

The Emergence of a Neo-Communitarian Movement in the Turkish Diaspora in Europe: Settlement and Competition Strategies of the Gülen Movement in France and Germany

by Emre Demir

This paper examines the organisational and discursive strategies of the Gülen movement in France and Germany and its differentiation in Turkish Islam in Europe, with the primary focus on the movement's educational activities. The paper describes the characteristics of organisational activity among Turkish Muslims in Europe. Then it analyses two mainstream religious-communitarian movements and the contrasting settlement strategies of the "neo-communitarian" Gülen movement.

Despite the large Turkish population in western Europe, the movement has been active there for only about ten years – relatively late compared to other Islamic organisations. Mainly, the associational organisation of Turkish Islam in Europe is based on two axes: the construction/sponsoring of mosques and Qur'anic schools. By contrast, the Gülen movement's members in Europe, insisting on 'the great importance of secular education', do not found or sponsor mosques and Qur'anic schools. Their principal focus is to address the problems of the immigrant youth population in Europe, with reintegration of Turkish students into the educational system of the host societies as a first goal. On the one hand, as a neo-communitarian religious grouping, they strive for a larger share of the 'market' (i.e. more members from among the Turkish diaspora) by offering a fresh religious discourse and new organisational strategies, much as they have done in Turkey. On the other hand, they seek to gain legitimacy in the public sphere in Germany and France by building an educational network in these countries, just as they have done in Central Asia and the Balkans region. Accordingly, a reinvigorated and reorganised community is taking shape in western Europe.

Panel:
Euro-Islam, Identity and
Integration

Venue:
B202,
Brunei Gallery, SOAS

26.10.07 Panels	Parellel Session 1	Parellel Session 2
9:30-11:30		Presentation 02
13:00-15:00		
15:10-17:00		

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