

## **State-Scripted Religious Discourse: Islamic Sermons in Germany**

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My dissertation examines Islamic discourse produced by the Turkish government for two different audiences, its citizens in Turkey and those who have migrated to Germany. Turkish officials and migration scholars alike have recognized that religious discourse can shape attitudes toward participation in mainstream institutions, motivate transnational activities, and impact the integration of second-generation immigrants, all of which may generate significant socioeconomic outcomes. My current research focuses on an institutional arm of the Turkish government headquartered in Köln whose official mandate is to meet the religious needs of Turkish immigrants, but which also tries to preserve Turkish identity among immigrant children and impede the growth of radical Islam. I seek to understand how this agency uses Islamic sermons to promote cultural and economic integration with German society and how it mobilizes resources to remain competitive in an open religious market.

In the first phase of my dissertation research I am analyzing contemporary Islamic sermons in Turkey, where the avowedly secular government manages all public religious matters, including the production of sermons that are, in theory, read during Friday prayers in more than 77,000 mosques nationwide. Textual analysis of over 300 sermons produced under two different administrations will be augmented by interviews with religious leaders to determine how socio-political developments and institutional forces have shaped religious discourse in Turkey, including debates over the role of Islam in the public sphere.

A similar research agenda will be followed in Berlin, where I plan to collect sermons and other literature produced by the institution mentioned above as well as interview members of its staff. The German context, however, raises different questions: Can the Turkish government compete with independent mosques and imams who may better meet the needs of Anatolian migrants? How much pressure has Turkey's EU candidacy placed on Turkish officials to present Islam in a positive light, and has this affected weekly sermons? As commentators begin to speak of parallel societies and a "new Berlin wall" forming between ethnic Germans and Muslim Turks, what measures are being taken in religious and cultural sectors to prevent riots like those seen in France in 2005? My study will help answer these questions by highlighting the role of an actor often overlooked in discussions of migration: the government of the sending country.