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Sacred Space in the City: Community Practices of Turkish Muslim Women in the Mosques of Berlin

Abstract: Islam is often considered as opposition to secular public life, and it is largely addressed by fixed definitions, institutional organizations, and observable symbols. Moreover, it is treated as the prevailing manifestation of a single Muslim identity. The literature on Turkish Muslim communities in Europe often analyze the institutional character of Islam (i.e., faith-based organizations). Women's agency in those practices are often neglected. In this article, based on an ethnographic work in my Ph.D. project, I will particularly focus on the social construction of mosques as places of community practices by Turkish Muslim women in the Berlin neighborhoods. Related with a more general discussion on the cultural-religious repertoire of these women and neighborhood networking, I will analyze the religious practices along with community practices. Thus, I will discuss that the mosques are not only physical spaces of prayers, but also socio-political spaces of community construction.

Keywords: mosque, community, gender, neighborhood, social capital, cultural capital

Introduction

I am raised by a secular middle-class family in the capital city of Turkey. My grandfather was a misfit in his home village, where Islam is the vessel of social construction of everyday life. He left the village as a grown up and he became a teacher. He was calling himself an atheist when I asked him about Islam. His lifelong partner, my grandmother, on the other hand, was the only person in our family who calls herself Muslim. But it is hardly noticeable that she goes to her room to pray five times a day.

One day, when my grandfather passed away, I visited his small village. Everybody was giving us condolences on that day. They were my distant relatives, but I knew almost nobody. Two rooms were assigned to the guests: the living room for men and the other room for the women and children. I was there, with my upper-middle class, "well-educated" mind, with all my tattoos and apparently with no familiarity with religious rituals out there. I was a stranger among my relatives. The women were calling me 'the high-trained, city girl.' On that day, I experienced how religion functions as a culture and as a practice of community in the neighborhoods with the symbolic boundaries Islam set for the believers. Islam is often considered as opposition to secular public life, and it is largely addressed by fixed definitions, institutional organizations, and observable symbols. It is treated as the prevailing manifestation of a single Muslim identity. However, the women at the funeral had considerably different way of using their religious affiliation than my

grandmother. Women's agency in Islam are often neglected in the studies of religion and community.

After some years, when I moved to Berlin to write my doctoral dissertation, I started to think about the role of Islam and culture of practicing religion when they closely and intensely took part in the *doings* of community in the neighborhood. Islam could be an individual practice like my grandmother did, but it could also function as a means to community building like I observed at the funeral of my grandfather in that small town. Therefore, in Berlin, I investigated the role of religious observance in constructing public and private spaces in the 'host' city and building ties and boundaries among Turkish Muslim women. I reflected on maintenance of everyday life through cultural-religious repertoire, social construction of urban spaces, cultivation of community practices in the neighborhoods and manifestation of boundaries in urban public life.

The literature on Islam in European cities were approached from various angles however practice of Islam by Turkish diaspora in Germany is dominantly studied through faith-based organizations (FBOs) (Çarkoğlu and Toprak 2007; Yurdakul and Yükleyen 2009, 2011; Yükleyen 2010). These valuable studies contributed to better understand how Islam is institutionalized in European cities, but they did not concentrate on how Islam is practiced in daily life, and they did not particularly consider gender in the male dominated FBOs. Therefore, analyses remained insufficient to cover what is happening on site. Both in the larger research I conducted and in this particular paper, I focus on daily practices of community building in the neighborhoods and religion. While the overall research discussed various fields in daily routines of Turkish Muslim women, this paper specifically addresses mosques. This particular interest asks the question: How Turkish Muslim women in Berlin neighborhoods, Kreuzberg and Wedding, construct sacred spaces (mosques) in their daily routines and how do they practice religion as a means of community building? I argue that mosques are socially constructed not only as sacred[1] spaces but also as places of community.

The construction of neighborhood communities has several dimensions and patterns. In this paper, I argue that community is not a single entity of ethnic or religious communities. It is rather a set of multiple processes and identifications. Jenkins (1996) stated that "As a very basic starting point, identity is the human capacity … It is a process—identification — not a 'thing.' It is not something that one can have, or not; it is something that one does." (Jenkins 1996: 5). Following this idea, I consider identification of Turkish Muslim women on various dimensions rather than ethnic, religious attributions in the analysis. In line with this premise, in this paper, I consider communities as in their different definitions among individual members. Jenkins (2016) argued that communities can be defined differently by its members, but they are still meaningful collectivities (ibid.: 157). I also suggest that Turkish Muslim women can define their 'community' from various angles and levels, but they still have the sense of collectivity and commonality among themselves. Therefore, communities are not homogenous entities of 'similar' individuals in terms of age, gender, ethnicity, or religion. They are active processes of building and reproducing

[1] See Berger (1990) for a detailed conceptualization of religion and sacred in the society/community. His works on the concept of 'sacred' was influential for this study.

of discourse, meaning and ties. More importantly, spatial proximity, even though not being the only prerequisite for building communities, function as an important factor among the community construction of Turkish Muslim women. Throughout the paper, I will analyze mosque spaces in the two Berlin neighborhoods as social arenas of this active processes of community building.

Methods and Data

Between October 2018 and December 2019, I conducted an ethnographic study, primarily in the two districts of Berlin where Turkish population is high in density: Wedding and Kreuzberg. Wedding and Kreuzberg are mixed districts of Berlin yet contain large numbers of Turkish population. Therefore, there are several mosques which are run by Turkey-originated FBOs in these two districts. The research was conducted through thirty in-depth interviews, twenty-one go-alongs and participant observation with different cohorts of Turkish Muslim women living in Berlin at least for twenty years. I recorded all interviews and most of the go-alongs, I took field diary and notes.[2] In that period of time, I regularly visited mosques in Wedding and Kreuzberg. The data that I will provide in this article comes from in-depth interviews and conversations in the mosques.

I had regular visits to three mosques which belong to different FBOs run by Turks. The structure of the mosques are mainly apartment flats in Germany. Only one of the mosques that I have been visiting on a regular basis is a separate building with usual architecture of a mosque. It has minarets, main hall, lavatories (*abdesthane*[3]) and women's gathering place (*kadınlar mahfili*[4]) and a yard in front of it. As for the other two mosques, I could only enter to the women's section where men are not allowed. This is usually one floor of an apartment or half of an apartment where the entrances for men and women are separated.

Regarding the sample, I only interviewed with women who have Turkish roots and migration background. Therefore, whether they hold German citizenship, Turkish citizenship, or dual citizenship, I based my selection on the basis of their self-identification in terms of nationality. Besides this, there were different age groups, various levels of education and differences in the ways in which Islam is practiced. Some women I talked with live very much according to the codes of Islam and some others identify themselves as Muslims, but they see religion on a spiritual level and do not necessarily practice it in public. Besides this, there was persuasive similarity among women including family structures, and socio-economic background. While making a comparison between two women with different religious practices, I ensured that their ages and cohorts to be similar. In other words, in order to avoid inconsistency in the analysis, I did not compare religious experiences of a 50-year-old mother with a 22-year-old student.

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[2] Before the participant observation and in-depth interviews, I individually took informed consent by the women. Additionally, all names in this text are pseudonyms.

[3] 'Abdest' (in Turkish) is the ritual of washing the body before prayers or before handling the Quran. See https://www.lexico.com/definition/abdest 'Abdesthane' (Lavatory) is the place for this particular ritual.

[4] 'Kadınlar mahfili' (in Turkish) means the gathering place of women at the mosques. The mosques are designed and used by women and men to be in separate places.

In the semi-structured interviews, I firstly asked questions regarding the transnational attachment to Turkey and Germany. As interviewed women are from mostly second and third generation, they do not have personal experiences of migration. Therefore, I tried to understand how they experience their migration background as women who were either born in Germany or who migrated as a child. I asked about their emotional ties with Turkey as well as the frequency of their visits to Turkey. Later, I asked them to tell about their daily routines. The reason for this section was to understand how they use the city and the neighborhood. Besides this, I also investigated the regular, idle aspects of their ordinary days. In the later sections of the interviews, we mostly talked about the cultural belonging and religious orientation. I asked questions regarding their usual religious practices, how do they define religiosity and so on. These parts have a significant role in understanding how mosque is seen and used. Many examples in this paper comes from this section of the interviewees where women tell about their social ties, routines, and community belonging practices in the mosques. It is also important to note that not all women I worked with are regular attendees of a mosque but in this particular paper I only gave examples from those who use mosque space as a means to networking and community building. Similarly, this study is not an attempt to suggest that mosques always inclusive for all Turkish Muslims in Germany. Although there are no restrictions on attending meetings in a mosque, it needs time and correspondence to get into the community.[5]

Regarding my position as a researcher in the field, being a woman from Turkey made me insider among the participant women. After a certain point in my fieldwork period, several times, older women mentioned that they see me as their daughter. However, being at the mosque as a guest was particularly challenging because in the cases which they recite prayers by heart, I could only stay outside of the circle and waited silently. Additionally, as the ethnographic fieldwork required intimacy and off the record conversations, women shared sensitive matters in their lives and although these were not parts of the analysis (and none of them were mentioned in any of the related texts), I had ethical concerns during the fieldwork.[6]

Representations of Muslim Sacred Space in Europe: an Overview

Healey (1997) defines the nature of public space as "managing our co-existence in shared space" (Healey 1997: 3) while Fenster (2006) describes it as "a creative product of and context for the everyday lives of its inhabitants." (Fenster 2006: 42). The notions of space and place were not systematically included in the literature on Muslim communities until 1980s (Desplat 2012: 12). Sociological analyses without space and time made these communities isolated from where they were emerged and categorical fixed definitions (i.e.,

[5] This is a very important mechanism in mosques, and it would be a valuable following study to my ethnographic work. Mosques are semi-public spaces simply because a mosque is a place in which its regular attendants feel themselves at home (private space) (and this takes time and networking) but in practice, a mosque is always open to everyone.

[6] These ethical concerns are not mentioned in this journal article due to practical reasons (word limits) however in the overall PhD project, ethics has a broad coverage. I did not mention sensitive issues which were classified as 'out of record' by the participant women.

Islam in opposition to Western codes) enlarge the gap. Since 1990s, the importance of space in the making of religious communities was highly valued and it was studied from various angles (Metcalf 1996; Eickelman and Anderson 1999; Göle 2002; Falah and Nagel 2005; Mahmood 2005). "These different perceptions of spatiality in Muslim societies and cultures echo a tendency in the social sciences to treat space and place not necessarily as dichotomous but as differently evaluated concepts of one social reality" (Desplat 2012: 17). Correspondingly, Agnew (2005) argued that "Space is the abstraction of places into a grid or coordinate system as if the observer or controller is outside of or looking down on the places that constitute it" (Agnew 2005: 81). Following this perspective, I intentionally chose to use 'space' in this paper in order to refer a broader definition of socio-spatial practices in the mosques. Currently, 2,000 mosques in Germany are considered as Turkish mosques and 900 of them are officially funded by Türkisch-Islamische Union der Anstalt für Religion (DITIB) which is a branch of Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey. 80 mosques which are run by Turkish Islamic organizations such as DITIB, Islamic Community Milli Görüş (ICMG) or Süleymanlı community[7] are active in Berlin.

In my study, another theoretical conceptualization of community shows that various forms of relations among individuals are as significant as 'place' or the 'neighborhood' per se. In her book, *Community as Urban Practice* (2017), Blokland proposed to take community by looking into the different forms of social relations, including fluid encounters to durable ties. In this paper, I follow the idea that various types of relationships and different forms of networks would function as significant tools to build 'communities.' The impact of place (in this case mosques, or more generally the neighborhood or the city itself) is undeniable yet it is not the only factor in bringing people together. A great number of Turkish Muslim women visit mosques which are in the neighborhood whereas a considerable number of others do not prefer the closest one if they have networks and ties in another. Similarly, not all mosques are preferred by their location or spatial environment. Many times, mosque is the place where the FBOs or other networks suggest. Nevertheless, the space of mosque has a significant role in the process of building communities. Before analyzing the role of sacred spaces as places of 'durable engagements', social and cultural capitals; a brief background of Turkish Muslim migration to Berlin would be helpful.

Islam in Berlin: Mosques and Transmigrant Communities

In the scholarly literature, the flow of migration from Turkey to Germany is a much-discussed topic. In the 1960s, Germany was experiencing economic constraints and the supply of labor force was met by the recruitments from Turkey, Italy, Greece, and Portugal. High numbers of men and women from Turkey were welcomed to work in the country. They were called 'Gastarbeiter' (guestworkers). After recruitment, when Turkish population increased in Germany under the family unification law, they eventually became a part of the society. Meanwhile, the continuous back and forth movement of Turks thanks to

[7] These are—among others—three official Islamic organizations which are currently run and funded by Turkey-based or Turkey-originated organizations, parties, and foundations. In my study, I visited various mosques that are belong to these three 'communities.'

the proximity of Germany and Turkey, keeps these people connected with their culture, religion, and traditions. They regularly visit Turkey, and they have friends and relatives back in Turkey with whom they regularly communicate. Therefore, they are connected to daily routines in Turkey via the everyday lives of acquaintances. Furthermore, Turks socio-culturally became more present in years. Today, the fourth generation of *Gastarbeiter* live in various German cities. Many of them, like their parents (third generation), hold German citizenship.

What determines immigrant status, if it is not the residence permit or citizenship in a host country? There are many migration studies on the conceptualization of the word 'immigrant' (Duleep and Regets 2002; Bowen 2004; Deaux 2006). Yet, in the case of Turkish Muslim women I worked with, I was still hesitant to call them immigrants since they either do not have a first-hand migration experience or they could not accurately remember the process because they were children. Younger generations no longer see themselves as immigrants. *Sometimes, after a long chat or stuff, people say 'Oh! I am surprised that you are Turkish, your German is very good!* one of my informants, Gamze, who is a young woman with German citizenship, explains with frustration, *Can you believe this? They think that I cannot speak good German because I am Turkish… I was born here; I lived my entire life here. My whole life, my home is here and yet they think that it is shocking that I speak good German! Such a foolish thought!* She was outraged because of being excluded due to her Turkish descent while she is literally a part of German society—both in terms of passport and social life. *Whatever you do, you are a foreigner, you are an immigrant, this never changes, only becomes invisible sometimes, but such understanding is always there* she continues afterwards. Similarly, twenty-five-year-old Azra, friend of Gamze, says *no matter what, we are the immigrants, because of our family, home country, and predecessors*. Gamze also shared another moment she felt upset when she was in high school: *At the end of the semester, our teacher said: 'Oh! Are you going back to your home?' She said Heimatland. In German, you know, it is like 'home country.' It is not okay to say that to us because my Heimat is actually Berlin, not Turkey. It is so absurd.* Similar occasions continued to happen in her life: *At university, I was in a class. The professor said, 'Ah, how well integrated you are!' For God's sake… I am out of patience about this kind of things*. These are significant indicators of how national and religious identities are formed as oppositional identities (see, Çelik 2015). Although there are practical limitations of this paper to discuss this further here, the formation of 'reactive ethnicities' and 'oppositional identities' (Waters 2001; Nagra 2011; see Çelik 2015) will be mentioned to understand how mosques are socially constructed as fields of social and cultural capital.

All participant women stated that they visit Turkey regularly (one or two times a year). They have relatives, friends, even family members in Turkey. Therefore, their social ties with the home country remained strong. This connection is reaffirmed with the going back and forth between Turkey and Germany and it is strengthened by the emotional ties. Moreover, a nostalgic discourse is frequently circulated among different generations and within the families. This discourse is mostly associated with how beautiful Turkey is in terms of its nature, people, social order and so on. Following narrative from the field is a good example of this emotional tie: *We know we are different; we don't want to live like Germans, we are Turks, we are Muslims, we feel happy here (mosque)… We miss Turkey.*

Ask everyone here, man or woman, they would all say that they miss Turkey. This is a place where we can be in Turkey. Besides the emotional ties and regular visits to Turkey, online communication with acquaintances in Turkey consolidates the identification with the home country. In my fieldwork visits, I observed that women frequently video call their friends and family in Turkey, and I have been told that online conversations are one of the daily routines for them.

The importance of mosques and community building practices within the mosques are dominantly related to immigrant status of Turks in Germany and their history of migration. The long-term existence of the Turks in European cities and the way they preserve their settlement without breaking their ties with Turkey moved them to a special minority position. In other words, Turks kept their ties with their home country, meanwhile they built a new life in the host country, and they maintained it for many years. As a result, they created a hybrid culture. Within this hybrid culture, devotion to religion and tradition still formed the basic boundaries within many Turkish Muslim families and in the neighborhoods such as Wedding and Kreuzberg where Turkish population is high. The practice of going to the mosque has gained more meaning than just a worship performance; it becomes a practice of building neighborhood communities. In the following analysis sections, I will examine the mosque as foci space, space of 'durable engagements,' and space of social and cultural capital. While examining all these, it is important to consider the two important factors I mentioned above: immigration status encourages the idea that 'we must stay together' among Turkish women and being in the mosque feels like being in Turkey and keeps the ties with the home country alive.

Analyses

Mosque as a Social Space of 'Durable Engagements'

Feld (1981) defined foci as a "social, psychological, legal, or physical entity around which joint activities are organized" (Feld 1981: 1016). Cafés, bars, neighborhoods, parks, and schools can be a foci (Barwick 2015: 3). In this paper, I discuss that mosque is a foci for Turkish Muslim women. In Berlin, mosques belong to FBOs and people who are regular attendants of a mosque are usually members of that FBO as well. Moreover, without a few exceptions women I worked with attend to a nearby mosque where they can also see similar faces like neighbors. Blokland (2017) argued that we may have roles and networks in various fields of life while still not engaging with others closely. (Blokland 2017: 66). She stated that "I may go to the same church, the same step aerobics class, or even the same workplace for a long time, and yet never form personal network ties with the people I engage with there … 'to engage' points to a practice of participating and committing oneself. When people are engaged in doing something, it usually means they are part of groups of people doing something together." (ibid.: 67). Her definition of 'durable engagements' comes from the idea of continuation of interactions and not necessarily forms ties and personal networks. She pointed out that "it is possible that … casual, repeated interactions … produced more personal connections" (ibid.) but durable

engagements continue regardless of the possibility of being friends with others and so on. In other words, ties exist in "personalities for us" but 'durable engagements' are relatively independent from individual personalities (ibid.: 68).

Correspondingly, in many Berlin neighborhoods, people mostly choose the mosque they regularly visit on the basis of their membership to an FBO, but they also usually prefer to attend the nearest mosque to their residence. Therefore, when people move out the neighborhood, they might begin to attend another mosque in their new district. As they did not continue to visit the former mosque anymore, the durable engagements around that mosque will not particularly change. Only actors would change. However, in some rather exceptional cases, the meaning of attending a mosque regularly for women, move beyond 'seeing the similar faces' (familiarity) or 'engaging with similar others' (durable engagements); and became a place of personal ties (like friendships). Feyza is a married woman with two children. She told me once that they continue to attend a mosque in their former neighborhood after moving out to another district four years ago. She says *I do not know, we started to go there once we lived there. We moved here but we stuck to it. We never started to go to a closer mosque*. They visit mosque each weekend by driving one hour. The reason of not preferring to go to a closer mosque and perform prayers, is because of the personal ties they formed at the former one. This is rarely seen among participant women because spatial proximity enables accessibility and sustainability of mosques and people in those mosques. Except Feyza, all other women attend the mosques in their own neighborhoods and find a new one (according to other factors like FBO membership etc.) if they move. On the other hand, even if they would not continue to visit that mosque after moving out of the neighborhood, 'durable engagements' in that mosque would last. In terms of 'durable engagements,' personal networks are not specifically important. Mosque functions as a space in which manifolds of networks and encounters constantly exist. It provides a hub of social networks for Turks. Additionally, the example of Feyza and her family visiting a far-away mosque regularly, gives the hints of how mosque space is organized as a place for socialization besides prayers. The time spent to get there and the time period (*an entire day*, Feyza said) shows that mosque is a space for meeting social needs and not only a place of prayer. Additionally, special events like religious holidays or funerals are prominent periods when both regular and non-regular attendants of mosques come together. These times are specifically important to practice community because of the emotional aspects (see Konecki 2021).

I argue that two fundamental factors increase the chances of befriending with others in the case of Turkish Muslim women in Berlin. First one is the diasporic culture. The women I worked with in the fieldwork often stated that they need to stick together because of their immigrant and minority status in German cities. When they find a person from Turkey, they would like to interact and get to know each other. The discourse of being all alone in a host country is often mentioned by the first- and second-generation women. Younger women use this discourse less than their mothers and grandmothers, but they are taught to connect with other Turks and Muslims within their family circle.

Correspondingly, the second fundamental reason is religious-national identification. Turkish Muslims are often seen as the closest persons around because of the shared culture. Although these people do not necessarily support each other, the idea of shared culture is

strengthened by the discourse of this affinity. Therefore, a mosque appears as a place of 'durable engagements' which may end up with personal ties in some cases. Forty-year-old Hanife said that *being with those women together at the mosque, making friends, connecting… many of my friends are those whom I met in the mosque. We have known each other for years. Mosque is not a place where you go and silently pray and then leave. It is about being together. You can share with those who care for similar things. You can make friends there. This is what I think of the mosque*. It is important to note that Hanife does not identify herself as a very pious woman. On the opposite, she was not practicing Islam regularly before she began to attend the mosque. Her engagement with religious practices is highly linked with her wish to make friends and to form personal ties. The 'durable engagements' she once had, turned to personal networks and friendships. It is an example of how sacred spaces are constructed in various ways and how they function as social spaces with different purposes.

Mosque as a Space of Social Capital

Earlier, I argued that when religion is not only a matter of spiritual connection, it often functions as a significant tool for other aspects of social life such as access to resources, social capital, networking and so on. Then it becomes an instrument of building community in the neighborhood as well. There are convincing data from the fieldwork, addressing that the mosques are places for accumulating social capital among other Turks in German cities. Twenty-six-year-old Sezen mentioned her father in our interview and said, *my father is not a… he is religious but not like that… but he still goes to Cuma*[8] *(Friday prayer). Because he runs a business, and he says that he needs those men there. I mean they are his friends. Not that he is using people or something like that. But he would not go as frequent as he does now if he does not want to continue those relations. So, one side of the coin is that*.

As the mosques are hub of 'durable engagements,' the continuation of network sustainability enables regular attendants to access social capital resources. Bourdieu (1986) defined social capital as: "The aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group…" (Bourdieu 1986: 21). In a mosque, both feeling of membership to a neighborhood community and durable social networks provide attendee women with valuable resources in other fields of their lives. For example, a considerable number of women I met during the fieldwork were working in cleaning sector and they are helping each other to find these jobs. Many of those women were also regular attendees of mosques and they mostly met each other in there.

Especially among women who are affiliated with an FBO in Germany, the mosque space is one of the areas to establish new social networks. Although the mosque is a male-dominated place, the structure of mosques in Europe enables women to spend their days with other women. As pointed out earlier, besides a few examples with mosque architecture, almost all of the mosques in Berlin are in the form of apartment flats and they have two

[8] 'Cuma' (in Turkish) translates as Friday. It is used to refer to Friday prayers which are dominantly practiced at the mosques by men each Friday noon.

separate sections for women and for men. These flats usually contain one main hall and a small room which is mostly used as a tea-room or as a lobby. I spent considerable time in those tea-rooms before the prayers and halaqa (religious gathering to study the Quran). Those are the places where women tell each other about their lives. In other words, women get to know each other and build social networks which will eventually provide them with social capital resources.

The network which is established between women in mosques sometimes evolved into bonds such as friendships and sometimes it was used as functional tools. The small talks before the meetings in a mosque allow women to get to know each other. In this way, when there is a need, they could ask each other for help. For example, thirty-eight-year-old Serpil was a regular attendee of a mosque in Wedding. She met forty-one-year-old Emine, who was working as a teacher in the same mosque. A few years later, when Serpil needed to find a new flat to rent in the neighborhood, Emine helped her, and their friendship developed later. It is not surprising that these two Turkish Muslim women, who have lived in Germany for many years, are looking for someone in their community for help.

On a fieldwork day, I met with two young women, Hacer and Füsun who are close friends. As we were drinking tea and having a conversation, I learnt that they were both teaching classes at mosque once a week to the children. Füsun told me that the classes are mainly about the basic hygiene principles and preliminary knowledge about Islamic rules. Later she said that *I found this job you know after school. I was coming here everyday anyways and then my mother asked on my behalf for this. It is not for money or anything. I like to be here, and I feel useful*. Füsun was a regular attendee before she became a teacher in the mosque in Wedding. Her mother, her sister and her aunts were also regular members. Their long-lasting networks enabled Füsun to find a job at the mosque. However, such opportunities are not necessarily in the mosque space. Like previously mentioned cleaning jobs and need to find a new flat, women get help from others in various fields of their lives. Thirty-four-year-old Sevda has two children and her forty-one-year-old friend Nagehan who has one child, once mentioned that *we raise our kids together*. They became close after many years of regular attendance to the same mosque, and they look after each other's children when there is need. These examples show the importance of mosque space as a means to build social networks and accumulate social capital. The accumulation of social capital is not only important for the help and cooperation among women, but it also shows how community is constructed in practice.

Mosque as a Space of Cultural Capital

Bourdieu (1986) argued that "cultural capital can exist in three forms: in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of long-lasting dispositions of the mind and body; in the objectified state, in the form of cultural goods (pictures, books, dictionaries, instruments, machines, etc.) …and in the institutionalized state, a form of objectification which must be set apart because, …it confers entirely original properties on the cultural capital which it is presumed to guarantee" (Bourdieu 1986: 17). He mentioned the values that are accepted as high culture but, in this paper, I interpret it as a set of tools and instruments to get into a community. In this case, religious capital functions as cultural capital for Turkish

Muslim women in Berlin. Therefore, I argue that accumulation of the necessary habits, discourse and practices, women gain access to social networks in the neighborhood. This accumulation is transmitted among generations, and it is actively performed in the mosque space. Additionally, it comes with a religious observant morality: 'to be a decent Turkish Muslim woman.'

Inside the mosque and in a religious community, a specific cultural capital is produced and transmitted to the next generations in a systematic way. It is not easy for an outsider -as a researcher like me, to gain immediate access to this accumulated cultural capital. Similarly, the time I spent there for fieldwork was obviously not sufficient. An excerpt from the field diary focuses on the practical reflection of the accumulation of cultural capital and familiarity to the routines in the mosques:

We entered the mosque at noon prayer. I waited a little while for them to perform salaat and then I was introduced to other women. We sat on the floor of a small room near the kitchen. This place is a separated area from the big hall where people pray, recite the Quran, and have classes. After an almost one-hour conversation, I joined their class in the main hall. The class was about heaven and afterlife. It followed with a reading practice of the Quran in Arabic. Their teacher—a middle aged woman—read the line and then everybody tried to pronounce it correctly one by one. After this session, they sat to the floor in a circle shape to recite the Quran. Meantime they told me to sit behind them. I was not allowed to be in the circle firstly because I was new, and I did not know the Quran by heart. The reciting started. At the end of the recitation, they invited me to the circle and Narin whispered to me to say prayer along with them. At that particular moment, I realized that I did not do my homework well. I did not know any prayers so I could only raise my hands as they do and wait for them to finish their prayer. (Field diary, 16 November 2018)

It is often challenging for numerous Turkish women to complete their higher education and find a well-paid job in Germany. There are different reasons. Especially for the second-generation children of immigrant families who were raised in a new world where their parents are trying to adapt to, their education might not be given much importance. Thirty-four-year-old Seda was born in Germany. She said that *take my mother, for example. She came here when she was twelve. She went to school for two years and then, at the age of fourteen, she started working in a factory. No further education. It was the same for my father. So, my parents did not have opportunities either for developing themselves or for caring about our education*. She later also mentioned that *our parents did not really care about education either. They were so busy earning money. That was the most important thing in their lives*. Completing higher education is not possible for most women in the face of the difficulties of immigrant status and being financially disadvantaged. In addition, Turkish women in Germany may encounter structural discrimination due to their immigrant status in the labor market.

Apart from these, other reasons make it difficult for women to obtain financial freedom, as well as the conservative family structure among Turks, which can prevent women from obtaining cultural capital in professional fields. Many of those women who are not able to find a well-paid job or to continue with their education, incline to hoard opportunities within the mosque and FBOs. Interviews showed that even though reasons change for this decision, women who chose to stay in the mosque, are mostly encouraged by their families and they would like to stay in the community/ in the neighborhood network. Before her unpaid work at the mosque in Wedding, twenty-two-year-old Füsun was applying for jobs around the city. She explained one of her job interviews as: *Once, I had an interview at (the*

name of shop), you know it right? So, I went there with a friend. She was waiting for me in the shop. Well, they asked me some questions and then the woman asked if I would take off my headscarf during working hours. I said no, of course. I mean, I would not take it off. Then she said, 'I can't let you work with a veil; it is against our policy, it is not preferable for our customers either.' When you go out and ask, they would say there is 'Freiheit' in Germany. So, I am asking, where is it? Füsun thinks that for the recruiter, a saleswoman with a headscarf is undesirable for the customers. She also later mentioned that she feels happier and more comfortable when she works at the mosque. The comfort defines the recognition and acceptance by others.

Turkish women in Germany often start going to the mosque regularly from their childhood. First of all, they start going to the mosque with their mothers and other family elders. Then, many of them attend courses that teach basic Islamic values and hygiene rules for children. Later, some of them continue Quran courses. In this way, they become familiar with the mosque for many years.

Narin, who is a first-generation Turkish Muslim women and mother of three, mentioned that *All of my children [two daughters, one son] memorize the Quran. My middle daughter was a hodja*[9] *for four or five years*. Similarly, Nagehan, a second-generation Turkish Muslim woman, stated that her eleven-year-old-son becomes familiar with the mosque: *he comes with us to the mosque every week. Of course, he cannot come here (referring to the women's section at the mosque), he goes with his father. Next year, I am planning to send him to a Quran course. For now, he only visits the mosque with us. I want him to see and learn. I mean, a kind of familiarity. It is important*. Both girls and boys gain familiarity from early ages and some of them continued to stay within the FBO community and accumulate cultural capital in this field. Later, both women and men became teachers or employees in the FBOs. Women, although they are not allowed to be imams, teach Arabic to others or they teach to younger ones about the basic Islamic principles. In this way, both transmission of codes is provided within the mosque and cultural and social capital are accumulated by its regular attendees. Importantly, capital accumulation is a crucial part of community building practices. It defines to be an insider while it shows who is the outsider.

Conclusion

Based on a broader ethnographic research, I analyzed that mosques are mediums of social networking, place-making, and community relations in the neighborhoods. This function of mosques has particular importance in the case of minority groups in a host country. I argued that community building practices among Turkish Muslim women is an example of how mosques are places of sociability. One of the fundamental arguments of this paper is that Islam is not only a belief, but it also appears to be instrumentalized. By a set of norms or by place-making in a neighborhood space; religion functions as a practice of community.

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[9] 'Hodja' ('hoca' in Turkish) refers to the religious teacher at the mosques. Hodja is usually a man who is the 'imam' of the mosque. However, women I met during the fieldwork, frequently refer their female religious teachers who teaches others Arabic alphabet, to read the Quran or to give lectures to younger women and girls as 'hodja.' Therefore, this is an uncommon usage of the word but a frequent usage among the participant women.

I analyzed how mosques are 'foci' (Feld 1981) places of 'durable engagements' (Blokland 2017) and how they are socially re-constructed as places of social and cultural capitals (Bourdieu 1986). I suggested that a mosque (as a physical space) can only be a place of community building if people go there and in the case of Turkish Muslim women, going to a mosque is a consequence rather than a reason. My fieldwork showed that mosques are not places of prayers only. In fact, many women I worked with stated that they began to go to the mosque because they have a friend there. For some others, their mothers and other family members were regular visitors of a mosque, then they simply began to join their acquaintances. Therefore, going to a mosque appears as a consequence of social ties.

Social and cultural capitals are accumulated in the mosque as a significant process of community building practices in the neighborhood and in the city. Women at the mosques help each other in other fields of life such as finding a flat, or a job. They cooperate in raising their children. These are based on the social ties they build in the mosque as a community, and it expands to a neighborhood network. Just as nationality, religion appears as an important part of the familiarity and networking.

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