if their constitution and the number of members prove that they are permanent. Also, the same article mentions that recognized organizations can levy taxes.⁵² These articles suggest that the conditions required are easy to fulfil, because the only things needed for such status are being a religious community, having members and a constitution, adhering to the law, and applying for recognition (Muckel 2017, 82–83). These conditions are understandable if one considers the state’s desire to find long-term and capable partners; however, these criteria and the privileges mentioned in the article are not the only ones. For instance, the applying organization must be structured in such a way that it can work with the state in the relevant areas for an indefinite period (Document (3) 2008, 10). Another report prepared by the German parliament lists the criteria for application as lawfulness, a demand for the status, the capacity of the applicant as a religious or world view community, a constitution and members as an assurance of longevity, and a stable community background with sufficient economic resources (Document (5) 2006, 7–8). A similar document adds to the list of conditions clear representation to the outside world and an executive body that has authority over decisions and the implementation of doctrine (Document (16) 2006, 6). Moreover, decisions made on previous applications and interpretations of the law established different conditions that are mentioned in the literature and similar documents. For example, Spielhaus and Herzog (2015b, 425–26) clarify that the number of members needs to be at least 0.1 per cent of the individual state of the applicants.

These conditions are gathered from different sources; it is not possible to find a single detailed and definitive list of conditions. Also, states, which are in charge of granting the status to organizations, have published no clear guidance or list of conditions, apart from Hamburg and Bavaria, which have made laws dealing with the issue (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 424–25). The list, reproduced in Rosenow-Williams (2012, 108), is possibly the most accurate and the clearest, and lists the criteria as follows:

- remaining stable over a period of 30 years;
- having a clear organizational structure with a transparent decision-making process;
- being a membership-based organization with religious consensus; and
- providing proof of compliance with the German legal system.

⁵² See Article 137 of the German Basic Law: available in English at <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/StatischeSeiten/breg/basic-law-content-list.html?nn=447370#doc94410bodyText1>.

This list of requirements summarizes many of the claims relating to the issue, but debates and events can always change the list because, as will be seen in the next paragraphs, there are some ‘unwritten’ conditions as well.

Joppke and Torpey (2013, 68) claim that, as society became multi-religious, unwritten conditions were added to the existing criteria for recognition, including applicants’ potential for undertaking state functions and their loyalty to the country. In a decision made by the Federal Constitutional Court with regard to an appeal by Jehovah’s Witnesses in 2000, compliance with the law and protection of fundamental rights and freedoms were counted as criteria for acquiring recognition status, but loyalty to the state was seen as unnecessary based on the German Basic Law.⁵³ Therefore, an applicant must respect German law, especially in debated issues such as discrimination against women and demands toward Islamic Shariah Law. Tolerance of other religions and converts should also be observed in order to achieve the status (Document (5) 2006, 10; Document (20) 2018, 6). Thus, the list of conditions for attaining recognition status is quite long and seems to get longer when one considers unwritten conditions and the different interpretations of the law by states.

Organizations meeting these conditions can apply for and obtain status. These applications are made at the state level, and, because of the federal system in Germany, the request should be made in each individual state. Although recognition as a corporation under public law in one state means that an organization has this status in all states, the rights that come with this status can be used only in the relevant state (Gutknecht 2014, 3). Recognized organizations can levy taxes in the relevant state; the taxes are then collected by the authorities and distributed according to German Basic Law.⁵⁴ These organizations can employ staff with the same status as civil servants, establish branches and appoint personnel, found cemeteries and nominate members to public broadcasting services (Rohe 2008, 58; Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 426). In addition, recognized religious communities are considered in legislation and planning processes in related issues, which increases their prestige and social impact (Document (5) 2006, 8). Therefore, recognition status brings many rights and opportunities to these communities that are not included in the previous stages.

⁵³ Federal Constitutional Court’s decision on the recognition of Jehovah’s Witnesses, BVerfG, Urteil vom 19. Dezember 2000 – 2 BvR 1500/97 – BVerfGE 102, 370–400 (in German): see <http://www.servat.unibe.ch/dfr/bv102370.html#Rn070>, accessed 11 December 2018.

⁵⁴ See Article 137 of the German Basic Law: available in English at <https://www.bundesregierung.de/Content/EN/StatischeSeiten/breg/basic-law-content-list.html?nn=447370#doc94410bodyText1>.

Religious organizations that obtain this status differ from legal entities such as universities, townships and social welfare establishments that share the same status. According to Spielhaus and Herzog (2015b, 424), recognized religious organizations are not subjected to state oversight, unlike the corporate bodies listed above, because of secularism and states' neutrality. However, this does not mean that a recognized organization can maintain this status forever. Bavaria, one of the states that regulated this issue through law, details the conditions for the termination of status in its *Kirchensteuergesetz*. According to this law, status ends when the organization requests or loses religious community status, if there are reasonable doubts about the community's adherence to the laws when it is bankrupt or has ceased to function for a year, and if it moves its headquarters abroad.⁵⁵ Therefore, the state has oversight of recognized organizations in specific areas, such as their functionality and conformity with the law. However, the state cannot intervene in the internal issues of recognized organizations, such as religious doctrine, because of the neutrality principle.

Article 137 of the German Basic Law recognized the two established churches of the time when it was prepared, and it opens up this status to new religions due to the neutrality principle. Since the constitution was adopted, several Christian and Jewish societies have gained this status. According to Rosenow-Williams (2012, 107) 26 Christian and several Jewish organizations have been recognized as corporations under public law. Turkish religious organizations have been applying for this status since the 1970s; however, their applications have been rejected continually by the authorities (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015a, 17). Only one Muslim organization – the German Ahmadiyya Community – has been recognized as a corporation under public law, but this has been seen as proof of the availability of this status to other groups (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 421). However, there is an evident stagnation in the recognition processes of other Muslim organizations, particularly Sunni groups, which constitute the majority. The state has admitted that the exclusion of Muslims from this status could lead to severe problems, and some initiatives have been discussed to overcome hurdles in the process (Document (5) 2006, 13). However, there is no information about what – if any – projects have been undertaken since these debates.

The status of the corporation under public law provides a prestigious position in addition to the rights and privileges that come with it. Almost all major Turkish religious organizations in Germany are striving for this status, but, according to my observations and daily

⁵⁵ See Article 1. paragraph 3 of the Bavarian Church Law (*Kirchensteuergesetz*) (in German): see <http://www.gesetze-bayern.de/Content/Document/BayKirchStG-1>.

conversations, their primary goal is not to obtain economic benefits but to achieve permanency in Germany by giving religious education to their children in public schools – many migrants also see this as an indication of equality with other religious communities in Germany.

In brief, there are five types of recognition in the German system that apply to immigrants' religious organizations. While these organizations usually have no trouble achieving basic recognition, their efforts for further recognition often end in rejection and there are ongoing structural problems that block widespread recognition. This is discussed in the next section and the main obstacles faced by Turkish Islamic organizations examined.

4.4. Turks in Germany and recognition

Turks are by far the biggest immigrant group in Germany, and their ethnic, cultural and religious differences make them the most significant minority group in the country. However, they have never sought recognition as an *ethnic* minority in Germany; their organizations tend to focus on religious or cultural issues, which shape their policies. As summarized in Chapter 3, political organizations, which are comparatively few in number and are ineffective in the community, often have a transnational character and act as proxies for their central bodies in the homeland. Their concerns and conflicts are therefore mainly driven by the ideologies they bring with them and are not influenced by the local agenda. However, religion is a crucial matter shaping the identities of these immigrants, and it plays a significant role in their institutionalization efforts and mobilizations. The Turkish immigrant community has had a conservative outlook since the early days of migration because most workers were recruited from the rural and religious parts of Anatolia. They have emphasized their religious practices during their life in Germany and so it is natural that the most influential immigrant organizations tend to be religious.

The first groups, which were organized around mosques, started to make claims for recognition in the early years. The first applications for corporation under public law status were made by individual mosque associations during the 1970s, but they were all rejected (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015a, 17–18; Thielmann 2010, 173). These organizations were relatively primitive, but their organizational skills improved in the following decades. However, the journey to full recognition is still far from complete. Muckel (2017, 104–10) explores the eligibility of Islamic organizations in Germany for corporation under public law status and detects two types of obstacle: the first is the negative political atmosphere surrounding Muslims, while the second concerns legal problems relating to structural and transnational issues. In the

light of these findings, this section focuses on the main hurdles in the recognition processes of Turkish religious organizations in Germany. The arguments above will be explored and updated based on previous applications, the literature, including media coverage, reports from the German parliament on the issue, and interviews.

One of the initial obstacles discussed is the structure of the immigrant community, which is extremely fragmented due to the different Islamic sects and groups. Three leading organizations – Diyanet, Süleymancis and Milli Görüş – were pioneers in the religious market of the Turkish community's Sunni majority. In addition, there are also Alevis and many other smaller groups. The main problem is that all of these groups have their own agenda and institutionalization, and even those from the same sect have religious and political differences, which means that there is no unified voice of the community. This fragmentation creates a problem for recognition because the German authorities do not want to have to speak to each individual group, but there is no consensus among them on the solutions to problems (Fuess 2007, 226). Therefore, the first issue to be discussed is the lack of a unified voice for these religious groups.

The second issue relates to the structure of these organizations. Their applications for recognition have been rejected due to a series of problems such as lack of a constitution, insufficient number of members, longevity or issues of representation (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 108). A report prepared by the German parliament noted the lack of a constitution, which regulates relations between the organization and the state, as the most severe failing in applications (Document (5) 2006, 11). Other issues are linked to these structural problems, such as the education of imams and the funding of activities from abroad, and have been discussed intensely in German politics in recent years, as can be seen from parliamentary reports (Document (6), 2016; Document (18), 2016; Document (2), 2017; Document (19) 2017; Document (22) 2018; Document (25) 2018). On the other hand, there are also some well-known divergences between Islam and the German recognition procedures, and so the second part of this section will deal with these questions.

The last part explores the problem created by the contemporary political atmosphere, in which Islamophobia is a significant issue. The increasingly negative image of Islam and Muslims has led to the politicization of the recognition process and has blocked possible improvements. Thus, the last part of the section focuses on the politicization of Islam and the challenges created by this phenomenon.

4.4.1. Lack of a unified voice

One of the crucial problems in the Turkish Islamic community in Germany is its fragmentation, which paves the way for numerous groups assembled around contrasting facets of the community. This situation can be observed in any aspect of social life, but is particularly visible in the context of political and religious organizations. In such an atmosphere, German politicians have always emphasized the need for a single and unified point of contact that represents all Muslims in Germany for the recognition of Islam (Kortmann 2018, 6; Spielhaus and Herzog 2015a, 34; Spuler-Stegemann 2002, 92). However, so far, it has been impossible to establish such a contact, mainly because of the number of different organizations and their different agendas, and this has a clear effect on recognition (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 121). There are two main reasons for this fragmentation that come under the scope of this research: the first is rooted in the Islamic belief system, which provides fertile ground for new religious groupings; and the second relates to the historical enmities and contestations between different groups that block commonality. As a result, there are many religious organizations with small differences in terms of belief systems within the immigrant community.

There is a perception about Muslims that they are homogeneous and that all the members of Muslim groups are pious and have a stable alignment with religion. However, this perception is ‘simply wrong’ (Rohe 2008, 51). Like Christians, Muslims differ from each other, with different rules and norms about how to practise Islam and different strengths of belief (Şen 2008). In Islam, there are two main sects – Shia and Sunni – which were shaped in the early years of Islam after the death of Prophet Muhammad. These two sects have numerous subdivisions, which are different from each other in many ways. Each of these groups is seen as Muslim because being a Muslim has just two simple conditions: if a person recognizes the existence and oneness of Allah (God) and accepts the prophecy of Muhammad, then they are a Muslim. The rest of an individual’s belief system depends on their understanding of the Qur’an and Sunna (the words and behaviour of the Prophet as narrated in hadiths, which are not accepted by some sects), because Islam sees religion as a matter directly between man and God. As a result, there are always people who claim to have a better understanding of Islam, and this can create new groupings.

Muslims living in Germany reflect this fragmented structure. In this comparatively small community, Sunnis are the majority (74 per cent), Alevites are the most significant minority (14 per cent), and these are followed by Shia (7 per cent) (Rohe 2008, 49–50; Spielhaus 2014, 14). Moreover, the Sunni majority is split into many movements and

organizations, such as DİTİB, IGMG, VIKZ, GO, and countless other small Sufi orders following different religious leaders. In addition, there are many independent mosque associations that are not linked to any of these groups. Even though their belief systems are identical, each of them follows a different person, order or political view that shapes their religious practices and agendas.

Some see this multiplicity of Turkish Muslim groups in Germany as a result of the authority vacuum caused by the lack of policies addressing the religious needs of recruited workers. The high number of different organizations was even debated in the Turkish parliament in 1998, and an MP from the Democratic Left Party (Demokratik Sol Parti or DSP) claimed that this was a result of Germany's strategy for dividing Turkish society (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 117). In contrast, Mustafa Yeneroğlu, a former administrator of IGMG and current member of the Turkish parliament, said in an interview that the 'multiplicity of Islamic groups and organizations in Germany is not a result of both of them. These groups traditionally have always been part of the Turkish population, and it is natural to see them in the immigrant community too, because it is a smaller version of the original community' (Interview 1, 2018). The liberal atmosphere in Germany also helped some groups that were facing persecution in Turkey to settle and grow in the diaspora (Stowasser 2002, 61). Also, as emphasized by Yeneroğlu, these groups have their roots in Turkish and Islamic history, and their existence in the migrant community could be seen as a reasonable consequence of that fact.

The second issue that causes problems is the historical enmity between groups. The main Shia and Sunni sects have been hostile to each other since their formation; this is one of the main reasons behind conflicts and rivalries in the Islamic world. In addition, there are historical conflicts between Sunni and Alevi sects, going back to the Ottoman–Safavid Wars of the sixteenth century. Some factions are not seen as Muslim by the majority groups: one of these, the Ahmadiyya, which is the only 'Muslim' community to have received full recognition, is perceived as a non-Muslim community by the majority of Muslim groups (Kamp 2008, 139). Also, these enmities and conflicts have a significant effect on the self-identification of groups such as the Alevi community, which started to organize after a series of attacks on their community in Turkey (Argun 2003, 104).

Groups within the same sect also have contestations. VIKZ, IGMG and DİTİB are all Sunni organizations but they follow different leaders or understandings. On the other hand, some groups were seen as radical and judged to be threats to the *laïcité* structure of Turkey. As a result of this history, some of these groups distance themselves from the state's moral agency:

Diyanet. In Turkey, all mosques are funded and owned by the state. Thus, in Turkey, these groups cannot organize around mosques, and this situation provides a higher position to Diyanet. However, as a consequence of the mosque organization system in Germany, they have become strong actors that can negotiate for their agendas, and this situation fuels the fragmented structure of the community.

In addition to these factors blocking the way to a unified platform, two other points are affecting the representativeness of these organizations. First, only a small percentage of Muslims are organized around these structured groups. According to a parliamentary answer given to a related question in 2007, an organization can represent only its members, and only around 15 per cent of all Muslims in Germany are members of Muslim organizations (Document (14) 2007, 5). This number is far lower when only the members of Muslim organizations seeking recognition are considered. Therefore, recognition of an organization could create a situation where that organization has excessive sovereignty over the whole Muslim population, most of whom have nothing to do with the recognized organization (Document (5) 2006, 10). The second problem is related to the condition of longevity, which is endangered by the fragmented structure of the community and contestations between organizations; this could lead to small organizations being absorbed by others, so the longevity of an organization cannot be guaranteed (Document (5) 2006, 9). Therefore, it could be argued that the lack of a united voice creates obstacles even to fulfilling the fundamental conditions mentioned in the Basic Law.

To sum up, Turkish-Islamic society in Germany has struggled to build a common platform to represent all groups in order to fulfil German politicians' requirement for 'one voice for all Muslims'. According to Çinemre (2018, 450), the lack of a partner organization that can speak on behalf of Muslims and negotiate with the state on critical issues is the most crucial issue in the recognition process. However, this does not mean that there are no relevant initiatives: there have been attempts to unify all Muslim organizations under a single umbrella organization both by the state and by the organizations themselves (Dolezal, Helbling, and Hutter 2010, 176). The most notable attempts were the German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islam Konferenz or DIK) (see, Document (15) 2006; Document (24) 2018), initiated in 2006, and the Coordination Council of Muslims in Germany (Koordinationsrat der Muslime in Deutschland or KRM), established in 2007. The German Islam Conference was founded by Ministry of Domestic Affairs in 2006 to create a forum for Muslim groups and Alevis, where state and religious actors from the migrant community could communicate on essential issues

(Document (13), 2014, 169–70). It has been criticized by Muslim groups for aiming to create a German Islam or a version of Islam that is friendly to European values (Joppke and Torpey 2013, 71). KRM could be considered the most prominent initiative in this frame, with all the significant Sunni organizations gathered together under the leadership of DİTİB; it represents almost 80 per cent of all organized Muslims in Germany (Ceylan 2017a, 87). Although it could be seen as a significant development for Muslims in Germany, it is viewed as just a communication platform by DİTİB because its structure is based on a one-page contract between the parties, and therefore it does not act as an umbrella organization (Interview 5, 2018). Furthermore, DİTİB's dominance in the organization and the historical contestations between the member groups mean that it is not sufficiently active in the frame of recognition of Islam in Germany (Kortmann and Rosenow-Williams 2013b, 52–53).

In addition to these endeavours to unite Muslim groups under one umbrella organization, there are also groups that are not interested in full recognition status. One of them, Central Council of Muslims in Germany (Zentralrat der Muslime Deutschland or ZMD), criticizes the status and claims that it is an attempt to change Islam by forcing it into a Christian-style mould (Joppke and Torpey 2013, 71). This criticism focuses on Germany's efforts to produce a 'German Islam', which will reduce interventions from abroad among the Muslim population of Germany. However, the 'German Islam' idea is profoundly opposed by the Turkish community and widely takes place in the media.⁵⁶ Therefore, the initiatives undertaken by both the state and organizations face many obstacles due to historical or contemporary issues, and so the debates look likely to continue in the future.

4.4.2. Functional and structural problems

The other issue that generates problems for Turkish religious organizations in the way in which recognition is directly related to the structures and functions of the organizations themselves. Reasons for the rejection of recognition applications include representation, the number of members and constitution-related issues. Their functions in the community and the absence of a hierarchical structure could also be added to this list. Lastly, education, the appointment of imams and the funding of these organizations' activities are also regarded as

⁵⁶ 'Ankara'nın nüfuzuna karşı Alman İslamı [German Islam against Ankara's Influence]', DW, 3 September 2018: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/ankaran%C4%B1n-n%C3%BCfuzuna-kar%C5%9F%C4%B1-alman-islam%C4%B1/a-45332094>; 'Almanya Müslümanlara 'kendi İslamını' dayatacak [Germany Will Impose German Islam on Muslims]', ensonhaber.com, 3 September 2018: see <http://www.ensonhaber.com/almanya-muslumanlara-kendi-islamini-dayatacak.html>, accessed 4 September 2018.

problematic because of their links to home countries. In general, all of these issues are related to a greater or lesser extent to the structure of religious organizations.

The first issue arises from the functional ambiguity of these associations. As mentioned earlier, only a religious community can apply for this status, and these associations must be religious organizations in order to become a religious community. However, this aspect is complicated for Turkish religious organizations in Germany because of the circumstances and transformations that brought them to their current form. As already noted, the predecessors of these religious organizations were places of worship that were established by workers on a temporary basis and for major occasions such as Friday prayers or Ramadan. Family reunions in the 1970s turned them into cultural and religious associations that linked people to their home culture and religion. Thus, these associations have functioned as centres of religious education for new generations, tea houses and canteens for seniors, sports clubs for youth groups, and a place for casual gatherings at events such as funerals, marriages and prayers since the beginning of their history (Lemmen 2017, 314). It could therefore be said that they cater not only to the religious needs but also to other aspects of Muslim migrant life in Germany (Riedel 2010, 22). This multifunctional status, which is a reasonable consequence of their historical context, is unique for mosque associations in the transnational community. However, in the recognition frame, this multifunctionality could be seen as a factor that vitiates their religious community identity and is therefore an obstacle to recognition.

Moreover, their umbrella organizations in individual states are the ones making recognition claims, but the religious community status of these organizations is also the subject of debate (Document (8) 2008, 12). A recent report put an end to these debates and stated that a religious community should have individual members but that legal entities can be members too, which means that Islamic umbrella organizations can be accepted as religious communities (Document (1) 2018, 6). Naturally, all the other conditions must be met for this status, and organizations are working on their structures and constitutions to fulfil them. Some recent developments and recognition claims show that there is a new trend towards transforming traditional organizations into religious community organizations as a result of professionalization and the fulfilment of the conditions required for recognition in the community.

Another issue arising from the structure of mosque associations is the lack of membership, which causes problems in the area of representation. Even the KRM, which claims that it represents almost 85 per cent of all mosque associations in Germany, has a minority of

all Muslims in Germany as members (15–20 per cent). This issue is regarded as a representation problem by the German authorities within the context of recognition (Kortmann 2018, 12; Thielmann 2010, 173–74).⁵⁷ As stated above, not all Muslims who use the services of these associations are registered members; most mosque organizations have only their regular attendees and inner circle as members. Also, most members represent their families, and so numbers should be increased to take into account family members who are not listed as affiliates (Ceylan 2017a, 88). Ceylan (2017b, 247) argues that not all Jewish or Christian people are listed as members of their respective organizations either, but they are still called Jews and Christians. Therefore, such an expectation could be criticized, but still, 15 per cent is a relatively low number. According to observations made in several mosque associations, Turkish religious organizations are also aware of this problem. Thus, representatives and imams of the mosque organizations invite the community to become members to ensure the future of Islam in Germany. These organizations are also making new arrangements in their structures to increase the number of members.

Today, mosque associations are more complex, and their administrators are better informed than in the past as a result of the transformations aiming to fulfil recognition conditions. An interviewee, Aykan İnan, emphasized this transformation as follows:

Our first problem in this manner [recognition] is our traditionalism. Thanks to them, our fathers and grandfathers established cultural associations which gather both cultural facilities and praying rooms under the same roof because they were cultural ... Nobody imagined in these times that we would claim recognition 50–60 years later ... We are struggling with changing these cultural associations to mosques. (Interview 5, 2018)

Thus, both the aim and the structure of these organizations have changed, and today's administrators are well educated and up to date on the issue. Even though they still have issues in the frame of recognition, they are facing their critics and improving themselves. Therefore, the functional uncertainties of these organizations could be regarded as largely solved because organizations are more aware of the conditions today and are changing their frameworks.

The second problematic issue linked to the organizations' structure is their financing. Security-related problems and radical movements first attracted the attention of the German state and society to this issue. The sources of these funds are heavily debated in politics and the

⁵⁷ 'Official Recognition of Islam in Germany?', Spiegel Online, 16 April 2007: see <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/Muslim-group-s-first-mission-official-recognition-of-islam-in-germany-a-477438.html>, accessed 12 September 2017.

media and are often negatively linked to terrorism, which harms the image of Islam and immigrants' recognition claims. So, how are these organizations endowed? In principle, services are provided using money that is collected from members' subscriptions and contributions, like all other primary civil society establishments under private law. However, as religious organizations, they serve anyone who comes to the mosque, which means that a person does not have to be a member of the organization to pray in the mosque, ask advice from the imam, or send their children for religious instruction (Yükleyen 2012, 76). Also, the monthly or yearly subscriptions are not the only source of income for these mosques. Especially in the gatherings at peak times such as Ramadan and Friday worship, they collect donations from the people who come to the mosque. Thus, they can raise enough funds to finance their other events, which they could not afford with just the money that comes from members' contributions.

In addition, mosque associations can be financed from abroad, especially for the missionary activities of some sects. This support could include sending imams and paying their salaries, which is a burden to associations. There is no specific data on the amount or sources of this finance flow, but it is known that some religious organizations receive large-scale funding from abroad. According to a report prepared by the German parliament, some Jewish and Orthodox organizations receive funds from abroad, not just Muslim organizations (Document (6) 2016, 7). There is no legal regulation that differentiates between public and private donors or between sources inside and outside the country (Document (18) 2017, 2), so funding from abroad is not forbidden by law. According to a more recent report, receiving finance from abroad does not necessarily mean that the source of funding has direct control over the organization, as has been suggested in public debates (Document (22) 2018, 15). The uncertainty about the funding of mosques can easily lead to discussions and fears in the wider society and give rise to problems in the recognition process. However, according to a report from the German parliament, organizations such as churches have no requirement to make their balance sheets public or to explain their finances, and the state cannot force them to do so (Document (22) 2018, 16).

In brief, making these associations self-sufficient financially could be a solution to this issue. In that frame, collecting tax from Muslims for mosques has been suggested by politicians

in recent times.⁵⁸ However, there are many obstacles, including the applicability of this tax in Islam, because even recognized immigrant organizations such as Ahmadiyya do not use their right to levy taxes on their members. In an interview, Aykan İnan emphasized the difficulty of collecting such a tax from Muslims in Germany, because it would be foreign to Islamic societies. Thus, organizations are not keen to use this right even if they are recognized in the future (Interview 5, 2018).

The third issue about Muslim organizations' structure that is debated is the question of imams sent from abroad. Typically, a mosque association consists of an administrative board, which is selected democratically by local people, and an imam from the homeland. On this issue, every group has its own tradition or practices. For instance, DİTİB imams are appointed by the Turkish Diyanet for a certain period, while the imams of other groups, such as IGMG and VIKZ, could either come from Turkey or be educated in Germany. This has become a critical and debated issue in recent times, mostly because of security concerns and espionage claims regarding DİTİB's imams (Document (19) 2017; Document (25) 2018; Document (30) 2017). Parliamentary reports and governmental answers state that DİTİB's imams are sent and paid for by Turkey for a period of two to five years in general (other, similar organizations do not have imams coming for such long periods). Although DİTİB administrators claim that this is based on an agreement between Turkey and Germany, in an answer to a parliamentary question the government denied the existence of such an agreement (Document (30) 2017, 4). According to another report, the sending of imams takes place within the framework of generally applicable rules and regulations on labour migration (Document (19) 2017, 1). However, a more recent document stated that there is a procedure for DİTİB imams' visa applications called the 'Diyanet procedure', according to which Diyanet provides a letter of confirmation to its imams that is recognized in the visa procedure as sufficient documentation for employment in Germany (Document (25) 2018, 5). As a result of this process, Diyanet imams can work in DİTİB mosques for up to five years while other organizations, such as IGMG, bring their imams to Germany for only a couple of months on tourist visas.

Imams are often criticized for their lack of German language skills and their unfamiliarity with society and its problems (Sydow 2013, 244), although some organizations have instigated initiatives to educate their imams. VIKZ prefers to train its imams (who are

⁵⁸ 'Unionspolitiker sprechen sich für Moschee-Steuer aus [Union's politician speaks about mosque tax]', *Die Zeit*, 26 December 2018: see <https://www.zeit.de/politik/deutschland/2018-12/islam-moschee-steuer-koalition>, accessed 26 December 2018.

called *Hoca*) in their own Islamic education facilities, which are similar to their main body in Turkey, while Diyanet's international divinity programme (*Uluslararası İlahiyat Programı*) is a bachelor's degree in Islamic divinity studies particularly for new generations in the diaspora. The programme aims to overcome the language and cultural problems of imams sent directly from Turkey by educating Turkish youngsters born abroad in divinity schools in Turkey (Erşahin 2015, 132). There are similar initiatives on the Germany side too. Some Islamic theology faculties have been founded in recent years to foster studies in this area, and maybe also to educate imams in Germany in the future, which is seen as a crucial issue for independence in this frame.⁵⁹ It seems that this debate will continue, because there are problems on both sides. On the one hand, educating imams in Turkey is seen as dependency by Germany; on the other hand, there is a question over the quality of education that students will receive in German theology institutes and the credibility of these imams in the community. Furthermore, the state has to be neutral towards all religions and should not interfere with internal issues such as the education of imams, and so this issue has to be resolved by the religious communities themselves. When one considers the problems they face with regard to recognition as religious communities and financing, the severity of addressing this issue can be understood.

Hierarchical issues constitute the final structural problem debated here. As set out in the previous paragraphs, Islam has no hierarchical order, unlike Christianity (Kaya 2015, 68; Sydow 2013, 243). Thus, imams' position in the community differs from that of Christian priests. In Islam, an ordinary man with the necessary knowledge could become an imam without any official ordination or consecration; this creates a non-hierarchical structure between imams (Kamp 2008, 144), whose approval does not necessarily come from a higher religious authority but instead comes from the community with which they are linked. Therefore, any hierarchy exists only in the organizational structure of associations. As a consequence, all imams can be regarded as equal, and they can preach freely to their communities. However, in most Muslim-populated countries and Muslim organizations, things work differently. States or Muslim organizations regulate critical areas such as Friday sermons, which are sent from a central body. But even though such a situation creates a hierarchy in the organizational bureaucracy, there are still no different levels for imams in Islam.

⁵⁹ 'Almanya'nın imam çıkmazı [Imam Paradox of Germany]', DW Turkish, 16 December 2018: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/almanyan%C4%B1n-imam-%C3%A7%C4%B1kmaz%C4%B1/a-46761398>, accessed 18 December 2018.

As a result, at least since the abolishment of *Khilafat* in Turkey's early years, Sunni Islam has not had a single authority that can rule on Islamic doctrine. This issue, combined with the equal standing of imams, causes problems in the context of a hierarchical structure, which is necessary for recognition. The German system expects a clear structure and transparent decision-making processes, because of the full range of rights that comes with recognition status (Bodenstein 2010, 58; Joppke and Torpey 2013, 68). Furthermore, bodies should have the power to make decisions on doctrine and order in the religious community (Rohe 2008, 58). This disparity has been recognized by state and political actors, according to reports prepared by parliament (see, among others, Document (3) 2008, 8–9; Document (16) 2006, 6–7; Document (5) 2006, 9). This debate continues because politicians and organizations have different perspectives. 'On the one hand, German policymakers emphasize the idea that if Muslims would like to be treated in the same way as Christianity, then they should be organized in the same way. On the other hand, Islamic organizations evaluate the conditions as not applicable to Islam because of structural differences (Kortmann 2018, 11). Islam was late to arrive in Germany, where state–religion relations evolved within the context of the Christian church, and Islamic organizations find it difficult to fulfil some expectations. These structures either do not exist in Islam or have not developed enough. In the same vein, Aykan İnan stated the following on the issue:

When the constitution was prepared, there was no Islam in Germany ... Even the name of the law is state–church law, and it expects the same conditions from Islamic organizations. At this point, we are trying to fulfil all expectations by organizing hierarchically at federal and local levels. Similar to the churches, we have a religious centre in Ankara (Diyanet), and they have a religious authority on the doctrine ... However, no organization except DİTİB recognizes this religious authority, which is causing the problem. (Interview 5, 2018)

Although there are specific criteria that are not usual for Islam, at least some Turkish religious organizations are working to create an appropriate body to receive recognition status. However, Kaya (2015, 74) claims that creating a church-like Islamic structure could lead to a 'clergy' in Islam, which forbids putting any broker between man and God. Because of these reasons, such efforts to change the structure for the sake of recognition have been criticized by many Islamic organizations (Joppke and Torpey 2013, 71). The issue needs to be solved with better communication between the different sides, informing them about the situation and eventually finding common ground.

To conclude, the main problems arising from the structure of Turkish religious organizations in the frame of recognition are multifunctionality, the low number of members, funding from abroad, imams and the absence of a church-like hierarchy. Religious communities could solve these issues, but there is a discernible divergence between Islam and the expectations of the recognition process, in addition to the 'know-how' problem, which has largely been solved over the last decades. Thus, dialogue-based reconciliation would be better for both sides, and current partnerships could be regarded as signs of this. According to Ceylan (2017b, 255) finding a legal form that is acceptable to both sides is just a matter of time, and, when it happens, mosque organizations will be more professionalized in any aspects that require the support of the state. However, another issue stands in the way of recognition: the politicization of Islam.

4.4.3. Increasing politicization of Islam

Populist or extremist right-wing trends in German politics are another critical issue challenging the recognition claims of immigrants' religious organizations. Immigrants in Germany were the victims of many xenophobic incidents during the 1980s and 1990s and there has been a dominant discourse about the temporary status of migration and a rejection of Germany being a country of immigration. This approach created a base for anti-immigration movements, but both discourses and the focus of populist right-wing movements changed during the 2000s. The turning point was the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the USA, which created a new wave that linked terror and Islam and eventually produced fertile ground for Islamophobia and anti-Islam movements (Yanarışık 2013, 2914). Naturally, such a trend had severe outcomes for the Islamic communities living and struggling for recognition in Western countries.

Media coverage and images of Islam have also changed dramatically since 9/11. For instance, in Germany, 71 per cent of the news related to Muslims was about integration and recognition before 2001; however, while media coverage on this issue increased more recently, 57 per cent focused on Islam and terrorism (Dolezal, Helbling, and Hutter 2010, 181). Therefore, it could be claimed that the anti-immigration focus of such trends transformed into an anti-Islam focus in Germany after the 2000s (Ceylan 2017a, 81). Unsurprisingly, this view of Islam in the media and in politics has affected recognition issues for Muslim organizations.

The changed atmosphere following 9/11 had two notable consequences for religious organizations: first, the state became overly suspicious about their activities. As a result, many organizations, such as IGMG, were put under surveillance by the Agency for the Protection of the Constitution (*Das Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*) (Argun 2003, 161). This created fear

among its affiliates and the organization lost many members, which eventually affected its representativeness (Ewing 2003, 408), because being a member of such an organization could lead to severe problems for people's careers. The second issue is mainly related to the media, which became extremely sensitive to Islam and related matters. Whenever a terrorist attack happened somewhere in Europe, the media pushed Islamic organizations to talk about it. According to Ceylan (2017b, 248), by frequently expressing their feelings about such negative issues, Islamic organizations could be contributing to the link between Islam and terror. On the other hand, not responding to these demands could open them up to criticism from politicians and the media.⁶⁰

The outcome of rising populism in politics is more severe and relevant for immigrant organizations because of the possible effects on the recognition process. Populist right-wing movements are gaining power in Germany as well as in many other countries. One of them, PEGIDA (Patriotische Europäer gegen die Islamisierung des Abendlandes or Patriotic Europeans Against the Islamization of the Occident) was founded mainly on anti-Islamist and anti-migration ideas in 2014 and started to criticize all political parties' asylum policies during the refugee crisis (Alkan 2015, 283). As the movement became more and more visible in the social and political arena, Islamophobic attacks on Muslims and other immigrants increased. In addition, AfD (Die Alternative für Deutschland or Alternative for Germany) began in 2013 with political arguments that could be summarized as EU-sceptic and populist-conservative; it openly rejects Islam as part of Germany. Shortly after its founding, AfD had organized in all German states and got good results in the elections, making it one of the most successful new political parties in German history since 1950 (Berbair, Lewandowsky, and Siri 2015, 154). More importantly, AfD received 12.6 per cent of the votes in the 2017 German federal elections⁶¹ and became the main opposition party to the 'grand' coalition. The party is expected to be the second-largest party in the next elections, according to surveys.⁶² AfD believes that Islam should not be recognized and that rights such as religious instruction and pastoral care should not be given to Islamic organizations (Ceylan 2017b, 249). Any increase in the power

⁶⁰ D. Heinrich, 'Germany's Islamic Organization DITIB under Fire for Skipping "March Against Terror"', DW, 16 June 2017: see <https://www.dw.com/en/germanys-islamic-organization-DITIB-under-fire-for-skipping-march-against-terror/a-39286296>, accessed 14 September 2018.

⁶¹ Results of the German federal elections 2017 (in German): see <https://www.welt.de/themen/bundestagswahl/>, accessed 15 September 2018.

⁶² 'AfD überholt SPD und wird zweitstärkste Kraft [AfD Passed SPD and Became the Second Most Powerful]', *Die Welt*, 30 September 2018: see <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article181714198/Emnid-Umfrage-AfD-ueberholt-SPD-und-wird-zweitstaerkste-Kraft.html>, accessed 14 September 2018.

of such parties and movements could thus be regarded as the most critical threat to the recognition of Turkish religious organizations.

It is also possible to observe an inhospitable atmosphere in general for immigrants' religious organizations. The existence of such an increasingly important actor in politics affects other parties too, and eventually pushes them towards the edges, or at least puts pressure on them. As a result, working for the recognition of Islam or making positive claims for recognition in the political arena becomes problematic and rare. Also, many younger Turks are hesitant about becoming active members of these organizations because they fear that it could cause problems in their future lives and careers in Germany. To conclude, these Islamophobic movements and parties are one of the most severe challenges to religious organizations' efforts to achieve recognition. The future of these two issues will possibly be connected.

4.5. Conclusion

This chapter has told the story of Turkish immigrants and their organizations from the perspective of Germany in order to understand approaches to the recognition claims of immigrants. During the first phase, policies focused on the economic gains expected from temporary migration and other aspects of these people's lives were not taken into account. The economic depression of the 1970s brought an end to official recruitment, but not to migration, which continued through family reunions and asylum-seeking. During these years, Germany still expected these immigrants to return to their home countries, and most policies were designed in the context of this expectation. According to Aykan İnan, even the integration policy had as its aim the return of immigrants. Governments let people learn their own language and religion because they wanted to facilitate their reintegration into their home society (Interview 5, 2018). Furthermore, there were periods when the state paid money to immigrants to encourage them to return. Another issue was the increase in xenophobia and discrimination, and one of the most debated questions was: is Germany a country of immigration?

Finally, in the last period, there was a realization that migrants were permanent residents and immigrants were accepted. This change brought transformations in the integration policy as well as in debates about the issue. The rights of migrants and recognition of their differences became the subjects of discussion in these years. Unfortunately, 9/11 and rising terror in the world led to the politicization of Islam. The upward trend of politicization and right-wing movements seems to have delayed the process of finding common ground for integration and recognition among Muslim organizations.

Until 1973	Between 1973 and 2000	After 2000
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economy-focused policies - Expectation of temporariness - Lack of policies on the needs of immigrants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Economic depression and end to recruitment - Family reunions increasing migration - Policies to reduce immigrant numbers - Is Germany a country of immigration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Realization of immigrants' permanency - Integration policies and increase in naturalizations - Politicization of Islam and rise of Islamophobia - Rise of populist right-wing movements - Does Islam belong in Germany?

Figure 3: Germany's policies towards Turkish migrants

The chapter also looked at the recognition issue, one of the main pillars of this study. Different recognition structures – liberal, *laïcité* and pillarization – have distinct features that are related to a country's history and its approach to immigrants. In Germany, church–state relations are at the root of the system for recognition and the recognition of religious organizations can be divided into five subcategories. The first is the right to associate, which defines the legal basis of religious associations, but Germany has no specific structural or legal category for religious organizations in this stage: all associations have to fulfil the same conditions. The first generation of religious organizations were satisfied with this level of recognition, but today they have improved and have started to seek further recognition.

The second type of recognition concerns contracts between state authorities and organizations. These partnerships range from solving ongoing problems, such as a lack of cemeteries, funerals, kindergartens or projects relating to women, youth or refugees, to providing a framework listing and guaranteeing the rights of these organizations. The money that comes from these contracts goes directly to the relevant services rather than to helping these organizations more generally. However, they provide an interim recognition that can pave the way for the more advanced types of recognition. However, state agreements can offer a higher level of recognition depending on the content; this type of agreement is becoming more common, and immigrants' religious organizations are keen to make such agreements.

The third type of recognition is status as a religious community; this is mentioned in Article 7 of the German Basic Law and gives recognized organizations the right to religious instruction in public schools. Most immigrants' religious organizations are still struggling for this status. The last type is recognition as a corporation under public law according to Article

137 of the German Basic Law. This type is called full recognition and implies an equal position with other religions in Germany. The conditions for achieving this status include being a religious community and proving the durability of the organization through the number of members and its constitution. However, the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations has become a long-debated issue, and many unwritten conditions have arisen as reasons for the rejection of applications. Besides, the structure of Islam, immigrants' religious associations and the recognition structure itself create obstacles for the recognition of these groups. Furthermore, the political atmosphere in Germany has created robust debates about the issue, stagnating the recognition process.

Right to associate	Partnership contracts	Religious community status	Corporation under public law
An ordinary association under private law	Temporary solutions that depend on individual state policies	Recognition as a religion and rights to give religious instruction in public schools	Constitutional recognition with a wide range of rights and privileges
	State Agreements		
	Provide a frame for the rights of subjected communities, generally provides high prestige		
<div><div>←</div><div><i>Scale of recognition</i></div><div>→</div></div> <div>Basic recognitionFull recognition</div>			

Figure 4: Scale for recognition of religious organizations in Germany

The obstacles that Turkish organizations are facing on their way to recognition can be categorized under three headings: a lack of a unified voice, multifunctionality and structural issues. In addition, there are also problems caused by recent political trends and the increasing politicization of Islam. Islam's structure favours plurality, which creates a fragmented Muslim community in Germany as well as in other parts of the world. It is therefore pointless to try to recognize Muslims as one homogenized community under one organization. Second, these organizations provide a series of services, mainly because of historical circumstances. This functional ambiguity could create an impediment for their further recognition as religious communities. However, it could be claimed that at least some of these organizations are aware of the problems and are trying to improve their structures in order to achieve their aims. Nevertheless, the politicization of Islam becomes a hurdle for further recognition at this point. Since 2001, Islam has been regularly associated with violence and terror because of the

increased terror attacks of different groups. Such an atmosphere has naturally created an infertile ground for the recognition struggles of Turkish religious organizations in Germany. The rise of populist right-wing parties could be seen as the most prominent obstacle to these organizations' future claims.

To conclude, the last two chapters have provided a broad understanding of transformations that took place in Turkey's policies, Germany's approaches, and the migrant community itself. Fundamental factors that affected these transformations, such as different migrant organizations, the strategies of sending states and recognition structures for immigrants' religious organizations, have also been examined. In the next chapters, the two organizations that are the subject of this study will be discussed to understand their current place on the path to recognition in Germany.

5. DİTİB: RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS TURKISH - ISLAM UNION

After covering the background, it is now time to start the case studies that differentiate this study. As stated in Chapter 1, the first case to be assessed is the Turkish-Islamic Union for Religious Affairs (Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion e.V. or Diyanet İşleri Türk İslam Birliği) – DİTİB – the most significant transnational (Turkish, Islamic and migrant) religious organization in Germany. In examining its history, structure, transnational links and recognition processes, the main objective will be to understand the status of DİTİB in the frame of the recognition scale and the reasons for this status.

Following a description of DİTİB, issues affecting its recognition, such as the structure of the organization, financing, political stance and transnational connections, will be detailed. We will see how DİTİB views recognition in Germany and investigate the efforts it has made, and the kind of transformations implemented in order to fulfil the conditions for recognition. As a result, the chapter will discover how much ground DİTİB has covered towards full recognition and will set out the reasons for this, thereby also revealing the organization's shortcomings in this frame.

As a federal republic, Germany has 16 individual states with highly effective political power with regard to domestic policy. The recognition of organizations as religious communities or corporations under public law is under their jurisdiction, which makes them crucial in the issue. The last part of the chapter will therefore look at the applications of three different states – Hamburg, Hesse and Bavaria – with the aim of uncovering forms of recognition at different levels. Differences and similarities will provide hints for necessary and crucial requirements in the implementation process, which in the previous chapters has been debated mostly in reference to the federal level. During data collection, the existing literature, documents and reports published by officials and the respective organizations were reviewed, and also face-to-face semi-structured interviews were conducted with key informants.

As a result of research during the data-gathering process, three main points came to the fore about DİTİB. First, there is a distinct trajectory in the transformation of the perception of DİTİB's transnational character: once-welcomed transnational links started to be regarded as a negative issue in the context of recognition. Second, in contrast to the current perception, DİTİB was seen not only as a result of Turkey's strategy, but also as a consequence of Germany's and Turkey's shared interests and of bottom-up pressure coming from the Turkish community. Lastly, Germany's recognition system has had a definite impact on DİTİB, which has experienced several transformations during the process. Therefore, this system does not just

recognize organizations as they are but also pushes them to adjust their structures to fulfil conditions. This chapter constitutes the ‘state-linked transnational organization’ side of the research, and thus it supplies data to test the hypothesis: that the nature of transnational links has a definite effect on recognition processes.

5.1. DİTİB from a historical perspective

DİTİB is the most prominent Turkish Islamic organization making recognition and representation claims in Germany. It was founded as an initiative of the Turkish state and linked to the Presidency for Religious Affairs (Diyanet). Its foundation and aims, and the perceptions of both Germany and Turkey at the time, are critical for understanding changes and continuities in the recognition issue. Furthermore, features of its main body in Turkey and the type of Islam it represents are also essential points for understanding the role of DİTİB and its representativeness for the Turkish community in Germany. Therefore, two main questions will be asked in this section: what is Diyanet and what are its objectives? And what makes it different from other Turkish religious organizations in Germany?

5.1.1. The main body: Presidency for Religious Affairs

Religion is still a decisive factor in Muslim-majority countries, regardless of their regimes. The practice of faith and the management of religious places are left to Muslims who are capable of performing these duties – there is no ‘clergy’ class in Islam. However, a field with such power could not be ignored, and so states formed institutions to regulate religious services (Kutlu 2009, 107). For instance, the Office of Şeyhülislam in the Ottoman Empire was one of the strongest and most long-lived of these institutions and served Muslim society for almost 500 years (Erdem 2008, 42). The newly founded Turkish Republic inherited this institution, and the Ministry of Islamic Law and Foundations was formed in the first parliament. However, the founding elite of the republic imagined a modern nation state in line with the *laïcité* principle, so they abolished the ministry and the caliphate after the announcement of the new regime in 1923. The founders then had three options: maintaining a separation from religious matters in line with secularism; leaving religious affairs to religious communities; or controlling religion through new institutions (Ulutas 2010). They chose the third option because religion was too important to leave to Islamic groups, which could threaten the new regime.

In this political atmosphere, Diyanet was established as one of the first agencies of the young Turkish Republic in the 1920s and aimed to respond to the ‘religious needs and services’ of society (Aydın 2008). There were two problems with that aim: the existence of a state-

controlled institution to regulate religious services in a secular state; and the ambiguity of the limits of these needs and services. For the former issue, it could be argued that Turkey invented its own kind of secularism or *laïcité*, which differs from the French version. In this type, the state does not maintain its distance from religion; rather, it tries to reform religion to make it ‘modern’, ‘national’ and ‘liveable’ (Ulutas 2010). Such an understanding has led to many initiatives aiming to change people’s religious practices, which eventually paved the way for new Islamic factions in the Muslim community that opposed the secular state. Also, this approach created a perception of state control of religion, which has been voiced many times since the early years of Diyanet. According to this point of view, the real aim of Diyanet was to regulate Islam and change it into an orthodox version, so the state could take control and limit the power of religion on politics (Gözüaydın 2008, 217). As a result, such authority over religion was regarded as a way that the founding elite could secure the principle of secularism.

The second issue regarding Diyanet was the definition of its services, because they were not described precisely. Its aims were listed as regulating religious appointees, managing religious places and maintaining services. However, several sects and factions followed their own spiritual understanding in their religious practices and rituals. Therefore, a crucial problem was which of these understandings would Diyanet follow in delivering services. As a solution, a distinct identity was created by merging Sunni Islam with secular Turkish nationalism; this is why many people call Diyanet the representative of Turkish Islam (Doomernik 1995; Şenay 2012; Yurdakul and Yükleven 2009). However, this approach led to problems between Diyanet and groups that were not Sunni or that criticized the control of the state over religion (Kutlu 2009, 108). Debates on these issues continue, with no agreed solution, but Diyanet is still the most trusted and accepted religious institution by the majority of the population.

As the central religious institution, Diyanet appoints imams to mosques, prepares the imams’ Friday sermons, and comments on disputed issues in the application of religion. These duties were widened during the 1970s as a result of Turkish migration to European countries. In 1976, Diyanet was authorized to open branches abroad to serve Turkish expatriates, turning it into a transnational organization that provides services to Muslims not only in Turkey but also in other countries (Ulutas 2010). As a result, Diyanet became an institution regulating the religion in a distinct way via a vast web of civil servants. This web extends from small villages in Anatolia to big cities in Europe, giving Diyanet a crucial strength that makes it popular with all governments (Gözüaydın 2006, 7). As a consequence of such power, its politicization has always been a critical issue, even though it must always consider secularism, be above party

politics, and represent national unity while providing its services according to Article 136 of the Turkish Constitution.⁶³

To conclude, Diyanet was one of the first institutions of the Turkish Republic and was established to carry out the religious services that had been linked to the Office of Şeyhülislam in the Ottoman Empire. However, the founding elite of the Turkish Republic aimed to create a modern, secular nation state, and so they wanted to develop a control mechanism for religion to secure the secular state by creating a standard nationalist version of Islam. As a result, a vast network of religious civil servants was developed to carry out these objectives first in Turkey and then in other countries with Turkish populations. This institution eventually turned into a powerful political tool that every government wanted to use, but this led to accusations of politicization, linked to the political perspectives of the ruling party. It could be argued that, even though the institution was founded to provide religious services – and it still undertakes this duty – its political character, which was created during its formation, has always been an influence.

5.1.2. Diyanet in Germany: DİTİB

As has already been noted, guest worker recruitment programmes and various other types of migration created a Muslim community in Germany after the 1960s. As these immigrants were seen only as a workforce and were expected to return to their home countries, neither the sending nor the receiving countries were interested in other aspects of their lives (Lemmen 2017, 313). However, the majority of workers decided to stay, changing the structure of the community and creating a demand for religious services. Neither state was prepared for this situation: Germany was trying to reduce the effects of the Oil Crisis, while Turkey was struggling with the Cyprus issue and political turbulence in addition to facing the same – but more severely felt – economic crisis. Therefore, the two states became involved in this issue later than the various religious groups mentioned in the previous chapters. However, incidents in the 1970s and 1980s gave rise to arguments that led to Turkey's involvement in the religious market in the diaspora, with Germany's assent.

The factors that shaped the organization of Islam in Germany and brought the Turkish state to the field can be summarized under the following headings: the permanent settlement of migrants and demographic changes in the community, and the increase in the fear of political

⁶³ Article 136, Presidency for Religious Affairs, Turkish Constitution, 1982, Turkish Grand National Assembly: available in English at https://global.tbmm.gov.tr/docs/constitution_en.pdf, accessed 10 May 2019.

Islam and fundamentalist Islamic groups in the world. The first factor was widely discussed in the previous chapters: briefly, the strong religious affiliation of recruited workers, a shift from temporary guest workers to permanent residents, and the arrival of women and children all increased the need for religious and cultural services. There was a fear of losing children and women to a foreign culture, and also a desire to make living abroad like living at home (Doomernik 1995, 59; Karakasoglu and Nonneman 1996, 247; Kastoryano 2004; Stowasser 2002, 60–61). Consequently, the places of worship that already existed started to grow. Islamists, who came under pressure in Turkey during the 1970s, moved to Germany as refugees and began to organize (Ewing 2003; Sirkeci 2006, 77). As summarized in the previous chapters, almost all of these associations had political orientations as well as moral aspects. According to Abadan-Unat (2017, 261), Suleymancis (VIKZ) and Milli Görüş (IGMG) wanted to form an Islamic state based on sharia law in Turkey during these years; such an aim had long been considered a threat by Turkey's secularist policymakers. Even though an office for guest workers was established under Diyanet in 1972 to play a role in the religious market in opposition to these groups, it could not adequately organize in the diaspora (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 103). The reason for this could be the general approach of the period towards the diaspora, as explained in the previous chapters.

This climate changed at the beginning of the 1980s, and Turkey decided to expand Diyanet to its diaspora. Particularly decisive for this change was the fear of fundamentalist political Islamic groups; this triggered the secularist reflexes of the state, which became more sensitive to these issues after the *coup d'état* in 1980. As a result, Turkey began to see the organizations founded by refugee political Islamists as threats to the secular state because of their anti-secular political views (Bas 2008, 98). Turkey's concerns about this issue increased as a result of the conjuncture created by the Iranian Islamic revolution. Naturally, Turkey did not want religious-political organizations to grow in the diaspora and assist their central bodies in Turkey via transnational tools. After a visit to the diaspora, president of Diyanet Tayyir Altıkulaç pointed out this danger to General Kenan Evren, head of the military junta, and advised him to take measures against this threat (Yükleyen 2012, 51). In the period that followed, negotiations took place during the visit of the German Minister of Domestic Affairs Friedrich Zimmermann on the establishment of a foundation that would deal with the religious affairs of Muslims in Germany and one that would do the same for Christians in Turkey (Binswanger and Sipahioğlu 1988, 76). As a result, Turkey started to seek ways in which it

could reach out to its emigrants after a period when it had ignored them, but the main reason for this was the fears of the time.

The threat that Turkey felt existed from Islamic organizations that had fled the country was just one side of the story. In addition, there was a high level of demand in the community for politically neutral religious services, and this created another reason for Turkey to enter the field. In an interview, Zekeriya Altuğ, head of DİTİB's Department for External Relations and former speaker of KRM, stated:

The first general assembly of DİTİB took place in this area with over 200 mosque associations, and they decided to found an umbrella organization in 1984. Yes, this process was initiated by Diyanet's president Tayyer Altikulaç, but the Turkish community had been demanding this since the 1970s. They wrote petitions to Diyanet many times and said 'Do not leave us alone,' 'Please take care of religious education of our children,' etc. Furthermore, our member association number has swiftly increased following the foundation, which was not possible without a demand in the field. They were attracted by the religious expertise of the imams sent by Diyanet, and they were sometimes waiting for years to receive one. As a result, this demand was the real reason behind the foundation of DİTİB and its achievements. (Interview 6, 2019)

As seen in this quote, he obviously disputes the idea that DİTİB was just a project against 'harmful' organizations. Instead, he suggests an explanation based on demand coming from the field. In a similar vein, Hasan Celal Güzel, who was the undersecretary of the prime minister in 1985, emphasized this point in a press release relating to sending imams to Europe: 'We have to answer to the religious needs of our citizens abroad and block others from filling this gap at the same time' (Mumcu 1987, 199). However, the question of why Turkey decided to answer these calls in the 1980s rather than in the 1970s demonstrates the existence of other concerns at the time. It is known that Diyanet showed very little interest in the requests for support that came from the Turkish community during the 1970s (Doomernik 1995, 50). Therefore, DİTİB's institutionalization and aims could be better understood if these two main reasons were considered together.

Naturally, Germany's response to the demand for Turkey to establish such an association was crucial to this process. It was a critical decision for Germany to make because such an institution could lead to a foreign country having influence over Muslims in Germany. When one considers the contemporary consequences and debates on the issue, Germany's acceptance could be seen as surprising. However, the two main factors that led Turkey to reach this decision also influenced Germany's decision on the issue. There was a demand for religious

services in the immigrant community, and radical groups could quickly fill this gap. German politicians also evaluated Turkey's moderate Islam and its imams as efficient tools in the fight against fundamentalism in the country (Binswanger and Sipahioğlu 1988, 73; Sunier, van der Linden, and van de Bovenkamp 2016, 402). Furthermore, during this period, allowing Turkish institutions to provide religious services to immigrants kept the issue as a matter of international relations rather than a domestic issue in Germany (Beilschmidt 2013, 189). When one considers the 'Germany is not a country of migration' discourse of the period, it makes sense that the country tried to keep this issue an international one. Additionally, Turkish workers were expected to be guests who would eventually return home, and so it was not considered Germany's duty to provide religious services to the community or to pay for them (Sydow 2013, 244). The Turkish state therefore finally entered the religious market in the Turkish diaspora with DİTİB.

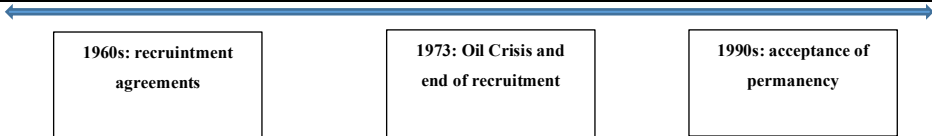
Actors ↓	Transformations throughout time ↓		
<i>Turkish community</i>	Guest workers	Permanent settlers	Naturalized citizens
<i>Germany</i>	Economy-focused policies and interest in Turkish workers	Security concerns and discourse of 'Germany is not a country of migration'	Integration and de-transnationalization policies and the rise of right-wing movements
<i>Turkey</i>	Remittance-maximizing policies	Control-focused policies because of the threat from undesirable organizations	Transnationalization and active use of sending state strategies
<i>Islamic organizations</i>	Small places to gather and pray	First Turkish-Islamic organizations in the 1970s and founding of DİTİB in 1984	Localization of these organizations and claims for recognition
Approximate timeline			

Figure 5: Timeline and transformations in the components of the research

DİTİB was established in 1984 in Cologne, but there are different pieces of information about the exact date. According to a report from the Bundestag, DİTİB was founded by 15

mosque associations in Berlin in 1982 (Document (17) 2000, 8); however, this association was just a regional union and it later transferred to the current organization (Spuler-Stegemann 2002, 103). The umbrella organization was founded in 1984 with 150 participating mosque organizations, according to DİTİB's website.⁶⁴ Even though it was established later than some other pioneering organizations in Germany, DİTİB has become the most prominent Muslim organization in Germany today with its 960 member associations. Its first working principle was to link already existing organizations under one roof; this ran in parallel with its foundational desire to unite all organized Muslims in Germany in one group (Wunn and Moser 2007, 28). The aim of the umbrella organization is described as the coordination of religious, sporting and cultural activities of its member associations.⁶⁵ Also, DİTİB claims to represent Muslims in Germany and defines itself as a politically neutral organization that provides places of worship and contributes to integration (Document (7) 2015, 15). As a result, DİTİB's aims include uniting all organized Muslims, coordinating their events and representing them; it could be claimed that these fit with its foundational mission of regulating and controlling the religious field.

But how has this mission of control been carried out? The main reason why other Islamic organizations grew faster in the Turkish community was that the two states had left a gap by underestimating the spiritual needs of migrants. Therefore, these groups' function was simple: fill this gap by providing necessary services, but in ways that were appropriate to their order or ideology. Diyanet was familiar with this phenomenon, and it had worked against these organizations by offering the same services in Turkey. Based on that experience, DİTİB used the same strategy in Germany. It targeted the member associations of other groups, eventually creating a competition in the community (Sunier and Landman 2015, 51). Although, its identity as a secular state institution hindered its aim of reaching out to other groups (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 104), the steady increase in the number of members, from 150 to 960, shows that this issue was overcome thanks to other factors that made DİTİB attractive to members.

There were three main differences between DİTİB and other organizations. The first related to people's perception of Diyanet, which is labelled a non-partisan organization. As other religious organizations worked in the interests of either political parties or religious groups, this was an advantage. As a result, DİTİB became a hub for people who wanted

⁶⁴ On the establishment of DİTİB and its structure (in German), see <http://www.DİTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=8&lang=de>, accessed 8 February 2019.

⁶⁵ On the aim of DİTİB's umbrella organization (in German and Turkish), see <http://www.DİTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=8&lang=de>, accessed 8 February 2019.

religious services from a politically neutral organization and who wanted to avoid political conflict (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 199). The second decisive difference was economic; this was vital for mosque associations founded in and supported by a relatively poor community. Diyanet sends imams from Turkey to serve in these associations and pays their salaries, which would otherwise be a severe financial burden. This is the main economic reason why associations join DİTİB (Sunier and Landman 2015, 51; Yükleven 2012, 49). Lastly, issues such as educating imams or bringing them from Turkey are challenging for associations, and they adopt different ways of solving them. However, in DİTİB, bringing well-educated imams from Turkey is easier because of the privileges given to Diyanet in this area (Document (25) 2018, 5). Therefore, as an association whose working principle is to connect already existing groups under one roof, DİTİB has been successful in attracting mosque organizations to join its network.

In the beginning, there were low expectations for DİTİB because its foundation was planned rapidly and it lacked financial resources, but it grew quickly and became the most prominent migrant religious organization in Germany (Gorzewski 2015, 18–19). Today, similar organizations linked to Diyanet are active in other European countries with a Turkish community. Thus, it is claimed that 70 per cent of the Turkish population in Europe supports such organizations (Arkilic 2015, 23). DİTİB is not only the most prominent Muslim organization in Germany but also the most debated because of its representativeness and recognition claims, which will be assessed in the following sections.

5.2. DİTİB from organizational and religious perspectives

DİTİB is a Diyanet initiative that aims to provide religious services to the diaspora based on the Turkish understanding of Islam and to block others to gain power in the diaspora (Mügge 2012b; Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 65; Yükleven 2012, 51). Thus, it could be argued that DİTİB's aims and the foundation process are almost identical to those of its main body in Turkey. As noted above, Diyanet was also established to reduce the strength of undesirable religious actors in Turkey. In this section, we look at the organizational structure of DİTİB, which is a key criterion in its recognition as a religious community, as well as its religious stance and its role in representing the migrant community, which partly affects the problem of the lack of a unified voice.

5.2.1. Organizational structure

Functionally, DİTİB is not significantly different from other religious organizations, such as VIKZ and IGMG. It is an umbrella organization that brings together individual mosque associations, which constitute the executive parts of the organization. These mosque associations have different departments for women and youth groups, they organize religious conferences and special events on important religious and national days, and they provide a room for religious practice, just like ordinary mosque communities. However, in parallel to Germany's federal administration system, DİTİB is organized in three hierarchical levels: federal, state (*Länder*) and local. Although it began with a centralized body, it evolved over time to fulfil recognition requirements and as a result of changes to its original constitution (Arkilic 2015, 27). Therefore, one could argue that its structure evolves according to the needs and challenges of the time and of the community.

The organization is a web of mosque associations, with the central body coordinating and partly administering the individual associations. The central mechanism consists of four constitutional organs: general assembly, high religious advisory committee, administrative board and audit board.⁶⁶ The general assembly is the highest decision-making department in the hierarchy and meets once every two years. The audit board is appointed by the general assembly and comprises two people who inspect the organization's financial and administrative aspects. Similarly, the advisory committee is composed of five high ranking imams or Islamic theologians who do the same for religious matters.

The administrative board deals with management issues and comprises a president and six other members elected by the general assembly for a two-year term. This board has ten directorates under its supervision that are responsible for different services and areas of management, such as pilgrimages, external relations, family and social services, and so on. As a result of such a broad spectrum of services and the vast web of member associations, the administrative board and its subdivisions employ the largest number of DİTİB's central staff. The president of the administrative board is also known publicly as the president of DİTİB. Presidents have been religious affairs counsellors or attachés in the Turkish embassy and consulates since DİTİB's foundation.⁶⁷ As a result of this dual role, the president is both an administrative and a religious expert. There is therefore a perception that DİTİB is a religious

⁶⁶ On DİTİB's structure (in Turkish and German), see <http://www.DiTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=8&lang=en>, accessed 10 March 2019.

⁶⁷ For details of former DİTİB presidents (in Turkish and German), see <http://www.DiTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=40&lang=en>, accessed 10 March 2019.

organization managed by a diplomat, something that is criticized in Germany from time to time for being administrative rather than religious (Arkilic 2015, 27). Also, the close links of presidents and members of the higher-level boards hinder the claim that ‘we do not have any direct link to Diyanet’ and create problems in DİTİB’s relations with Germany (Kortmann and Rosenow-Williams 2013b, 49; Yurdakul and Yükleven 2009, 219). However, DİTİB continues to follow this tradition by choosing counsellors for religious affairs in the Turkish embassy as presidents.

As noted, DİTİB was formed with a centralized structure, with no administrative body between the umbrella organization and individual mosque associations, but this was a problem in Germany because of the country’s federal structure. German state governments are the responsible authorities in matters relating to religion, such as religious instruction in public schools and granting religious community and corporate body under public law status (Joppke and Torpey 2013, 69; Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 426). These German states started to seek partners in the 2000s to solve local issues relating to Islam, and this created a push factor for DİTİB to change its structure. The religious community status, which is necessary to offer religious education in public schools, was also an incentive for this structural change (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 205). At the same time, DİTİB and Diyanet began to discuss the establishment of state-level unions between the central and local administrations to solve such issues (Gorzewski 2015, 64–65). As a result, DİTİB underwent a transformation based on the German church structure (Euchner 2018, 105). This was a significant change that came after a long period of debate and apparently as a result of the recognition conditions.

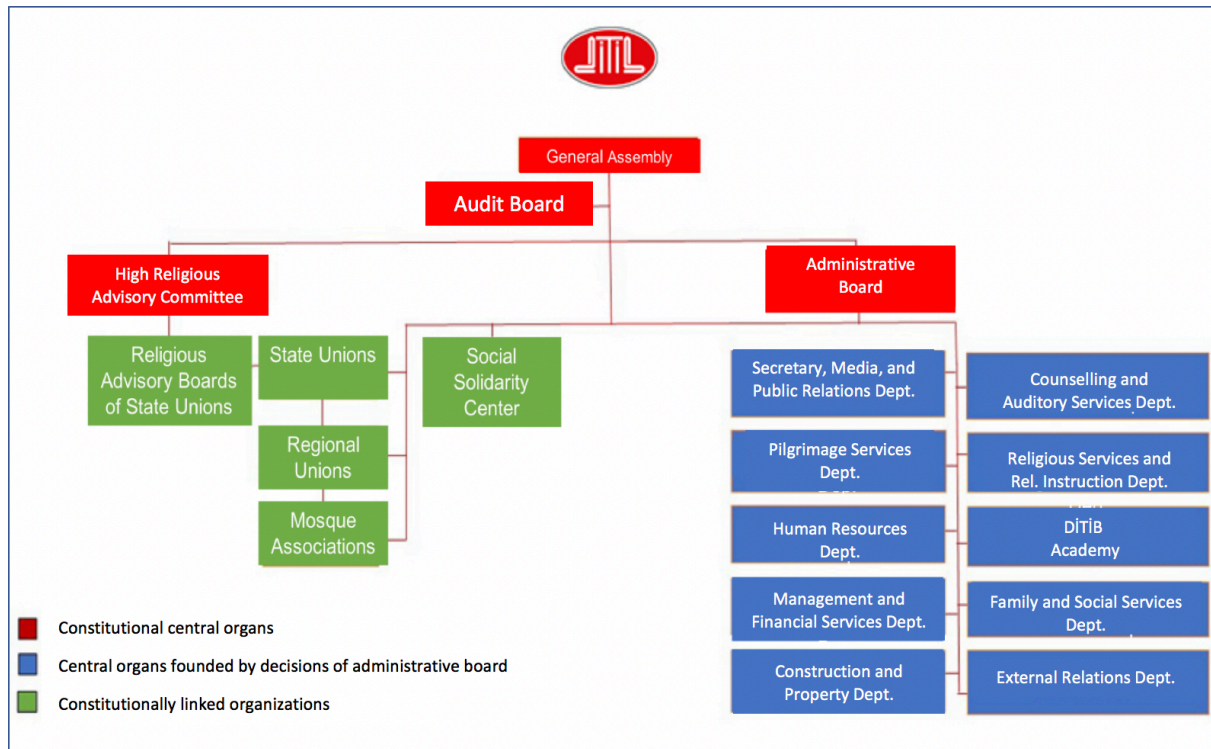


Figure 6: Organization structure of DİTİB. Source: <http://www.DİTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=8&lang=en> (author's translation).

According to DİTİB's structure, these mid-level unions are responsible for the coordination of mosque associations in their region. Today, all the former states of Federal Germany have at least one state union, with two or more regional unions in large and densely populated states such as North Rhine-Westphalia and Bavaria. Small states can combine with their neighbours under one state union, for example Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein.⁶⁸ Figure 6 also shows religious advisory boards; these can be found in every state and are composed of Islamic theologians and often the religious attaché of the nearest Turkish consulate. Similar to the system in the central body, these boards mainly deal with religious matters while the state union deals with administrative issues such as running mosques and organizing events. Administrators in these state unions are not public servants employed by Diyanet or Islamic theologians; instead, they are people with different occupations coming from the migrant community itself (Gorzewski 2015, 66). Arguably, state unions are more independent from the transnational links to Turkey as a consequence of these features, and they are more effective at solving local problems and advancing recognition-related issues. As mentioned in Chapter 4,

⁶⁸ For details of DİTİB unions in individual German states (in Turkish and German), see <http://www.DİTİB.de/default.php?id=12&lang=en>, accessed 25 March 2019.

some state unions were recognized as religious communities or signed state contracts relating to the rights of Muslims in their regions.

The final parts of DİTİB's organizational network are mosque associations; these could be described as service points or the places where DİTİB interacts with the immigrant community. All of these associations are self-sufficient registered associations (*eintragener Verein*), just like the higher-level bodies. The by-laws of these associations are drafted by the central organization in Cologne, and, according to Article 20.1, member associations are linked to the DİTİB umbrella organization at the country level and the state union at the regional level, while still protecting their independence (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012). Local mosque associations have a general assembly, administrative board and high-level advisory board. The first two organs are almost identical in every association: for example, governing boards are democratically elected by the general assembly, and they choose their president among themselves. Their main objectives tend to relate to running the mosque, dealing with expenses, and fundraising via members and events. However, according to Article 11.9 of the by-law, these executive boards are responsible for fulfilling any instructions from the umbrella organization and state unions, as long as they do not threaten the independence of the organization (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012). The high-level advisory boards of each organization include the presidents and vice presidents of the umbrella and state organizations, which have unlimited power to inspect the other organs of the association (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012, Articles 19.1–2). Therefore, there are articles and paragraphs in the statutes of mosque associations that limit the power of the administrative board by making the umbrella organization and state unions the final decision makers.

The dual administration structure that is seen in central and state bodies exists at this level too. Religion-related issues are all handled by a religious service worker (*din hizmetleri görevlisi* or imam) appointed by the high-level religious advisory boards of the state unions (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012, Article 17.1). These imams lead prayers, give sermons, provide religious instruction and are responsible for the promotion of relations between the community and other Islamic groups and religions (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012, Article 17.2). They are coordinated by religious attachés in the nearest Turkish consulate and by the religious advisory board of the state union. Association members provide funding for mosque association activities through regular contributions and donations. The only visible economic support provided by Turkey is the salary of the imams, who are officially public servants.

In short, DİTİB has grown since its foundation and has created a hierarchical structure that ranges from the local to the federal level. In addition to being the most prominent umbrella organization for mosque associations, it is also the most hierarchically organized institution among Muslim and immigrant organizations in Germany (Sunier and Landman 2015, 51–52). Its structure can be seen in the by-laws that give the umbrella organization and high-level religious advisory boards power over administrative and spiritual issues. Its transformation from a centralized organization to a three-tier structure that parallels Germany's federal system can be explained by DİTİB's desire for recognition.

5.2.2. Religious understanding and representation

As DİTİB was founded as a Diyanet initiative, the two organizations hold an identical position on religious matters. As an institution of a secular state, Diyanet's understanding of Islam differs from traditional groups, a situation that has created contestations and had created a multifaceted community. While its position in a secular state and the definition of secularism in Turkey have always been debated, the turbulent years of the 1970s and the military coup of 1980 brought a new level of intensity to this issue. The military administration decided to use religion and nationalism as tools against the undesirable groups that took part in the clashes of the 1970s (Sunier et al. 2011, 17). Eventually, religion became a unifying element for the nation. A new Turkish–Islamic synthesis was created, combining religious and nationalist views; this became a kind of state ideology that fostered Diyanet and the religiosity of the population through mandatory religious courses in public schools (Faist 1998, 336). Toprak (2012, 220) claims that this new understanding had three primary elements: 'the mosques, the barracks, and the family'. Representing the mosques, Diyanet was upgraded and given the objective of protecting national solidarity in accordance with changes to the constitution (Öztürk and Sözeri 2018, 629). As a result, Diyanet became a religious institution representing a form of Islam that followed the Hanafi school of Sunni Islam combined with social elements and a type of secularism that is specific to Turkey.

This change in Diyanet's structure not only created an organization that combined secular, nationalist and religious elements but also made it a more controversial institution in terms of governance. It could be argued that this combination made it vulnerable to politicization because of its dependence on government. For example, while it tried to be more secular under the Kemalist administrations in the 1990s (Şenay 2012, 1625–26), such considerations faded under periods of conservative and nationalist JDP rule. This dependence is also reflected in perceptions of the institution over time, while DİTİB's instability is

mentioned in German parliamentary reports and noted as an obstacle to recognition (Document (16) 2006, 5-6). These issues led to Islamic groups and intellectuals in Turkey criticizing Diyanet for being the mouthpiece of state for religion, having a strange understanding of secularism, or hampering the universality and unity of Islam (Ulutas 2010). These criticisms were also made by groups in the immigrant community when Diyanet extended its services abroad and formed one of the main reasons for the fragmented structure of the religious field.

Like its aims and objectives, DİTİB's religious stance was not very different from that of its main body. It has always been seen as the representative of Turkish Islam – this is even part of its name. In the foreword to the association by-laws, its religious stance is defined as 'mostly linked to the Hanafî school of Sunni Islam, but other schools of Sunni Islamic belief are also equally acceptable' (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012, Foreword). Although, there is no evidence of nationalist factors in its by-law, one of DİTİB's foundational aims was to strengthen the religious and national elements of Turkish emigrants' identity (Yaşar 2012, 204). Arguably, such an objective was in line with Diyanet's mission of protecting national unity and solidarity, and this gave a nationalist character to DİTİB (Bas 2008, 99). In accordance with this, the salaries of DİTİB's imams had long been paid under a project called 'Protecting and Promoting Turkish Cultural Heritage/Assets' (Mumcu 1987, 198) that gives a hint about its relation with nationalism. However, this nationalist character mostly involved an emphasis on praising the Turkish nation and its function in the Islamic world rather than constituting a link to a political faction. These elements of Turkish Islam are apparent in the special events organized on Turkish national days by local mosque associations and in the fact that Turkish is the universal language in local mosques – only a summary of the Friday sermon is given in German as a result of the growing number of non-Turkish Muslims and the new generation's lack of Turkish-language skills. This emphasis on the Turkish language and culture could be seen as relics of an earlier period when mosques were meeting places and cultural centres. Besides, most of the administrative staff and regular users of these mosque associations are still first- and second-generation immigrants who are more oriented towards Turkey.

Except for its nationalist elements, it is difficult to argue for a political link between DİTİB/Diyanet and a political faction in Turkey, a point that differentiates them from other religious organizations and groups in the community. The most important reason for this is the fact that Diyanet is an official institution, and, as such, Diyanet and its imams cannot be part of any political party according to the objectivity principle of the state. On its website, it states

that DİTİB is a non-party political organization and that it refrains from any political activity.⁶⁹ However, there are some issues that relate to both religion and politics, such as the headscarf, terrorism, and the actions of some religious groups. In these debates, as a public institution, Diyanet's stance is generally in line with the ruling government's approach to the problem: for example, the wearing of headscarves was forbidden in Turkey for years because of the *laïcité* principle of the state, and so Diyanet/DİTİB did not make any statements on the issue because of the secularist approach of the Turkish government. However, more recently, the organization's attitude to such debates in both Turkey and Germany has changed to reflect JDP government positions (Yükleyen 2012, 82; Yurdakul and Yükleyen 2009).

Similar attitudes are apparent in recent incidents relating to the Gulenist organization. Following the failed coup attempt in 2016, Turkey declared that the organization was a terrorist group and waged war against it. Diyanet therefore also took a stance against the Gulenists and criticized the organization, mainly from a religious perspective, in its publications (Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu Başkanlığı 2017). DİTİB also issued three press releases condemning the failed coup attempt, but without naming the perpetrators.⁷⁰ A similar joint press release was issued together with IGMG, VIKZ and ATİB on the coup attempt.⁷¹ However, the German authorities accused DİTİB's imams of collecting information on members of the GO in the period that followed.⁷² Even though DİTİB denied these accusations,⁷³ the imams involved were recalled to Turkey by Diyanet.⁷⁴ These incidents show that DİTİB has tried to protect its non-political position but it is generally on the same page as Diyanet with regard to key issues. The easing of Kemalist laicist control over the religious field in Turkey is also affecting DİTİB by facilitating its cooperation with other Islamic organizations in Germany. For example, DİTİB did not collaborate with any of the other leading Islamic groups before 2001 and had not

⁶⁹ The principles of DİTİB are given on its website (in German and Turkish): see <http://www.DİTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=9&lang=de>, accessed 25 March 2019.

⁷⁰ DİTİB press releases from 16 July 2016 are available on its website (in Turkish and German): see http://www.DİTİB.de/default1.php?pageNum_artikell=11&totalRows_artikell=1161&id=11&sid=28&lang=en, accessed 25 March 2019.

⁷¹ Joint press release of four pioneering Islamic organizations against the coup attempt in Turkey, 24 July 2016 (in Turkish and German): see <http://www.DİTİB.de/detail2.php?id=1072&lang=en>, accessed 25 March 2019.

⁷² News of the accusations appeared in 'Almanya'da DİTİB'le ilgili soruşturma [Investigation against DİTİB in Germany]', *Deutsche Welle*, 18 January 2017: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/almanyada-DİTİBle-ilgili-soruşturma/a-37179736>, accessed 25 March 2019.

⁷³ DİTİB press release on the accusations, 9 December 2016 (in Turkish and German): see <http://www.DİTİB.de/detail2.php?id=1102&lang=en>, accessed 25 March 2019.

⁷⁴ News about the recall of imams appeared in 'Türkiye casuslukla suçlanan imamlarını geri çekiyor [Turkey recalls imams accused for espionage]', *Deutsche Welle*, 10 February 2017: see <https://www.dw.com/cda/tr/t/%C3%BCrkiye-casuslukla-su%C3%A7lanan-imamlar%C4%B1n%C4%B1-geri-%C3%A7ekiyor/a-37495525>, accessed 25 March 2019.

membered to any peak platform (Lemmen 2001, 88), but this attitude changed in the following years, and it pioneered the founding of common platforms such as the KRM.

Coordination between DİTİB and other Muslim organizations set up by Turkish migrants has been improving, but there has been no final solution. In the past, there were contestations between DİTİB, as the representative of official Islam, and other Islamic groups, such as IGMG and VIKZ. The organizations were also in competition to recruit more mosque associations by encouraging transfers from their rivals. Starting from 2000s, such issues are rare, and most of the problems between the organizations seem to have been resolved (Çakır and Bozan 2005, 203). One result of these improved relations is KRM, which was a joint initiative. Also, a report from the German parliament (Document (11) 2018, 6) noted that around 40 Diyanet imams were working for IGMG mosques in 2018, which reflects the close relationship between these organizations.

In brief, DİTİB shares Diyanet's unique Turkish Islamic understanding, which is based on Sunni Islam. Even though the majority of Muslims in Germany are Sunnis (Spielhaus 2014, 14–17), the other elements in this understanding – Turkish nationalism and secularism – have sometimes led to factions and even disputes between DİTİB and other groups. Today, as a result of the pull factors provided by the German recognition system, most of these groups are working together and cooperating for the common good on issues such as religious instruction, and they have established common platforms – such as KRM – to act collectively in the German Islam Conference (Deutsche Islam Konferenz or DIK) (see, Document (28) 2018). DİTİB's non-party political identity supports its legitimacy and makes it the representative of the state in the eyes of the community. Therefore, it could claim to represent the Turkish community in religious matters more than any other organization; it already sees itself as representing 70 per cent of Muslims living in Germany.⁷⁵ Furthermore, by seeking solutions to local problems and by achieving recognition in Germany, DİTİB could move into a leading position compared with other religious organizations, but it needs to put more distance between itself and Diyanet.

5.3. DİTİB from a transnational perspective

As expressed by Gutknecht (2014), cross-border connections or loyalties are also a critical issue in the frame of recognition for religious organizations. As an immigrant community that has seen a constant back and forth movement of people, remittances,

⁷⁵ 'About us' section of DİTİB's website (in Turkish and English): see <http://www.DİTİB.de/default1.php?id=5&sid=8&lang=en>, accessed 26 March 2019.

ideologies, ideas and religion since the start, the Turkish community in Germany could be categorized as a transnational one. Almost all of the political, cultural and religious organizations in the community have transnational characteristics. These links have been created and fostered by different actors in different periods of the history of Turkish migration. The first economic transnational relations were instigated by guest workers to support their families via remittances; these links were supported by Turkey to raise foreign currency for domestic investments. Following the 1973 economic depression, transnational ties evolved as a result of the spiritual needs of emigrants. The transnationalization of political movements followed, with asylum seekers fleeing after various clashes in Turkey. Almost all of the pioneering Turkish immigrant institutions were either founded or affected by these processes, which gave them transnational characters.

Most religions have transnational characteristics: their messages and institutions cross borders, and they have a desire to spread. Islam follows this basic pattern, with some minor differences. Furthermore, Islam is an immigrant religion in Germany and there are still debates about whether it should be embraced as a natural component of the community. Therefore, DİTİB is a transnational organization, and these factors strengthen this identity. Like other Islamic organizations, it has cross-border links connecting it to its homeland. These links and the conditions that create them will be discussed in the following section, along with the question of how these transnational links are perceived – a crucial issue for recognition. German attitudes to these links will be explored in the second part of this section, with the aim of understanding the scope of transnational connections and Germany's perception of them through history.

5.3.1. Transnational links of DİTİB

As has been seen, DİTİB is a controversial organization, with debates mainly focusing on whether it belongs in or is loyal to Germany. Recently, its president stated that DİTİB is a German organization that was founded in Germany according to German law, and that it respects the German Constitution.⁷⁶ This speech could be understood as a response to increasing criticism on the part of the German authorities about its cross-border relations. Although DİTİB's administrators always emphasize its 'Germanness', some features make it a transnational organization. Rosenow-Williams (2012, 198) adds that DİTİB is not only a home

⁷⁶ 'DİTİB'den yeni başlangıç: Almanya'ya aitiz [A new beginning for DİTİB: we belong to Germany]', *Deutsche Welle*, 16 January 2019: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/DİTİBden-yeni-ba%C5%9Flang%C4%B1%C3%A7-almanyaya-aitiz/a-47110575>, accessed 1 April 2019.

or host country-oriented organization; rather, it is a transnational organization whose activities are related to both sending and receiving countries and therefore it has many cross-border links. These links will be discussed under two categories: religious and organizational.

As a transnationally founded institution, DİTİB's cross-border links can be observed in all three levels of its structure – federal umbrella organization, state unions and mosque associations (Yaşar 2012, 206) – and these links go beyond just receiving imams from Diyanet (Kortmann and Rosenow-Williams 2013b, 49). The relation between DİTİB and Turkey can even be seen in the fact that its name includes Diyanet (Diyanet İşleri). Therefore, this study will not only show the existence of these transnational links; it will also focus on their extent and their effect on the organization. In addition, as seen earlier, both sending and receiving countries have had shifting policies on this issue. Thus, the transformation of these transnational links in parallel to these changes will also be scrutinized.

DİTİB is discussed as an extension of Turkey's Diyanet or as a representative of the official Turkish Islam in the literature (see, among others, Abadan-Unat 2002; Lemmen 2001; Wunn et al. 2007). Several official reports prepared by the German parliament have defined it as an organization that is linked to or is a foreign branch of Diyanet, and thus is open to Turkey's influence in many respects (Document (7) 2015, 15; Document (21) 2018, 6; Document (17) 2000, 8). Similarly, Gorzevski (2015, 47) argues that the by-laws at all three levels open up space within the control and decision-making mechanisms of the organization to Diyanet. For instance, the president of Diyanet is the honorary president of DİTİB and can attend meetings and inspect all of the organization's documents, but he has no voting rights (DİTİB Umbrella Organization by-law, Article 4). Similarly, DİTİB's presidents have always been Turkish public servants working in the Turkish embassy in Berlin as advisers on religious affairs. Furthermore, presidents are not the only Turkish civil servants at the executive level: in response to a parliamentary question, the German government stated that three Turkish officials were working in the executive board in 2017 (Document (30) 2017, 5).

These examples hint at the existence of transnational links and their potential for affecting the organization, but they are not the only ones. In addition to presidents, religious advisory councils include Turkish religious attachés and theologians at every level of the administration. As stated before, presidents are elected from and by the executive boards, while candidates for these boards must be approved by the high religious advisory committee, which is formed of five religious attachés from Turkey (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 197; DİTİB Umbrella Organization by-law, Article 9). The highest religious and administrative organs of

the umbrella organization are linked to a greater or lesser degree to the main body in Turkey, and even though they select their own boards, advisory councils exercise control over these boards. Also, the fact that Turkish public servants are employed in the organization is also evidence of the transnational character of the organization.

Transnational links are also visible at the state level, which is one of the most important levels for recognition. Here, religious attachés acted as coordinators for the imams in their region for an extended period after DİTİB's foundation. However, from the 2000s onwards, DİTİB began to establish regional unions to coordinate its members' activities and work with state authorities. The administrators of these state unions are not religious attachés, as they were before, but are local people with different occupations. This marks a critical change in the frame of transnationality. However, the high religious advisory committees still have indirect control over all part of the organization (DİTİB State Union of Bavaria by-law, Article 21), and, as a rule, their members must be educated theologians who have completed at least four years of study at a faculty or college of Islamic theology (DİTİB State Union of Bavaria by-law, Article 20). As there is a lack of Islamic theology faculties in Germany, this means that religious attachés and imams sent from Turkey are the only candidates. This situation provides an opportunity for transnational control or influence on state unions (Yaşar 2012, 116), and so, although cross-border links are weaker at the state level, they still exist and have the potential to affect decision-making processes.

Democratically elected local people also manage local mosque associations. This level is at the bottom of the hierarchy, and so all of the transnational links noted above could have an effect. According to Article 19 of their by-law, presidents of the umbrella organization and state unions are natural members of the high-level advisory boards of every DİTİB mosque, and these boards can inspect and control every activity and document of the mosque association; this could therefore be seen as an extension of the transnational effect. Furthermore, imams in these mosques are public servants educated in and sent by Turkey. Although the associations are financed through the contributions and donations of members, not enough is collected to fund all of the activities, facilities and imams' salaries. Therefore, the transnational financing of imams is a crucial issue for local mosque associations and for DİTİB.

In addition, the media and politicians always focus on imams from Turkey when discussing the effects of transnationality. In many German parliamentary reports, imams are seen as the most obvious example of Turkey's transnational influence (Document (7) 2015, 15; Document (21) 2018, 6). However, even though they are points of contact for the Turkish

community in Germany, they have very little power in the administration of organizations. According to the by-law of mosque associations, imams can attend meetings only when subjects relating to religion are being discussed, and they can only speak about these issues (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, Article 11). However, imams can be elected to the high religious advisory board of the state union, which has considerable power over member organizations. According to the by-laws of mosque associations, this board can take decisions on religious matters and these decisions would be binding for member organizations. In addition, this board is authorized to monitor member associations, and it can ask for an extraordinary meeting of the general assembly if the executive board is seen as acting inappropriately (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, Article 24; DİTİB State Union of Bavaria by-law, Article 21). This last point also proves the existence of transnational links at all three levels of the organization.

DİTİB officials are also aware of these transnational links and of the problems they cause in the organization's relations with Germany. In an interview, Zekeriya Altuğ said:

DİTİB's most distinctive feature is its political neutrality, which opens our mosques to all Muslims. They are talking about links to Turkey ... There are 17–18 reports prepared by influential social scientists and pioneering institutions in Germany about us. They could not even find any effect of these links on our activities at the end of their research about our associations, by-laws and everything. They are only saying that there is a *potential* for a possible political effect. They are hesitating about giving our rights just because of this possibility, though it has never happened. (Interview 6, 2019)

From this quote, it can be seen that DİTİB accepts that there are transnational links, but denies that these links have an effect on their decisions. It is claimed that these links are not political and that they never influence DİTİB's activities in Germany.

At this point, another question should be asked: have these transnational links always been like this? In 1984, DİTİB was founded in Cologne with a centralized organizational structure and with all of the mosque associations directly linked to the umbrella organization. As a result, religious attachés acted as coordinators of the member associations, a role that could be considered as involving more substantial transnational control. However, institutionalization at the state level and the establishment of state unions altered this situation, and the coordination role was handed over to local members of the associations. This change could be understood as decreasing the effect of transnational links on the organization.

As seen above, DİTİB administrators evaluate transnational links as existing but affecting only religious matters. As noted at the beginning of this section, Islam aims to spread

its message to the whole world, as do many other religions, and this creates the potential for transnational activities. It can therefore be claimed that Diyanet in Turkey has absolute authority over DİTİB with regard to religious issues; as Zekeriya Altuğ stated:

We are connected to Diyanet only for religious matters; they are our main reference point. Religious authority was the greatest need of our community when DİTİB was founded. People have trusted Diyanet's expertise on religious issues. Today, it is not possible for us to say that we do not recognize the fatwas [decisions on religious matters] of Diyanet; our member associations would oppose us. (Interview 6, 2019)

In conclusion, it is evident that DİTİB is a transnational organization and has transnational links to Diyanet in Ankara. These links can be categorized as organizational and religious, and they are apparent at all three levels of DİTİB's structure through its by-laws. The only visible financial link between the two is the payment of imams' salaries by Diyanet. All of these links have the potential to influence the decision-making mechanisms of DİTİB, something that is accepted by the organization. However, it is claimed that these links have not affected their activities in Germany – with the exception of religious activities – since the foundation of the organization. Their argument is that 'Diyanet is just a religious reference point for us, because of its expertise in religious matters, and it should not be a problem for us in Germany', and so they do not see these links as problematic. In an interview with ZDF, DİTİB's president did not directly answer the question about cutting these ties, but added: '[L]ife is changing, and these things could change too.'⁷⁷ As seen above, the most significant factor behind any changes to these links is recognition and its conditions.

5.3.2. The attitude of Germany towards DİTİB's transnational links

A recent parliamentary question asked in the German government was called 'DİTİB as the long arm of Turkish President Erdoğan' (Document (11) 2018). The negative political atmosphere surrounding DİTİB's transnational character is clear from this title. Many German politicians and media outlets have reflected similar opinions about the organization in recent years: a simple search on *Deutsche Welle*'s website reveals the increasing interest in and change in perception about DİTİB in the German media. For instance, 232 news items relating to DİTİB have been published on the website since 2016, with just 167 in the period between 2000 and

⁷⁷ Interview with DİTİB's president, ZDF, 28 October 2016 (in German): see <https://www.zdf.de/nachrichten/heute/neuer-DITIB-chef-pocht-auf-anerkennung-als-religionsgemeinschaft-100.html>, accessed 10 April 2019.

2016.⁷⁸ As far as the change in tone is concerned, while DİTİB used to be mentioned as the most prominent Islamic umbrella organization in the migrant community and as a suitable partner for the state, and thus fostering integration, before 2016, the *Deutsche Welle* website has focused on its transnational links and has criticized the organization since then. Obviously, the reason for these changes can be found in political dynamics at both national and international levels. At this point, an important question arises: what are the conditions that the organization has faced over its history and in the present day?

It could be argued that Germany's attitude to DİTİB and its transnational links are closely correlated to the political conjuncture of the time. As briefly mentioned above, the attitude towards DİTİB was different in the beginning compared with the present day. Germany welcomed the foundation of the organization in Cologne, but this attitude changed over time and is now more critical. In a related study, Laurence (2006, 263) classified European governments' approaches to the institutionalization of Islam as either a '*laissez-faire* policy of outsourcing (1974–1989)' or a 'proactive policy of incorporation (1989–2004)'. This reflects the welcoming of transnational Islamic organizations in the first period, and de-transnationalization and European governments' cooperation efforts in the second period – and this generally mirrors the case of DİTİB. Therefore, this section applies a parallel categorization to the German perspective and focuses on the reasons behind this shift.

Initially, DİTİB and its transnational links were welcomed by Germany, for two main reasons: first, Turkish secular Islam was regarded as a moderate form of Islam, and so DİTİB could lead to the establishment of this type of Islam in Germany (Rosenow-Williams 2012, 190). This kind of reasoning was a consequence of the atmosphere created by the Islamic Revolution in Iran. Thus, it could be claimed that Turkey and Germany had the same interest in 'controlling' or 'regulating' Islamic groups in the country. Second, because the migration process focused on economic gains in the beginning, it underestimated other needs of these workers. Later, policymakers on both sides failed to foresee the trend for these guest workers to settle in the host country. Islam was generally understood as a religion of foreigners and Germany did not consider that it was its duty to provide for the spiritual needs of immigrants, therefore it saw Turkey as responsible for these needs (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 102–3). This approach continued into the 1980s, based on the temporary nature of Turkish migration and the state's promotion of returns to the homeland. In this context, supporting religious belief, which

⁷⁸ The search was made through DW's website and could be verified: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/g%C3%BCndem/s-10201>, accessed 10 April 2019.

is an essential part of Turkish migrants' national identity, could encourage the dream of a return home. However, there was a need for experience and funds to deliver these services, which did not exist in the German state because of historical church–state relations and the secular political system. Germany therefore let the sending state and its organizations deal with the religious needs of their migrants.

However, the foundation of such a transnational organization had its critics, and their concerns mostly shaped the second period. During the foundation process, some people had concerns that such an organization would have an influence over Muslims in Germany (Sunier and Landman 2015, 47). These concerns started to influence state policy in the following years, and the incorporation or de-transnationalization period began. Primary reasons for this change could have included security concerns relating to Islamic organizations, the acceptance of migrants' permanency in Germany, and possibly Turkey's changing interest in its emigrants.

German policymakers started to accept that Turkish immigrants were now a permanent part of the community in the 1990s; this produced a need for contact points to facilitate interaction. At the same time, the atmosphere created by violent terrorist attacks and incidents in the Islamic world led to a focus on transnational Islam in Europe and Germany (see Document (9) 1995). However, unlike in the previous period, this combination of factors did not suggest an obvious solution. One of the main reasons for this change was the realization that foreign ties were created among immigrant communities via 'official Islams' controlled by politicians in sending states (Laurence 2006, 268). As a consequence, European countries changed their attitudes to sending states' 'official' Islamic organizations and started to found Islamic councils to reduce home country influence on Islam and Muslims in Europe (Laurence 2015, 69). Germany's Minister of the Interior Wolfgang Schauble initiated the German Islam Conference (DIK) in 2006, and examples from other European countries were examined during the debates in the parliament on this initiative (Document (5) 2006).

Laurence (2006, 265) argued that this de-transnationalization period ended in 2004, probably because of the date of publication, but one could say that this process is still continuing. The inauguration of DIK could be regarded as an attempt to reduce DİTİB's power compared with other Islamic organizations in Germany. However, there has always been debate about the groups invited to these summits. Interviewees from DİTİB claimed that small organizations that are labelled 'representatives of liberal Islam' and people who see themselves as 'representatives of unorganized Muslims' have been invited solely to reduce or balance DİTİB's power in these meetings (Interview 5, 2018; Interview 6, 2019). Therefore, it could be

argued that Germany maintained its negative attitude towards DİTİB after 2004. However, this negative stance was not sufficient to suspend cooperation until more recently.

During the 2000s, DİTİB was regarded as a partner: for instance, many projects implemented by the central office in Cologne and DİTİB's member associations were funded from the federal budget during these years (Document (30) 2017, 16–17). There were almost no negative reports on the organization and it also played a representative role for Muslims in Germany and made statements about the need for Muslim recognition.⁷⁹ These calls for recognition were taken seriously and states responded. In Hamburg, for example, DİTİB signed a state agreement on the rights of Muslims in 2012 and had almost the same rights as other recognized religious organizations.⁸⁰ This shows that, even in these years when Germany was aware of the transnational links and was making policies based on this awareness, DİTİB was still a reliable state partner. However, it is worth noting a specific change in that attitude that occurred after 2016, a change that could be explained by two main reasons from each side of the story.

According to the German side of the story, the main reason for this change was DİTİB's relations with the Turkish state. Relations between Turkey and Germany have not been the best in recent years, with the political crisis following the failed Turkish coup attempt of 2016 playing a pivotal role. While Germany criticized the Turkish government for its actions after the attempt, Turkey blamed Germany for being a safe destination for people who related to the Gulenist organization. Espionage accusations against DİTİB in this context constituted a dramatic point in its history in Germany. The case was closed later by the Office of the Federal Attorney,⁸¹ it is understood that some imams provided information about people close to the GO among DİTİB's members without the knowledge of DİTİB's administration (Document (30) 2017, 8). Even though this incident occurred outside DİTİB's hierarchy and without its knowledge, the news about the organization was negative and destroyed its image as a reliable partner in Germany.

⁷⁹ 'DİTİB'den tanınma çağrısı [A call for recognition from DİTİB]', *Deutsche Welle*, 12 July 2010: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/DİTİBden-tan%C4%B1nma-%C3%A7a%C4%9Fr%C4%B1s%C4%B1/a-5783035>, accessed 11 April 2019.

⁸⁰ 'Müslümanlara Hak Eşitliği [Rights equality for Muslims]', *Deutsche Welle*, 15 August 2012: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/m%C3%BCsl%C3%BCmanlara-hak-e%C5%9Fitli%C4%9Fi/a-16167128>, accessed 11 April 2019.

⁸¹ 'DİTİB imamlarına yönelik casusluk soruşturması kapatıldı [The espionage case against DİTİB's imams was closed]', *Deutsche Welle*, 6 December 2017: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/DİTİB-imamlar%C4%B1na-y%C3%B6nelik-casusluk-soru%C5%9Fturmas%C4%B1-kapat%C4%B1ld%C4%B1/a-41682087>, accessed 12 April 2019.

Furthermore, critics pointed out the potential influence of transnational links on DİTİB; previously, these links had not been regarded as being used politically. German states swiftly responded to these accusations, and one by one declared that they were suspending or reconsidering their partnerships with DİTİB.⁸² German state authorities started to criticize DİTİB's transnational links to Turkey and called for it to sever them. This was not the first such reaction in the history of relations between the two countries: in a similar case, some teachers sent by Turkey for Turkish language and culture classes had been accused of collecting information on mosques and organizations in Germany and 15 Turkish diplomats had been sent back to Turkey in 1982 (Østergaard-Nielsen 2004, 118). However, there were other reasons for the shift in the perception of DİTİB's transnational links.

Germany also had concerns about the results of cooperating with a transnational organization on its integration policy. In response to a parliamentary question, the government openly stated that it wanted Islamic organizations to be localized, as this could boost the integration of Muslims (Document (12) 2017, 2). Furthermore, cooperating with a state-linked religious organization in specific fields could be against Germany's neutrality principle. According to a report prepared in 2012 for the recognition process in Hamburg, there is no regulation against state-linked religious organizations becoming religious communities in Germany (Klinkhammer and de Wall 2012, 51). However, there are problems when it comes to the right to provide religious instruction in public schools. As stated in Article 7.3 of the German Basic Law, the state must be neutral in its stance towards religions and cannot interfere in the religious instruction of religious communities. The possible influence of a foreign state on religious instruction in German public schools is therefore unacceptable, as not even the German state has that right (Document (12) 2017, 14–15). As we have seen, there are also some legal issues that block the recognition of transnational religious organizations. However, there was a clear change in attitude between the 2012 and 2017 reports.

It could also be argued that Turkey's increasing attempts to reach out to its emigrants were another reason for the change in Germany's attitude towards DİTİB. When DİTİB was founded, Turkey's only aim was to block the expansion of other religious organizations in the Turkish community in Germany; this mirrored the host country's interests, because the state was secular, DİTİB was politically neutral, and other groups were targets for both Germany and

⁸² 'Beş soruda DİTİB'in casusluk soruşturması [Espionage investigation about DİTİB in five questions]', *Deutsche Welle*, 15 February 2017: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/beş-soruda-DİTİBin-casusluk-soruşturması/a-37563354>, accessed 12 April 2019.

Turkey. However, the change in Germany's perception of all three aspects could be seen as another factor behind the transformation. Aksel and Akçapar (2017, 147) argue that Turkey's understanding of secularism also changed, strengthening engagement policies in the diaspora, while the solid *laïcité* of Kemalism evolved into a softer version that could be regarded as supporting an official religion. This evolution has influenced DİTİB's secularity too. Therefore, the allegations against DİTİB were taken seriously by Germany, which responded by suspending its good relations with the organization. It could thus be argued that DİTİB's previously welcomed transnational links became a problem when their 'potential for political influence' became visible, and especially in the context of worsening relations between Turkey and Germany.

However, DİTİB's side of the story puts forward some other reasons for the change. Interviewed DİTİB administrators claimed that Germany's attitude started to change long before the stagnation of relations between the two countries, and that the main reasons for this were the rise of far-right movements and DİTİB's recognition claims. In a question about the issue, the head of DİTİB's external relations stated:

our links to Turkey affect our relations with the German state, but I do not think that it is the only issue ... Our links to Turkey were way stronger before. However, DİTİB was the preferred partner of the state because we were not asking for our rights. In this frame, I do not think that the reason is our links to Turkey. Instead, the reason is our claims for permanency and being a part of here. (Interview 6, 2019)

As seen, there is a strong emphasis on DİTİB's demands for recognition as the main reason for the change in Germany's attitude. Furthermore, interviewees also point to the rise of extreme right-wing movements and the political atmosphere created by this as factors affecting the issue. In an interview, Aykan İnan stated:

Eventually, recognition is a political decision. Politicians think that our recognition in a state would have consequences for them. The atmosphere created by the rise of the extreme right is the main reason for that. They would be blamed because of this action and lose votes in the end. (Interview 5, 2018)

They accept that the transnational links involved in their interactions with Germany had an effect, but they also believe that the factors mentioned above were more influential. Therefore, all of these points should be combined in any answer to the question of what was the reason behind the worsening relations between DİTİB and Germany.

To sum up, there was a distinct evolution in Germany's attitude to DİTİB and its transnational links. The organization was welcomed when it was founded in the 1980s, but it also had its critics. In the following years, these critics became more visible, and Germany started to be more aware of the adverse outcomes of collaborating with DİTİB. Therefore, Germany adopted a policy that aimed to create contact points in Islamic communities while reducing the effect of transnational institutions by founding DIK. However, even during this period of incorporation, Germany's position on DİTİB's transnational links was almost neutral. The German state and local authorities continued to regard DİTİB as a suitable partner during the 2000s. This standpoint was revised following the failed coup attempt in 2016 in Turkey. Partnership agreements and dialogue processes between DİTİB and federal and local government administrations have largely been suspended as a result of this shift. Since then, DİTİB's transnational connections have been one of the most discussed topics in the media and in politics, and there are calls for DİTİB to sever these ties as a condition for further negotiations. Transnational links have thus become a key issue for DİTİB's relations with the German state and for its recognition claims.

5.4. DİTİB from a recognition perspective

In this chapter, the research has focused on different aspects of DİTİB, while Chapter 4 looked at religious organizations' recognition in Germany, the conditions for achieving recognition, and the main problems faced by Turkish-Islamic organizations. These are all aspects of this research, which focuses on differences in the recognition process and the reasons for these differences. Thus, in this final section of the chapter, the information already gathered will be used to analyse DİTİB's current position in the recognition process. After an examination of DİTİB's motivation and claims for recognition over time, the section looks at what the organization has done to back up its recognition claims, focusing on the hurdles that were mentioned in Chapter 4. This will lead into the research on DİTİB's current position in the recognition process and an analysis of the specific differences between individual German states (*Länder*), focusing on Bavaria, Hamburg and Hesse.

5.4.1. The way to recognition

When it was founded as an umbrella organization for mosques, DİTİB's main aims were to provide services to Turkish people living in Germany and to dominate the religious field by bringing as many mosques as possible under its roof with the help of Diyanet. As a result, it was expected to block the spread of 'undesirable' Islamic groups and regulate the field, while providing religious services to the migrant community. It is likely that few if any people behind

this strategy and the founding of the organization planned to make claims for recognition in the future. As with Germany's policies towards Muslim organizations, DİTİB's approach evolved slowly as various factors had an impact.

Among these factors, the acceptance of the Turkish community's permanency in Germany not only altered the policies of the host state but also changed the motivations of religious organizations by enhancing future imaginations and expectations. After this point, it was impossible to imagine a future in which younger generations' religious instruction or essential services such as funerals were provided only by mosques. As an interviewee from DİTİB stated:

Our only aim, in the beginning, was keeping our religion alive here. We did not want our children to forget their religion, so we built mosques to pray, give Qur'an courses to our children, and get together. However, we have settled here since then, and the number of our children in public schools has increased, which led us to feel the necessity for religious instruction ... In parallel, our daily needs and problems have increased, which showed us that being a cultural association is not enough. As a result, we realized the necessity of being a religious community. (Interview 5, 2018)

Therefore, the need for recognition arose after the acceptance of permanency. In addition, naturalizations among the community increased after 1990, and equality with other citizens in every aspect of life became a crucial issue for Muslims. Religious organizations adapted to the demands of this new society and started to make claims for recognition.

This turn led Islamic organizations to seek ways to solve these problems and increased their awareness of for recognition structures in Germany. They realized that there were shortcomings in their organizational structures and human capital that needed to be addressed to fulfil the recognition criteria. The difficulties these initial organizations faced in dealing with legal issues and negotiating with the state are understandable. As Mustafa Yeneroğlu stated in an interview:

This issue [recognition] was a topic that a small elite group of the people discussed, and the Turkish community had been unaware of it until the middle of the 1990s. This change correlated with the permanent settlement tendency among the community, who started to buy houses and sites for mosques in that period ... Naturally, a need came up for transformations in institutions in line with the necessities and opportunities of this new situation. However, there was strong opposition to these changes too. When I mentioned being a religious community, my friends in DİTİB opposed this idea until the 2000s. They still saw the organization as a religious service provider for Turkish guest workers. They later accepted the situation and focused on this issue, but it was too late ... [because] Germany has a specific system that allows the state to cooperate with religious organizations at

different levels when they fulfil some criteria. As a result of this late awareness of the issue, they could not find human capital with expertise in these issues ... Turkey sent public servants who were also not familiar with the society, language or these processes. As a result of these factors and Germany's unhelpful attitude, Muslim organizations could not adequately change to fit the criteria for recognition. (Interview 1, 2018)

DİTİB was not very different from other organizations in this respect. All of its imams and some of its administrators were sent by Turkey, and, naturally, they were not familiar with the society, the language or, most importantly, the law and recognition processes. However, this lack of human capital and awareness of the process seems to have been solved with the second and third generations of migrants. Rosenow-Williams (2012, 213) mentions tension in DİTİB between younger generations who favour localization and older generations who oppose this idea and advocate for the protection of links with Turkey. With regard to the current situation, it could be said that DİTİB now employs experts born and bred in Germany and educated in related fields to deal with these issues, which shows the tendency towards and focus on localization.

It could be claimed that Germany's efforts in creating contact points also helped organizations in this period. Germany was aware of the situation of Muslim organizations and their structural weaknesses; a document from the German parliament suggested that these organizations should be informed of the legal procedures and conditions relating to recognition to solve the representation problem (Document (5) 2006, 13), although there is no evidence that these suggestions were implemented. Moreover, DIK could be regarded as an influence in this context, since many crucial issues were debated by the representatives of umbrella organizations and state institutions at its summits. For instance, the themes of the 2014 summit included the legal basis of state–religion relations in Germany and the establishment of proper cooperation between Islamic organizations and the state based on the law (Document (27) 2016, 4). It could be argued that such efforts eventually led to improvements in the recognition of Islamic organizations.

On the other hand, as claimed by Laurence (2015, 70), state-linked Islamic organizations started to cooperate with other religious organizations to protect their shared interests: for example, DİTİB pioneered the foundation of KRM in cooperation with other major umbrella organizations. Interestingly, the organizations invited to join were those that were subject to DİTİB's aim of control, which caused severe contestations between these groups. From this perspective, Germany's strategy for creating a contact point possibly led to better

awareness about the recognition process and related problems. Furthermore, DIK helped ease the long-lasting contestations between the major Islamic organizations in KRM as they had to act together for their common interests at the summits.

As a result of this long process, DİTİB seemed to understand the need for recognition in Germany. It had achieved only basic recognition before the early 2000s: both its umbrella organization and the mosque associations were ‘registered organizations’ and there was almost no sign of further initiatives. However, increasing awareness about further opportunities for recognition, the changed expectations of members who became permanent settlers and improvements in human capital brought about several transformations in the structure of the organization. For instance, according to Yaşar’s (2012, 65) detailed study, 24 out of 37 amendments made between 2001 and 2009 to the by-laws related to DİTİB’s name, aim and structure. Notably, the 2009 changes almost rewrote the by-laws and defined the structure of state unions, which was as a big step towards recognition (Gorzewski 2015, 65). Consequently, DİTİB openly called on the German authorities to recognize the organization as a religious community so that it could represent Muslims in negotiations with the state.⁸³

Similar changes were made in the following years to fulfil the recognition conditions as a result of negotiations with state authorities. For example, a local newspaper reported on a meeting about the amendments made to the 2012 version of the by-laws, seeing this as proof of DİTİB’s persistence in claiming recognition.⁸⁴ The new by-laws also led to many improvements in the structure of the organization. This change could be seen as a transformation from a cultural association to a religious community, because almost all of the amendments had this aim. An interviewee from DİTİB defined the process and alterations as follows:

Our first organizations were in the form of cultural associations, and this issue created a tradition that we are still struggling to break ... With the changes made in 2012, our association’s by-law was transformed into a religious community logic from a cultural organization. It was the biggest change in our constitution since our foundation. It was not possible to be recognized with the previous one, because it was a cultural organization’s by-law. However, the new one is directly a religious community by-law. It has direct claims for the rights of religious communities, such as giving religious instruction in public schools and taking part in the foundation of Islamic theology faculties.

⁸³ ‘DİTİB’den Tanınma Çağrısı [DİTİB’s call for recognition]’, *Deutsche Welle*, 12 July 2010: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/DİTİBden-tan%C4%B1nma-%C3%A7a%C4%9Fr%C4%B1s%C4%B1/a-5783035>, accessed 1 May 2019.

⁸⁴ Aykan İnan, ‘DİTİB Yeni Tüzüğü ile Dini Cemaat Olmaya Kararlı [DİTİB is decisive about being a religious community with its new by-laws]’, *Haberbayern.de*, 16 January 2013: see <http://www.haberbayern.de/DİTİB-yeni-tuzugu-ile-dini-cemaat-olmaya-kararli-460h.htm>, accessed 1 May 2019.

Constitutions of church associations were taken as an example for this new version. (Interview 5, 2018)

As a result of a long preparation process after the 2000s, DİTİB's new constitution could be interpreted as a big step on the path to recognition. In the past, it had not directly claimed to be a religious community, and some studies show that it was still defining itself as a welfare or migrant organization, emphasizing its social and cultural functions alongside its religious ones (Kortmann 2012, 310–12; Kortmann and Rosenow-Williams 2013b, 46). However, this issue was cleared up in the 2012 by-law: Article 1 stated that all member associations had to add 'DİTİB Turkish-Islamic Community' to their name (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012). As a result of this change, all of the DİTİB mosque associations began to call themselves religious communities.⁸⁵ The aim of the associations was also revised: Article 2 stated that they aimed to provide religious education in public schools (DİTİB Mosque Associations by-law, 2012).

5.4.2. Results of recognition processes

As a result of DİTİB's many changes, its interactions with the state increased. The organization was seen as a partner by state authorities on many critical issues relating to Muslims, and many of its projects were funded by the state during the 2000s. Also, some agreements were signed between German states and DİTİB in the years following 2012, which could be evaluated as a turning point in the recognition process. The city state of Hamburg was a pioneer in this context, signing the first state agreement with DİTİB in 2012.⁸⁶ This agreement was the result of lengthy negotiations between Hamburg and Islamic organizations and provided almost equal rights to Muslims living in the city. Following Hamburg, Bremen concluded a similar process in 2013.⁸⁷ These agreements resolved many problematic issues, such as religious education, the construction of mosques, the use of cemeteries and religious holidays (Document (31) 2012; Document (32) 2013). In addition, the state of Lower Saxony signed a contract with DİTİB in 2012 granting it the right to open chaplaincies in prisons (Spielhaus and Herzog 2015b, 435). These examples could be seen as the results of processes

⁸⁵ The story of the transformation from cultural organization to religious society can be seen through the change in the organization's name over time through a search using DİTİB as a keyword at 'Gemeinsames Registerportal der Länder': see https://www.handelsregister.de/rp_web/search.do, accessed 20 May 2019.

⁸⁶ 'Müslümanlara Hak Eşitliği [Equal rights for Muslims]', *Deutsche Welle*, 15 August 2012: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/müslümanlara-hak-eşitliği/a-16167128>, accessed 5 May 2019.

⁸⁷ 'Staatsvertrag mit Muslimen in Bremen [State agreement with Muslims in Bremen]', *Die Welt*, 16 January 2013: see https://www.welt.de/print/die_welt/hamburg/article112791784/Staatsvertrag-mit-Muslimen-in-Bremen.html, accessed 4 May 2019.

that began in the 2000s and achievement of the second level in the scale of recognition, which includes making agreements with state authorities. Some of these agreements were made for a specific reason and resolved key issues faced by Muslims every day, but they do not necessarily grant religious community status with all the constitutional rights that come with it. The prison chaplaincy agreement in Lower Saxony is an excellent example of this. On the other hand, state agreements in Hamburg and Bremen provide extensive rights that come with third- or fourth-level recognition.

A further step on the recognition scale was DİTİB achieving religious community status: this is mentioned in the constitution (Article 7) in relation to religious instruction in public schools. Hamburg's and Bremen's agreements include articles relating to education, but with some exemptions for religious instruction, which makes them different from other states' agreements. Public schools in Hamburg provide a 'religion for all' class, while Bremen has a specific condition based on the 'Bremen clause' (Article 141 of the constitution) and offers a 'Biblical history in the Christian context' course instead of religious instruction (Fetzer and Soper 2001, 113; Khorchide 2009, 53). Neither of these state agreements grants the right to religious instruction in public schools but they offer the possibility of revising the curriculum to meet the concerns of the organizations involved (Document (32) 2013, §8; Document (31) 2012, §6). Therefore, it could be argued that these agreements do not give full recognition to Islamic organizations, but both grant religious community status.

While both the Bremen and the Hamburg contracts describe Muslim organizations as religious communities in the text, the Bremen agreement makes a more explicit statement about the status of these organizations. In Article 1(3), it states that Islamic religious communities and their member communities are religious communities within the meaning of the Basic Law (Document (32) 2013, §1.3). However, as noted above, this status does not cover every aspect of religion. Some members of DİTİB believe that these agreements could have applied these specific conditions so as not to grant 'real' recognition status. In a similar vein, Hofhansel (2010, 204) claims that conditions for recognition as a religious community could become an obstacle for Islamic organizations in states where Article 7(3) is used for religious instruction. When the agreements in these two states are regarded from this perspective, it could be claimed that DİTİB's recognition as a religious community was more straightforward here than in other states. Another state that acted in the same period was Hesse, where DİTİB was recognized as a religious community and entitled to give religious instruction in public schools (Arkilic 2015, 27; Euchner 2018, 105). In Hesse, however, there was no state agreement, unlike in Hamburg

and Bremen. Furthermore, Hesse has direct religious instruction classes that are different from mixed religion classes, making it the first state to allow Islamic religious instruction in Germany.⁸⁸ Thus, it could be argued that the situation in Hesse constitutes the only example where DİTİB is directly recognized as a religious community.

There are also failures – perhaps more of them than achievements. In Lower Saxony, dialogue had started for a state agreement like the ones in Hamburg and Bremen, but the CDU government suspended negotiations with DİTİB in 2016 (Document (27) 2016, 9). Similarly, the state of Rhineland–Palatinate started talks with Islamic organizations, including DİTİB, in 2014. Two expert reports affirmed DİTİB’s capability of being a religious community and providing religious instruction in public schools (Document (33) 2015, 2). However, negotiations were halted as a result of increasing criticism about DİTİB’s transnational links in 2016. The situation was similar in North Rhine–Westphalia, a region with a considerable Turkish-Muslim community and the headquarters of the umbrella organizations. Negotiations were suspended in 2016 due to the conjuncture created by the incidents in Turkey,⁸⁹ although the reports prepared by experts during this process did not see any legal obstacles to recognition (Document (26) 2016, 10; Document (27) 2016, 8–9). These examples show that DİTİB’s transnational links to Diyanet and relations between Turkey and Germany had a particular impact on the recognition process. However, interviewees from DİTİB emphasized the domestic politics of Germany as the critical factor behind this situation. In an interview, Zekeriya Altuğ said:

We must admit that the relations between Turkey and Germany have an evident impact on the process of recognition. However, I do not believe that it is the whole and real reason. Germany’s relations with Turkey began to worsen from the end of 2016, but our talks had slowed down way before then. For example, in North Rhine–Westphalia, reports of experts about Islamic organizations in the frame of religious community status were expected to be delivered in 2015. However, first they postponed the date then wanted additional reports. Finally, they suspended the concessions by using Armenian voting in parliament and worsening relations with Turkey as an excuse. The question here is why this process did not end way before then. The real reason behind this is AfD’s entry in the parliaments of some states in the last elections. They did not want to take this step in the

⁸⁸ For explanations of Islamic religious instruction, see the website of Hesse’s Ministry of Culture: <https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/schulsystem/religionsunterricht/bekenntnisorientierter-islamischer-religionsunterricht>, accessed 6 May 2019.

⁸⁹ ‘DİTİB als Religionsgemeinschaft bestätigt [DİTİB confirmed as a religious community]’, *Pfälzischer Merkur*, 28 November 2016; see https://www.pfaelzischer-merkur.de/welt/landespolitik/DİTİB-als-religionsgemeinschaft-bestaetigt_aid-2186095, accessed 7 May 2019.

most populated state of Germany. They thought that such a step could fortify AfD. (Interview 6, 2019)

While accepting the role of the worsening relations, Altuğ emphasized the rise of the extremist right-wing party AfD. However, it could also be claimed that transnational links played a crucial role in the failures, as Altuğ admitted and as was stated in the states' reports.

DİTİB has therefore experienced achievements and failures in the frame of recognition processes, mostly from the 2000s onwards, as a result of changing social factors and perceptions on the part of both Islamic organizations and the state. The permanency and related needs of the migrant community played a major role in DİTİB's interest in recognition, while Germany's desire and attempts to create a contact point with Muslims also contributed to this process. DİTİB changed its structure, by-laws and aims in order to become a reliable partner for state administrations and improved its recognition level during these years. However, this positive atmosphere changed in 2016 when relations between Turkey and Germany deteriorated; at the same time, DİTİB's transnational links became more visible and were viewed negatively. This led to some ongoing processes being suspended and some states choosing to suspend negotiations. DİTİB's transnational links and the political influence they could bring to bear, as well as the effect of incidents relating to cross-border relations, were among the reasons for this stagnation, while interviewed DİTİB representatives highlighted the rise of right-wing political movements in Germany. The following sections provide details of these processes in selected states and discuss the effects of these transnational links.

5.4.3. Localizing the recognition processes

In this part, we will try to understand why similar processes in different states (*Länder*) ended up with different outcomes for DİTİB's recognition claims. In addition, the impact of transnational links will be traced. This topic is not debated directly in the literature, and especially not at state level; the focus tends to be on the transnational character of organizations due to the contemporary nature of the recognition issue. However, as already stated, religious community status is directly linked to providing religious instruction in public schools, and so studies related to Islamic religious education in Germany could provide hints about the different states' attitudes towards recognition.

There are two studies that focus on Islamic religious education in public schools and put forward a hypothesis about the differences between states. Hofhansel (2010, 204) analyses the subject from a political perspective and argues that confessional religious instruction is more

likely to take place in states with right-wing (Christian Democrat) than left-wing (Social Democrat) governments, but they are more reluctant to extend this right to Muslims, especially in the initial phase. This claim makes sense if one considers the differences in religious instruction classes in states such as Hamburg and Bremen. The silence surrounding the recognition of Islamic organizations in Bavaria could also be explained by this hypothesis. In addition, Eucher (2018, 94) claims that the difference between the policies of various states on Islamic instruction in public schools could be explained by two factors: the governance capacities of Islamic organizations and the historical background of church–state relations in religious education in the relevant states. This hypothesis is used to explain why Hesse introduced religious instruction classes while the process in Baden-Württemberg ended in failure.

In the light of these two papers, we could set out three parameters that determine the attitude of states towards religious instruction classes: the political position of the ruling government; the capacity of religious organizations; and church–state relations. However, these parameters do not focus on the transnational aspects of these organizations, which are arguably essential factors in the process. Therefore, in the following sections, this research highlights the effect of transnational links on the negotiations between DİTİB and government in three selected states: Hamburg, Hesse and Bavaria. These three states are differentiated according to the results of recognition talks: the Hamburg process ended with a state agreement; Hesse directly recognized DİTİB as a religious community and granted the right to religious instruction; and Bavaria is largely silent on the issue of DİTİB’s recognition claims and the related processes.

5.4.3.1. Hamburg

Hamburg was the first state to sign a state agreement with Islamic organizations. This provided an example for other states with considerable Muslim communities, and similar processes were initiated in other German states following Hamburg. The agreement was signed after lengthy negotiations with the Hamburg branches of DİTİB, SCHURA (Rat der Islamischen Gemeinschaften or Council of Islamic Associations) and VIKZ, and it clarified the rights of Muslims organizations by collecting them all in one place. The agreement defines the signatory organizations as religious communities, which could be understood as third-level recognition, based on the scale of recognition set out in the previous chapters. Moreover, the agreement has 13 articles that cover almost every aspect of Muslims’ life in Germany. It could be claimed that the rights covered by the contract include nearly all of the rights that come with

full recognition. In brief, there are articles regulating education, spiritual support in hospitals and prisons, property held by mosque associations, rights relating to state media outlets, Islamic holidays, and so on. However, it should be noted that these rights do not equate exactly to the rights given to religious communities and corporations under public law by the German Basic Law. Instead, they are variations of these rights with some room for future regulations if the organizations earn the right to one of these further statutes (Document (31) 2012, §6–§13). Therefore, despite the fact that the rights it grants to Muslims are quite extensive, the agreement is not particularly generous as far as recognition is concerned.

Interviewee Zekeriya Altuğ, who played an active role in the negotiations in preparation for the Hamburg agreement, complained about state authorities' hesitation in giving religious community status. He stated:

The talks started in 2007 and went fast until 2011 when we almost had a compromise with the state authorities. However, the process slowed down after that time, because the only issue left was recognition as a religious community. The state government offered to give us all the rights but not the status ... We [DİTİB] decided to decline signing an agreement that does not include the status because an agreement that cannot define us as a religious community has almost no benefit to us. Furthermore, we could never have a second chance like this in the future if we had postponed this issue ... As a result of our insistence on this point during the debates, state authorities offered a new plan. They openly said that there is no politician courageous enough to make such a decision, but a report prepared by legal experts about the issue could help in this frame ... Consequently, the reports were completed in 2012, and they added the status in the agreement. (Interview 6, 2019)

The reason for DİTİB's insistence was possibly to gain a constitutional guarantee, because the lack of one arguably makes these solutions temporary or transitional, as they are not under the protection of the constitution (Çinemre 2018, 450). But why did the government hesitate? According to the quote above, the reason was the high political risk of such a decision. This claim was accurate to a certain extent, but it was not the only explanation.

The effect of transnational links on the talks between DİTİB and the state of Hamburg is not mentioned very much in either the literature or the interviews. It could be argued that the negative perception of these links was less pronounced then than it is now. For instance, in a detailed 170-page report prepared on the signatory Islamic organizations, the part about transnational connections and the effects of these links covered only three pages (see Klinkhammer and de Wall 2012). Furthermore, the report confirms the possibility of becoming a religious community, but it advises DİTİB to change its by-laws because of the problems relating to the state's neutrality principle in religious instruction (Klinkhammer and de Wall

2012, 60). Government statements of the time were also in line with the perception reflected in the report. In response to a question in the Hamburg parliament about DİTİB's transnational connections, the senate stated that it was aware of the situation and viewed Diyanet as a state church that also existed in some other European countries. This approach is not in accordance with German Basic Law, but it is not an obstacle for cooperation (Document (34) 2012, 4). Therefore, it could be argued that the transnational links were known and there were some doubts about their possible effects on the organization, but the government chose to grant religious community status to DİTİB.

However, this attitude changed in the following years. The incidents of 2016 and the espionage claims made DİTİB the focus of criticism in Hamburg too. As a result of the shifting relations between Germany and Turkey, some political parties started to ask for the agreement with DİTİB to be suspended or terminated. These statements sometimes followed a social media post by a DİTİB or SCHURA member, and critics claimed that these organizations were against democracy and Christianity.⁹⁰ However, the primary concern of these politicians was obviously the claim that the Turkish government had an influence on DİTİB; this point was clearly expressed by members of AfD and CDU.⁹¹ Although representatives of other parties made similar statements, cooperation between DİTİB and Hamburg is ongoing. According to a CDU spokesperson on religious issues, DİTİB North (the state union of DİTİB responsible for Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein) has so far successfully resisted influence from the umbrella organization and Turkey, and so cooperation is still active; if this were not the case, DİTİB could not be a religious community or a partner for Hamburg.⁹² Thus, although the organization faces severe criticism nationally, state authorities focus on the actions of state unions. This could be evaluated as a success that came as a result of the changes to the organization's structure.

To sum up, the recognition process for DİTİB (and other organizations) in Hamburg was significant because it provided an example for other states. It could be claimed that there

⁹⁰ 'CDU fordert Ende der Zusammenarbeit mit DİTİB [CDU demands the end of cooperation with DİTİB]', *Abendblatt*, 6 January 2017: see <https://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/article209193463/Tuerkischer-Verband-macht-Stimmung-gegen-christliche-Kultur.html>, accessed 19 May 2019.

⁹¹ '5 Jahre Vertrag mit den Muslimischen Verbänden [5 years of agreement with Muslim associations]', NDR.de, 6 June 2018: see <https://www.ndr.de/ndrkultur/sendungen/freitagsforum/5-Jahre-Vertrag-mit-Muslimischen-Verbaenden-buergerschaft666.html>, accessed 19 May 2019.

⁹² 'Hamburger Islamvertrag mit DİTİB erneut in der Kritik [State agreement of Hamburg with DİTİB is again under criticism]', *Abendblatt*, 27 November 2018: see <https://www.abendblatt.de/hamburg/article215886063/Hamburger-Islamvertrag-mit-DİTİB-erneut-in-der-Kritik.html>, accessed 21 May 2019.

were four key issues that had an impact on the process. First, the political views of the government affected both religious education policies and interactions with Muslim organizations (Hofhansel 2010, 204). Clearly, the traditional left-wing tendency of Hamburg was particularly influential, even though the negotiations were started by a CDU government. Second, the ‘religion for all’ model, rather than dedicated Islamic religious instruction in public schools, arguably eased the process because Islamic organizations would not have been able to use these privileges even if they had achieved recognition status. The rise of right-wing parties could be seen as the third factor influencing the process; the government’s hesitation in giving religious community status to Islamic organizations could be regarded in this frame. Finally, DİTİB’s transnational links are an essential factor. Concerns about these links were expressed in the reports prepared for the agreement, although they were not considered as dangerous as they have been more recently. Many political figures criticized DİTİB for being under the influence of Turkey and demanded termination or suspension of the agreement. However, the deal is still valid in Hamburg, and DİTİB continues to enjoy its partner status.

5.4.3.2. Hesse

As mentioned earlier, Hesse recognized DİTİB as a religious community and granted it the right to provide religious instruction in public schools. Even though there was no state agreement between the two sides, this gave Hesse a particular place in the German landscape because DİTİB was clearly recognized as a religious community with full rights. However, this state has also decided to end its cooperation with DİTİB as a result of the debates. This section therefore examines how the organization’s transnational links were perceived in the recognition and termination periods and recounts the story of a collaboration that was once DİTİB’s only success.

The DİTİB state union in Hesse was founded in 2009 to facilitate better interactions with the local administration and improvements in issues relating to recognition. This was a key decision in the history of the organization, which achieved success in Hesse with the recognition of DİTİB as a religious community in 2012 (Euchner 2018, 105). Implementation of this decision started in the 2013–14 school year with the participation of two Islamic communities: DİTİB and the Ahmadiyya community, which was recognized at the same time.⁹³ As already mentioned, the latter became the first Islamic organization to be given the status of corporation under public law and therefore was a natural participant in Islamic religious

⁹³ ‘Okullarda İslam din dersi [Islamic religious instruction in schools]’, *Deutsche Welle*, 17 December 2012: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/okullarda-islam-din-dersi/a-16459920>, accessed 25 May 2019.

instruction. As a result of talks, DİTİB was entitled to give religious education in 25 state schools and Ahmadiyya in two schools.⁹⁴

During the negotiation process, two reports were demanded by Hesse on DİTİB's eligibility for religious community status; this was a similar procedure to the one seen in the other states assessed here. As a result of DİTİB's determination to obtain rights, it made structural and constitutional changes and the reports were positive.⁹⁵ In a newspaper article, Dr Hüseyin Kurt (2018), an adviser to the head of DİTİB Hesse at that time, wrote that the constitution was rewritten in many respects to be compatible with the secularity principle of the state. The role of DİTİB's central administration on the advisory councils was limited, and a relatively independent organ for the inspection of religious education was formed via these amendments in 2012. It could be claimed that these changes played a significant role in the recognition process, while the efforts to reduce the impact of the central DİTİB on the state union and religious education could be seen as being related to concerns about transnational links. Kurt (2018) mentions a letter from the Minister of Education to DİTİB at the end of the process, which warned DİTİB Hesse about its transnational relations and stated that the partnership could be suspended if anything violated the principle of secularism. It is evident that the state of Hesse was aware of and concerned about DİTİB's cross-border linkages during the negotiations, and therefore it gave the state union this warning.

Recognition was put in jeopardy because of the incidents of 2016. A wave of criticism of DİTİB's transnational links began in parallel with events in Turkey and the increased tension in the bilateral relations of two countries. As in other states, the partnership with DİTİB Hesse started to be discussed in the media and politics. As a consequence of the intensified criticism, at the beginning of 2017 the state of Hesse demanded three new reports from three scholars on the transnational character of DİTİB and its effects on religious instruction (see Isensee 2017; Rohe 2017; Seufert 2017). While the reports from Isensee and Seufert focused on religious instruction and Diyanet, Rohe's report looked mainly at DİTİB Hesse's relationships with the central DİTİB and Diyanet in Turkey. According to their findings, there was no evidence of the central DİTİB or Turkey having political influence on religious instruction in Hesse (Rohe

⁹⁴ 'DİTİB Hessen'de 25 Okulda Din Dersi Verecek [DİTİB will give religious instruction in 25 schools]', *Sabah Avrupa*, 17 May 2013: see <https://www.sabah.com.tr/avrupa/2013/05/17/DITIB-hessende-25-okulda-din-dersi-verecek>, accessed 25 May 2019.

⁹⁵ News relating to the results of reports about DİTİB prepared during the process appeared in 'Hessen: Bekenntnisorientierter islamischer Religionsunterricht ist auf dem Boden des Grundgesetzes möglich', 3 July 2012: see <https://religion-weltanschauung-recht.net/2012/07/03/hessen-bekenntnisorientierter-islamischer-religionsunterricht-ist-auf-dem-boden-des-grundgesetzes-moeglich/>, accessed 28 June 2019.

2017, 10). This finding is important because Rohe's report listed almost all of the key incidents where DİTİB was criticized for being under the political influence of Turkey, such as the Armenian resolution in June 2016, the failed coup attempt in July 2016, and the referendum process for constitutional amendments in 2017. However, as mentioned earlier, the report indicated the potential for political influence because of the structural deficits of DİTİB and thus recommended fundamental changes that could make the organization more independent (Rohe 2017, 16–17). The state of Hesse also demanded that DİTİB make necessary changes in its by-laws to avoid this potential political influence and gave it a year to comply, which ended in December 2018.

During this year, DİTİB was the focus of critics in Germany. Media coverage and political discourse were not in favour of the organization, but DİTİB Hesse was eager to maintain its status in the state. Therefore, some parts of the by-laws were amended by the state union to reduce the influence of DİTİB Cologne on the organization and to satisfy the expectations of the state government in late 2018.⁹⁶ These changes were obviously made in order to maintain Islamic religious instruction in Hesse, but, according to news reports, the state government was not entirely satisfied with the amendments and so the decision about retaining the partnership was postponed until the end of 2019, with preparations begun for a scenario in which DİTİB would be excluded.⁹⁷ During the same period, an MP from the AfD group in the parliament of Hesse delivered a petition for the suspension of cooperation with DİTİB. According to this petition (Document (39), 1–2), the main reason for the suspension was DİTİB's transnational links to Turkey and the excess authority given to the organization via religious instruction rights because not all of the Islamic population in Hesse follows DİTİB's Sunni Islam. Consequently, in April 2020 Hesse announced its termination of the partnership with DİTİB for religious instruction; the reason given was its transnational links to the Turkish government.⁹⁸ DİTİB's only success in this context thus turned into a failure because of its transnational links.

⁹⁶ 'DİTİB kommt Land Hessen entgegen [DİTİB meets the state of Hesse]', *Hessenschau*, 11 December 2018: see <https://www.hessenschau.de/gesellschaft/islamunterricht-DİTİB-kommt-land-hessen-entgegen,DİTİB-110.html>, accessed 29 June 2019.

⁹⁷ Press release from the government of Hesse, 'Hessen setzt Ausweitung des in Kooperation mit DİTİB erteilten islamischen Religionsunterrichts aus [Hessen suspends the expansion of the Islamic religious instruction given in cooperation with DİTİB]': see <https://www.hessen.de/presse/pressemitteilung/hessen-setzt-ausweitung-des-kooperation-mit-DİTİB-erteilten-islamischen-religionsunterrichts-aus>, accessed 29 June 2019.

⁹⁸ 'Hessen trennt sich von DİTİB [Hesse separates itself from DİTİB]', *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, 28 April 2020: see <https://www.sueddeutsche.de/politik/islam-unterricht-hessen-trennt-sich-von-DİTİB-1.4891252>, accessed 1 May 2020.

In brief, Hesse is a pioneering state in Germany in the frame of positive action regarding Islamic organizations. It has recognized the Ahmadiyya community as a corporation under public law and granted DİTİB the right to religious instruction in public schools. These two actions were the first of their kind in Germany. DİTİB implemented a series of transformations before achieving recognition as a religious community, and the reports prepared for the negotiation process did not see its transnational links as a significant problem. However, as happened in other states, the incidents that occurred in 2016 and the intensified criticism of DİTİB changed the state's government's attitude to cooperation. As a result, new reports were commissioned in 2017 to investigate three aspects of DİTİB: Diyanet, religious instruction, and the effects of its transnational links. In contrast to the general perception, these reports declared that there was no evidence of Turkey's political influence via cross-border links on religious instruction, but they noted that there was a potential risk as a result of the structure of the organization. DİTİB was given time to change this structure and become independent. At the end of 2018, DİTİB amended its by-law once again to fit these criteria, but these changes did not reassure the government of its independence. Therefore, cooperation with DİTİB on religious instruction was terminated.

5.4.3.3. Bavaria

The Free State of Bavaria could be defined as an example of a 'silent state' in the context of DİTİB's recognition claims. Unlike the previous two states, there is neither a state agreement with Islamic organizations nor recognition of an organization as a religious community. DİTİB and other Islamic organizations have applied for recognition – and even for full recognition – over the last 60 years, but none of the applications has been successful so far (Document (17) 2000, 34; Document (37) 2010, 4). Religious instruction, which is the most significant sign of religious community status, is a compulsory subject in public schools; however, Islamic instruction in the state has a very different history. These processes and the results will be detailed in this section, including interactions between DİTİB and the state authorities, to understand the attitude of the state towards the organization. Additionally, the change in this interaction, especially in recent times, will be emphasized to reveal the relationship between DİTİB's transnational links and the process.

As in other states, DİTİB and its member mosques are organized in registered associations in Bavaria, and it is possible to see cooperation between state authorities and various Islamic organizations on many issues (Rohe 2018, 54–61). As a state with confessional religious instruction in public schools, Bavaria differs from Hamburg and Bremen, where

alternatives were created to facilitate cooperation with Islamic organizations. However, in Bavaria, the solution that has been found is not compatible with other states, where DİTİB is either recognized as a religious community and entitled to provide religious instruction or included on round tables for religious education. The history of Bavaria's initiative goes back to the 1980s. While some Islamic organizations were making applications for corporation under public law status (Document (17) 2000, 34), Bavaria established its first cooperation initiative for Islamic religious instruction in public schools. In this first initiative in 1987–88, the partner was the Ministry of National Education of Turkey, and the teachers sent by the ministry were employed to teach courses that included religious and cultural elements from the homeland (Kothmann 2006, 244). However, this project coincided with a time when the general approach was still focused on the temporary status of migrants and was not adequate to meet demand, so a new solution emerged in the 2000s. In these years, three parties – CSU, SPD and the Greens – decided to create a religious community to act as a partner for the state (Kothmann 2006, 245). These efforts resulted in a series of round-table meetings held by major Islamic organizations to discuss religious education. The organizations involved decided to merge and found the Islamic Community of Bavaria, which applied to provide religious instruction in public schools in 2007, but its application was rejected (Hofhansel 2010, 202). Islamic religious education in the state continued under a model called the Erlangen model and was carried out by Islamic instructors who graduated from the Islamic Religious Education Department at the University of Erlangen-Nuremberg (Hofhansel 2010, 202; Kothmann 2006, 246; Rohe 2018, 60). According to this model, the state cooperates only with the university and solves issues without including Islamic organizations in the process.

There were two key points in this process that related to DİTİB. First, DİTİB was not part of the round-table discussions (Hofhansel 2010, 202). Second, the state does not rely on any organizations for Islamic religious education and is not keen to cooperate with them on that level; this is arguably in line with the claim that Christian Democrat governments are reluctant to extend religious instruction rights to Muslims. Bavaria's distinct perception of the issue was also one of the important points that emerged during observations and occasional conversations with members and administrators of DİTİB's South Bavaria state union. People from DİTİB generally regard Bavaria as one of the most intransigent states with regard to coordination with the organization. Furthermore, they claim that even this frosty relationship between the two sides is now in danger because the state has avoided contacting DİTİB in recent years due to increasing political tensions surrounding the organization.

Traces of this lack of a relationship between the two sides is also evident in documents from the Bavarian parliament. In an early document from 2012, an MP criticized Minister of Finance Markus Söder for attending a DİTİB festival in Nuremberg and asked the government whether it agreed with the claim ‘Islam is a component of Bavaria’, which the minister had made in his speech during his visit. In response, the government quoted the President of the Federal Republic, Joachim Gauck: ‘Muslims who live here belong to Germany’ (Document (38) 2010, 14). Even though this could be interpreted as an open attitude towards Muslims, Bavaria’s critical stance towards DİTİB differentiates it from other states. Similar questions and criticisms about the state’s interactions with DİTİB continued to arise in the following years. For instance, in a parliamentary question about Islamic guidance for Muslims in prisons, the cooperation of the state with DİTİB was openly criticized because of DİTİB’s transnational linkages and the possible influence of Turkey on the organization (Document (35) 2015, 2). In fact, cooperation with DİTİB in this state has always been criticized, even when the organization was considered a reliable partner by the authorities. According to another document (Document (36) 2017, 18), DİTİB state unions in Bavaria applied for the right to provide religious instruction in public schools in 2014, but the application has not yet received a reply. Additionally, this document clearly shows the state’s reluctance to get in touch with DİTİB in the preparation phase of religious instruction in public schools.

In brief, it could be said that Bavaria is the least eager state in terms of interacting with Islamic organizations among the three states analysed here. Issues relating to Islam are solved without the inclusion of major Islamic organizations and relations between DİTİB and the state authorities are far from being stable or positive. The negative view of DİTİB’s transnational links has a longer history in Bavaria, as there were already criticisms of them before the recent crisis. However, it is also possible to argue that the negative stance towards DİTİB’s transnational links and the effects of this negativity became more visible after the recent incidents, as in the other two states.

5.5. Conclusion

This first case analysis chapter has looked at four aspects of DİTİB that relate to the issue of recognition. The historical trajectory of DİTİB, discussed in the context of the dynamics examined in previous chapters, shows that the organization’s changes and its involvement in the religious arena of Turkish migrants were closely related to the transformations that the community faced. There was no artful strategy behind DİTİB’s foundation; rather, it was the result of a conjuncture created by many factors. Moreover, its foundation was not a one-sided

initiative: Germany and Turkey had shared interests, especially in blocking undesirable Islamic groups. As a result, the number of DİTİB's member organizations rose swiftly in the initial phase and it became the most prominent Islamic organization in Germany. Furthermore, mirroring interactions between the community, the host state and the organization itself, DİTİB has played various roles in its history, including as a migrant organization and a representative of Turks and Muslims in Germany.

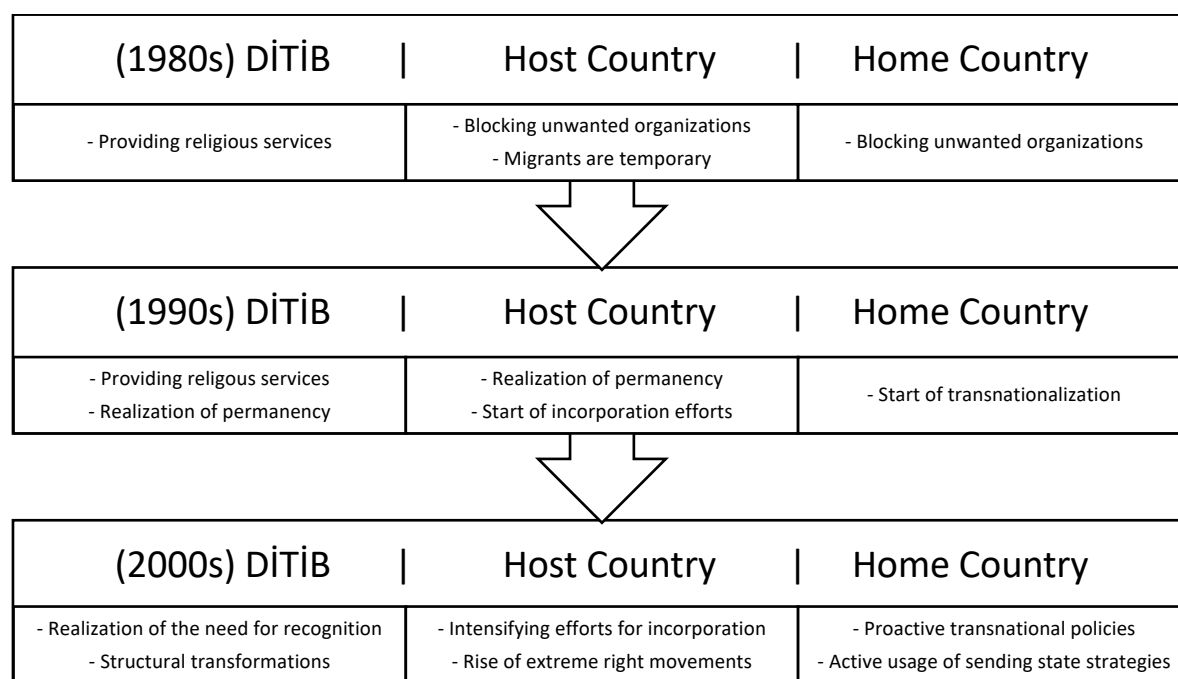


Figure 7: Actors and transformations in DİTİB's recognition process

The second part of the chapter focused on DİTİB's organizational and religious features, which are direct or indirect factors in the recognition process, the three levels of its regulatory scheme, and its religious understanding, with the aim of exploring DİTİB's organizational capabilities in the areas that relate to recognition. A hierarchy and a clear structure are needed for recognition because they are signs of an organization's capacity to carry out state-like functions. DİTİB is a well-organized body at the three levels of the German system and is known as the best-run group among Islamic organizations.

Religious understanding is the primary cause of plurality in the Islamic field in both Turkey and Germany, and the lack of a unified voice is regarded as one of the reasons for the current situation in the recognition process. In parallel to the improvements in the structure of DİTİB, it is possible to see a softening process in religious understanding for the sake of recognition. Cooperation between significant religious factions is increasing, and DİTİB now has a more open attitude to the groups that it was established in order to block. As a

consequence, it could be said that DİTİB has been continually transforming to fulfil its aim of recognition since this appeared on its agenda as a result of the permanent settlement of the Turkish community in Germany.

The third part of the chapter looked at DİTİB's transnational connections and Germany's attitude towards them. DİTİB has cross-border links to its main body in Turkey at all three of its administrative levels; these were more direct in the early years. The links have the potential to affect DİTİB's decision-making processes, but interviewees claimed that political influence has never been exerted. The German authorities were aware of these links from the start, but, even though there was some criticism, they were regarded as neutral or positive features and DİTİB was seen as a reliable partner. Moreover, DİTİB's transnational links have been reduced over the years with amendments to its by-laws designed to avert criticism and facilitate the recognition process. However, there has been no parallel improvement in Germany's perception of DİTİB, and links that were once viewed positively or neutrally have become problematic for the country in recent years. Especially after the incidents of 2016, the relationship between the two sides worsened because of the increased visibility of the potential for political influence on transnational links and the rise of extreme-right political movements targeting Islam and migrant organizations in their campaigns.

The fourth section brought together these findings and examined DİTİB's journey in the recognition process. DİTİB's increasing determination to be granted recognition led to changes in its structure to fulfil the conditions required. As a result, it has managed to become a partner of the state in many projects; this equates to the second step on the recognition scale set out in Chapter 4. Some German states have come up with pioneering decisions in relation to the recognition of Islamic organizations, while others have remained silent. Hamburg and Bremen have signed state agreements that cover the rights of religious organizations and that have brought a certain degree of recognition to DİTİB. However, some fundamental rights, such as the right to religious instruction, have not been included.

An examination of the actions of Bavaria and Hesse provides a broader conceptualization. Hesse was the only German state that recognized DİTİB as a religious community and granted the right to provide religious instruction in public schools until 2020. On the other hand, traditionally more conservative Bavaria has always been negative about cooperating with Islamic organizations, including DİTİB. Therefore, even on the issue of religious education, Bavaria excluded these organizations and found solutions by collaborating with a university. The most significant element these examples have in common is the fact that

transnational links have played a prominent role in these processes. Although they were not seen as a key issue in drawing up state agreements or partnerships in the past, criticism intensified after the incidents of 2016. Almost every state that interacted with DİTİB in the ‘neutrality’ period either suspended the relationship or imposed new regulations to reduce DİTİB’s transnational links.

In conclusion, this chapter has clearly outlined the historical trajectory of DİTİB’s transnational links and the changing perceptions of them. It has been seen that DİTİB is not a direct outcome of Turkish strategy, but was born out of the shared interests of both countries. Population dynamics have influenced the aims of the organization and put recognition on its agenda to respond to emerging needs, while changes in its structure and its relationship with other groups show that DİTİB has been trying to resolve obstacles to recognition. Another important finding of this chapter relates to Germany’s recognition system. It could be argued that the system does not recognize already existing organizations; rather, it forces them to change in order to satisfy its conditions. The political character of recognition also makes it more difficult for Islamic organizations. Political, historical and structural issues play determinant roles in the recognition periods, as shown by the achievements in some states and failures in others. The most common feature of the states analysed is the negative perception of DİTİB’s transnational links, but even here there are variations. Sometimes cross-border links were seen as neutral and not a critical issue that would block recognition; sometimes they were regarded as the main reason to refuse recognition. Although it is not possible to find a common reason for a neutral attitude, a negative reaction could be linked to the increased visibility of political influence and a change in the political atmosphere.

6. AABF: ALEVİ COMMUNITY IN GERMANY

The second case analysed in this comparative study is the Alevi Community in Germany (Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland), which is usually known by its previous name – Federation of Alevi Communities in Germany (Föderation Alevitischer Gemeinschaften in Deutschland) – and AABF, the abbreviation of its Turkish translation: Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu. As its name indicates, it is the organization of Alevis (*Alevi* in Turkish and *Alevite* in German), a religious minority group in Turkey. The group is complicated because there are ongoing debates about who are Alevis and what is Alevism. The word ‘*Alevi*’ etymologically comes from the name Ali, who is the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad and one of the first Muslims. Alevism (*Alevilik*) basically means ‘love for Ali’ (Argun 2003, 102; Şirin 2013) and refers to people who love and follow Ali (Dalkıran 2012, 97); thus, at first sight, the group would seem to be a category of Islam. However, there are many Alevis who support the idea of being a religion independent from Islam, while other groups see themselves as a sect of Islam. In Germany, Alevism is a recognized religion, and AABF is given rights according to Article 7 of German Basic Law as well as state agreements signed in many states.

Like other groups in the Turkish community in Germany, Alevis came to Germany as a result of the worker recruitment agreements. The dynamics that affected DİTİB and other migrant organizations had consequences for Alevis too. Turning points in this history, such as the halt of official recruitment, family reunions, refugee flows and permanent settlement, all influenced the Alevis’ struggle in Germany. However, Alevis have some features that make them different from other groups. First, they have always been a minority group in Anatolia, in the times of both empire and the republic, because Alevism diverges in some ways from Sunni Islam; it could even be defined as the ‘other’ (Sökefeld 2015). Although they share some beliefs with Sunni Islam, most Alevis do not accept the main elements of Islam and practise their rituals – ‘*cem*’ – in ‘*cem* houses’ (*cemevi*) instead of mosques. Also, a *dede* (grandfather in Turkish) leads these rituals rather than an imam.

Historical enmities led to Alevis coming under pressure and having to practise their religion in secret; sometimes, they even pretended (named as *takiyye*) to be Sunni Muslims (Dalkıran 2012, 96). Migration to Germany caused dramatic changes in the history of the group: the fertile atmosphere that allowed religious and political groups to flourish also motivated Alevis to practise their beliefs more openly in the diaspora. However, institutionalization in Germany came later than for other Islamic groups; one of the reasons for this was the difficulty Alevis experienced in overcoming their tendency of concealing their identity, as they had done

historically (Sökefeld 2003, 141). In addition, the transfer of *dedes* to Germany was not as smooth as it was for imams because each *dede* was linked to a specific community and was a ‘kinship-oriented and genealogically based authority’ in the Alevi community (Sökefeld 2002). As a result of these and other reasons, the first Alevi organizations were not founded until the late 1980s. However, even though they began later than other Turkish religious organizations, they have become the most successful in the context of recognition. Today, AABF is a recognized religious community and has right to carry out religious instruction in eight states.⁹⁹

This chapter looks at AABF’s history, religious understanding, structure and transnational links, and, as in Chapter 5, the recognition process is examined in the three states of Hamburg, Hesse and Bavaria.

6.1. AABF from a historical perspective

An in-depth assessment of Alevism is beyond the scope of this research, but a brief introduction is useful to understand the aspects that relate to recognition. This first part therefore defines the term itself and summarizes the history of Alevism from its foundation to modern Turkey. The chapter then covers the institutionalization efforts of Alevis and introduces some of their organizations, focusing on their migration to Germany and their lives in the migrant community. As in Chapter 5, this background is discussed against the backdrop of the dynamics presented in Chapters 3 and 4. Lastly, AABF, which came out of this complex background, will be examined. The main aim of this final section is to show how a centuries-old hidden tradition was revived abroad and how this had a profound influence on the homeland through the foundation of one of the most influential organizations in the Turkish transnational space in Germany.

6.1.1. What is Alevism?

In contrast to the groups detailed in the previous parts of this study, it is quite challenging to define Alevis and Alevism because there are many different subgroups, including *Bekhtashis* and *Nusayris*, among many others. There are also debates about whether it is a religion, a sect under Islam, or a culture (Delibaş 2017, 104; Massicard 2013, 59–60). Therefore, there are different definitions of Alevism, depending on the source of the definition (Arslan 2016, 343–44). There is no consensus on a description of this belief system in the literature either. Some publications see it as part of Islam, with Turkish and Shia elements; some as a political culture with a philosophy of secular democracy and a historical resistance

⁹⁹ ‘About us’, AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 1 July 2019.

against injustice; and others as an ethnic issue, focusing on its shamanic (Turkish) or Zoroastrian (Kurdish) elements (Massicard 2017, 19). As a consequence, some scholars use Alevism as a blanket term for all of these groups (van Bruinessen 1996, 7, 2016, 117). Among these scholars, Yıldırım (2017, 19-20) defines Alevism as an umbrella term for groups sharing two main elements: a doctrine centred on Ali, and a structure that does not follow canon law, which leads to varying local practices instead of the robust rules of Islam. This also explains the lack of the main pillars of Islam, at least among most Alevi groups. Love for Ali is a common position for all groups, with even those who describe themselves as atheist or agnostic Alevis respecting him as a historical figure (Argun 2003, 102). Therefore, this section begins with an exploration of the debate surrounding Ali in Islam's early years. Other key topics, such as Turks and their Islamization, religious conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Iran in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and the attitude of the Turkish Republic to Alevis will be described in brief to understand the effects of these issues on today's Alevism.

As love for Ali is shared by all Alevis, all theories about the history of Alevism refer to his life. Ali was among the first group of people to accept Islam at the time of Prophet Muhammad. Even though he was just a child, Ali stood with the prophet and was one of the closest people to him during his lifetime. He fought in many battles and came to the fore due to his courage. As a sign of this closeness and trust, the prophet let Ali marry his daughter Fatima. However, the death of the prophet in 632 caused an administrative crisis in the newly established state, and discussions began about who would be his successor. These debates and the decision made had a significant impact on the contestations in the history of Islam and created the basis of Alevism.

Abu Bakr was elected as the new leader of the state, but even though he was one of the closest companions of the prophet, some people objected to this decision and claimed that Ali should have been elected leader. Ali was unhappy with the decision and objected to it and to the subsequent two elections (Kocadağ 1996). There are two stories about what happened in this period. According to Ali's supporters, he had the right to be the leader because he had been chosen directly by the prophet, and the election of somebody else went against the prophet's wishes. However, this appointment by the prophet is rejected in the other version of the story. According to Shaban (1971, 16), the stories of the prophet appointing Ali as his successor are improbable because it was against the Arabic tradition of the time to elect someone so young and untested as a leader. Besides, according to Kennedy (2016, 45), Abu Bakr was an ideal choice not only because of his age, abilities and closeness to the prophet, but also because he

satisfied the expectations of prominent tribes in the community. This lack of consensus in the election of the caliph caused the most significant fragmentation in Islam in the following decades.

After the death of the third caliph, Uthman, Ali was finally elected as leader, but the debates did not stop. Some groups, including some of the companions of the prophet and his wife, objected to Ali's leadership and started a rebellion. Although the uprising was quelled by the forces supporting Ali, the incidents that followed this move created a series of clashes among Muslims. As a result, Ali was deposed, and his son was brutally killed in Karbala by the Umayyads. Unsurprisingly, these incidents created opposing views in Islam and led to the division between Sunni and Shia (supporters of Ali) that still exists today.

When it comes to the origins of Alevism as a belief system, there are different theories. According to the first, the circumstances mentioned above in Islam's heartland pushed followers of Ali away from the centre and towards frontiers such as Iran and Central Asia, where they encountered different communities with varying backgrounds and faiths, such as the Turkic tribes. According to this view, Alevism grew out of these journeys to the east and the Islamization of Turks by Ali's supporters in the seventh and eighth centuries. The Turks did not welcome the Arabs initially, and there were many clashes between two sides. Also, the Umayyad regime did not have a positive attitude towards non-Arab nations, and so the Islamization of the Turks took centuries. However, as a consequence, the first Turkish tribes to become Muslim were possibly influenced by the version of Islam that favoured Ali. According to Özyürek (2009), an essential part of the syncretic character of Alevism and what makes it different from Shiism arose in this period, because nomadic Turks combined some of their shamanistic beliefs with mystical Islam (Delibaş 2017, 104; Özyürek 2009). The result was a belief system that followed Ali but included some rituals from the old beliefs in addition to some Islamic ones (Dalkıran 2012, 103–4). For instance, the role of the *dede* in the community, the use of music and some of the dances performed in rituals tend to be regarded as traces of shamanism, which were quite common among pre-Islamic Turkish communities (see, among others, Zarcone 2016).

As a result of migrations to the west in the early centuries of the first millennium, these Turkish tribes moved to Anatolia and started the Islamization of the peninsula. Alevi and the states that existed in these territories were not hostile towards each other until the sixteenth century. While settled and urbanized groups adopted Sunni Islam as a result of religious education and the Qur'an, people in the countryside and nomadic tribes followed a heterodox

belief system. As a result, almost all of the Anatolian countryside was Alevi in the early Ottoman Empire (Yıldırım 2017, 17). Moreover, there are many examples of good relations between the Ottoman administration and Alevis: for example, there was a relationship between the janissaries (Turkish infantry) and the Bektashi order, with every member of this militant group also a member of the brotherhood. According to Yıldırım (2019, 11–12), when one considers the closeness of this group to the centre of the empire, it is easy to understand the extent of good relations during this period.

However, this situation changed because of the clashes between the Safavids and the empire in the sixteenth century. The leader of this rising power was Shah Ismail, an inspiring Alevi, and he appealed to Anatolian Alevis to rise up against the Ottoman Empire. Safavid propaganda was quite influential in Anatolia, and many Alevi tribes became allies of Shah Ismail during the wars between the two states (Dalkıran 2012, 107). The second theory regarding the origins of the Alevi belief system focuses on this period. According to Ocak (1996, 204–9), Alevis were nomadic tribes at the time, but the Ottoman Empire was pushing them to settle; this made them open to Shah Ismail's propaganda since he was presented as a rescuer. According to this narrative, elements of Shia Islam merged with Turkmen tribes' heterogeneous beliefs in this period and created today's Alevism (Ocak 1996, 208–9); this version is also accepted by an interviewed member of AABF. The Ottoman Empire responded violently, leading to many tragedies that have never been forgotten by Alevis (Delibaş 2017, 105–6). This was one of the most significant incidents on which was based the enmity between Sunnis and Alevis that still continues today in Turkey. Alevis were forced to live in the distant rural areas of Anatolia and to continue their rituals in secret. Eventually, this secrecy became a general precaution of the group against the persecution of the state, and it was maintained throughout the following centuries.

Another milestone in the history of Alevis was the founding of the Turkish Republic. There were interactions between Mustafa Kemal and some Alevi leaders during the preparations for the war of independence against the occupying forces following World War One (Yıldırım 2015, 100–101), and many sources claim that Alevis supported the foundation of the secular republic since they expected many changes in their favour as a result (Shankland 2003, 24). The construction of a national identity following the regime change highlighted 'Turkishness', which indirectly this benefited Alevism. The reason for this was the idea that the essence of Turkishness could be found in Alevism, where it had been preserved because of the Sunni–Arab influence (Massicard 2013, 18–22). Moreover, the relatively more straightforward

compatibility of their belief systems with secularism gave them a favourable position with regard to the state (Özyürek 2009). However, this optimism swiftly changed as a result of state policies; Sufi orders and their lodges were abolished in 1925 and the uprising in Dersim, in which Alevis were involved, was violently suppressed (Delibaş 2017, 106; Shankland 2003, 24). Alevis' expectations were thus not met by the new regime and further tragic incidents were added to the group's history (Tekdemir 2018, 34). However, Mustafa Kemal is still loved and respected by most of the community.

As a consequence of the confrontation with the state in the early years of the republic, Alevis continued to live in the countryside. However, the change in political atmosphere with the advent of multiparty democracy in the 1950s and a more democratic constitution following the military intervention of 1960 had a significant effect. In subsequent years, Alevis became highly politicized and became active in leftist ideological groups, thereby creating the basis for a more ideological definition of their belief system. Groups that see Alevism as a culture of resistance were generally initiated by these former left-wing activists. The fundamental reason for this transformation was the flow of migrants from rural areas to the cities and abroad. In addition, the leftist trend that affected the whole world in the 1960s also influenced the Alevis, who were mostly workers living in poor suburbs of the big cities. As a result, Alevism started to be identified with the left in Turkey, and the community's piety was lost to a great extent (Massicard 2013, 29–32; Yıldırım 2012, 156). In this polarized society, the largely nationalist right wing advocated patriotism and considered Alevis, along with Kurds, as threats to the unity of the nation (Dressler 2008, 285). During these years, the identification of Alevis with the left became so strong that even the state began to see them in this way (Bardakçi et al. 2017, 100). Some Alevis who were involved in left-wing organizations began to flee to Europe, and especially to Germany, as refugees, which increased both the numbers of Alevis abroad and the attempts to form an organization.

The *coup d'état* of 1980 in Turkey was dramatic and significant for Alevis, as well as for all other groups in the country. The reinvention of the Alevi identity and the revival of Alevism began as a result of the dynamics of this decade. According to Çamuroğlu (1996), there were three reasons for this revival: the frustrating decline in left-wing ideologies; the rise of political Islam in Turkey; and the influence of the Kurdish movement. The military administration following the *coup d'état* chose a Turkish–Islamic synthesis as the foundation for the unity of the country. This resulted in policies to increase the religiosity of the public, such as compulsory religious courses in schools. However, the Turkish–Islamic synthesis

excluded Alevism, and religious classes did not even mention Alevis (Bardakçi et al. 2017, 100). At the same time, religion was moving to the centre of politics, leading to a gradual rise of political Islam. In response to this situation, Alevis turned to the traditions that they had largely left behind for the sake of their leftist ideologies (Dressler 2008, 286). Consequently, previously left-wing cadres of the Alevi community led the reinvention of Alevism as an identity, but this revival was more secular and excluded religious elements (Yıldırım 2012, 142). Naturally, this was not the only interpretation of Alevism, but organizations and the leading elite adopted this understanding; this had a significant influence on the movement and created the basis for current debates about Alevism in the community.

In short, the 1980 *coup d'état* was an exciting milestone in the history of Alevism. While driving the elite to re-explore their belief system, it also created common protest points for Alevis and increased institutionalization efforts (Sökefeld 2008b, 190–91). According to Yıldırım (2012), changes that had started in the 1960s created a ‘modern Alevism’ that differed from the ‘traditional’ version: it was more urbanized, it focused on identity instead of beliefs, it was individualistic, and it was based on written sources with a structure centred on ‘*cem* houses’.

Following this turn to Alevism as an identity, a new interest to it arose in Turkey and the community became more visible. However, there were also many violent attacks against Alevis in the late 1970s and 1980s. The tension between right and left political blocs and the identification of Alevis with the left were among the reasons for these incidents. Moreover, their increased visibility meant that the nationalist movement started to target them in the cities with Alevi populations (Massicard 2013, 30–31), including in Kahramanmaraş in 1978 and Çorum in 1980. Following these two attacks, another took place in 1993 in Sivas, where 33 Alevi luminaries who had come to the city for a festival were killed in a hotel fire caused by the crowd. These three tragic events had a significant effect on Alevi identity and Alevis’ interactions with the state. On the one hand, they increased the already existing barriers between two major Turkish religious groups; on the other, they increased Alevis’ awareness of their identity and paved the way for the revival and for stronger organizations. In the literature, these incidents are emphasized as the catalyst for the Alevi movement both in Turkey and in Germany (Arslan 2016, 344, 2017, 157; Sökefeld 2008b, 70). Furthermore, the movement started to have a stronger voice in its struggle for recognition. The main demands were recognition of Alevism and its institutions, equality, and the restructuring of Diyanet to include Alevism (Bardakçi et

al. 2017, 102–5). These demands appeared on the agenda of government from time to time, but there was little progress.

The most recent debate on the issue occurred in 2015 when JDP started its project ‘Alevi Initiative’ (*Alevi Açılımı*). Meetings were held with experts, state authorities and representatives of Alevis, but some Alevi organizations protested and abandoned the process. According to Borovalı and Boyraz (2015), the initiative was a historical step towards solving the problems of Alevis, although it was not successful in creating relevant policies. It thus seems that these issues will continue to occupy a place on the agendas of politicians in the future.

6.1.2. Alevi institutionalization in Turkey

The Alevi revival led to the community being more strongly organized around associations in both home and host countries. The first Alevi organizations were founded in the 1960s, which was quite late, and were mostly local and not very visible. In one of the initial publications on this issue, Kaleli (2000) gives a brief overview of these local organizations as well as the more significant national ones. Similarly, a recent study by Yeler (2019) draws a picture of Alevi organizations in Turkey and abroad. Some key points about these organizations should be noted. First, they range from local organizations to federations and confederations, which are structured as associations and foundations. However, not all of them are religious in character; Alevis have also established political parties at different times, and religious associations or movements have turned into political parties. Therefore, historically, there has not been steady institutionalization. Second, in addition to the differences in location and structure, there are significant issues that divide these groups, such as the question of whether Alevism is part of Islam. Furthermore, they did not act together effectively on Alevi-related issues because of the lack of an umbrella organization. In fact, there is no one group that represents all Alevis, at least not in Turkey. It is also possible to draw parallels between the political atmosphere in the country and the institutionalization of Alevis. For instance, while liberalization in the country was reflected in local associations in the 1960s, the highly politicized and polarized years that followed led to the creation of political movements, and the religious trend of the 1980s brought about today’s religion- and identity-based organizations.

As already mentioned, the relatively liberal constitution of 1960 created a fertile environment for civil society organizations in Turkey. The first Alevi organizations – Hacı Bektaş Tourism and Promotion Association (Hacı Bektaş Turizm ve Tanıtma Derneği) and Hacı Bektaş Culture, Development and Support Association (Hacı Bektaş Kültür Kalkınma ve Yardım Derneği) – were founded in Ankara in 1963 (Kaleli 2000, 17–19). The latter also

opened 17 branches in Turkey (Yeler 2019, 116). Hacı Bektaş was the founder of the Bektashi order and had great religious importance for Alevis, and so many of the initial organizations used his name instead of Alevi. As religious brotherhoods had been banned in the early years of the republic, Alevis promoted their events as cultural ones that aimed to improve tourism in the region (Massicard 2013, 26). These institutions did not represent Alevis or claim to do so; instead, they tried to respond to the needs of the Alevi population living in the region (Yeler 2019, 117). Due to political reasons, many of these organizations were banned by the state, but similar groups continued to be established. A number of these organizations are mentioned in the literature (see, among others, Yeler, 2019; Kaleli 2000) and some have gained attention due to their size and influence. In the following paragraphs, organizations will be categorized as political movements, religious establishments or umbrella organizations. Due to the large number of organizations and the scope of this research, the information on them will be brief.

The initial Alevi organizations were established at a time when the political and social atmosphere of Turkey was changing too. Alevis, like others, were highly politicized in these years, with a well-known tendency towards the left. Probably because of this situation and the decreasing effect of religion, one of their first institutions was a political party: Turkey Union Party (Türkiye Birlik Partisi or TBP). This party was inaugurated in 1966 and used an emblem combining a lion with 12 stars, signifying Ali and 12 imams, which was considered proof that the party had an Alevi identity (Massicard 2013, 26–27). In the first elections in 1969, the party won 2.8 per cent of the votes and sent eight members to parliament (Yeler 2019, 168). These numbers show that the party clearly did not have the support of all Alevis, who are estimated as comprising one-third of the population, but sending eight MPs to the assembly could be counted as a success for a new party. However, due to inner conflicts, the party weakened in the following years and its votes dropped to 1.1 per cent in 1973 and 0.4 per cent in the 1977 elections (Massicard 2017, 57). TBP was banned along with all other political parties after the 1980 coup *d'état* and was never revived (Kaleli 2000, 34). Although it was not supported by Alevis as a whole, the party was one of the first Turkey-wide Alevi initiatives and was the most successful among the community's political endeavours.

Alevi activities in the political arena continued in different left-wing and social democrat movements in the following years. Due to their devotion to secularism and the republic, their votes were shared among Kemalist and leftist parties. However, the dramatic incidents in Sivas and the Gazi district of Istanbul in the 1990s started a debate in the Alevi community about how well the parties they supported protected their rights (Yeler 2019, 181).

In line with these debates, a new political movement named Democratic Peace Movement (Demokratik Barış Hareketi or DBH) was started in 1995. Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Associations (see below) had a significant influence on the movement and increased the anti-Islamist stance of the group (Massicard 2017, 95). In accordance with this understanding, the shutdown of Diyanet was listed in the programme of the movement, but the constitution prohibited such aims for political parties. Thus, the movement faced an investigation by the Constitutional Court, which finally led to its closure. During the investigation, leaders resigned to avoid possible political bans and in 1996 formed a new political party: Peace Party (Barış Partisi or BP) (Tekdemir 2018, 43). Alevis' views of the movement were divided, and some leading organizations did not openly declare their support. In contrast, the most active endorsement came from Alevis living in the diaspora and their organization: AABF (Massicard 2017, 214). Despite the fact that the party invested a lot in its campaign before the 1999 general elections, it gained only 0.2 per cent of the votes. Such a result was an apparent failure and entirely unexpected by the leading cadres, who immediately summoned a party congress and abolished the party (Kaleli 2000, 95). The second Alevi political movement therefore encountered a more significant failure compared with its predecessor, although either of these two movements could have achieved the momentum experienced by the Kurdish or Islamist movements. As many sources estimated Alevis at 20 to 30 per cent of the Turkish population, these results either failed to represent the community or reflected its politically divided status. Alevis' experience with religious organizations revealed this division even more clearly, as shown below.

After the first Alevi organizations were founded in the 1960s, several local and umbrella organizations were established, including Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Associations (Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Dernekleri or PSAKD), CEM Foundation (Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Merkezi Vakfı) and Ehl-i Beyt Foundation (Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı). While PSAKD saw Alevism as a socialist resistance movement, CEM Foundation regarded it as the Turkish interpretation of Islam, and Ehl-i Beyt Foundation viewed Alevism as a Shia interpretation (Özyürek 2009, 238). In addition to these three, Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri or AKD) were also important. These organizations, along with Alevi–Bektashi Federation in Turkey (Alevi–Bektaşî Federasyonu or ABF) and Federation of Alevi Foundations (Alevi Vakıfları Federasyonu or AVF), will be detailed in the following sections to provide an overview of the main streams in the Alevi movement.

PSAKD was initially formed in a village in Turkey's eastern province of Sivas, where Pir Sultan Abdal lived in the sixteenth century. It started as a local association with the aim of responding to the needs of this Alevi village, but it then began to organize events and festivals relating to Pir Sultan Abdal (Yeler 2019, 118). This group organized the Pir Sultan Abdal festival in Sivas in 1993 that ended with the killing of 33 Alevi intellectuals and artists in Madımak Hotel, mentioned above. As a result of this tragic incident, PSAKD became well known in the Alevi community and increased the number of its members and its importance (Kaleli 2000, 40). The association is also significant for its perception of 'Aleviness'. According to Yeler (2019, 124–25), PSAKD claims that Alevism is the resistance of the Anatolian people to assimilation and the pressure of Islam coming from the Arab Peninsula. This view is also reflected in its stance in discussions about Alevism's relationship to Islam. The organization tends to sideline the religious aspect of Alevism and focuses on political issues, following a leftist ideology (Massicard 2017, 91). Because of this, PSAKD has been strongly criticized by other organizations in the community (Gorzewski 2010, 57), although it is still one of the most influential Alevi organizations in today's Turkey.

Another grouping, which is similar to PSAKD but more centrist, is AKD. This was established in 1991 in Ankara as Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture and Promotion Association (Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Tanıtma Dernekleri) and opened 60 branches in different cities (Kaleli 2000, 48). It changed its name to Alevi Culture Associations in 2008, and today it has 102 branches around Turkey (Yeler 2019, 128–29). According to Massicard (2017, 90), AKD does not focus solely on the political or spiritual side of Alevism; instead, it emphasizes the community's cultural and folkloric aspects. It defines Alevism as the love for Ali and follows the way of Ehl-i Beyt (members of the house of Prophet Muhammad) (Yeler 2019, 129). In sum, this organization also has a specific perception of Alevism, which balances the religious and political aspects of the movement.

The other two organizations differ from PSAKD and AKD mainly because of their emphasis on religious practices in Alevism and their stance towards the state. CEM Foundation was founded in 1995 by İzzettin Doğan, a *dede* (religious leader) and professor of law (Gorzewski 2010, 57), and is active today with more than 50 branches around Turkey.¹⁰⁰ The organization's founder was an influential person, and his ideas and popularity helped the Alevi community increase public awareness of its problems (Yeler 2019, 133). In contrast to PSAKD,

¹⁰⁰ For a list of branches, see the CEM Foundation website (in Turkish): <http://www.cemvakfi.org/pages/Subelerimiz>, accessed 7 August 2019.

CEM Foundation does not see Alevism as a protest movement but preaches a Turkish Islam, which, it claims, has been purified of Arab influence (Massicard 2017, 92). According to Kaleli (2000, 69), Alevi organizations that focus more on the cultural and political aspects of Alevism are regarded as ‘atheists’ by CEM Foundation. Therefore, it could be argued that the foundation sees Alevism as part of Islam and gives more importance to religious elements. Also, due to its positive attitude to the state and its efforts to establish good relations between Alevi and Sunni communities, CEM Foundation is regarded as the Diyanet of the Alevis by the other organizations (Abadan-Unat 2017, 270). In sum, this organization takes a different position to the groups mentioned above because of its understanding of Alevism and its political attitude to the state.

The last organization briefly explored here is the Ehl-i Beyt Foundation. This was initially founded in 1997 and changed its name to World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation (Dünya Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı) in 1999.¹⁰¹ The organization has a distinct understanding of Alevism, clearly seeing it as part of Shia Islam. As a result of its strong emphasis on Shia traditions, it is the only organization that does not practise ‘*cem*’ and ‘*semah*’ rituals, which are characteristic of *Alevis* (Massicard 2017, 91). After its establishment, 186 other Alevi organizations, including the most influential ones, reacted against the World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation and accused it of trying to assimilate Alevis into Shia Islam (Yeler 2019, 148). In a similar vein, Kaleli (2000, 72) emphasizes its close relations to Iranian Shiism and thus does not consider it part of the Alevi movement.

This brief introduction to four very different Alevi organizations in Turkey reflects the plurality of different views in the community. These four perspectives on Alevism are in line with Bilici’s (1998) categorization: left-wing Alevism, mystical-Islamic Alevism, heterodox Alevism, and new Shia-inclined Alevism. These factions are still visible in today’s Alevi community, with religious understanding and political stance providing the main points of division. AKD, which represents mystical-Islamic Alevism, works together with PSAKD on essential issues even though they differ in their views on the relationship between Alevism and Islam (Yeler 2019, 129–30). On the other hand, CEM Foundation follows a different path, while World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation is marginalized and excluded from the movement by other

¹⁰¹ For details about the organization, see the World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation website (in English and Turkish): <https://www.ehlibeyt.org.tr/?vakif-hakkinda-2/vakif-hakkinda-6.html>, accessed 7 August 2019.

organizations. These divisions have led to a fragmented scenario in terms of umbrella organizations.

The Sivas and Gazi incidents had a unifying effect on the Alevi movement, which realized that Alevis urgently needed to be represented by a single, powerful organization. The first relatively successful attempt came in 1994 with the formation of the Council of Alevi–Bektashi Representatives (Alevi Bektaşî Temsilciler Meclisi or ABTM), which gathered together almost all the Alevi organizations in Turkey and abroad under one roof administered by the president of AABF, Rıza Gülçiçek (Gorzewski 2010, 62–63). In its foundational declaration, the organization stated that it was the only representative of Alevis and that decisions taken by other organizations would not be binding (Kaleli 2000, 88). However, some of the ABTM’s aims were not agreed upon by all of the members, leading to disunity even at the start. Relations with the state and Diyanet in particular became critical issues, followed by a debate on inaugurating a political party; this led to some members resigning and the council was disbanded in 1995 (Massicard 2017, 99).¹⁰² However, attempts to unify the Alevi movement did not end here.

In 1999, the second ABTM was formed, and, following some name changes due to legal issues, it transformed into ABF in 2004. The leading organization in this federation was PSAKD, and it had a considerable influence on ABF’s understanding of Alevism; this caused fragmentation in the movement as it estranged CEM Foundation and World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation (Yeler 2019, 151–54). Although the whole Alevi movement is not represented under this umbrella organization, ABF is the most prominent and influential organization for Alevis in Turkey (Dressler 2008, 293), mainly representing the protest/left-wing and mystical-Islamic factions of Alevism. Groups with other views in this debate formed similar associations: for example, AVF was pioneered by people close to CEM Foundation in 2005, and, as one would expect, it reflects the arguments of this group.

This brief mapping of Alevi organizations has shown how the Alevi movement in Turkey is multifaceted in terms of organization type, political stance and religious understanding. In contrast to the role played by Diyanet for the Sunni population, there is no umbrella organization that has absolute authority on religious issues, which has led to contestations between organizations representing different views of Alevism and has weakened

¹⁰² For more on the history of ABF, see the ABF website (in Turkish): <http://www.alevifederasyonu.org.tr/abfhakkindadetay.php?id=2>, accessed 1 August 2019.

the movement's political power. As a result, the demands of Alevis have not been met, even though they have appeared on the political agenda from time to time.

6.1.3. Alevis in Germany

Like other Turkish groups, Alevis moved to Germany as a result of the worker recruitment agreements of the 1960s. In line with the claim that they make up 20–30 per cent of Turkey's population, they are estimated as having constituted 30 per cent of all guest workers (Argun, 2003, p. 107). There are an estimated 800,000 Alevis living in Germany today (Algül 2015, 304). As with other migrants, economic factors were one of the major push factors behind the Alevis' move to Germany. They usually lived in rural and underdeveloped areas of Anatolia, which made their financial status even worse, so in the 1960s they were more likely to migrate than other groups (Bozkurt 2016, 80–81). In addition, the repression they had faced for centuries in Turkey also influenced their decision to join the recruitment process (Massicard 2013, 185).

Following the halt of official worker recruitment in 1973, migration continued via family reunions, as has already been discussed. However, there was another factor that played an essential and slightly different role for the Alevi population. The Alevi movement at the time went hand in hand with left-wing ideologies, and many Alevis, especially young people, were among the leading activists. Refugees escaping the polarization in Turkey thus became the founders of *Alevi* organizations in Germany (Çoşan EKE 2014, 174). This had a considerable influence on the future of these organizations because these people had experience of civil society organizations and contributed greatly to institutionalization processes (Shankland and Çetin 2008, 223).

Like other groups in the migrant community, the main aim of Alevi guest workers was to earn and save as much as possible. However, the life of Alevis differed slightly from that of the rest of the community when Sunni Muslim workers began to establish the first places of worship in their new country of residence. Alevis did not do this at the same time as other groups; according to Sökefeld (2003, 141), this was a result not only of weaker religious orientation and the culture of hiding their religion but also of the difficulty of moving Alevi institutions from one place to another. Therefore, when the first mosque associations were founded in the 1970s, there were no corresponding Alevi organizations. Instead, Alevis established politically active associations such as worker unions, reflecting their engagement with the left in Turkey. The first Alevi organization in Germany was the Turkish Workers' Union (Türk Ameleler Birliği or TALEB), which was founded in the 1970s (Massicard 2013,

186). The organization did not openly emphasize its Alevi nature, but TALEB is very similar to '*talip*', which refers to a 'follower' in Alevism, and so it was claimed that this symbolically showed the identity of the organization.

TALEB was active in the 1970s when Alevis were politicized in the leftist groups and tried to establish their first political movement: TBP (Turkey Union Party). In parallel to this initiative, TALEB became the Union of Patriots (Yurtseverler Birliği or YB) in 1978 (Bozkurt 2016, 115). According to Sökefeld (2003, 142), this organization was the result of a split between Alevis and the leftist movements that refused to criticize the ruling left-wing government in Turkey after the Maraş massacre. YB had close ties to TBP, so it financially and politically supported the party while acting as its European wing (Ş. Şahin 2005, 472–73). YB also organized the first public *cem* ritual in Hamburg in the 1980s, which was attended by hundreds of people (Sökefeld 2002, 171). These years also marked the end of the leftist trend in Turkey, and, as stated above, Alevis started to rediscover their religious identity. After being passive during the 1980s, YB transformed into the Federation of Alevi Communities in Germany (Almanya Alevi Cemaatleri Birliği), which then became AABF in the 1990s (Bozkurt 2016, 115). This organization became a pioneer in its field, and it gave momentum to the institutionalization of Alevis in the whole of Europe (Algül 2015, 303). This move from labour union to political organization and finally to Europe-wide religious organization makes AABF almost unique, because, compared with other Turkish religious groups, it was almost completely established and developed in Germany.

The 1980s marked a turning point for Alevi institutionalization in Germany and saw a transition from politics to culture and religion. The first reason for this was the revival that Alevis were experiencing in this period. Second, Özyürek (2009, 239) claims that the European Parliament's decision to support organizations promoting immigrant cultures created an opportunity for Alevis. Furthermore, the founding of DİTİB and the intervention of the Turkish state in the religious field in the diaspora triggered fears among the Alevi immigrants that led to organizations concentrating more on religion (Ş. Şahin 2005, 478). Finally, the religious needs and identities of immigrants became the subject of debate during the 1990s in Germany. According to Yeler (2019, 68), the increase in the demands of Sunni groups in Germany motivated Alevis to make similar claims and strengthened the religious focus of the movement. As a result of these factors, by the 1990s AABF was a prominent religious organization that represented the majority of Alevis, and it started to make claims for recognition. However, the Alevi community in Germany was also divided.

Especially after the Alevi revival, the number of organizations increased both in Turkey and abroad. The most well-known ones were German branches of CEM Foundation and World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation and Kurdish Alevi organizations of (Bozkurt 2016, 116). As mentioned above, these organizations follow different understandings of Alevism. Among them, CEM Foundation is more loyal to the state and secular-Kemalist version of Alevism; there are claims of financial relations between its German branch, which was opened in Essen in 1997, and the Turkish state (Sökefeld 2008b, 190). According to Massicard (2013, 189), the organization is quite small and has only 1000 sympathizers in Germany. The Europe Ehl-i Beyt Alevi Organization was founded in 1999, and currently its headquarters are in Frankfurt. It claims to have 10,000 followers (Adıgüzel 2011, 129). This organization also follows the religious understanding of its main body in Turkey and accepts Alevism as a part of Shia Islam; this has led to criticism from AABF due to its knowledge of Alevism and its close relations with Sunni organizations (Gorzewski 2010, 87–88). Compared with AABF, these organizations are quite small and are not able to divide the community, as they do in the Alevi movement in Turkey. Furthermore, according to Spuler-Stegemann (2003, 18), even the independent organizations in the Alevi community accept that AABF is the most prominent voice of Alevis in Germany.

The Sivas massacre motivated Alevis to organize, and many associations were founded in the 1990s. As the political features of the community decreased, they started to prioritize their religious identity; according to Sökefeld (2010, 25), the main reason for this was the re-exploration of their religion and the potential for recognition as a religious community in Germany as Alevis began to be naturalized and changed their expectations of life abroad. Alevis have achieved considerable success in the frame of recognition: in many German states today, Alevism is a recognized religion. The Alevi community is a well-integrated part of the German system as a result of high naturalization rates and their considerably more open approach to life abroad, with an emphasis on human rights, democracy, secularism and gender equality. Toprak (2010, 13–14) states that 70 per cent of all Alevis hold a German passport, and, even though they are a minority in the Turkish community in Germany, the majority of politicians and representatives from a Turkish background in state and federal parliaments are Alevi. As a result, they have a positive reputation in Germany, which presumably has played a role in their success in recognition processes.

6.1.4. AABF – Alevi Community in Germany

Three main points will be emphasized in the exploration here. First, how did these circumstances lead to the foundation of AABF? Second, what impact did its political

background have on the organization's religious and organizational transformations? And finally, hints of AABF's recognition status will be provided.

As already mentioned, the Alevi movement in Germany began as a workers' union and left-wing political group, reflecting the position of Alevis in Turkey. However, the fading of leftist dreams and the rise of the Turkish-Islamic synthesis in Turkey following the *coup d'état* started a new period for Alevis, and they began to channel their organizational experiences into religious organizations. The concentration of Alevis and the multiculturalist policies of the EU and Germany in these years created a fertile atmosphere for cultural organizations in the community. While the former leftist and political figures of YB established Alevi Culture Centres, the more religious wing started to come together around Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Associations (Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Dernekleri or HBVA), which were mostly controlled by *dedes* (Massicard 2013, 189). These two factions had different perspectives on Alevism. While HBVA viewed the other side as upholders of leftist ideologies, the Alevi Culture Centres saw HBVA as religious conservatives (Sökefeld 2008b, 82). Meanwhile, these organizations were springing up around Germany; one of the very first public events under the Alevi name – 'Alevi Week' – took place at Hamburg University in 1989. This was the first event that introduced Alevis to the German public, and also a manifesto was published that included a demand for rights for Alevis (Wunn and Moser 2007). After this, the first initiatives to establish an umbrella organization for newly established Alevi groups started.

As a result of these changes, the first umbrella organization, the Federation of Alevi Communities in Germany (Almanya Alevi Cemaatleri Federasyonu or Föderation Alevitischer Gemeinschaften in Deutschland), was founded in 1991, initially in Mainz (Adıgüzel 2011, 120–21). According to Kaleli (2000, 73–78), this organization was an initiative of *dedes*, and it brought together different groups. After a while, some of these groups started to reject the labelling of Alevism as the 'true Islam' and efforts to build good relations with Turkey's Diyanet. Also, members of this federation were mostly HBVA; Alevi Culture Centres were either not invited or not eager to participate as subordinate groups. However, the massacre that took place in Sivas contributed to the merger of these two movements (Sökefeld 2008b, 82–83). After some transformations, Alevi Culture Centres joined the federation, which changed its name to the Federation of Alevi Associations in Germany (Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu or AABF) and moved its headquarters to Cologne in 1993 (Adıgüzel 2011, 121; Gorzewski 2010, 81). Although the organization uses the abbreviation AABF, it gives 1989 as

its date of foundation on its official website.¹⁰³ However, the change in 1993 following the Sivas incident could be seen as a milestone in AABF's history because it played a key role in its future relations with Diyanet and also in its understanding of Alevism.

The foundation of the AABF coincided with the tragic incidents in Sivas and Istanbul, which created a greater motivation for Alevis to organize; in fact, many new organizations were established throughout Europe (Arslan 2016, 344; Çoşan EKE 2015, 254). This boom meant that a more extensive umbrella organization was needed. In response to this need, AABF changed its constitution and transformed into the Federation of European Alevi Associations, but this change caused debates in the community because it gave the German federation too much authority over organizations in other countries (Kaleli 2000, 76). Another name change thus occurred in 1998 when associations from different countries left to establish their own federations (Sökefeld 2008b, 84). AABF changed its constitution once again in 2002 to become a purely religious organization and adopted the name Alevi Community in Germany (Almanya Alevi Toplumu or Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland) while still continuing to use its well-known former abbreviation (Kaplan 2004, 150). Today, AABF has 160 member organizations in Germany and is still a leading member of the Confederation of Alevi Associations in Europe.¹⁰⁴

In a document from the German parliament, the organization is defined as the representative umbrella organization of Alevis, of whom there are around 270,000 in Germany (Document (21) 2018, 6). The aims of AABF are given as the revitalization of the Alevi belief system in Germany and Turkey via education and public work in addition to the improvement of dialogue and cooperation between religions as well as among communities from Turkey (Document (7) 2015, 36). These aims could be seen as the result of the Alevi revival that started in the 1980s, and the organization contributes to this process via seminars, religious instruction and setting up libraries. In addition, its by-laws put an emphasis on its liberal features: following public awareness and recognition as a corporation under public law, the by-laws express AABF's interest in issues such as multiculturalism, gender equality, the rights of children and young people, the importance of the arts, and the protection of nature. The by-laws also explicitly refer to AABF's commitment to the democratic structure of Germany (AABF Umbrella Organization by-law, 2014, §2). Its website also stresses the importance of all human

¹⁰³ For more on the events for the thirtieth anniversary, see the AABF website (in German): <https://alevi.com/30-jahre/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

¹⁰⁴ 'About us', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

beings, with no discrimination due to gender, sexuality, religion, piety or ethnicity.¹⁰⁵ This particular emphasis on issues that are often linked to criticism directed at Muslims could be regarded as a strategy for recognition; this point will be evaluated further in the following sections.

AABF sees itself as the representative of Alevis, but the by-laws do not include a definition of Alevism. As mentioned before, there are still debates about a definition within the Alevi community, where there are very different versions of Alevism. According to AABF's website, their understanding of Alevism includes elements from Islam and some rituals from the Sufi tradition.¹⁰⁶ Moreover, they accept the Holy Qur'an as one of the sources of their belief system, but they believe that the authentic version of the verses that came to the prophet was changed when they were written down in book form. Therefore, the only true form of the Qur'an is represented by the life of Ali, and they believe that following him is the only way of applying the verses (Kaplan 2010b, 41–42). Alevism, as understood by AABF, also differs from Islam because it does not accept the five pillars. Instead, it offers a list of rituals that should lead a person to become a 'perfect human being' (*insan-ı kâmil*); this clearly refers to the Sufi aspect of the belief system (Kaplan 2004, 38–47).¹⁰⁷ However, both on its website and in its by-laws, AABF maintains a discourse that is close to the left, recalling the political background of its founders.

When this belief system is considered in combination with the AABF's liberal features, the organization's religious understanding becomes clear. Simply put, it combines the political discourses of former leftist activists with the mystic elements of Hacı Bektash's Sufism. It could be claimed that, instead of representing the views of one of the Turkish groups, AABF's understanding has been shaped by the groups that founded the organization. In AABF's perspective, Alevism is not part of Islam or a specific religion, and this makes it different from other Alevi organizations (Adıgüzel 2011, 123). In an interview, Fuat Ateş, a member of AABF's Executive Board, said the following:

We made a plan in 1998 for the future of the organization and the definition of Alevism was one of the main problems listed there ... In that definition, Islam was also mentioned due to the conditions of that period, but this point has been causing debates since then. Therefore, we will update this plan and amend this definition in the following period. We will add that Alevism is an individual belief system. We are against defining Alevism based on other religions. Yes, our

¹⁰⁵ 'About us', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

¹⁰⁶ 'Our religion', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

¹⁰⁷ 'Our religion', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

belief system has been influenced by many sources, and it has a syncretic character, but still, it is an individual belief system. (Interview 7, 2019)

AABF sees Alevism as not being part of Islam and rejects definitions based on similarities with or differences from Islam; it has therefore tried to get recognition in Germany as a separate religion – which it has achieved to some extent. However, Sökefeld (2008b, 200–2) states that, even though the administrative cadres of the AABF tend to think that Alevism does not belong to Islam, the majority of Alevis in Germany, like the community in Turkey, have the opposite view. These groups still act together within the federation, although their ideas on some points differ so markedly. Thus, as stated by Gorzewski (2010, 83), this lack of clarity on such matters could be a strategy to keep these incompatible groups together.

Despite these ambiguities with regard to Islam, both in AABF and in the community more widely, AABF is accepted as the representative of Alevis living in Germany and is recognized as a distinct religious community in many German states. It has been organizing Alevi religious instruction courses in public schools since 2002, when it was first recognized in Berlin. It has been recognized by many other states since then and is currently seeking full recognition; among all the Turkish organizations in Germany, it is the one that has come closest to that aim. While the organization was founded mostly as a result of a bottom-up process in which transnational political activists played a significant role, incidents in Turkey and changes in strategy also had an impact on Alevis and influenced AABF's foundation and recognition processes. As has been seen, the political background of AABF's founders influenced its religious understanding, giving it an original belief system compared with Turkish–Islamic organizations that reflect the ideas of their central bodies. Furthermore, the effect of its background and transnational links is not limited to its belief system, as will be made clear in the following sections.

6.2. AABF from an organizational perspective

A clear hierarchical structure was a condition for the recognition of religious organizations, but this proved to be a hurdle for Turkish organizations. However, AABF managed to overcome this problem and developed a well-organized structure. In organizational terms, AABF is not very different from other Turkish religious umbrella organizations in Germany; in essence, it has a web of '*cemevis*' and Alevi Culture Centres instead of mosques. Again like other Turkish organizations, AABF is organized as a registered organization (*eingetragener Verein*), which gives it tax privileges. These associations mainly provide

services to their local communities and are coordinated by state unions or, in AABF's case, state representative bodies. The umbrella organization is placed at the top of this hierarchy and coordinates the whole structure while representing Alevis at the country level and seeking the recognition of Alevi rights on national and international platforms. This structure will be detailed in the following paragraphs, but it should be noted here that AABF does not impose a great deal of central authority on lower-level organizations. Election processes are transparent and democratic, the principle of secularism is strictly applied, and the power of religious figures is limited. Importantly, there is no outside intervention in elections or administrative processes.

AABF's central organization is located in Cologne and it has representative bodies in some German states. While the state branches represent Alevi associations in their regions, the umbrella organization does the same for the state branches. The main structure has eight elements including the general assembly, executive community, supervisory board, discipline board, spiritual board (religious advisory council), and other specialized organs.¹⁰⁸ The most influential decision-making organ of the AABF is the general assembly, which meets every year with delegates elected by member associations. Every member organization sends a number of delegates to the general assembly depending on its size, so some have more representation than others (AABF Umbrella Organization by-law, 2012, §9).

One of the most important issues that the assembly deals with is the election of the executive board, which is responsible for the coordination and administration of the organization. The executive committee consists of 13 members elected by the general assembly. The candidate with the largest share of the votes becomes president, and the remaining 15 candidates become members of the executive board (AABF Umbrella Organization by-law, 2012, §11.1). In addition to these elected members, the presidents of the women's, youth and spiritual boards are also members of this executive board.¹⁰⁹ This reflects the importance of women and youth for AABF, but it also reveals the position of the spiritual board, which was clearly more influential in DİTİB. The spiritual board, which is elected by its own general assembly, consists of two *dedes* or *anas* (male and female religious functionaries) from each member organization, has 12 members, and has a budget decided by AABF's general assembly. The board is responsible for religious issues and answers questions on this subject; although it has the right to speak at and vote on the executive board, it cannot intervene in issues outside

¹⁰⁸ 'Organs of the AABF', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

¹⁰⁹ 'Der Vorstand', AABF website: see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

this framework (Kaplan 2004, 152–53). If there is no consensus on a question, the general assembly can make a decision (AABF Umbrella Organization by-law, 2012, §15). It could thus be claimed that the spiritual board has minimal power on the executive committee, while the general assembly has absolute authority over the spiritual board's budget and constitution, and even over decisions on religious matters when there is no consensus. The other organs of the organization focus on issues relating to youth, women, culture and the arts to strengthen the community and its faith.

The second level of the AABF's organizational structure is its state representative bodies; these were founded to coordinate the local associations and make better contacts with state administrations, which are crucial in the recognition process as a result of the German system.¹¹⁰ According to the constitution of the umbrella organization (§9.6), currently there are five state representative bodies – North Rhine-Westphalia, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse, North Germany and Bavaria – and seven more are expected to be established in other states. The hierarchical relationship between the umbrella organization and state bodies is comparatively loose because organizations at the state level are simply copies of the upper structure, which means that they follow the same democratic and secular principles in their administration. Members of the executive board of the umbrella organization have the right to participate in all meetings at the state level, but they can only make suggestions (AABF Bavaria by-law, 2016, §7.5). The executive board of the state bodies are elected by the general assembly of them and it consists of 11 members (eight selected and three automatic members), including the president and the chairs of the youth, women's and spiritual councils (AABF Bavaria by-law, 2016, §11.1–2). As in the main body, the spiritual council is democratically elected by the general assembly of the state body and focuses only on religious issues in the community (AABF Bavaria by-law, 2016, §15). Therefore, one could say that there is a dual administrative system that follows the principle of secularity.

As in other umbrella organizations, local associations are on the lowest rung of this hierarchical structure. These associations are the main publicly visible parts of the organization and the level with which people interact on a daily basis. Probably because of this, this is the only level where the constitution includes details about religious issues. Listed among the aims of the local organizations are increasing awareness of the Alevi-Bektashi belief and building places of worship (*cemevis*), as well as organizing events such as conferences and cultural

¹¹⁰ 'Die AABF Landesvertretungen', AABF website: see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 10 October 2019.

evenings to memorialize Alevi poets and saints (AABF Munich by-law, 2019, §3). While the focus is mostly on representation and cooperation at the upper levels, this level tends to concentrate on services provided to the public. Another function of the local organizations is the training of religious functionaries (AABF Munich by-law, 2019, §3). This is vital for the community because otherwise it would not be possible for the organization to be independent. Local associations are based on similar principles to the higher-level structures and their administration is democratic and transparent within the local community. The state organization intervenes only in that its executive board members have the right to attend the local organization's meetings, but their powers are limited to speaking at meetings and offering advice (AABF Bavaria by-law, 2016, §7.5). In addition, the spiritual boards of the local associations also have similar duties and powers, which are relatively limited compared with those of DİTİB analysed in Chapter 5.

The by-laws of all three structures include clear information about the funding of the organization. According to the umbrella organization's by-law (2014, §17), AABF is funded through monthly contributions from its member organizations along with donations and revenues from selling publications and other products. The organizations at the lower levels are dependent on the same sources for their finances. All management expenses are funded from these sources. In addition, AABF receives funds from the state and foundations: for example, official documents show that AABF and its member associations have received a considerable amount of project funding from the Ministry for Migrants and Refugees to improve immigrants' organizations (Document (8) 2018). No other sources of funding are mentioned in either the by-laws or the literature.

AABF thus has a similar structure to other Turkish religious organizations in Germany. However, it is clearly more democratic as far as election processes and the composition of religious boards are concerned. Its constitutions are well defined and include necessary detail about its organizations' administration. While the hierarchy between the umbrella organization and the other levels is loose, the general assembly has absolute supremacy on every decision, including those relating to religious issues. However, the autonomy of the individual local associations is guaranteed, and any intervention from outside is limited. Anyone can be a candidate for positions in the administration, which is also an important point supporting the democratic character of the organization. Furthermore, an emphasis on human rights, women and youth and respect for the German constitution and laws are clearly visible in every by-law, which are also transparent on the subject of their finances. All in all, it could be claimed that

the organizational structure of AABF and the application of its discourses screen the politically active history of the organization. The effects of this political activism will be better understood in the following section, which evaluates the organization's transnational links.

6.3. AABF from a transnational perspective

Like DiTİB, AABF is an organization with transnational links, as could be seen from its foundation. Here, these cross-border links will be explored in detail and their importance to the organization evaluated, thereby revealing how they greatly influenced AABF's structure and aims as a transnational religious organization and the movement's struggle in Turkey. Unlike in Chapter 5, there is no separate section on the perception of Germany of these cross-border links because they have very rarely been debated either in official documents or in the literature. Therefore, it could be claimed that Germany has a positive or at least a neutral attitude to AABF's transnational links.

As stated above, the Alevi movement in Turkey had a close relationship with leftist ideologies, starting in the period from 1960 to 1980. The first phase of Alevi transnationalization took place during these years. The escape of Alevis as political refugees to Germany and the engagement of Alevi workers in left-wing movements, initially via labour unions and then YB, are the most prominent examples of their transnational links. These political refugees and the leading cadres of these pioneering organizations played crucial roles during the foundation of the initial organizations (Massicard 2013, 189; Sökefeld 2010, 20). Additionally, the highly politicized Alevi movement in Germany supported linked political parties in the homeland via financial contributions during this period. Thus, it is clear that the Alevi movement in Germany was transnational even at the start.

The transnational character of the movement was also visible in the establishment process and activities of AABF's early years. Especially in the first years of the 1990s, AABF was an active participant in the Alevi movement in Turkey. AABF was eager to share its experiences in institutionalization with its counterparts in Turkey, and, when conditions have been favourable, these experiences have been transferred to the Turkish political arena (Argun 2003, 108). For instance, AABF played a major role during the establishment of the first joint platform, the Council of Alevi-Bektashi Representatives (ABTM), which gathered together almost all Alevi organizations in Turkey and abroad under one roof. The first president of this platform was the president of AABF, Rıza Gülçiçek, in 1994 (Gorzewski 2010, 62–63). AABF's transnational influence on the Alevi movement in Turkey continued in the following

years, even after ABTM was abolished. AABF's role in this process also proved that it was keen to transfer its experiences of unifying the movement and struggling for rights in Germany. Thus, Özyürek (2009) sees AABF as a trigger for the Alevi movement in Turkey. Arslan (2017, 155–56) goes beyond this claim, arguing that Alevism was transformed from a cultural belief into a religion as a result of institutionalization in Europe. These two points show the importance of AABF and its transnational interactions in the movement.

Even though the ABTM initiative did not last long, AABF's transnational activities continued through different channels. The Peace Movement of the second half of the 1990s was another clear sign of AABF's transnational political links. Leading figures in the organization, such as Rıza Gülçiçek, had become candidates for left-wing parties in elections in Turkey in the past, but, in the case of the Peace Movement, Alevis were the driving force behind the movement. This was the second time that there had been an initiative to form an Alevi party. Leaders of the AABF travelled to Turkey many times and worked with the Peace Party grown out of the Peace Movement and other leftist parties to channel Alevi votes; AABF also contributed financial and political support. At the end of this collaboration, the president of AABF became the vice president of the party and had a significant impact on the candidate list (Argun 2003, 113). However, the party got no candidates elected in the elections and was disbanded. The failure of the Peace Party initiative caused a critical transformation in the organization. According to Sökefeld (2008b, 85–88), this failure paved the way for changes in the administration of AABF; among its supporters, the idea that it should focus on the situation in Germany instead of in Turkey became stronger. This resulted in a decrease in transnational activities and AABF started to follow a policy focused more on Alevis' life in Germany and their religion. However, fighting for Alevi rights in Turkey and cooperating with organizations sharing this aim were kept as objectives of AABF (Adıgüzel 2011, 127).

AABF was a pioneering association that exported its experience to similar movements in other European countries, including Turkey (Yeler 2019, 69), and this culture of cooperation could be considered a key feature of the Alevi movement in Germany. In addition to Alevis in Europe, returnees also provided support to networks in Turkey to organize as Alevis around *cemevis* (Özyürek 2009; Rittersberger 1996, 77). These contributions were vital in financing places of worship, many of which opened as a result of this support. This contribution to the Alevi community in Turkey is still listed as one of AABF's aims in the by-laws of the umbrella organization (2014, §2.12–13). According to this by-law, AABF supports efforts to secure constitutional recognition for Alevis in Turkey, and it plans to establish representative bodies

and build relations based on cooperation. An interviewee from AABF's executive board said the following:

We [AABF] have gained most of the rights that we have been struggling for in Germany. We have signed state agreements; our children can take Alevi religious instruction in public schools etc. There is almost nothing left that we can get from Germany ... Of course, there is the corporation under public law status, but it is just a matter of time, and we are waiting to complete the 30 years condition. In this frame, the thing that we should do now is deal with the problems of Alevis living in other parts of the world and increase dialogue with them. In particular, we want to do this for those in our homeland. (Interview 7, 2019)

As seen from the quote above, helping organizations in the Alevi movement – both financially and politically – is one of the main aims of AABF. Lobbying in their country of settlement and in European institutions for Alevi rights in Turkey is commonly coincided incidents in AABF's history (Kaleli 2000, 155–56; Soner and Toktaş 2011, 422). Furthermore, Alevis are better represented in German politics than all of the other Turkish groups, which allows them to establish close relationships with political actors – many times, they have been able to influence Germany to make decisions in accordance with their aims (Pries and Tuncer-Zengingül 2013, 160–61; Yeler 2019, 79). Their lobby activities are more successful than those of other Turkish groups in Germany and have led to substantial gains for the Alevi movement both in Germany and in Turkey.

As we have seen, AABF has had a transnational character from the very beginning of its history, and there have been many occasions when this transnational nature has become visible and has created a basis for cross-border activities. These activities were quite common until the 2000s when the movement decided to focus on Alevis' problems in Germany. This change also marked the beginning of AABF's efforts to achieve recognition in their host country. The shift was quite pronounced compared with the other organizations discussed here because, since then, there has been almost no sign of transnational links in the organizational structure. Unlike DİTİB, which still covers these links in its constitution, AABF's by-laws do not include any hint of transnational links apart from its support of the broader movement. It could be argued that the failures of AABF's transnational initiatives in the past and its demand for recognition in Germany led to a complete change in the organization's transnational links. Although AABF still has a transnational character, its links are now purely symbolic. And, in addition to its democratic and transparent organizational structure, the fact that its transnationality is merely symbolic makes its recognition politically and legally far more straightforward compared with other immigrants' religious organizations.

As can be seen, the cross-border connections of AABF were active mainly before it started to make recognition claims, but these links were never a major feature anyway. Probably because of this, official documents collected during research rarely mention AABF's transnational links. Parliamentary reports about migrants' religious organizations tend to emphasize AABF's theological understanding and organizational structure rather than its transnational links, while there is more emphasis on them in some other organizations (Document (7) 2015; Document (21) 2018; Document (23) 2018). Even the report by Spuler-Stegemann (2003), which is possibly the earliest one demanded by the state of North Rhine-Westphalia to decide whether to grant the organization religious community status, does not mention its transnational links. Therefore, AABF's transnational character has never been taken into account, perhaps because the organization defines itself as a German movement and emphasizes its independence from any central organization in the homeland.¹¹¹ However, the organization does have a transnational character, as has been apparent in some of its political engagements in its history and in its aims, which include supporting the Alevi movement in Turkey.

6.4. AABF from a recognition perspective

As stated in Chapter 5, religious understanding, organizational structure, representativeness and transnational links are the main pillars involved in religious recognition in Germany, and the information set out in the sections above will be used to understand AABF's current position on the recognition scale. First, this part will look at the history of AABF's demands for recognition, its strategy, and what it has done to achieve its aim. This will lead into an analysis of AABF's current recognition status in Germany. Finally, since the recognition of religious organizations comes under the jurisdiction of states (*Länder*), these processes will be localized to understand the different approaches of German actors, with a focus on Bavaria, Hamburg and Hesse.

6.4.1. The path to recognition

As we have already seen, making claims for recognition is a comparatively new phenomenon, partly because of the perception that existed that the Turkish community had a temporary status in Germany. However, it could be argued that Alevis started to organize around their religion later than the other groups in the Turkish immigrant community. Çoşan Eke (2014, 175) claims that Alevis' tradition of concealing their beliefs and the fact that they

¹¹¹ 'About us', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 8 November 2019.

were unfamiliar with the German recognition system were among the reasons why they started this struggle relatively late. Furthermore, their engagement with political and ideological groups in Turkey arguably caused a delay in the localization of Alevi organizations.

However, changes that took place in the 1980s and 1990s had consequences for the Alevi movement, which eventually started to make claims for recognition. The first change was the acceptance of permanency in Germany, which had outcomes for all organizations in the Turkish community. However, the Alevi movement experienced this change differently from Turkish religious organizations, which had already started to institutionalize around mosques in the 1970s. What was missing in the Alevis' institutionalization was religion, since their engagement with left-wing ideologies had caused a decrease in religiosity within the community. However, the Alevi revival, which followed the failure of the ideological struggle, led the movement in Germany to make religion a focal point for its institutionalization. The results of this change became visible with the founding of Alevi religious organizations in the 1980s and later of AABF.

The second reason for Alevis' efforts to achieve recognition was arguably the change in Turkey's policy towards its migrants in Germany after the *coup d'état* in 1980. The policy of control that Turkey adopted subsequently gave rise to DİTİB, which was connected transnationally Diyanet. Alevis had problems with Diyanet and were excluded from the Turkish–Islamic synthesis, and so their political movement in the 1980s positioned itself in opposition to what they described as 'the rise of Sunni Islamism' (Çakır 1998, 44; Dressler 2008, 286). An initiative that came from the Turkish state was not welcomed by the Alevi community in Germany; Alevis did not send their children to religious classes because there were claims that teachers were instructing them in a religion that conformed to the understanding of the state, resulting in an increased demand for religious instruction that included Alevi beliefs (Shankland and Çetin 2008, 235). This was expressed during debates about religious classes for immigrant children in many states, and initially the demand was for inclusion rather than for specific Alevi religious classes (Tosun 2009, 100). Such a demand was also included in the manifesto published in Hamburg during the Alevi Culture Week (Kaleli 2000, 175–76). However, at this point Alevis' claims for recognition were still weak and unstable, although they were increasing.

The Alevi movement in Germany was relatively quiet during the 1990s, even though the umbrella organization was established in this period. Institutionalization increased rapidly in these years, primarily as a result of the tragic incidents in Turkey. Alevis' main concern was

again Turkish politics, with the energy of the movement channelled into transnational efforts to bring Alevis together under one roof and to support the Peace Party in Turkey. However, the failure of these initiatives in the late 1990s brought momentum back to AABF's recognition struggle, a localized agenda, and the issues of the Alevi community in Germany. As a result of these debates, new cadres came to power in the administration of the organization and new departments were established to address relevant issues. The activities of these new administrative cadres mainly concentrated on informing the community about naturalization, educating young people, promoting dialogue between religions, and providing Alevi religious instruction in public schools (Sökefeld 2008b, 85–88). This transformation was quite abrupt, and events relating to these subjects increased awareness of the community in general. As a result, recognition became one of the fundamental aims of AABF in the early 2000s and its character changed from a cultural organization to a religious organization, with alterations to its by-laws (Arslan 2017, 165). It could be argued that the appearance of these subjects on its agenda and the change in its self-definition indicated that AABF was attempting to gain recognition in Germany.

After this change in focus and aims, AABF gave great importance to recognition for a couple of reasons. First, the trajectory of the Alevi movement and the Alevi revival had created a demand for recognition as a religious community rather than as a political or cultural one. Moreover, Alevis could only be recognized as a religious community in Germany because of the recognition system. Additionally, the opportunities, especially economic ones, that come with recognition were as attractive to AABF as they were to other organizations. According to Çoşan Eke (2014, 189, 2015, 259), in addition to practising their beliefs freely, recognition of their differences from other Islamic groups – or even as a different religion – was also crucial for Alevis. Probably because of this, AABF abandoned the round tables on Islamic religious instruction in several states and started to demand a separate Alevi religious instruction class (Tosun 2009, 100–101). This new approach marked Alevis' separation from the other organizations that had been seeking to achieve similar objectives.

Alevis not only separated themselves from the mainstream recognition struggle but also operationalized their differences from the Sunni majority as a strategy. As already mentioned, Alevis differ from Sunni Muslims especially in the context of religious rituals, places of worship and preachers. In addition, some visible and more or less generalizable features such as not wearing headscarves, gender equality and being open to alcohol consumption have been mentioned in the literature to support the idea that Alevis are closer to European culture

(Shankland and Çetin 2008, 225). According to many sources, Alevis are an excellent example of an integrated community in Germany, which makes them favoured partners for the state because they can be considered a counterbalance against radical Islam (Arslan 2017, 165; Bozkurt 2016, 119–20). It is evident that such a perception could have many benefits for the community in its struggle for recognition, and the organization is obviously aware of this fact. In line with this, Fuat Ateş from AABF's executive board stated the following:

There is no place where Alevis migrated where we are faced with integration problems in Europe ... We also do not have any problem with Europe in the frame of religion. We have gender equality, which enables men and women to pray together. We do not have a limitation for drinking alcohol. Even eating pork, which is forbidden by our religious council, is usually allowed in daily practice. We do not have specific conditions that could lead to a problem with Germans in any social context. (Interview 7, 2019)

As a result of this difference in traditional characteristics, AABF has managed to legitimize itself and has covered more ground in the recognition process than other migrant organizations (Pries and Tuncer-Zengingül 2013, 163). Emphasizing their differences from Sunni groups therefore seems to be a key strategy for Alevis, as well as presenting themselves as a Europeanized, secular and modern religious (or Islamic) community (Çoşan EKE 2014, 189). As mentioned above, the by-laws of all three levels of the organization include articles that emphasize these points. Similarly, definitions on AABF's website also refer to these differences.

This strategy was not the only one that the community followed for recognition. In this frame, Sökefeld (2008b, 186–89) argues that AABF has not only transformed its structure to integrate with the German system, but it has also tried to build relations with politicians, representatives of other religions and other civil society organizations, including by inviting them to events and visiting their offices. When one considers that Alevis are in the majority among politicians with a Turkish background in Germany, this strategy is also a logical choice to achieve their goals for recognition.

It could be argued that these two strategies have helped the organization overcome some of the problems that other organizations are failing to resolve. As mentioned in the previous chapters, the rise of right-wing movements and the negative attitude towards migration have created hurdles for these organizations and have been one of the critical issues for DİTİB. However, the interviewee from AABF said that this political trend has had the opposite effect for Alevis:

As a result of this process [the rise of right-wing movements], mostly the ‘bad examples’ have become more visible. However, we [AABF] are the ones they give as a good example of integration. Even more, I could say that this process is in our favour. Alevis have become more important for other political parties and gained better positions because they are showing us as examples in the frame of multiculturalism or integration. Therefore, I could say that this trend created a positive atmosphere for our organization. We have not faced any problems in our ongoing processes. (Interview 7, 2019)

This point of view is entirely unexpected when one considers the challenges that migrants have been facing because of this trend. However, as has been seen, Alevis’ differences from Islamic organizations and typical immigrant groups are apparently advantageous in the frame of recognition.

In Chapter 5, it was seen that there was a correlation between the rise of these movements and criticism of DİTİB’s transnational links. Cross-border relations were always an important topic in any report, document and process relating to recognition of the organization. Therefore, it was easy to estimate the effects of transnational links on recognition from even a quick look at the literature. However, almost none of the related publications discuss AABF’s transnational links in the frame of recognition processes, so it would appear that this issue has never been seen as a problem by the authorities during negotiations. When asked about this point, the interviewee from AABF said the following:

During these processes, our links or relations with Turkey have never been brought to the negotiation table. The majority of our members and administrators are already German citizens ... Therefore, they evaluate us as a German organization during these processes. (Interview 7, 2019)

However, the high naturalization rates of the community could be an inadequate explanation for this situation. AABF started the recognition process in the 2000s when it turned its focus on Germany after its transnational initiatives had failed, and this transformation was successful. Its by-laws and administrative structure have almost no trace of transnational links, apart from cooperation with Alevi organizations in other countries, and so AABF’s cross-border links are probably seen as having been neutralized and not hindering the recognition conditions.

To sum up, it is evident that recognition in Germany is a relatively new phenomenon for the Alevi movement. While some of the reasons for this are shared by other organizations in the Turkish migrant community in Germany, some are specific to the Alevis. It could be argued that political engagements in Turkey were the main reason, as they meant that the community did not focus on its life in the host country. However, failures in Turkish politics

created turning points for the Alevi movement in Germany. Problems that the community faced in Germany gained importance and the recognition process started to be taken more seriously in the late 1990s. As a consequence, younger generations gained more significant positions in the AABF administration and the organization began to focus on equal rights in Germany. Issues such as naturalization, integration, dialogue between religions and political participation were essential components of this process, so AABF started to inform its members about these topics through specific events. As a result, naturalization rates in the Alevi community in Germany are much higher than in other groups in the Turkish population. Also, many politicians with a migrant background belong to the Alevi community, which facilitates their access to decision-making processes. Furthermore, Alevis are regarded as an integrated and modern Muslim or Turkish group by German actors,¹¹² and this gives them a more favourable position compared with others. Arguably, AABF has used this perception as a strategy to reach its recognition goals; it emphasizes its differences in every possible way, as seen in its recent discourses that focus on being an independent movement from Turkey, unlike other religious groups seeking recognition. The results of this strategy and its effects on the recognition process will be seen in the following section.

6.4.2. The results of recognition processes

As a consequence of its trajectory, recognition became one of the most critical topics on AABF's agenda, with initiatives beginning in the late 1990s. The organization was granted the recognition it needed in order to organize in its early years and also covered some ground in the frame of making agreements with authorities to receive funding. These two levels apply more or less equally to all Turkish migrant associations that define themselves as non-profit and registered organizations. Particularly after AABF started to focus explicitly on issues such as naturalization and integration, many of its projects were funded by the state, which increased its support of such projects under the SPD-Greens coalition (Sökefeld 2003, 149–50). Therefore, AABF achieved the first two levels on the recognition scale relatively quickly and started to discuss further recognition opportunities even before the 2000s when it made many of the necessary structural changes. AABF's first petition for recognition as a corporation under public law was made in the state of North Rhine-Westphalia (Document (17) 2000, 35), and

¹¹² 'Almanya'da Aleviler Uyuma Örneği [Alevis in Germany are good examples of integration]', *Deutsche Welle*, 9 February 2011; 'Müslümanlara Hak Eşitliği [Equal rights for Muslims]', *Deutsche Welle*, 15 August 2012: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/müslümanlara-hak-eşitliği/a-16167128>, accessed 15 November 2019.

although there has been no response to this claim as yet, many other improvements have been accomplished since then.

Religious community status became an issue as a result of the debates on the religious education of migrant children in public schools. The first religious course to include information on Alevism took place in Hamburg in 1999, where the state offers an inter-religious curriculum instead of religious instruction (Çoşan EKE 2015, 256). As mentioned before, Alevis separated themselves from other organizations campaigning for Islamic religious education and started to demand their own religious instruction. Recognition in this context first occurred in Berlin, where the state first granted the right to provide religious instruction in public schools to the Islamic Federation. Subsequently, the same right was given to Alevis, following the application of a pioneering Alevi organization in Berlin, and classes began in 2002 (Sökefeld 2003, 149; Tosun 2009, 100). This was the first time that Alevis were recognized as a religious community in Germany and it gave momentum to AABF's initiatives for recognition in other states (Çoşan EKE 2015, 255–56). To support these claims, the organization underwent transformations to its by-laws and organizational structure. These changes have led to many other achievements in the recognition processes in other states.

Success in Berlin was an essential step for the Alevis and AABF because it was the first time that Alevi rights were officially recognized. The organization subsequently made the same claim in North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW), Hesse, Baden-Württemberg and Bavaria, which resulted in Alevism being recognized as a specific religion – a milestone in the history of the movement. The interviewee from AABF summarized the process as follows:

Alevi religious instruction in public schools came onto the agenda of the organization in the late 1990s, but everybody thought that it was unrealistic. The idea was that they did not even have these rights in Turkey, so how could it be possible to have them here in Germany? Our former leftist members had contacts in German politics, and via these channels they learned that we could get this right. They want us to be the only umbrella organization that could represent all Alevis. Two reports were commissioned from experts about us. As a result of these reports, Alevism was recognized as an individual religion. (Interview 7, 2019)

The four applications were combined, with the decision made by NRW binding for the other states (Sökefeld 2008b, 193). As mentioned in the quote, before deciding, experts were asked to produce two reports on AABF's compliance with the conditions for recognition set out in German law. The desire for recognition pushed AABF to make changes to its by-laws to satisfy the conditions for being a religious community while the reports were being compiled (Sökefeld

2010, 26). The first report, prepared by Spuler-Stegemann (2003, 16), dealt with Alevism's relationship to Islam and accepted it as a specific syncretic religion that has many points in common with Islam. Muckel (2004) produced a second report on the possibility of defining AABF as a religious community; it clearly stated that AABF satisfied the conditions for being a religious community according to German law, and that the organization could partner with the state on religious instruction (Muckel 2004, 51). Following the publication of these reports, in 2006 AABF was recognized in these four states as a religious community and religious courses started in 2008 (Çoşan EKE 2015, 256). AABF's experience with regard to the recognition process increased along with its achievements, and this led to parallel transformations in the structure of the organization. Applications in other states have benefited from these improvements: for example, Lower Saxony and Saarland accepted AABF's claim and Alevi religious instruction started in 2010 (Kaplan 2010a, 148). Religious classes are also held in public schools in Schleswig-Holstein.¹¹³ It can thus be claimed that AABF has been quite successful in the processes that result in recognition at the third level.

In addition, AABF has signed agreements with four German states that give additional rights to the community. As seen in Chapter 5, DİTİB had similar agreements in Hamburg and Bremen. The pioneer here was Hamburg, where a state agreement was signed with AABF in 2012¹¹⁴ and the community's rights are clearly set out. Following Hamburg, other states started to discuss similar contracts: for example, a similar protocol was drawn up in Lower Saxony in 2013 (Çoşan EKE 2015, 256), but here, unlike in Hamburg, the agreement was with AABF only and excluded other Islamic organizations. A year later, Bremen completed the preparations for a contract with Islamic organizations, including AABF, and signed an agreement.¹¹⁵ After these agreements, some processes for similar contracts stalled, and there were no improvements for a period of five years. However, in early 2019, the state of Rhineland-Palatinate signed an agreement with AABF.¹¹⁶ These agreements and the smooth processes show that AABF is seen as a reliable partner by the German authorities. Fuat Ateş, from AABF's executive board, said

¹¹³ Interview with AABF's spokesperson for education, Yılmaz Kahraman, in 'Almanya'daki Okullarda Alevilik Dersleri [Alevi religious courses in German schools]', Pirha.net, 8 April 2017: see <https://www.pirha.net/almanyadaki-okullarda-alevilik-dersleri-video-49887.html/08/04/2017/>, accessed 21 November 2019.

¹¹⁴ 'Hamburg unterzeichnet Staatsvertrag mit Muslimen und Aleviten [Hamburg signed a state agreement with Muslims and Alevis]', *Der Spiegel*, 13 November 2012: see <https://www.spiegel.de/politik/deutschland/hamburg-unterzeichnet-staatsvertrag-mit-Muslimen-und-aleviten-a-867032.html>, accessed 25 November 2019.

¹¹⁵ 'Bremen unterzeichnet Staatsvertrag mit Aleviten [Bremen signed a state agreement with Alevis]', HAZ.de, 14 October 2014: see <https://www.haz.de/Nachrichten/Politik/Niedersachsen/Bremen-geht-Staatsvertrag-mit-Aleviten-ein>, accessed 25 November 2019.

¹¹⁶ 'Alevilerin Talepleri Kabul Edildi [Demands of Alevis were accepted]', DW Turkish, 27 March 2019: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/alevilerin-talepleri-kabul-edildi/a-48083682>, accessed 25 November 2019.

in an interview (7, 2019) that relations between the organization and the German authorities are good and that there are ongoing negotiations for agreements in other states.

All of these agreements are organized in a similar way and contain more or less the same rights, including religious holidays, religious instruction in public schools, and the right of the organization to own property (Document (52) 2012; (53) 2014; (54) 2019). They openly state that AABF is a religious community, according to Article 7.3 of the constitution; this is something that was partly or entirely missing in the agreements made with other Muslim organizations (Document (52) 2012, §5; (53) 2014, §1.3; (54) 2019, §6). Following these agreements, the first chair on Alevism in a European university was founded in Hamburg, where the first Alevi cemetery in Europe was also established in 2016.¹¹⁷ In addition, all three of these agreements mention AABF's intention to be recognized as a corporation under public law and include a promise either to intensify dialogue and interactions with the organization or to revise the agreement when AABF gains this status (Document (52) 2012, §15; (53) 2014, §15; (54) 2019, §13). The inclusion of such statements in these agreements could be understood as a positive sign for future improvements in this frame. In parallel, AABF declares on its website that it is working towards corporation under public law status and that it will probably achieve this soon.¹¹⁸ In response to a question on this issue, the interviewee from AABF said:

As a result of the last improvements, there are nine states where we have the right to give Alevi religious instruction. In addition to that, we signed state agreements in four states while similar processes are continuing in some of the other states. Negotiations in NRW are now focused on the corporation under public law status. Our only shortcoming is the completion of 30 years, which will be done soon. (Interview 7, 2019)

As stated in the constitution, religious organizations have to prove their longevity, which is interpreted by judicial authorities as meaning that they have to be in existence 30 years after their establishment (Khorchide 2009, 60). Therefore, AABF will possibly reach this status in the near future. The positive attitude of the German authorities towards AABF obviously helps in the recognition process, even if immigration-related topics have been the subject of tense debate in recent years.

To sum up, Alevis have steadily climbed the recognition scale. Like other Turkish organizations, AABF accomplished the primary step easily, but it has also successfully handled

¹¹⁷ 'Avrupa'nın ilk Alevi Mezarlığı Hamburg'ta [Europe's first Alevi cemetery in Hamburg]', DW Turkish, 10 April 2016: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/avrupan%C4%B1n-ilk-alevi-mezarl%C4%B1%C4%9F%C4%B1-hamburgta/a-19176970>, accessed 25 November 2019.

¹¹⁸ 'About us', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/ueber-uns/>, accessed 26 November 2019.

the second and third levels. The organization became a partner to state agencies on many projects and received funding for them,¹¹⁹ and these projects have not been interrupted by political debates or international relations. Furthermore, the organization has been quite successful in the frame of recognition as a religious community, having achieved this status in almost every state with an Alevi population. The organization has also sought full recognition, and agreements have been signed in four states. As noted earlier, these contracts mainly create a framework and define the rights of the groups involved. In AABF's case, they clearly state that AABF is a religious organization and can benefit from the rights that come with this status. Moreover, all of these documents cite the will of the organization for recognition as a corporation under public law in an affirmative manner. This can also be regarded as a sign of AABF's status in the recognition struggle and of possible future improvements.

6.4.3. Localizing the recognition processes

AABF has covered a lot of ground in its struggle for recognition, and many of the processes have been successfully concluded. Probably because of these results, full recognition is now the final target for Alevis in Germany. As shown in Chapter 5, DİTİB's struggle had notably different results in different states, possibly because of the political position of the ruling government, the capacity of religious organizations, and church–state relations (see, among others, Hofhansel 2010, Eucher 2018). In addition, transnational links had a clear influence on these processes. However, these findings are not applicable to the case of AABF, because the organization has been successful in every state where it has applied for recognition, regardless of ruling party or historical church–state relations. Therefore, this section will mainly provide information on these processes and examine the main reasons for these achievements. Because of the relatively smooth processes and the lack of data on them, the section will rely on information gathered in interviews with AABF administrators. As in the previous chapter, we will start with Hamburg, which could be called a pioneer in this frame. Hesse and Bavaria will then be examined together since AABF recognition in these two states came as a result of the same process.

6.4.3.1. Hamburg

Hamburg was the city with the first manifesto to use the word 'Alevi'. Alevis' organizational history in this city state is also one of the oldest in Germany: according to its

¹¹⁹ 'Our engagements', AABF website (in German): see <https://alevi.com/unser-engagement/>, accessed 26 November 2019.

website,¹²⁰ the Alevi Community in Hamburg (Alevitische Gemeinde Hamburg) – previously called the Hamburg Alevi Culture Centre (Hamburg Alevi Kültür Merkezi or HAKM) – is one of the oldest Alevi organizations in Europe and is currently a member of the AABF. The organization was quite active in the past and left its mark on the history of the Alevi movement, particularly with its Alevi Manifesto of 1989. In addition, Hamburg was the first city where Alevis started their struggle for Alevi religious instruction. This process was started in 1991 with a petition and ended with the inclusion of Alevism on the curriculum of ‘Religion for All’ classes in 1998 (Sökefeld 2008b, 191). Because of Hamburg’s approach to religious instruction, AABF was not directly recognized as a religious community by the inclusion, but this was considered a great success by the Alevi community.

As was noted in Chapter 5, Hamburg is also the state that signed the first state agreement with Muslim organizations in Germany; this agreement included Alevis. The process was started in 2007 and ended in 2012. Fuat Ateş stated the following in an interview about the process:

The reports published in 2003 were the most important documents that opened our way in these processes. We have presented the results of these two reports in other states where we applied. In Hamburg, for example, we did not face difficulties during the process. Besides, Olaf Scholz was there at that time. He has always been in interaction with our community. He is a politician who has very close relations with some of our friends in the organization. (Interview 7, 2019)

This quote shows the effects of links to political actors in Germany. Alevis are very active in politics, and most politicians in Germany with a Turkish backgrounded are Alevis, which possibly helps Alevis achieve their aims. As a result of the process in Hamburg, two separate agreements were signed: the first with Muslim organizations as a group, and the second only for Alevis. The agreements were similar, so the demand for a separate agreement was probably a result of seeing Alevism as a religion that is independent from Islam. Today, AABF’s state agreement with Hamburg is still in place, with no inference or problems.

6.4.3.2. Hesse and Bavaria

Hesse and Bavaria are considered together here as Alevi organizations have religious community status in both states, as the result of the same process. After gaining the right to provide religious education in Berlin, AABF made similar applications in other states. As a result of these initiatives, the administrations of four states chose NRW to decide whether

¹²⁰ ‘About us’, Alevi Community in Hamburg website (in German): see <http://www.alevi-hamburg.com/index.php/de/ueber-uns>, accessed 28 November 2019.

AABF was eligible for these rights. As explained above and discussed in an interview (7, 2019), the reports prepared for this process became an essential tool for Alevi to get the same rights in other states (for the reports, see Muckel 2004; Spuler-Stegemann 2003). The reports looked at questions such as the following: what is Alevism? What are its links with Islam? Can AABF be considered a religious community? The answers to these questions were positive for Alevi's recognition struggle, and AABF was granted recognition status in 2006. Based on this, AABF started to offer Alevi religious courses in public schools in the states covered by this status from 2008 (Çoşan EKE 2015, 256). The reasons for this achievement were given in the media as the structure of the organization, the number of its members, and the changes made to its by-laws to reinforce its religious community identity.¹²¹ Religious education classes are still provided in these states, and negotiations are continuing for future enhancements in the frame of recognition.

Of these two states, Hesse could be considered the more accommodating in the frame of immigrants' rights based on the findings of Chapter 5, since it was the only state where an 'Islamic organization' was recognized as a corporation under public law. It is one of the pioneering states in terms of its positive approach to issues relating to immigrant communities. AABF is listed among the religious communities with which the state cooperates in the context of religious instruction in Hesse.¹²² Alevi religious courses started on 31 August 2009, taught by Alevi teachers in the German language, and continue today.¹²³ This is not surprising: other Islamic organizations have the same status and the same rights. As discussed Chapter 5, Hesse had some issues with DİTİB in the turbulent years following 2016, but AABF's position was considerably better: it had been granted rights long before any other immigrant organizations (in 2008), and, during the period when the relationship between the state and migrant organizations faced challenges, AABF actually advanced its status. As a result of this situation, SPD officially demanded that the government make a state agreement with AABF to resolve problems in specific areas such as holidays, religious instruction and pastoral care services in some public institutions (Document (57) 2019). The importance of this petition can be appreciated when one considers that the same party wanted to end cooperation with DİTİB at

¹²¹ 'Debatte Islam-Unterricht: Aleviten machen Schule', TAZ, 3 September 2008: see <https://taz.de/Debatte-Islam-Unterricht/!5176354/>, accessed 1 December 2019.

¹²² 'Religionsunterricht', Ministry of Education of Hesse website: see <https://kultusministerium.hessen.de/schulsystem/religionsunterricht>, accessed 2 December 2019.

¹²³ 'Alevitische Religionsunterricht an der Grundschulen', AABF Kassel website: see http://www.alevi-kassel.de/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=93%3Aalevitischer-religionsunterricht-an-den-grundschulen-&catid=63%3Areligionsunterricht&Itemid=174&lang=de, accessed 2 December 2019.

the time because of the debates around DİTİB's transnational links (Document (39) 2019). It is not possible to find information in any document or statement referring to AABF's transnational character, while DİTİB is highly criticized because of its transnationality; one could therefore claim that AABF's transnational character has never been seen as a negative factor during the recognition process.

The second state, Bavaria, is known as a state with a conservative majority. The findings in Chapter 5 were in line with this claim: Bavaria is one of the states that is most silent on the subject of Islamic organizations' demands. Alevi religious instruction classes started in 2008 in five cities as a result of the reports mentioned above and because of AABF's interactions with the Bavarian state authorities (Kaplan 2010a, 147). In response to a parliamentary question in 2011, it was stated that the number of schools offering Alevi religious instruction had increased to seven and that these classes were provided by teachers trained by AABF (Document (55) 2011, 2). Another parliamentary question about Alevis was asked in 2015, and the government gave more up-to-date information on the community. However, it is hard to observe further improvements in the rights given to Alevis in the frame of religious holidays or cemeteries, and the government clearly stated that there were no ongoing negotiations for a state agreement similar to the ones in Hamburg and Bremen (Document (56) 2015). In light of this, it is evident that AABF is recognized as a religious community and allowed to give religious instruction in public schools, but the state of Bavaria does not seem eager to expand this status further. There is no hint of problems related directly to AABF's organizational structure or its transnational relations – such issues are not mentioned in any of the reviewed documents, reports or media outlets discussing the status of Alevis in Bavaria. Although AABF has a similar status here as in the other states examined, the process is more stagnant in Bavaria, possibly because of the traditional position of the state towards such issues.

6.5. Conclusion

AABF has been examined in this chapter using four main aspects that are similar to those used in Chapter 5. From an exploration of AABF's religious understanding, history and crucial milestones, it can be seen that Alevism is a blanket term that covers heterogenic groups with varying rituals and syncretic beliefs but who share a love for Ali. There are therefore different versions of Alevism, and such plurality naturally paves the way for a fragmented organizational landscape, as seen in Turkey. In mapping the historical context, three points are crucial: first, Alevis differ in their religion from the majority of the population of Anatolia, who are Sunni Muslims. Because of this, they faced episodes of suppression and violence in their

history that created not only ruptures in their religious understanding and institutionalization but also a culture of political protest. Second, their institutionalization in Turkey was shaped around different definitions of Alevism, and so, initially, there was no umbrella organization that represented the whole community. Third, refugee flows were more important for Alevis' migration to Germany and other European countries than they were for other groups in the Turkish diaspora; this point has been significant for their current status.

The establishment of AABF in Germany was related to the three points above. The politicization of Alevis in Turkey from the 1960s and their identification with left-wing ideologies were reflected in the Alevi community in Germany, as were the collapse of leftist activism and the revival of a more secular *Alevism*. Tragic events in Turkey triggered the foundation of AABF, which managed to combine the religious wing and the former leftist wing of the movement to become the representative of almost all Alevis living in Germany. The situation of Alevis in Turkey continued to be the most significant issue on AABF's agenda for a long time, and the organization channelled most of its energy into political initiatives in Turkey until the 2000s. In contrast to almost all other political and religious organizations in the Turkish transnational space in Germany, AABF was not a proxy of a central group in the homeland. It could be argued that it emerged and created its more or less distinct religious understanding and institutions in the diaspora and then tried to export these experiences to Alevi movements in Turkey through initiatives to unite different groups under an umbrella organization or to create political parties. Even after the focus of the community turned to its life in Germany, these efforts continued in the form of support and cooperation.

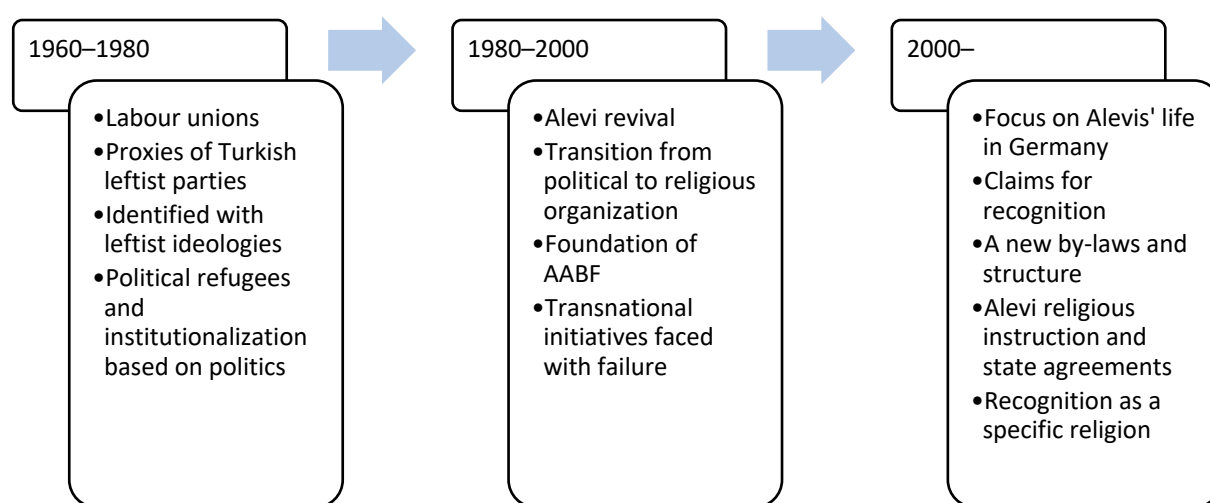


Figure 8: Transformation of the Alevi movement in Germany

The second part of the chapter detailed the organizational structure of AABF, which, in accordance with its importance for recognition, is well planned and transparent. The organization has a three-layer structure mirroring the German political system, with each layer following the principle of democracy. The religious community status of the organization is stated openly and its aims for recognition have been added to the objectives set out in the by-laws. In addition, there is an emphasis on issues such as human rights, gender equality, the environment, and dialogue between religions. It could be argued that this emphasis is a result of the political experiences gained by the pioneering cadres of the organization in earlier periods. The composition of the by-laws gives hints of these political experiences and shows that the organization is well informed about what is needed for recognition in Germany. The movement's struggles during its history created AABF, and this is particularly reflected in its institutionalization, mobilization of civil society and political processes. This combination could be why the organization is so clear, structured and democratic. As a consequence of debates relating to the changing focus of the organization when it began to concentrate on issues in Germany, the necessary measures were taken swiftly to fulfil the conditions for recognition.

The third part of the chapter dealt with the transnational character of the organization. Transnational connections played a huge role during the initial periods of the movement in Germany, but, after the founding of AABF, this transnational influence changed direction. AABF became one of the most important Alevi organizations and tried to use this power transnationally to unite Alevi movements or to create a political party in Turkey. However, most of these initiatives resulted in failure, and this active transnationality came to an end. When the community chose to focus on Germany in the early 2000s, this reduced any transnational efforts; since then, AABF has not undertaken any political or religious initiatives in Turkey. The new by-laws of the organization defined it as a religious community and limited its transnational aspects, including by excluding external influences on AABF's decision-making processes at each layer of its structure. This means that neither transnational actors nor the administrations of higher-level bodies can intervene in the democratic processes of the organization at any level.

While transnational links involving political influence have been excluded or neutralized by the new by-laws, the organization still lists transnational aims in these by-laws and sometimes acts accordingly. The most cited examples are cooperation with similar organizations and lobbying in Germany or in European institutions on behalf of Alevi issues in Turkey. In addition, the human capital that played a critical role during the foundation of AABF

has been very useful for the movement in Germany. Organizational skills, political experience and contacts with German politicians have obviously eased some of the processes that many other Turkish organizations have failed to cope with. Therefore, one can argue that AABF cut its visible and effective transnational links but still has a transnational character, and that this has contributed to its achievements in the frame of recognition.

Based on the information in the previous sections, it was seen that AABF and the Alevi movement in Germany had little intention of making recognition claims in the early years. This changed as a result of Turkey's policies towards its diaspora after the 1980s and the failure of AABF's transnational ventures in the 1990s. The first achievement was having Alevism added to the 'Religion for All' courses in Hamburg. This was followed by Berlin granting religious community status as well as the right to provide religious instruction in public schools. AABF's increased confidence and experience led to similar applications in other states, and, in 2002, the two reports commissioned by North Rhine-Westphalia decided on AABF's suitability for religious community status. This was a turning point and opened the way for recognition as a religious community in other states, because these reports not only confirmed AABF's suitability but also defined Alevism as an independent religion. As a result, the organization has now been recognized as a religious community in the nine German states where most of the Alevi population lives. The organization has signed state agreements that set out the community's rights and bring a greater level of prestige and legitimacy. As a result of these achievements, corporation under public law status will possibly be gained by AABF in the near future, once it has been active for 30 years. Thus, it could be said that AABF has a very successful and stable profile in the frame of recognition.

Finally, it was seen that AABF is recognized as a religious community in Hamburg, Bavaria and Hesse. The organization already has a state agreement in Hamburg, while a similar agreement is on the way in Hesse. Although there is a lack of data on the recognition processes, they appear to have been smooth, with no problems, discussions, suspensions or rejections. Almost all the parliamentary documents relating to AABF in all three states were in favour of the organization. The only state where this was not necessarily the case was Bavaria, which is dominated by the conservative CSU, but even here, AABF has the status of a religious community.

Another interesting point is that none of the documents reviewed mention the organization's transnational links, nor has there been political debate that presents AABF's transnational character as a problem. In fact, its transnational political activities of the past

benefited the recognition process. The political activists with organizational experience who became a crucial part of the organization had positive effects on organizational structure, political contacts and recognition strategies, while the discourses on gender equality, the environment and religious dialogue were also possibly influenced by these political experiences. In addition, strategies such as emphasizing the differences of the Alevi community from Muslim groups and presenting the community as a well-integrated one could also be understood in line with these claims. These issues make the community almost immune to the current trend of rising right-wing movements and discourses that affects all other immigrant organizations in a negative way. Furthermore, a motivation for AABF's recognition in Germany could be the prestigious position it confers for addressing the situation of Alevis in Turkey and for its aim of transnationally supporting them. Based on these factors, a transnational character is not always harmful to the recognition process, especially if the visible effects of these links on an organization's control mechanisms are curbed. Moreover, transnationally inherited features and skills can be very useful for an organization in the recognition process due to their political character.

In this chapter, the Alevi Community in Germany (AABF) has been assessed, with key details provided in the context of its recognition struggle. The contrast between DİTİB and AABF is clear, especially when their recognition and transnational statuses are considered. However, a comparative analysis is needed to fulfil the aims set out in the introduction to this study, and so we will turn to this in Chapter 7.

7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

As we have seen, there is a significant variation between DİTİB and AABF with regard to recognition policies. The differences outlined in previous chapters are not sufficient to explain this variation, and so this chapter attempts to explain it based on transnationality. The chapter is divided into two parts: observations and explanations. The first part covers findings from a comparison of data on recognition processes and organizations. Based on the data, I argue that the comparison has three dimensions: variations in recognition policy over time, between organizations, and between different administrative levels and actors.

The second part tries to answer the question: ‘Do transnational links explain these variations?’ Assuming that the answer is ‘Yes’, this second part attempts to explain, for example, why such changes exist over time and across organizations. I then discuss three key explanatory factors that are linked to transnationality. The first relates to a change in the degree or substance of transnational links, which creates a causal association between these changes and the variations mentioned above. The second dimension relates to the legal framework and organizational factors and shows how these are connected to the nature of transnational links. The third factor concerns the perceptions of German actors, since issues such as migration, integration and Islam are politicizing and playing a decisive role in the recognition process.

This section therefore shows how the nature and perceptions of transnational links are related. By the end of the chapter, it will be clear that even those recognition processes that are usually seen as domestic cannot be explained without reference to a transnational approach when those involved are Turkish migrant organizations. Moreover, the relationship between the nature of transnational links and the issue of recognition will be better understood. Thus, these findings pertain to the recognition and institutionalization of immigrants’ religious organizations as well as the integration problems of such communities.

7.1. Observations on variations

The first part of this analysis focuses on the variations that were observed during the data collection phase, summarized under three headings: between organizations, over time, and among actors. The most visible of these variations related to the DİTİB and AABF case studies, where some differences were observed in relation to recognition policies. In addition, the in-depth historical analysis of both cases revealed that there has also been a change over time in the recognition policies relating to organizations. The study looked at different actors and levels to see whether they experienced similar variations; this provided the third dimension of the

comparison. Taken together, these dimensions created the pillars of the comparative analysis. This section presents the variations observed and looks at the ways in which recognition policy varies. The study then reveals the changes over time in the recognition policies relating to these organizations since their early initiatives. The key questions relate to variations in recognition policies and in perceptions of them during their history. The last section focuses on how these findings relate to local actors and shows how there are intriguing differences in the variations among different actors.

7.1.1. Variations among organizations

The two initial background chapters not only defined the central notions and components of the study but also provided information about the factors that shaped the Turkish transnational space and that had an impact on the two organizations that were the focus of the case studies. It is possible to draw parallels between the effects of these factors on the two case studies. At some point in this dynamic process, the two organizations started to make claims for recognition, something that had not been on their agenda initially. For example, DİTİB was established as a consequence of Turkey's and Germany's interest in controlling the religious field in the diaspora, which was dominated by 'undesirable' organizations during the 1980s. DİTİB's strategy was to expand its web of mosque associations by providing apolitical religious services. This attitude, together with factors such as a lack of human capital and know-how about recognition processes, caused a decade-long delay in DİTİB's claims for recognition.

On the other hand, the institutionalization of Alevis was in its early phase in the 1980s, with no umbrella organization similar to DİTİB. Even after AABF had been established in the early 1990s, recognition was not among the aims of the organization. In line with the Alevi community itself, AABF took a reactionary position and mostly focused on politics in Turkey; this caused a similar delay in claims for recognition. Only after a failed initiative in Turkish politics in the late 1990s did AABF turn to the problems of Alevis in Germany. As a consequence, both organizations started to make claims for recognition at the beginning of the second millennium, due to partly similar factors.

The realization of the need for recognition brought some changes for both organizations. In DİTİB's case, these transformations included the introduction of a new administrative structure and some amendments to the by-laws to assert the organization's religious community identity. Despite the fact that these enhancements occurred from around 2010, relations between DİTİB and the German authorities remained positive. The organization was accepted as a partner in projects for the common good and regarded as a point of contact by the state due to

its liberal and secular attitude during the 2000s (Becker and El-Menouar 2012, 143). Thus, it could be said that DİTİB had already achieved step two on the recognition scale. However, being regarded as a contact point was just a temporary solution to problems and related only to time-limited projects on specific issues. Thus, the organization implemented the improvements to its structure mentioned in Chapter 5 to gain further recognition, for example for its religious community status and state agreements. Hamburg was the first state in which the organization achieved some of its aims and where it received a state agreement, which made its religious community status official. Bremen followed, granting similar status and rights to the organization. However, the rights obtained were not exactly those that come with religious community status, because the right to religious instruction did not apply in these states in the way described in Article 7 of the constitution. It could be claimed that gaining such status was easier in Hamburg and Bremen than in other states with religious instruction. DİTİB's initiatives to reach similar agreements with other states were met with failure or delay, with the sole exception being Hesse, where the organization was given religious community status for the first time in 2012. In Hesse, DİTİB has the right to provide religious instruction in public schools; this right was not included in the state agreements in Bremen and Hamburg. The organization was not as successful in the following years and failed to add further achievements to this list. Moreover, it lost its right to provide religious instruction in Hesse, due to political tensions around its transnational links in 2020.

AABF, however, provides an example of a more positive and consistent journey through the recognition scale. The organization became aware of the need for recognition and responded decisively, and this started to bear fruit in the early 2000s. Like DİTİB, AABF had also already climbed the first two steps on the recognition scale when it made necessary changes to its structure and improved its cadres in order to be able to move forward. In 2002, the organization was given the right to provide religious instruction in public schools in Berlin. This was a key step not only because it was the community's first significant achievement but also because it was the first time in Alevi history that the group had been recognized as a separate entity. The realization of the potential of this achievement led to further initiatives by the organization in other states. In 2005, four other states recognized AABF as a religious community based on two expert reports; this also gave additional momentum to the Alevis' recognition journey. Today, the organization is recognized in nine states; these cover almost all of the Alevi population living in Germany. The organization did not stop after achieving these goals. In addition to obtaining religious community status, AABF also signed state agreements with

Hamburg, Bremen, Lower Saxony and Rhineland-Palatinate. Hamburg and Bremen have also signed such agreements with Islamic organizations, including DİTİB, but the other two states drew up a contract with AABF alone. The state of Rhineland-Palatinate announced the agreement in 2019 when similar processes for Islamic organizations had stalled. In addition, AABF is now aiming to get full recognition, something that has been accomplished by only one Islamic organization (Ahmadiyya) in Germany. AABF will possibly achieve ‘corporation under public law’ status in the future when it fulfils the condition of being active for 30 years.

<i>Recognition scale</i> ➡	Basic recognition	Time-limited partnerships	Religious community status (number)	State agreements (number)	Corporation under public law status (expectation)
<i>Organization</i> ↓					
DİTİB	✓	✓	✓ (1 state)	✓ (2)	✗ (negative)
AABF	✓	✓	✓ (9 states)	✓ (4)	✗ (positive)

Figure 9: Organizations and their current recognition levels

As shown above and in Figure 9, there is an apparent variation between the organizations regarding recognition policy. It is known that both organizations are leading actors within their groups and that they started to make recognition claims at almost the same time. In addition, they both made vigorous attempts to change their structure and fulfil the criteria for recognition after they became aware of the need for recognition. It could be argued that AABF received its first recognition in 2002; this is earlier than DİTİB, which achieved the same status in 2012. AABF is recognized as a religious community in nine states, while DİTİB has this status only in Hesse. The other variation in recognition policy between these organizations came to the fore in the frame of state agreements. Both organizations made their first state agreement with Hamburg in 2012, but they had different results in subsequent attempts in other states, except Bremen: AABF has signed state agreements with four states, while DİTİB has signed only two similar contracts. According to these numbers, AABF has superiority over DİTİB in the area of recognition policy. Also, in AABF’s case, these numbers have increased steadily, whereas DİTİB has faced a stagnation period.

Similarly, there is almost no sign of DİTİB achieving full recognition on the recognition scale, while AABF is close to being granted corporation under public law status in the near future; this also consolidates the variation between the organizations in favour of the community. In conclusion, it can be seen that AABF has a distinct advantage with regard to

recognition. In the following section, I look for a corresponding difference in the second dimension of this section: variation over time.

7.1.2. Variations over time

While the background chapters explored the organizations, changes in the historical context were examined as the second issue. It can be seen that variations in recognition policies applied not only *across* organizations; they can be both positive and negative towards the same organization in different periods, as is shown by Germany's attitude to DİTİB from its beginning to more recent times. This section therefore looks for patterns of variation in the organizations' history and tries to draw parallels between them.

As stated in previous chapters, states' perceptions of and policies relating to the migrant community have changed over time. The journey of these immigrants from economic numbers to transnational citizens and external voters hint at the changes in Turkey's approach to the issue. A similar phenomenon exists in Germany, where migrants moved from guest workers to Muslim citizens. Although both of the organizations explored here were established in the 1980s and 1990s, policies applied by both countries in the preceding decades also had a tremendous effect on them. It should be remembered that Germany and Turkey adopted policies that focused on economic gains in the first two decades of migration, with almost no policies concerning other aspects of the migrants' life.

The increased politicization of the community created a fragmented civil society in the diaspora. The situation in Turkey and the problems of workers consolidated Alevis' leftist position while the demand for politics-free Islam created independent mosques, which more or less follow the line of Diyanet. This conjuncture gave rise to the two organizations studied here. According to Laurence (2006, 263), the German state adopted a '*laissez-faire* policy', allowing outsourcing in issues relating to religion until the end of the 1980s, when it changed its policy into one of incorporation and de-transnationalization. In parallel, religious communities organized freely in Germany, with no state inference, until the 1990s, but this situation changed in the following years and efforts for incorporation intensified particularly from the 2000s onwards.

When one considers the history of DİTİB, Germany's change in attitude and the recognition policy, Laurence's classification seems accurate. DİTİB was welcomed by the German state when it was inaugurated in 1984 because the fear of fundamentalism and the legal issues caused by the secularity principle led the state to tolerate such outsourcing. DİTİB

benefited from its links to a secular state agency that followed a moderate religious understanding. Also, Diyanet was eager to fund these services because of the similar concerns of the Turkish state. Recognition at the first level was thus straightforward for DİTİB. At this stage, neither the organization nor the two countries were aiming to create a religious structure that could become the equivalent of the established churches in Germany. Instead, Turkey and Germany shared the same concerns about the regulation and control of the religious field in the diaspora. DİTİB grew very quickly to become the most prominent web of mosques in Germany with the support of Turkey in the following years, but it took a while for it to make claims for equal recognition.

Changes in the community brought new issues to the agendas of these migrant organizations and eventually pushed them to change. Naturalizations and permanency in Germany started debates about religious instruction, cemeteries, and many other issues related to Muslims. On these issues, the German system required cooperation between the state and religious communities. However, this system was unfamiliar to Muslims' religious traditions, and there was no Islamic organization capable of undertaking such cooperation for the whole community. When it began to make recognition claims, DİTİB was not well prepared; it was not until the 2000s that it could start to take serious action. The period between 2000 and 2016 could be considered the golden years of the organization in this respect, because this was when it underwent structural transformations and a firm recognition policy was adopted towards the organization. DİTİB was seen as a reliable partner by state institutions during these years and was involved in joint projects that included public funding, although these projects were time-limited and restricted to specific purposes. As mentioned above, two state agreements were signed in addition to the provision of religious community status in Hesse; the latter was suspended in 2020.

All in all, the attitude to DİTİB was highly positive or at least neutral in the early years. However, the situation changed sharply, and the organization faced the most difficult challenges of its history in the period from 2016. Almost all of its joint projects and financial relations with the German authorities have been suspended, its prestige has decreased, and media and political actors have openly criticized its reliability as a state partner. While DİTİB has steadily transformed from a mosque organization into a religious community by improving its organizational structure, attitudes to it have not proved as stable. In parallel, DİTİB's recognition status has experienced extreme ups and downs over the course of the organization's history.

AABF's history, however, has been less turbulent and sophisticated in the frame of recognition, although Alevis' emergence as a religious organization in Germany took a long time and was achieved only after a long period of political engagement. Even after institutionalization, the organization continued to pursue its political aims in Turkey through transnational political activities. Since the initial cadres of the organization were former leftists from Turkey, the organization was not close to the Turkish state. In addition, the protest culture of the community supported a position against governments from either end of the political spectrum. Therefore, AABF's relations with Turkey have never been like those of DİTİB, especially in terms of stability. However, its relations with Germany were transformed more silently and steadily. The community was known more for its political stance than for its religious beliefs until the end of the 1980s, and so it is not possible to find any sign of states' attitude to it as a religious community before then.

The political figures who played crucial roles in the Alevi revival managed to make contacts in German politics, mostly with left-wing parties. These affiliations enabled them to lobby for their aims in Turkey. Even after the Alevi revival and the foundation of AABF, the community continued to be oriented towards Turkish politics and channelled its efforts into transnational initiatives in Turkey. In contrast to the de-transnationalization and incorporation aims of the state, there is no evidence of criticism in Germany of such initiatives by the community. One could thus argue that the attitude of the state to the Alevi community could be described as being at least neutral because there is no evidence of either supportive or critical comments from officials.

A notable change came after the organization started to make claims for recognition after the 2000s. The following years were successful for AABF in terms of recognition. Religious community status, which accepts Alevism as a separate religion, has been granted in almost every state where Alevis live, and four state agreements have been signed to set out the rights of the community. The achievements continued without interruption and the recognition process continued steadily. As has been shown, the state's approach to AABF has been consistently positive since the 2000s. Also, Alevis have been shown as an excellent example of an integrated society and have been praised on many occasions. Their differences from Muslim immigrants put them in a privileged place in the eyes of policymakers; the organization was

even invited to the presidential palace by President Frank-Walter Steinmeier, who made positive comments about Alevis in 2018.¹²⁴

Possibly, their differences are not appreciated by everyone in German society, but at least those close to Alevis or their issues are aware of their integration into the host culture. The lack of elements such as mosques, headscarves and strict rules on eating and drinking, which are closely associated with Islam by the public, has given Alevis a particularly advantageous position (Interview 7, 2019). When combined with the rise of negative opinions about Islam, the importance of such a reputation can easily be understood. According to a study by Bertelsmann Stiftung, conducted in 2019 as part of its ‘Religion Monitor’ project, one respondent in two sees Islam as a threat, and these numbers have been increasing steadily for a decade.¹²⁵ Therefore, it could be claimed that AABF has been affected to a lesser degree by the xenophobia, Islamophobia and the rise of populist right movements compared with Islamic groups in Germany. Furthermore, even in the periods when bilateral relations with Turkey worsened, AABF maintained its interactions with the German authorities without any interruption, unlike DİTİB. In recent years, when many organizations in the Turkish community have faced problems, there have not been any suspensions or failures in the projects and processes that AABF and the German state are involved in.

<i>Time periods</i> ➔	1980s	1990s	2000–16	2016–
<i>Organizations</i> ↓				
DİTİB	Positive	Neutral	Positive	Negative
AABF	–	Neutral	Positive	Positive

Figure 10: Germany's attitude to DİTİB and AABF in selected periods.

In conclusion, there were changes over time in the attitude of Germany to DİTİB's recognition claims. The relationship between the organization and the state has not followed a stable path and has often mirrored the bilateral relations between Turkey and Germany. On the other hand, Alevis and AABF have enjoyed a more stable relationship with the German state,

¹²⁴ ‘Steinmeier Alevi temsilcileri kabul etti [Steinmeier's meeting with Alevi representatives]’, DW Turkish, 23 April 2018: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/steinmeier-alevi-temsilcileri-kabul-etti/a-43503782>, accessed 27 March 2020.

¹²⁵ Bertelsmann Stiftung's ‘Religion Monitor’ project: see <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2019/juli/religioese-toleranz-weit-verbreitet-aber-der-islam-wird-nicht-einbezogen>, accessed 27 March 2020.

which could be defined as never worse than neutral. Furthermore, factors such as the rise of populist movements and Islamophobia, which have influenced the lives of immigrants in many ways in Germany, have not impacted on Alevis in the same way. While the attitude of society has changed towards many other groups and organizations in Germany, states have continued to grant recognition to AABF. Consequently, it could be said that there is a visible variation in recognition policies over time, and this will be explained in relation to transnational links below.

7.1.3. Variations between actors

Actors also play an essential role in recognition policies. In the German administrative system, providing recognition status to religious organizations comes under the jurisdiction of state governments. Each state government can have its own circumstances that do not always reflect the situation at the federal level: for example, while some issues are seen as highly problematic by central government, they might be handled differently by local administrations. Therefore, it could be argued that there is a vertical dimension to the differences between state governments and federal government. Second, the state government plays a critical role in general on this issue, and so we also need a horizontal frame to compare different federal states. Because of this, Chapters 5 and 6 included sections describing the situation in different states (*Länder*). These vertical and horizontal dimensions could be expanded to include other actors, such as political parties. Some German regions traditionally tend to vote for specific political parties, such as CSU in Bavaria, and so a comparison of the opinions of political parties could be another addition to the literature.

As a result of the explorations here, a few points came to the fore. Policy differences exist not only between local and federal governments but also among state governments themselves. Also, these state governments' policies relating to DİTİB and AABF vary over time. These variations are explained in the literature with reference to the political positions of state governments, the organizational capacities of communities, and the traditions of church–state relations in the region (see, among others, Hofhansel 2010, Eucher 2018). However, these points are arguably inadequate for clarifying the reasons behind other variations revealed by the data collected during this research project. Therefore, these variations will be analysed here and then explained based on transnationality.

It is evident that the federal government and state governments do not always share the same recognition policy for these two organizations. Especially during the period when DİTİB became a key issue due to bilateral relations, the federal government's attitude to the organization was quite negative. All of the financial support for joint projects with DİTİB was

suspended. Furthermore, it was demanded at federal level that the organization be overseen by the Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution (*Das Bundesamt für Verfassungsschutz*); this was discussed for a long time, but finally rejected.¹²⁶ While this was happening to DİTİB, there was no change in attitude to Alevis, with whom the federal government and authorities continued their interactions. While the situation was tense and DİTİB was put under pressure due to the attitude of the federal government, some state governments took decisions in line with the criticism and suspended their relations with the organization in this period. However, some states that had already given privileges to DİTİB were cautious about taking swift action, so they either asked for new reports on the local branches, as in Hesse, or continued their partnerships but emphasized the independence of the local branch from the central body, as in Hamburg. Therefore, it could be argued that federal and state governments' policies varied especially when the upper body viewed the organization negatively; but, when the perception was positive, as in the case of AABF, the variation was smaller and tended to be in favour of the community.

The horizontal dimension was elaborated in those sections that focused on the policies of state governments. DİTİB's position varies in three states discussed. The first state, Hamburg, is among the most accommodating, and DİTİB ended up with a state agreement, although its negotiations with Hamburg were not smooth. Concerns about DİTİB were voiced both in parliament and in reports prepared during the recognition process. The main concern was DİTİB's transnational links, but eventually these were regarded as harmless. Even after 2016, the state chose to continue its partnership with the organization, although there was severe criticism. The main explanation for the decision in favour of DİTİB Hamburg was that there was a focus on its differences and independence from the umbrella organization.

A similar attitude was observed in Hesse, but the result here was not positive and the only right DİTİB has is to provide religious instruction. The process did not go smoothly: two reports were commissioned on the organization before the decision was made and DİTİB was required to make changes to reduce both the effects of transnational links and the influence of the central body. The incidents in 2016 also had a negative impact on the process, and some political actors demanded the suspension of all partnerships. Three more reports were prepared

¹²⁶ 'Verfassungsschutz prüft Beobachtung von DİTİB [Federal Office for the Protection of the Constitution observation on DİTİB]', *Die Welt*, 20 September 2018: see <https://www.welt.de/politik/deutschland/article181605862/Koeln-Verfassungsschutz-prueft-Beobachtung-von-DITIB.html>; 'DİTİB wird doch nicht geheimdienstlich beobachtet [DİTİB is not under surveillance]', *Deutsche Welle*, 9 December 2018: see <https://www.dw.com/de/DİTİB-wird-doch-nicht-geheimdienstlich-beobachtet/a-46654761>, both accessed 28 March 2020.

by experts to evaluate whether transnational links had any effect on the courses run by DİTİB. As a result, some further amendments were demanded; however, at the end of the time allowed for these changes, the state decided to suspend its cooperation with DİTİB due to lack of improvement in the required areas.

The last state to be examined was Bavaria, traditionally a more conservative state in German politics. The state has always been comparatively silent with regard to relations with Islamic organizations. Political actors have mostly refrained from interactions with Islamic organizations and have tried to resolve issues relating to Muslims through projects that exclude organized groups. On many occasions, the state has been negative about cooperation with DİTİB, and this situation worsened after 2016. DİTİB Bavaria has not been granted any recognition status and there is little ongoing negotiation to improve this situation.

AABF's experience has been quite a contrast to DİTİB's turbulent recognition process in these three states. However, AABF's achievements in this field cannot be understood using solely the explanations mentioned earlier. Like DİTİB, AABF's recognition process in Hamburg resulted in a state agreement in 2012. Although they were signed on the same day, AABF signed a separate contract and emphasized its difference from Islamic organizations and from Islam. The political contacts of the community were also helpful and contributed to the negotiations. Similar processes in Hesse and Bavaria also ended with AABF being recognized as a religious community. These states initiated a joint action to decide on the issue, and two reports were commissioned on AABF. This was the only occasion when reports were requested. In all other instances, these two reports were used by the community to prove its eligibility for recognition status and its differences from other Islamic organizations.

The relations between Alevi organizations and local policymakers have always been positive, according to documents and interviews. Consequently, further progress is expected in Hesse, such as a state agreement; this has recently been mentioned by policymakers in parliament (see Document (57) 2019). As an exception to this positive atmosphere, Bavaria has been quiet about further improvements, but this is in line with its usual policy towards these issues. In sum, AABF's recognition processes have been completed in all three states, with almost no differences observed, apart from the minimal effects of political contacts in Hamburg and the traditional political stance in Bavaria.

<i>States</i> ➔	Hamburg	Hesse	Bavaria
<i>Organizations</i> ↓			
DİTİB	State agreement (increased criticism)	Religious community (suspended)	Basic recognition (lack of interaction)
AABF	State agreement (good relations)	Religious community (good relations)	Religious community (slow improvement)

Figure 11: The recognition status of both organizations and their relations with local policymakers.

In addition to the vertical and horizontal aspects of the issue, this analysis could be expanded to look at the perceptions of political parties with regard to DİTİB's and AABF's recognition. Initially, as seen from the examination of state governments, the acceptance of these organizations' claims increased from the centre to the left of the political spectrum, and so one could assume that SPD and the Greens would be more accommodating. These parties' policies at the federal level support this argument. In addition to the actions of their branches in the states studied, the programmes they announced during the 2017 general elections reflected their comparatively positive attitude. The Greens' election programme stated that Islam is part of Germany and that Islamic organizations should have the same rights as other religious groups as long as they satisfy the conditions.¹²⁷ Similarly, SPD's programme stated that Islam and Muslims belong to Germany and that they could enjoy constitutional rights as long as they obey the rules.¹²⁸ As can be seen, these two major left-wing parties put forward a moderate discourse on the issue.

On the other hand, the right-wing parties are more cautious in terms of accommodating recognition claims or simply reject them. Hints of this can be found in the statements of AfD and Bavaria's attitude to the recognition claims of both organizations. Their programmes released during the 2017 general elections show that their policies are similar at the federal level. For instance, the CDU/CSU manifesto said that they support the integration of Islamic organizations that are peace-loving and comply with democratic values in order to create

¹²⁷ Page 122 of the Greens' 2017 general elections manifesto: see <https://www.gruene.de/beschluesse-und-programme>, accessed 28 March 2020.

¹²⁸ Page 88 of the SPD government programme for the 2017 general elections: see https://www.spd.de/fileadmin/Dokumente/Bundesparteitag_2017/Es_ist_Zeit_fuer_mehr_Gerechtigkeit-Unser_Regierungsprogramm.pdf, accessed 28 March 2020.

partners that can cooperate with the state.¹²⁹ There is thus an emphasis on democratic values and peace, which arguably reflects the parties' conservative perspective on the issue. The strongest rejection in this context came from AfD, as one would expect. Its election manifesto rejects the idea that Islam belongs in Germany and states that Muslim organizations cannot be given equal rights to other religions because most democratic values are foreign to Islam.¹³⁰ These perceptions are in accordance with the party's far-right ideology and support the idea that left-wing parties are more accommodating when it comes to Muslim recognition claims.

Many parliamentary documents and some of the interviews conducted for this study support the views of the four main political parties set out above. When it comes to these parties' policies relating to the recognition of AABF and DİTİB, it is possible to make inferences from the sources mentioned above. Interviewees from both organizations (Interview 7, 2019; Interview 6, 2019) stated that SPD's attitude in Hamburg to their recognition process was quite welcoming. This was in line with the federal policy of the party and the general assumption that left-wing parties tend to accommodate the demands of immigrants. However, SPD's approach could be regarded as less favourable to DİTİB than to AABF (see Document (39) 2019; Document (57) 2019). Similarly, the Greens mentions DİTİB and other pioneering Islamic organizations in its election manifesto and opposes their recognition because of their alleged political aims.¹³¹ Also, the party asked parliamentary questions that were highly critical of DİTİB and its transnational links (see Document (30) 2018). AfD also mentions DİTİB in its election manifesto and argues that organizations with transnational links are a threat to society.¹³² None of these parties mention AABF in any document relating to the issue. Therefore, it could be claimed that even the parties with moderate policies relating to immigrants and Muslims have different perspectives on the two organizations and favour AABF.

It is therefore clear that perceptions of AABF have always been more positive; this paved the way for the steady, smooth recognition process, while DİTİB faced many challenges at every level. Especially after 2016, DİTİB became a target for criticism among politicians and

¹²⁹ Pages 12–13 of the CDU/CSU government programme for the 2017 general elections (in English): see https://www.cdu.de/system/tmf/media/dokumente/170816-regierungsprogramm-english-version.pdf?file=1&type=field_collection_item&id=10785, accessed 28 March 2020.

¹³⁰ Pages 45–6 of AfD's 2017 general election manifesto: see https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/08/AfD_Wahlprogramm_2017_A5-hoch.pdf, accessed 28 March 2020.

¹³¹ Page 122 of the Greens' 2017 general elections manifesto: see <https://www.gruene.de/beschluesse-und-programme>, accessed 28 March 2020.

¹³² Pages 45–6 of AfD's 2017 general election manifesto: see https://www.afd.de/wp-content/uploads/sites/111/2017/08/AfD_Wahlprogramm_2017_A5-hoch.pdf, accessed 28 March 2020.

in the media, although some state governments maintained their partnerships with local branches on the basis of their independence from the central body. Similarly, while many reports were commissioned on DİTİB, AABF was subjected to this policy only once and then used the results in future claims. And while DİTİB faced criticism and interactions with state governments were revised, AABF has never faced such accusations and has achieved its objectives thanks to good relations with states. Traditional political views of local governments could be seen as a key factor in states' approaches to the two organizations; left-wing parties tend to be more accommodating compared with centrist and right-wing parties. However, where DİTİB's recognition is concerned, the parties at the opposite ends of the spectrum share similar ideas.

7.2. Transnationality as an explanatory factor

Following the observations from the research project set out in the section above, this second part focuses on explanations from a transnational perspective. Data on Germany's recognition system for religious organizations was collected in the initial phase, and, based on that data, a recognition scale was created in Chapter 4. According to this, the question of whether a religious organization should be recognized or not depends on the extent to which it fulfils the necessary criteria. It could be argued that AABF satisfies the conditions for recognition more than DİTİB does. This claim is largely accurate, especially in terms of structural matters. However, after assessing AABF and DİTİB in detail, it is clear that there are many other variations and that these criteria are not sufficient to explain the different recognition policies. Variations over time and differences between actors cannot be explained solely by the criteria either. A traditional perspective focusing only on national or international factors is not adequate to provide an explanation; this is because these organizations have transnational links that have become an inseparable part of them and that affect all of their interactions in Germany. Therefore, this study offers a new perspective by assessing the transnational aspect of this issue and claims that transnationality is a crucial concept for understanding the recognition of religious organizations in Germany.

Through this research into the relationship between transnational links and recognition policies, three main points have come to the fore. First, transnational links have a definite and dynamic relationship to the identity of a religious organization, and this motivates the organization's claims for recognition. Second, transnationality influences the organizational structure of organizations. And third, transnationality plays a crucial role in the perception of the organization, especially during periods when these issues are highly politicized. These three

points provide the blueprint for the sections below, which present arguments and explanations to support the central claims of this study.

7.2.1. The substance of transnationality

Transnationalism is perhaps the key term in this study. As explained in the introduction, it refers to social spaces that extend beyond national borders (Sontag 2018, 123). In these spaces, interactions link people or institutions to their counterparts beyond the borders of the host country. Transnationalism could therefore be defined as cross-border links and interactions between people and organizations that connect them to their homelands (Bauböck 2003; Vertovec 1999). In addition, transnationalism could be understood as a perspective through which to view complex phenomena that are related to both sending and receiving countries yet are not entirely international. The two case studies help us visualize this notion, since each of these organizations was created by immigrants from Turkey for religious purposes and each one facilitates events that link their members to their homeland while actively participating in cross-border activities. The key point is that these organizations were transported from Turkey to Germany and now find themselves in a position that relates to both countries. As they include links and interactions that extend beyond either a national or an international perspective, this study has therefore adopted a transnational point of view.

There are many indicators of transnationality, but this study claims that the *substance* of transnationality plays a vital role in recognition processes. This substance refers to the essential components of transnationality, and the fundamental differences between the transnational links of the organizations explored here could help us visualize the concept. These two organizations include transnational religious, political and social links and arguments in their very foundation, and there are traces of these elements in their aims and activities. But are their transnationalities the same?

DİTİB was founded as a result of bilateral interactions between Turkey and Germany and maintains many links to Turkey's Diyanet. It is struggling to prove that these links are only religious, but their by-laws suggest that this is not the case. AABF, however, was founded by the Alevi community as a civil society organization. The founding cadres consisted of two main groups: more conservative religious groups and former leftist Alevis. Both of these groups had influences on the organization, but the former leftist figures were more active, which was reflected in the transnational political activities of the group in the 1990s. During these years, the organization improved its already existing transnational links and maintained them in the following years, although they became less visible and less important in 2000s. Evidence of

these transnational links can still be seen in their by-laws and discourses today. Coming back to the question of whether these transnational links the same, the answer is a definite no – and the differences between these cross-border connections constitute the substance of transnationality.

The main difference between these two transnational organizations is in the counterparts to which these links connect them. AABF is linked to Alevi organizations and political parties in Turkey, while DİTİB's links connect it to a state agency and a government. This situation creates a basis for defining the substance of transnationality, which arguably influences the two organizations. First, due to this variation, the transnationalities of these organizations are incompatible. While the contrast could be regarded as minor at first glance, the data has provided evidence that it has the potential to create differences in the organizations. These links, which played a crucial role in the organizations' establishment, also played a key role on other occasions. For example, DİTİB's link to Turkey helped it be seen as a 'neutral' and 'non-political' religious organization compared with other Islamic organizations in the diaspora. Also, the economic support that came with transnationality gave it an advantage against its rivals. The organization grew very swiftly and became the most prominent Islamic organization in Germany.

Similarly, the transnationality of AABF also played a vital role in its history. The political refugees who took part in the Alevi revival gave a direction to the transnational activities of the organization, and, as a result of interactions with Alevi civil society and transnational initiatives in Turkish politics, AABF's prestige increased among Alevis. As there was no unified Alevi voice, AABF's work to unite the various groups and its lobbying activities on EU platforms on behalf of Alevis in Turkey put it in a leading position. As a result of this transnational engagement with Alevi civil society, AABF has become the leading Alevi organization, even though it represents only a small proportion of the Alevi population compared with other organizations in Turkey. In both cases, the substance of transnationality was one of the main differences between AABF and DİTİB and their rivals in the field and helped them gain their current positions.

The substance of transnationality could thus be seen as essential for the position and prestige of these organizations. However, some could question whether it was equally decisive for DİTİB and AABF. It should be remembered that while Sunni Islam has a 'state religion' status in Turkey, Alevism has always been the belief of a minority and of the opposition. Therefore, it was not surprising that these different substances caused different transformations

in organizations. Furthermore, the influences mentioned above are not the only ones created by the difference in the substance of transnational links: it also has the potential to explain the variations mentioned in the previous section. This study therefore claims that the difference in the substance of these organizations' transnationalities could be a crucial factor for understanding the reason behind the observed variations.

There are several examples of the influence of transnationality on migrant organizations, but, due to the scope of this research, only those affecting recognition policies will be detailed here. While AABF's transnational links eased its integration into the German system due to its civil society experience, DİTİB's links caused problems because of the difficulty of merging a bureaucratic state system with the civil society environment. Similarly, the substance of transnationality supplied experienced human capital in the Alevi community, while DİTİB struggled with inefficiencies in this context. Also, differences in the motivation for recognition, localization, quick decision making to fulfil structural requirements and other similar issues could be linked to the substance of transnationality. Lastly, a clear relationship between the rise of right-wing movements and recognition policies was observed during the analysis. When the effects of this trend on individual organizations are considered, one can detect a connection between the politicization of the issue and the substance of transnational links. These claims will be discussed below and the study will try to theorize the influence of transnationality on recognition policies by providing explanations based on the substance factor.

7.2.2. Legal framework and organizational factors

Some of the influence of the substance of transnationality is related to the structure of the organizations and juridical matters. The structures of religious organizations and their compliance with German authorities' expectations are critical in the recognition process, and so both organizations made substantial improvements to satisfy recognition conditions. We have seen that AABF was faster and more specific than DİTİB in this context. It could thus be claimed that while AABF's transnational links to civil society were an advantage in creating a better organizational form, DİTİB's links to Diyanet were a disadvantage for the community. The arguments involved related to three main issues: human resources and culture; structural transformations and localization; and the legal limitations of the German system. After examining these issues, this section will seek an explanation based on transnationality for why these organizations vary in terms of organizational outlook, a factor that is critical for recognition.

Both DİTİB and AABF were set up to provide similar services to their communities; however, this was not easy at the early phase. One of the main barriers was human capital. First, there was a need for religious personnel, who were not available either for Islamic groups or for Alevis in the migrant community in Germany. Second, administrative and organizational skills were needed for running such organizations, and it was difficult to find them in a workers' community. Similarly, issues such as interactions with the state and recognition were technical matters that required expertise, which was also a problem initially. According to Ceylan (2017a, 83), organizations in the community had – and still have – a lack of professional structure and well-educated staff, because of issues such as the perception of temporariness, both states' ignorance of migrants' religious needs in the early periods, and problems faced by Turkish immigrants in the German education system. Although some of these obstacles have been overcome in recent decades, it is still possible to claim that Turkish organizations face problems relating to human capital and structural issues.

But does this problem affect all organizations to the same extent? The answer is no, because, as seen from the case studies, AABF is in a better position in terms of human capital and organizational structure. The former leftist activists who came to Germany and joined the Alevi revival brought their experiences of institutionalization and political activism. In addition, their contacts with the German left created a favourable atmosphere. And lastly, Alevis have been living as a minority since the fourteenth century, so their struggle for recognition has a long history. According to Şen (2008), this is why Alevis could organize more quickly and effectively. Also, literacy rates were higher among Alevis than in other Sunni Turkish immigrant groups coming with official recruitment programmes. Therefore, the movement was 'bottom-up' and the human capital for institutionalization existed, and it was able to use the transnational experiences of the Alevi community in Germany and create a better organization in the frame of recognition. Additionally, the AABF struggle was not limited to Germany; it has always been concerned about the conditions of Alevis throughout the world. Therefore, this transnational situation arguably gave AABF greater motivation for its activism.

On the other hand, DİTİB was founded by an initiative that brought together the two states and independent mosque organizations in the field. While Turkey was aiming to control the spread of undesirable Islamic organizations, Germany preferred Turkey's secular tradition because of similar concerns about radicalization and the financial cost of such an undertaking. Meanwhile, the central concern of independent mosque communities was receiving religious services in a politically neutral atmosphere, because almost all mosque associations were

aligned with a political faction that did not embrace the whole community. The eventual outcome satisfied the aims of each side at the time, but it was not satisfactory for the organization in terms of the German recognition system.

Initially, all of the leading cadres and religious personnel were bureaucrats imported from Turkey. In most cases, those running the organization were public servants, well-educated administrators, or even diplomats who were experienced in the state-managed religious field in Turkey. The organizational experience they brought to Germany was necessary for institutionalization, but these people were not familiar with the German system, the culture or even, sometimes, the language. DİTİB was the fastest and most reliable solution to fulfil the requirements of the parties who founded the organization because it met the religious needs of the community, but when other needs arose, it could not respond because the community was unable to provide the necessary human capital. In addition to the reasons given by Ceylan (2017a), the importing of all necessary personnel and services channelled the focus of the community into other areas. According to Yeneroğlu (Interview 1, 2018), ‘Turkish immigrant organizations could not fill the gap in human capital because their institutional mindsets or ideologies did not match the realities in the field.’ As a result, the human capital and the motivation were not there when recognition became an essential issue for the community. The experience that transferred transnationally to DİTİB could not be used as efficiently as in the case of AABF, because it was not suitable for a religious field run by civil society. The substance of transnationality in DİTİB’s case led to ‘top-down’ institutionalization, which reduced both the community’s motivation and its ability to achieve recognition.

Another area in which the substance of transnationality played a critical role was the structure of these organizations. AABF’s transnationality influenced its structure in the right way, while DİTİB faced difficulties. It is possible to claim that AABF’s success in the recognition process mostly relies on its organizational structure: a hierarchical organization that reflects the German administration system, transparency and respect for democratic values are all essential written and unwritten conditions for the recognition of religious organizations.

The organizations explored in this study both made some improvements to their structures to fulfil these conditions in the past. In AABF’s case, it started to focus on recognition in the late 1990s and made the necessary improvements to its structure in the early 2000s; these were sufficient for its applications for recognition. DİTİB’s interest in recognition as a religious community began in the early 2000s; the first sign of this change was the establishment of regional branches (Gorzewski 2015, 65). However, DİTİB was asked to make changes in every

report prepared during its recognition claims. Even during the processes in Hamburg, Bremen and Hesse, which were successfully concluded, changes in DİTİB's by-laws were required. Based on this information, it could be said that AABF was better at pinpointing problems in its by-laws while DİTİB has not been able to resolve them, and its transnationality could be seen as the main hurdle to improvements in this area.

Evidence for the claim that AABF has been more successful in resolving structural issues can be seen in the sections examining the organizational structures of these two communities. AABF's by-laws and structure are more clear, transparent and democratic compared with DİTİB's often amended by-laws. Also, AABF's by-laws emphasize some key issues such as gender, the environment and democracy. It could be claimed that AABF's by-laws have been prepared by people who know politics and what is needed to create a favourable impression in today's Germany. DİTİB's by-laws, however, are not adequately successful in this frame. The organization has covered considerable ground since its foundation and has made many amendments to improve its structure and by-laws, but there are still problems, as can be seen from recent debates.

In sum, DİTİB's transnationality is probably the biggest obstacle for the organization's further recognition because the articles in its by-laws that refer to these links are frequently criticized by the authorities. During the data collection chapters, it was seen that specific articles give an important power to religious advisory councils, which have obvious transnational links. This difference between AABF's and DİTİB's by-laws could also be caused by the difference in the substance of their transnationalities. AABF's transnational links give it a vast experience of political processes, which enables the organization to implement the necessary amendments. And, as a bottom-up movement, the Alevi community saw local problems earlier than other groups and took the necessary decisions to amend its democratic structure very swiftly. In contrast, DİTİB was unable to make these amendments in time because its awareness of issues such as recognition came quite late. Moreover, the use of political language was not easy for the organization because its transnationally inherited religious understanding was politically neutral and distanced from political issues in Germany. Lastly, it could be assumed that DİTİB's transnational links could limit its ability to make the amendments required for recognition, because, despite being changed many times, the by-laws still contain highly criticized issues.

The legal issues caused by the substance of transnationality are examined in this last part. As already discussed, AABF's transnationality has never been a negative issue in its interactions with the state. However, in DİTİB's case, these links have been a decisive factor in

its relations with Germany because they connect the organization to a state agency in Turkey. One result of this is that DİTİB is an issue that concerns two countries, and so its position in Germany is dependent on bilateral international relations. This correlation can be seen if one considers the ups and downs in DİTİB's interactions with Germany alongside the bilateral relations of the two states. Second, the secularity principle is a vital issue for Germany; according to Article 7 of the constitution, the state cannot interfere with religious instruction. DİTİB's transnational links are a problem here because, as mentioned in many state documents, they are seen as influencing the decision-making mechanisms of the organization (Document (21) 2018, 6). Naturally, Germany cannot grant to another state a right that it does not have itself (Document (12) 2017, 14–15). Therefore, DİTİB's recognition as a religious community or as a corporation under public law and its authorization for providing religious instruction in public schools are not possible as long as its transnational links exist (Muckel 2017, 100). These links became the subject of debate even in those processes that have been completed, and such rights were granted only after the partial independence of local branches from the central body was secured. In Hesse, this was done by establishing an independent body related to religious instruction and by passing a new by-law distancing the local branch from Cologne. However, even these amendments were not seen as adequate at the end of the process due to increasing criticism, and the partnership was suspended. Similarly, Hamburg praised the independence of the local organization from its umbrella body when criticism of and pressure against its cooperation with DİTİB intensified after 2016.

In conclusion, this part has traced the effects of transnationality on the organizational structures of AABF and DİTİB. There are key differences between the two organizations in terms of human capital, structure, decision making, transparency and compatibility with legal expectations that can be explained with reference to the substance of transnationality. Transnationality creates difficulties for DİTİB in the aspects examined here, whereas AABF is enjoying an advantageous position because of the slight difference in the substance of its links. The explanation here is also based on the variation across time of the substance of transnationality; after all, it could be argued that transnationality plays a critical role in shaping organizations, and this role impacts directly on their recognition processes.

7.2.3. The politicization of the issue and contestations

The last frame that this study will examine for the effects of transnationality is the authorities' perception of these organizations. As stated many times, the attitude of decision makers to these religious organizations has a decisive impact on the recognition process. As

one would expect, this attitude has a crucial connection with the overall image of these organizations and political trends in Germany. Therefore, any increase in debate and criticism could easily change that attitude. Immigrants, Muslims and their organizations in Germany have faced a negative atmosphere for a long time because of such criticism, and Islamic groups have been in a disadvantaged position because they have increasingly been seen as suspicious following the 9/11 attacks. Intensification of refugee flows from Muslim-populated regions to Europe as a result of conflicts became another catalyst, and migration rose on the scale of issues of most concern. Naturally, the combination of all these factors had political consequences and created fertile ground for right-wing parties.

Germany was among the first countries to be influenced by these problems, and right-wing movements gained momentum; AfD became the third biggest party in parliament in the 2017 elections.¹³³ In addition, some opinion polls illustrate that the proportion of people concerned about immigrants – and especially Muslims – is far greater than the share of AfD voters. In Bertelsmann Stiftung’s 2019 study, half of the respondents saw Islam as a threat and defined it as a political ideology rather than a religion.¹³⁴ Another research project, Leipziger Autoritarismus-Studie 2018, conducted by the Kompetenzzentrum für Rechtsextremismus- und Demokratieforschung (Competence Centre for Right-wing Extremism and Democracy Research) at the University of Leipzig, found that there had been a steady increase in the percentage of people who have concerns about Muslims and Islam since 2014.¹³⁵ Both of these studies illustrate the increasingly negative atmosphere for Muslims in recent years. Such a change in society also affects other political parties and pushes them to reconsider their positions towards Muslim organizations. In earlier sections, it has been seen that even the left-wing parties criticize Islamic organizations in Germany; this could be seen as confirming these results. Although these parties support recognition, they demand transformations, with an emphasis on integration, security and independence. These points were also summarized in the debates on the recognition of immigrants’ religious organizations.

¹³³ Results of the 2017 German general elections: see <https://www.bundeswahlleiter.de/bundestagswahlen/2017/ergebnisse/bund-99.html>, accessed 1 April 2020.

¹³⁴ Bertelsmann Stiftung’s ‘Religion Monitor’ project: see <https://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/de/themen/aktuelle-meldungen/2019/juli/religioese-toleranz-weit-verbreitet-aber-der-islam-wird-nicht-einbezogen>, accessed 1 April 2020.

¹³⁵ Leipziger Autoritarismus-Studie 2018, conducted by the Competence Centre for Right-wing Extremism and Democracy Research at the University of Leipzig in conjunction with the Heinrich Böll and Otto Brenner Foundation: see https://www.boell.de/de/2018/11/07/leipziger-autoritarismus-studie-2018-methode-ergebnisse-langzeitverlauf?dimension1=ds_leipziger_studie#Muslimfeindschaft, accessed 1 April 2020.

As mentioned in Chapter 4, this trend in German politics had adverse outcomes for the recognition processes of Islamic organizations and became one of the main hurdles in this frame. However, the data on the two cases showed that this problem had slightly different results on the recognition processes of the two organizations. DİTİB has been impacted negatively by the rise of right-wing politics, while AABF has not faced the same problems. In fact, there is evidence supporting the claim that AABF has gained a more advantageous position. This part of the chapter will argue that this difference has a significant effect on recognition policies and is caused by the variation between the substances of their transnationality.

In DİTİB's story, the attitude to the organization had clearly been negatively affected by the trends mentioned above. Interviewees (6, 2019; 7, 2019) from the organization emphasized this issue when explaining their backsliding in the recognition process. According to them, German politicians are afraid to make a move in favour of the organization because they know that AfD will benefit from such a move. At first glance, this explanation seems fair, because, as an Islamic and immigrant organization, DİTİB naturally faces challenges. While it is a fact that DİTİB's recognition processes slowed down in some states after 2013–14, the organization was not suspended from partnerships or processes in any of these instances.

The period from 2016 onwards put DİTİB into possibly the most challenging situation in its history, and some ongoing partnerships and processes were suspended. The main reason for this was given as transnational links; or, in other words, DİTİB's dependence on Diyanet. The organization became the focus of debates and criticism, and eventually this process affected DİTİB more than other Islamic organizations in Germany. AfD was one of the leading political parties targeting the organization and used its power in many states to block the recognition process. However, AfD and right-wing movements were not the only ones involved; other parties made similar attempts. Even left-wing parties such as SPD (see Document (39) 2019), the Greens (see Document (30) 2018) and the Left Party (see Document (11) 2018) joined the campaign against DİTİB when the issue became highly political due to bilateral relationships between Germany and Turkey. The substance of DİTİB's transnationality played a massive role in this politicization process and brought these different political actors to the same page, which was harmful for the organization.

However, AABF and its recognition processes were not affected by these trends. As a migrant organization and as migrants living in society, Alevis possibly faced some challenges, but there is no data focusing on this group. However, the reaction from the media and politicians

against Alevis was much less intense compared with Islamic migrant groups. One of the main reasons could be that they spread the perception that Alevism is independent from Islam and thereby escaped the ominous cloud hanging over Islamic communities. In these circumstances, Alevis came to the fore as an excellent example of an integrated community because they were close to German society in many respects. Also, the community has adopted a strategy for recognition based on emphasizing its differences from Muslims (Çoşan EKE 2014, 167–68). Again, there is no data about what percentage of Germans are aware of the differences between Muslims and Alevis, but at least the authorities and political actors are aware of them. Therefore, the community is kind of immune to criticism relating to integration and security concerns.

Another interesting point about AABF in this period was that the rise of right-wing politics in Germany did not affect the organization or any of its ongoing processes; on the contrary, it increased their visibility and created opportunities for Alevis in political parties, thereby giving them important positions from which to support policies against the trend. This can be better understood when the differences discussed between Alevis and Muslims are considered. Furthermore, it shows that at least some actors are aware of these distinctions. In line with this, a substantial number of parliamentarians in the German parliament with a migration background are Alevi, which makes the community stronger in its interactions with the authorities. Lastly, it was observed that AABF has never been the subject of debates caused by the politicization of Islam and recognition. It could be argued that it is seen as a ‘normal’ religious organization, and its transnational links are regarded in this frame. As a result, AABF was not a subject of the political debates that took place after 2016, and its recognition processes continued undamaged.

Right-wing movements have been rising in German politics for more than a decade, and this situation has thrown up new challenges for the migrant community. Both of our cases have probably faced difficulties relating to this political climate. In parallel with this political trend, the recognition of immigrants’ religious organizations became a highly politicized issue. In this frame, as an Islamic immigrant organization, DİTİB was the focus of criticism and debate. Initially, its recognition processes became slower because such decisions became more difficult for policymakers. DİTİB had no further successes in its recognition history after receiving religious community status in Hesse. However, the most significant loss for the organization came in the period that started in 2016, when DİTİB’s transnational links to Turkey were given as the reason for suspending its partnerships and recognition processes in many states.

Meanwhile, AABF's interactions with the German authorities continued without any disruption. Unlike DITB, it never became the subject of criticism in this highly politicized period. Furthermore, AABF's initiatives were supported by political actors who were simultaneously demanding the suspension of all interactions with DITB due to its transnational links (see Document (39) 2019; Document (57) 2019). Therefore, it could be claimed that the main reason for DITB's disadvantageous position compared with AABF in this period was the substance of its transnationality. As a result, this became one of the specific factors that created variations in all dimensions of the recognition policy.

8. CONCLUSION

This study has conducted research and a comparative analysis to investigate a possible relationship between transnationality and the recognition issue. It was already known that transnational activities were not welcomed by most of the host states (Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 771). However, the question of how transnational linkages affect the recognition process is more sophisticated and includes many aspects that cannot be answered just from the perspective of receiving countries. The comparative research here focused on this point and tried to provide an answer based on the concept of the substance of transnationality. It has been seen that transnationality plays a decisive role in the recognition process of immigrants' religious organizations by influencing many crucial aspects, in accordance with the main aims of this study.

In the analysis of empirical data, based on the dimensions observed in the recognition process, the effects of transnational linkages are divided into two sections. The first looks at the influence of transnational links on the institutionalization of immigrants' religious organizations, while the second focuses on the issue of recognition and the role of transnational identities in the recognition process. In addition to structural issues, findings that relate to actors, perceptions and contestations around the organizations are provided, with a focus on transnationality. The relationship between migrants' transnationalization and integration will then be elaborated. This part allows us to look beyond the two case studies and the issue of recognition, examining the tension between integration and transnational linkages. The fourth section explores the question of where these results lead us and speculates on possible futures based on the findings of this study. Two or three possible scenarios will be elaborated, together with a speculative future based on the most likely outcomes. In short, this part will present possible trajectories for the near future after examining the last 60 years of migrant history and institutionalization, along with achievements, problems and contestations.

8.1. Transnationality and immigrants' institutionalization

This research was designed to understand the role of transnational linkages in immigrants' religious organizations, primarily in the frame of religious recognition in Germany. Comparative analysis of two organizations with different transnational links has shown that these links are key parts of the recognition process. Furthermore, transnationality is decisive not only because of the perceptions of decision makers but also because transnational links have an impact on institutionalization, which is also a crucial factor in the process. Therefore, before focusing on recognition, this part deals with the effects of transnationality on decision-making

mechanisms and the structures of the organizations. The relationship between transnational links and institutionalization of immigrants is a partly explored phenomenon in the literature, mostly with a focus on concepts like political opportunity structures. However, the findings of this study clearly showed that these two organizations have transformed into different levels while being exposed to the same system. Consequently, this study implies that transnationality has a significant influence on how immigrants' institutions evolve and what paths they take in crucial times.

We know that organizational structures are important to the recognition process and that transnational links directly or indirectly affect organizations' internal transformations. The impact of transnationalism on immigrants' institutionalization is, at best, discussed as an additional factor in political opportunity structures. According to Kortmann and Rosenow-Williams (2013a, 43–44), in addition to political opportunity structures, the needs of members and cross-border links are essential elements in the structural transformation of migrant organizations. Similarly, Sezgin (2008, 249–50) briefly mentions transnationality as a factor shaping the structures and activities of Turkish immigrant organizations, in addition to culture and opportunity structures. It has also been revealed that some crucial decisions are difficult to make if the organization has powerful links to its home state (Kortmann 2015, 1077). However, apart from these studies, the effects of transnationality on organizational structures have not been debated to any great extent. Therefore, this study contributes to the existing transnational migration literature by revealing the effects of transnational linkages on institutionalization through detailed analysis.

As briefly mentioned in the literature, transnational links are influential in shaping immigrants' institutionalization. Their effects vary from creating the initial impetus for institutionalization to making key decisions for future transformations. Furthermore, the comparative analysis here revealed that some issues relating to transnationality could lead to differences in organizations' institutionalization. Therefore, effects of transnational links could be categorized under three headings the legacy of transnationality, the strength of links, and the substance of transnationality. The first category refers mainly to features such as culture, motivations and know-how inherited through the links; the second emphasizes the visibility and credibility of these links in the aims and structure of the organization; and the third focuses on the counterparts of transnational links that are capable of creating asymmetries in decision-making mechanisms. In sum, this study claims that the effects of transnational linkages on the

institutionalization of immigrants could be summarized under these headings and that differences in these three dimensions could explain variations among organizations.

The examples in this study are transnational migrant organizations because they were founded as a result of transnational conditions and have been actively transnational in their services and initiatives. Therefore, their transnational identity and links are inseparable from their existence as organizations. These links function as channels transferring critical assets such as culture, motivation and information. For instance, one of the main factors that led the German state to favour DİTİB in the first place was Diyanet's experience in providing religious services within a secular state. The expectation was that these experiences would be transferred to DİTİB via transnational interactions, such as the sending of imams. Consequently, the institutionalization of DİTİB was based on a structure that combined Diyanet's apolitical approach to providing religious services and its own response to the needs of immigrants. It could be argued that this legacy is one of the main reasons for DİTİB's leading position among Islamic organizations in Germany even today. However, it also created a dependency and limited its potential for structural change, which could have transformed the organization from providing services to representing the community.

Similar transnational factors played crucial roles for the Alevis too. The community was actively engaged with political groups in both Turkey and Germany in the initial phase; therefore, there was a great deal of know-how about institutionalization and political activism in the case of AABF's foundation. Alevis have always struggled for recognition throughout their history, which created an extra motivation for their transnational activities and institutionalization. The result of such a legacy was evident in the institutionalization and activities of the organization during the 1990s. However, the effects could primarily be seen in the institutional transformations of the organization in the 2000s. During the period after AABF became aware of the need for recognition, the transnationally inherited organizational and political skills of the members played a vital role in reshaping the organization. This transformation was precise and steady compared with DİTİB, and AABF achieved recognition shortly after making the relevant changes.

The study's focus on variations over time showed that changes in the visibility and strength of transnational links mirrored changes in the recognition policy. There was also a similar parallel between the strength of organizations' transnational links and the trajectories administrators chose for their institutionalization. For instance, the failures of AABF's transnational political activities and the community's realization of permanency in Germany in

the early 2000s led to a decline in the visibility of its transnational linkages. The organization turned its attention to the life of Alevis in Germany and made the necessary changes to its structure and cadres. The historical exploration of DİTİB showed that there was a transformation from a strongly Cologne-centred structure to state-level unions in the 2000s as a result of the organization's awareness of permanency and recognition opportunities. However, the transformations were comparatively loose in DİTİB's case and did not bring any significant decrease in its transnational links, since they were such an inseparable part of the organization. These links, which included the import of imams and leading cadres from Turkey, had no credible alternatives, so they were vital for the organization and their continuity needed to be secured in order to maintain critical services; this resulted in a particular path for institutionalization. In sum, a parallel between changes in the strength of transnationality and institutional transformations can be drawn based on the findings of this study.

Lastly, examination of these effects could be expanded using the substance of transnationality concept, which enabled this study to understand the structural effects of different types of transnational links. As set out in previous sections, this concept refers to the home counterparts of the organizations' transnational links: civil society and religious organizations in AABF's case, and a state agency in DİTİB's. This has consequences for the previous dimensions because the substance of transnationality determines the strength of the links and the legacy that comes with them. The substance of transnational links can also cause asymmetrical power relations between the organization and its counterpart and in the organization's decision-making mechanisms. As in the case of DİTİB, these links can create a dependency that can severely limit institutional transformation.

On the other hand, transnational links with civil society may provide a broader range of options for the organization – and especially for civil society organizations in the religious field in Germany. For instance, DİTİB's cooperation with other Islamic organizations has caused many problems in the past because of Turkey's attitude to these groups. However, AABF was able to unify the majority of Alevis in Germany thanks to the lack of such limitations. It could thus be claimed that not only the strengths and legacies of transnational links but also their substance have a significant impact on the shaping of immigrant organizations.

In conclusion, AABF was more successful in establishing an organizational structure that satisfied the recognition conditions because its transnational links supplied the necessary human capital, motivation and political know-how. DİTİB's transnational links, however, did not meet the same expectations and put the organization at a disadvantage in its recognition claims, not

only in terms of perception but also with regard to institutional compliance with the conditions. The three categories of these effects – legacy, strength and substance – not only explain how transnationality influences institutionalization but also answer the question of why some transnational organizations are better organized than others despite being exposed to the same opportunity structures. In conclusion, it is impossible to understand the institutionalization of immigrants without considering transnationality, which can shape structures and create differences among similar organizations.

8.2. Transnationality and the issue of recognition

This study was designed to assess the relationship between transnationality and the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations in Germany, and its findings indicate that transnationality is a vital factor in the recognition issue. Three points were highlighted as the main hurdles to Turkish immigrant organizations receiving recognition: the lack of a unifying platform, issues relating to internal structures, and the high level of politicization of the issue. Examination of the two organizations also revealed that both communities struggled with similar issues from time to time in their history. However, the comparative analysis has shown that they have not suffered equally. AABF was more successful in dealing with these issues and thus achieved better results in the frame of recognition. The findings of this study suggest that AABF's transnational links were an advantage, as they reinforced its recognition claims, while DİTİB's transnationality has become an obstacle.

This section will share the findings that relate to the effect of transnationality on recognition under three categories based on the hurdles listed above. The first dimension will look at the ways in which transnational links influence efforts to create a unified voice and this dimension will provide a new approach to the fragmented structure of the Turkish community in Germany. The effects of transnational linkages on institutionalization will then be elaborated, with an emphasis on recognition. It will be argued that the initial conditions created a dependency in DİTİB on transnational links and that such links have had a negative influence on its claims for recognition. Finally, the relationship between transnationality, politicization and the approaches of different actors will be discussed. It will be seen that the substance of transnationality concept also applies to this frame. In short, the central claim will be built on the impossibility of understanding either the development of these organizations or the way in which they are perceived – both of which are decisive elements in the recognition process – without considering their transnational links.

The transnational activities of immigrants were not welcomed by European states, with initiatives to create Islamic councils providing hints about host countries' attitudes to such dependencies (Laurence 2006, 2015; Østergaard-Nielsen 2003, 771). There are many studies that highlight the negative perceptions of transnationality, but our study has shown that not all transnational links are met with the same negativity. Thus, contrary to expectations, not all transnational links are an obstacle to the recognition process. But what creates this difference? Here, the substance of transnationality concept will be operationalized to show why an organization linked to a state agency has less chance of recognition compared with one linked to civil society.

The empirical data show that AABF was successful in unifying Alevis in Germany under its roof and that it is seen as representing the community. However, official documents and political discourse make it clear that the lack of a unified voice in the Islamic community was one of the main obstacles to the recognition of Islamic organizations in Germany. Although it is the most prominent organization of the community, DİTİB is unable to represent the entire community due to fragmentations and rivalries. AABF's transnational links to different Alevi groups in Turkey became an advantage for reaching a broader population in Germany. Also, its loose definition of Alevism enabled it to embrace different groups under one roof.

On the other hand, DİTİB's strong transnational links to Diyanet put it in a problematic position for unifying the community. There had been contestation between some groups and the Turkish state in the past, and DİTİB was created to decrease these groups' influence in the diaspora. Eventually, this issue created rivalry between the biggest actors in the community. Also, DİTİB represented a secular and politically neutral Islamic understanding, so cooperation with politically motivated Islamic groups was not feasible, notably when the Kemalist tendencies of the state increased during the 1990s. According to Schiffauer (2007, 90), DİTİB's transnational links limited its ability to adapt its policies, which could have created a consensus in the community on key debates relating to Islam in Germany. This situation changed to some extent after Justice and Development Party gained power and reduced the influence of the Kemalist ideology. In addition, in line with Laurence (2015, 65) claim, Germany's incorporation efforts through The German Islam Conference pushed the organizations to create The Coordination Council of Muslims in order to act together. However, there are always groups that have problems with the state or with the governing party, and DİTİB's position is always seen as being in parallel with the state. The situation is better than it was in the past, but

there is still no unified voice among these organizations, and DİTİB's links to Diyanet play a role in this.

The second problem detected during analysis was the structure of the organizations. One of the vital criteria for recognition was having a transparent and hierarchical structure – a structure that is quite similar to that of the established churches in Germany. Although such a structure is foreign to Islam, pioneering organizations in the community have tried to make adjustments. As a result, there were transformations from cultural organizations to religious communities during the 2000s for the sake of recognition. A new administrative structure that parallels the German system has been created for the same reason. For instance, AABF's structure was highly influenced by Alevis' left-wing activism and it defined itself as a democratic mass organization before its by-laws were updated in line with the requirements of religious community status (Pries and Tuncer-Zengingül 2013, 159). A similar change occurred in DİTİB, which updated its by-laws in 2012 (Interview 5, 2018). DİTİB was obviously slower than AABF in making the necessary changes, and there is a clear difference in the recognition policy in favour of the latter. The fact that transnational linkages have shaped immigrants' institutionalization could be one reason for this. Due to issues including political know-how, human capital and easier localization, which were all related to the substance of transnationality, AABF was able to build its current structure and become successful in the recognition process.

Moreover, the effects of transnationality on institutionalization could have some differences in an organization linked to a state agency when one considers the recognition issue. First, the historical analysis of the two organizations showed that transnational links result from the conditions that gave birth to them. The main factors that shaped the initial phases were the leftist background and Alevi revival for AABF, and, for DİTİB, states' concerns about 'undesirable' organizations and their desire for regulation of the field by an organization with a secular understanding. Similar to the path dependency concept, the study showed that the policy conditions during the foundation of the organizations created the paths that led to today's structures. In the case of DİTİB, the findings indicate that the initial circumstances and policies of Germany and Turkey created an organization that is incompatible with the conditions required for recognition. DİTİB was a quick solution to the urgent problems of the time, but policymakers could not foresee the future transformations in the community. The transnational links established to achieve these early aims caused increasing dependency in the following years as the organization grew. By the time the actors realized the need for the incorporation of

Islam, hardly any religious services could continue without transnational links. Naturally, significant structural change to reduce transnational linkages has become more and more difficult due to this dependency.

As the last dimension, our study revealed the relationship between the recognition policy and transnational links. This issue became a decisive factor especially in the last decades, when politicization increased. Trends such as political populism and Islamophobia have negatively influenced immigrants, and especially Islamic organizations' struggles for recognition. Although there are variations in perceptions of the issue among vertical and horizontal actors participating in the recognition process, it is possible to find common ground concerning transnational linkages. As noted above, these links are unwelcome, and decision makers have urged transnational organizations to reduce them as much as possible. However, not all of these transnational links are perceived in the same way. For instance, no sign of negative attitudes to AABF's transnational links were found during the review of the literature and official documents. Also, an interview (7, 2019) revealed that the organization's transnational links have never been regarded as contrary to recognition. However, there was a completely different scenario with regard to DİTİB's transnational links; DİTİB's transnationality was criticized by almost all of the actors mentioned here. On many occasions, these links were shown to be the main reason for the suspension of partnerships. Especially since 2016, almost all the progress DİTİB had made has been reversed. Hesse, which was the only state where DİTİB had religious community status and had the right to provide religious instruction in public schools, recently decided to end its cooperation with the organization due to the criticism.¹³⁶ The data show that transnational links to a state agency are perceived negatively by actors in the recognition process in every dimension. Furthermore, politicization and political trends are pushing actors to shape their policies on immigrants' religious organizations according to the substance of their transnational links.

In conclusion, successes and failures in the frame of religious recognition in Germany cannot be understood without a transnational perspective. Transnationality has generally had a negative impact on Turkish organizations' recognition processes, with differences between organizations mainly caused by perception and institutional issues, on which transnational links have had a major effect. The variation over time in the visibility and intensity of organizations'

¹³⁶ 'Ende der Kooperation mit DİTİB [End of the cooperation with DİTİB]', FAZ.net, 29 April 2020: see <https://www.faz.net/aktuell/rhein-main/region-und-hessen/hessen-beendet-kooperation-mit-moscheeverband-ditib-16746516.html?GEPC=s5>, accessed 24 May 2020.

transnationality has been mirrored by changes in the recognition policies relating to them, which again points to the same causal relation.

Similarly, the perceptions of different political actors also appear to depend on the transnationality of these organizations. Although there may be active contact between organizations and policymakers at the state government level, federal authorities and political parties consider transnationality to be a crucial factor. Therefore, this concept explains the vertical variations between different levels of the administrative system and the horizontal variations between different state governments and local actors. In conclusion, transnationality is a concept that appears at all stages of the recognition process, from institutionalization to unification of the community and perceptions about the organization. Therefore, there is a clear connection between transnationality and recognition policies, depending mainly on the substance of cross-border links.

8.3. Transnationalization and the integration of immigrants

When subjects relating to immigrants and recognition are debated, the wider picture often encompasses the issue of integration, which has been on the agenda of many European countries for decades. Turkish immigrants have been living in Germany since the 1960s, and – naturalized or not – they are part of everyday life. However, the integration debate still has a place on the political agenda. One of the main changes in the history of integration was the shift in focus from immigrants to Islam in the last decades (Ceylan 2017a, 81). As the majority of immigrants in most European countries are Muslims, this shift could appear justified. However, Becker and El-Menouar (2012, 158–59) claim that policymakers started to focus on the localization of Islam through DIK, the education of imams in Germany and the incorporation of Islamic organizations rather than solving the social and economic problems of migrants. Our findings demonstrate that even the most prominent and well-organized Turkish religious organization now faces considerable problems in the recognition process and act together with other groups in the field to express concerns about integration policies. One would expect that implications could be drawn from the findings of this study on the relationship between transnationality and the integration of Turkish migrants in Germany, and that a phenomenon that is critical for the recognition of immigrants' religious organizations would also affect integration, especially when it involves Islam. Consequently, this section will allow us to go beyond our two case studies and the issue of recognition in order to reach a broader understanding.

First, is transnationality a barrier to integration? Considering its effects on institutionalization and then on the recognition process, the answer could be ‘Yes’ in most cases. However, there are other factors that make this issue more complicated. The main problem that was revealed during data gathering on the community and its organizations relates to the perception of integration among different actors. In other words, the central tension over transnationality has led to almost every actor defining the term ‘integration’ differently. It is possible to find many definitions of the term, ranging from a multiculturalist to an assimilationist perspective (Gowricharn 2009; Kortmann 2015, 1059). While the more multiculturalist definitions of the term see it as a form of socio-cultural participation of immigrant communities while preserving their identity and values, the more assimilationist approaches indicate that integration can be achieved only through adaptation in various dimensions to the host society. Actors directly or indirectly impacting on the integration process of Turkish migrants could be summarized as Germany, Turkey and immigrant organizations. Thus, this study claims that the current situation has resulted from a clash of policies based on the different definitions. In line with these positions, transnational linkages could be seen as either negative or positive for integration.

Germany started to focus on this issue especially after the realization that migrants were becoming permanent residents; this became possible in the 1990s – before then, integration had been a controversial and unlikely option (Avcı 2006, 69). In the following years, Germany’s policies fluctuated between the multiculturalist and assimilationist ends of the spectrum depending on the political parties in power in state and federal governments (Abadan-Unat 2017, 361–63). However, for most Germans in these years, the integration of Turks was possible only through acculturation, which was quite far from multiculturalism and pluralism (Mueller 2006, 420). It could be claimed that the same attitude was adopted by debates on attempts to incorporate and de-transnationalize the religious field of the immigrant community, which also started in the 1990s. As will be seen in the following paragraphs, Germany’s policy was understandable in the circumstances, but it did not create a consensus that benefited all parties.

Incorporation attempts intensified due to security concerns following 9/11 and the terrorist attacks of fundamentalists all over the world. Therefore, debates on the integration of immigrants became debates on the integration of Islam. According to Kortmann (2018, 17), religious plurality is an accepted norm in Western societies; however, the idea of being a ‘Christian country’ still exists, especially among conservatives, and this hinders integration

efforts. Eventually, attempts to integrate Islam turned into a process of pushing institutions and traditions to change instead of making it easier for them to participate in society. The list of conditions for recognition got longer, as unwritten criteria such as gender equality, democratic values and secularity were added (Halm 2013, 467). Meanwhile, political support for and media coverage of ‘liberal’ and ‘independent’ Islamic communities and their invitation to participate in DIK as ‘representatives of unorganized Muslims’ provided clues – at least to the Islamic community – about what would be an acceptable image of Islam for the authorities. The discourses in documents published by political parties also support this claim. Eventually, a perception was created that Germany wanted to create a German Islam; this was mentioned many times in interviews and in conversations during the observational stages of this research. Administrators and members of Muslim organizations openly expressed their concerns about the European or German Islam discourse. The fear of changes to their religious traditions led them to resist or at least made them suspicious about integration efforts. In the end, this situation reinforced their transnational links, which consolidated their religious and traditional identities. Therefore, it is possible to say that transnational linkages could be seen as an obstacle to integration in this frame, but this situation can change depending on how the term is defined and what mechanisms are anticipated.

On the Turkish side, historical analysis of policies revealed that there was an increase in interest towards the country’s emigrants. As a result of its growing economy and search for alternatives in foreign policy during the 2000s, Turkey started to interact with its diaspora via new institutions and active policies. Furthermore, voting from abroad, which was an issue that had long been demanded and debated, became possible and increased the engagement of emigrants with their homeland. In this later period, a multiculturalist approach that tended to reject assimilation could be seen in Turkey’s perspective on integration. In a speech made during his visit to Germany in 2010, Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan said:

If we have been living here for 50 years now, we have to do our part and integrate into society ...
However, a forced change in religion, culture and traditions is assimilation, and it is a crime against humanity.¹³⁷

This approach to integration and the emphasis on preserving cultural and other values, such as religion, were in accordance with the active transnational policies of Turkey. Such strategies in

¹³⁷ ‘Erdoğan ve Merkel’den işbirliği mesajı [A message for cooperation from Erdoğan and Merkel], *Deutsche Welle*, 9 October 2010: see <https://www.dw.com/tr/erdo%C4%9Fan-ve-merkelden-i%C5%9Fbirli%C4%9Fi-mesaj%C4%B1/a-6097121>, accessed 15 May 2020.

sending states could strengthen feelings of belonging in the diaspora and reinforce homeland identities. Recent studies have shown that transnational links and integration are not mutually exclusive at the individual level (Faist, Fauser, and Reisenauer 2013, 100; Schunck 2014, 280–82). Following the multiculturalist definition of integration, transnational activities could support the internal integration of communities and help keep identities alive, and could even contribute to integration processes (Portes 1999, 471–72). Sert (2012, 86) goes even further and claims that there is a mutually supportive relationship between transnational activities and integration, at least at the individual level. Therefore, it could be assumed that transnational policies were not seen as an obstacle to integration on the Turkish side.

Between these two approaches, religious organizations also had their own understanding of integration. According to Kortmann (2015), Turkish religious organizations in Germany see recognition as a condition for integration, and they are amenable to a reasonable level of acculturation unless it turns into pressure for more. Like the transnational space itself, these organizations' views of integration are somewhere in the middle of the two understandings. Similar definitions and concerns were expressed by the interviewees, and the transformations made to the organizations' structures illustrate their incentives for modest acculturation. However, they feel threatened by the 'German Islam' discourse, which has made them suspicious of the goodwill of the authorities. Especially in an atmosphere of increasing Islamophobia, these organizations are maintaining a defensive position rather than transforming rapidly in order to meet the urgent need for recognition. Moreover, these organizations are the primary providers of basic religious services in Germany, and maintaining these services depends to a great extent on transnational links to their counterparts in Turkey. In such a scenario, the 'liberal Islam' approach is destined to clash with already established religious traditions. In this context, transnational linkages are evaluated by these organizations as the only way they can preserve their services, identities and traditions.

This section has tried to expand the findings of this study beyond the two organizations discussed in previous chapters. Religion is one of the most crucial components of Turkish immigrants' identities, which partly explains why religious organizations are the leading actors that claim to represent the community and that are struggling for recognition. The German authorities have paid particular attention to them in their integration policies, especially since the integration of immigrants has become the integration of Islam. Different actors have different approaches; as a result, integration policies and their results do not satisfy anybody. According to Eurobarometer research in late 2017, almost half of German respondents believed

that the integration of immigrants has not been successful.¹³⁸ The role of transnational links is highly dependent on the definition of integration used by the actors, but the previous sections have shown that their effect is mostly harmful to the recognition issue. Based on this, the same could be said for this dimension too, but finding common ground could turn transnationality into a useful tool for successful integration. One cannot know whether this is likely to occur, but the next section will speculate on the future of all of these dimensions, including this one.

8.4. Implications and Possible Scenarios for the Future

After presenting the findings of this study, the current situation become relatively clear: it is full of complexity and uncertainty created by different actors' conflicting perceptions and policies. As a consequence, both the processes (institutionalization, recognition, integration) and the actors (especially Islamic organizations) are being harmed. The current structure could be defined as a dead end for all the parties involved – a situation that cannot be maintained in the long term or with temporary solutions. This final part of the study therefore focuses on the following question: where do these results lead us? Optimistic and pessimistic projections of and speculations on future moves will be set out based on the findings of this study. As AABF has been relatively successful in this context, this part will concentrate on DİTİB and Muslims in Germany.

The study revealed that transnationality can play both positive and negative roles in the structure of organizations, depending on the substance of the links. For DİTİB, the focus has mainly been on the negative influences of such links; it has been revealed that they are some of the main hurdles to recognition. In an optimistic scenario, a steady decrease in transnational links and their effects on the organization could be imagined, leading to an improvement in its structure. On the German side, a decrease in the politicization of Islam and transnationality could be expected to produce a parallel decline in the effects of cross-border links. One could therefore expect perceptions of the organization to gradually become more positive. Considering the disjuncture between the traditional structures of Islamic communities and the religious recognition tradition of Germany, there would be a need for some changes in line with this new situation. In addition, a change in the 'German Islam' discourse, which is viewed

¹³⁸ European Commission, 'Special Eurobarometer 469: Integration of Immigrants in the European Union', October 2017: see <https://ec.europa.eu/commfrontoffice/publicopinion/index.cfm/survey/getsurveydetail/instruments/special/surveyky/2169>, accessed 14 May 2020.

negatively by the Muslim community, could be fruitful in this frame. Therefore, this should also be altered in an optimistic scenario, with a focus on the German side of the issue.

However, no solution is possible without considering transnationality. Therefore, Turkey and its actions are also an important factor. Even though Turkey supports the recognition of Islam and the integration of Turks, its opinions on how these objectives should be managed are not the same as Germany's. According to its constitution, the Turkish state should provide certain services to its citizens, and so there is a legal basis behind its active engagement policies in the diaspora. Also, the community in Germany is a valuable asset in lobbying in favour of Turkey's interests. Furthermore, as a result of voting from abroad, Turkish citizens living in Germany are part of a close political equation created by the Turkish presidential system. These points make the neutralization of all transnational linkages between Turkey and the diaspora impossible even in the optimistic scenario. However, an improvement in international relations between the two countries could increase dialogue and cooperation on the issue, and a new model that satisfies the expectations of both parties could be created. This model could be a transition between today's transnationally resourced and ruled Islamic field and a settled, self-financed and less transnational community. In these optimistic circumstances, recognition of DİTİB as a joint platform for Muslim organizations could be possible.

Even in this optimistic trajectory, there would be difficult questions to answer. For example, can DİTİB achieve recognition status in these circumstances? Is it possible to replace the current mechanism and still maintain at least the basic religious services without transnational links? Based on observations in the field and interviews, the funding of mosques and services could become a significant problem, due to the possible end of the transnational financing of imams. These services have been provided free by the Turkish state for years, and this has created a tradition in a considerable part of the Muslim community. Therefore, any upheaval could lead to new complexities in the field, even in the most optimistic scenario. Besides, the political cost of creating such an environment would be extremely high, as there would be the danger of increasing populist movements. When one considers the legal conditions that define states' position in religious affairs and the current political balance, it is challenging to offer definite answers to these questions. And there is also a significant question mark over whether the community would be willing to accept this new mechanism.

In a pessimistic scenario, DİTİB could maintain – or even strengthen – its transnational links to preserve its position as it went through unsuccessful and endless recognition processes. Marginalization and an increased dependency on transnational sources could be expected in

these circumstances. In addition, the rise of populism in German politics could increase, eventually making perceptions of DİTİB and Muslims more critical than they are today. In line with this, there could be a surge in the emphasis on the ‘German Islam’ discourse in relation to the Muslim community. At that point, the state could continue supporting some ‘liberal Islamic’ groups and cooperate with them as ‘legalized’ partners in the community. Furthermore, the entry of imams into the country and other transnational factors might be blocked by legal arrangements. In society, the dominant view could swing towards assimilation and complete acculturation could become a condition for integration. This could be the worst-case sequence of events for the recognition of Islamic organizations in Germany. However, negative events could also be imagined on the Turkish side. The relationship between Turkey and Germany might be worse than it is today, and Turkey’s transnational engagements in Germany could become a bigger target of criticism if right-wing movements get stronger. Naturally, in this scenario, one would not expect any improvements in the recognition processes for DİTİB and Islamic organizations in Germany.

As in the previous scenario, questions about such a future would be challenging to answer. For example, could Islamic organizations in Germany go further in their recognition struggles under such a state of affairs? Could we expect an improvement in the structures of these organizations without the motivation of recognition? And for how long would Muslims be excluded from constitutional incorporation rights in Germany and would this be tolerated by members of the Islamic community? Considering the political trends, each move in this context could have serious side effects, including a collapse of trust between the state and the Muslim community, which is now the second largest religious group in the country. Such a collapse would cause an intensification of transnational links and activities, because of people looking for an identity. If some transnational channels were blocked, then the situation could become more complex. Even though today’s organizations are transnational, their religious understandings and world views are more or less known. In these circumstances, the balance of the field would be damaged: new small groups could arise while the big players would lose their advantage due to a lack of transnational resources. Therefore, in this worst-case scenario, all the actors analysed in this chapter could be harmed, including the harmony of the host country.

The Muslim community in Germany would be the most disadvantaged party in all of these scenarios. The majority of Islamic organizations still rely on transnational financial and human resources. If the tension surrounding transnational links increased, even the essential

religious services could collapse. However, the current situation cannot be maintained with the help of transnational links forever because the needs of the community are changing along with social transformations and newer generations. Integration within the host country and a self-sufficient religious structure that equates to other religions in Germany are inevitable realities for the community, and so they should be taken seriously by all actors. If not, the community could face key challenges due to the domestic and international political context, and it could be trapped between Islamophobia, the German Islam discourse and transnational policies. Such a situation would not benefit any of the actors involved in this issue.

We have seen that these contrasting scenarios for the future of recognition and integration could all have unexpected consequences. In an imagined normative world, the best solution could be one created by a joint platform of related actors and their goodwill. However, this might be a little naïve in the world of real politics and the current circumstances, so the study ends with a possible, realistic, scenario based on an analysis of the imagined futures above and the findings of this study. Initially, AABF will possibly gain full recognition in the next few years, thanks to its structure and its strategy of emphasizing its differences from Islamic groups. Alevis' religious understandings and traditions are close to the idea behind the 'German Islam' discourse, and so they are not directly affected by the harmful politicization of Islam. Such an achievement would be a milestone in the history of Alevis because it will be the first time that Alevism is officially recognized as a religion. As we learned from similar instances in history, such an occasion will possibly influence the Alevis living in Turkey via transnational channels.

On the other hand, it is difficult to make positive comments on DİTİB in a realistic scenario, at least in the near future. First of all, international relations between the two countries and domestic politics in Germany seem likely to continue on their current path, so it is hard to imagine any positive change in the perception of the organization or its recognition status in these circumstances. Even if DİTİB makes some alterations to its structure, a possible rise in populism following the current Covid-19 pandemic will block any positive effects. However, changes such as cutting all transnational ties or reforming the religious understanding of the community into a more Westernized version of Islam are neither desired nor achievable by the organization. As already mentioned, transnationality is a reality for the continuation of religious services in Germany, and no alternative has been created so far. Similarly, the 'German Islam' discourse is opposed by the entire community except for a couple of 'independent' and 'liberal' mosques. The pressure on the organization in relation to transnational links and 'liberalization'

could increase depending on the political situation; the current trend of populism indicates that this is highly possible. Therefore, the realistic scenario for the future of DİTİB and other Islamic organizations in the frame of recognition is quite unfavourable, and tension around the issue of recognition would seem to prevail in the medium term.

All in all, given the urgency and vitality of this issue for the integration of Muslims, this situation cannot be sustained by postponing a decision or finding temporary solutions. The importance of the situation has the potential to force all the actors involved into changing their position in the future, because preserving their current approach will be more costly considering the millions of people affected. The creation of joint initiatives by Islamic organizations working together against the German or European Islam discourse on platforms such as the German Islam Conference might lead to considerable improvements in the future. If the technical issues in Islamic organizations and the contestations among them can be resolved, their readiness to adopt a moderate form of acculturation for the sake of integration would contribute greatly to the recognition process of Islam as an equal religion in Europe.

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9.3. Constitutions, laws, and bylaws

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DİTİB Umbrella Organization By-law, Version 2012, Amtsgericht Köln, no: VR-8932

DİTİB State Union of South Bavaria By-law, Version 2015, Amtsgericht München, no: 202465

DİTİB Mosque Associations By-law, version 2012, in Turkish and German, available at <http://www.DİTİB-bs.de/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/T%C3%BCz%C3%BCK-Vereinssatzung.pdf>

AABF Roof Organization By-law, Version 2014, in German, Amtsgericht Köln, no: VR-12063, available at <https://alevi.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/AABF-SATZUNG.pdf>

AABF Bavaria By-law, Version 2016, in German, Amtsgericht Nürnberg, no: 202008, available at <http://www.aleviten-bayern.de/satzung/?L=0>

AABF München By-law, Version 2019, in German, Amtsgericht München, no: VR-8850

9.4. Interviews

Interview 1, Mustafa Yeneroğlu, Member of Grand National Assembly of Turkey, Ankara, the interview took around 1.5 hours, 06.03.2018

Interview 2, Ünal Koyuncu, Expert, Turkish Migration Foundation, Ankara, the interview took around 1 hour, 06.03.2018

Interview 3, Hasan Kocabıyık, Department Director, Yunus Emre Institute, Ankara, the interview took around 1 hour, 15.03.2018

Interview 4, Anonymus, Presidency for Turks and Relative Communities, Ankara, the interview took around 1 hour, 15.03.2018

Interview 5, Aykan İnan, Vice-President, DİTİB South Bavaria, Munich, the interview took around 1 hour, 05.10.2018

Interview 6, Zekeriya Altuğ, Head of External Relations Department and former Speaker of KRM, DİTİB Central, Cologne, the interview took around 1.5 hours, 16.04.2019

Interview 7, Fuat Ateş, Member of the Executive Board of AABF Roof Organisation, Cologne, the interview took around 1 hour, 10.12.2019