

ISLAMIC INSTRUCTION IN GERMANY AND AUSTRIA A COMPARISON OF PRINCIPLES DERIVED FROM RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

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Muslim institutions in Europe are increasingly coming into their own, developing expertise and self-confidence. This is evident, for example, in the programs that have been developed in the various European contexts for the religious instruction of Muslim children in public schools. Among their many goals, these instructional programs aim to assist Muslim children in positioning themselves with respect to the religious source texts and teachings, as well as within their community and larger society. This essay attempts an analysis of the arguments underlying these positionings via a comparison of the models of religious instruction currently under debate in Germany and in practice in Austria.

Implementing Islamic Instruction in Public Schools: A Comparison of Contexts

Germany's federal structure has greatly contributed to the multifaceted character of the debate surrounding the implementation of Islamic instruction in schools. The governance of public schools, and thus the issue of religious instruction in public education, is under the jurisdiction of the individual German *Länder*. The federal states, in turn, have developed different approaches toward implementing Islamic instruction or alternative educational programs. Since the 1980s, all of the *Länder* with a relatively large population of migrant children have offered a program of supplemental native-language education. These supplemental programs include instruction in Islamic culture from a non-confessional perspective (*Islamkunde*). The

situation in Germany is further complicated by the fact that German constitution stipulates that religious instruction may only be carried out under the aegis of a religious community. To date, however, Islamic organizations in Germany have not succeeded in fulfilling the criteria necessary to obtain the status of a religious community, which continues to be the largest hurdle faced by Islamic organizations in Germany in their effort to gain access to the public schools. In the meantime, *Islankunde* has become the time-honored provisional solution for providing Islamic instruction to Muslim children.

Nonetheless, German debates on implementing Islamic instruction are beginning to yield concrete results. In fact, a number of *Länder*, including Baden Württemberg, Bavaria, and Hessen, are currently conducting round table discussions with various Islamic organizations that wish to provide religious instruction in the hope of arriving at a consensus regarding the appropriate educational curriculum for future Islamic instruction. Other *Länder* with a large population of Muslim children are pursuing a different political and administrative course. Rather than developing a curriculum under the authority of the Islamic community, Nordrhein-Westfalia has elected to transform its state-administered *Islankunde* curriculum from a supplemental, native language course into an independent subject taught in German. Hamburg has chosen yet another, radically different approach toward the issue of religious instruction in the schools, replacing monoconfessionally-based instruction with a single "Religious Instruction for All," which is being attended by a sizable number of Muslim children.¹

The educational and cultural authorities in the *Länder* increasingly find themselves confronted with multiple applications from a variety of Islamic organizations that all wish to provide religious instruction in the schools. Among the applications that include a detailed instructional proposal is the 1999 prospectus issued by the Central Council of Muslims in Germany (*Zentralrat der Muslime in Deutschland*, or ZMD). Conceiving of itself as a religious community, the Central Council prospectus rejects Nordrhein-Westfalia's *Islankunde* model in favor of an independent program of Islamic

¹ For an overview of developments in the German *Länder*, see Irka-Christin Mohr, "Zwischen öffentlicher Verantwortung and religiöser Selbstbehauptung: Modelle islamischen Unterrichts in Deutschland", in Michael Klöcker and Udo Tworuschka, eds., *Handbuch der Religionen. Kirchen und andere Glaubensgemeinschaften in Deutschland*, Munich: Olzog, 2000; Ali Özgür Özdil, *Aktuelle Debatten zum Islamunterricht in Deutschland*, Hamburg, E.B.-Verlag, 1999.

instruction.² To this end, the Central Council's prospectus was drafted to appeal to the broadest possible Muslim constituency.

In the following year, the Institute for International Pedagogy and Education (*Institut für Internationale Pädagogik und Didaktik*, or IPD), a committee of Muslim academics, published its own prospectus for Islamic instruction in the primary schools. As an independent institute, the IPD makes no claim to represent a religious community, and has made its detailed educational program available for adoption by any interested Islamic educational provider.³ After it was awarded the right to conduct religious instruction without having instructional materials of its own, the Islamic Federation, a Berlin umbrella organization, adopted the IPD prospectus as the basis for Islamic instruction in two Berlin primary schools. The 2001-2002 school year thus marks the first occasion that Islamic instruction has been provided under the aegis of an Islamic organization in Germany.

Although the Central Council and the IPD proposals differ in both content and intent, the legal pluralism that characterizes the German federal system has made it possible for both proposals to be currently under debate, and for both proposals to be implemented in the curriculum. Moreover, the proposals under debate in Germany have been labeled "drafts," in keeping with fact that they have yet to be tested in the reality of the classroom. This should be borne in mind during the analysis to follow.

The situation in Austria is completely different. Here, the public schools are governed by a single centralized state authority, as is the official recognition of religious communities. Thus the debate on Islamic instruction is far more unified than in Germany; indeed, it might be argued that Austria is characterized by the relative absence of public debate on the issue of (Islamic) religious instruction in the schools. The Islamic Religious Community of Austria (*Islamische Glaubensgemeinschaft in Österreich*, or IGgiÖ) was founded in 1979 as an umbrella organization for all Islamic associations in Austria, and functions as the principal spokesperson for Muslims in negotiations with the state. As an officially recognized religious community, the IGgiÖ has been awarded corporate status. It first began providing religious instruction in a small number of schools in 1983, and has

² The Central Council and the Islamic Council (*Islamrat*), another supra-regional umbrella organization, filed suit in Nordrhein-Westphalia against the Islamkunde curriculum. The case was recently dismissed on the grounds that the two organizations are not religious communities, and thus are not qualified to administer religious instruction.

³ The program includes a prospectus and teaching material.

since gradually expanded its course offerings to an ever growing number of schools. In accordance with both the Austrian educational system and the structure of the IGgiÖ itself, the syllabus is unified in design and valid for all of the Austrian federal provinces.⁴ However, both the curriculum and the textbooks no longer appear adequate to the IGgiÖ's impulses and attempts at self-positioning. This is the impression put forth by IGgiÖ officials, who have argued that the curriculum and the textbooks are outdated and in need of revision. This state of affairs might be considered typical for educational institutions, where reforms tend to lag behind reality. The critical fact remains that, although the Austrian schools have twenty years' actual experience in Islamic instruction, this is not reflected by the teaching material. As a result, neither the German nor the Austrian Islamic instruction programs reflect classroom experiences.

The Structure of the Prospectuses

An analysis of the two German proposals demonstrates that they do not adhere to the historic Islamic curricula, which are based on the Islamic disciplines of *kalum* (theology), *fiqh* (law), and *hadith* (the sayings of Muhammad and his companions). Instead, they are deliberately structured into three main fields, similar to the curricular models of Christian denominations: the Self in relation to God, the Self and the Other(s), and the Self in relation to the world as God's creation. In addition, the Islamic prospectuses also adopted the hierarchical model of progression from the close to the distant that is the founding principle for primary school instruction in Germany.⁵ (In this hierarchical model, "the close" may refer to the family or neighborhood, while "the distant" may refer to the larger society or other religions.)

In contrast, the Austrian IGgiÖ syllabus is organized according to the traditional canon in predominantly Muslim societies in which the material is divided into subjects such as *tawhid* (monotheism or oneness), *'ibadat* (ritual obligation) and *akhlaq* (ethics). The emphasis remains on mastery of the material, rather than on the students' relationship to their lifeworld. Moreover, rather than entailing a progression from the close to the distant, age-appropriate learning is assumed to entail a progression from the simple

⁴ While the preferred term in Germany meanwhile is "prospectus" (*Rahmenplan*), in Austria the term "syllabus" (*Lehrplan*) is generally employed. Both terms may be taken to refer to the instructional aims, didactic methods, and subject content for each individual grade level.

⁵ See Der Kultusminister des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen, ed., *Richtlinien und Lehrplan Evangelische Religionslehre*, No.2006, Düsseldorf, 1985, p. 24.

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to the highly detailed. In the first grade, for example, students learn only the movements of the body during ritual prayer. In the second grade, the students learn the prayer texts, while in the higher grades they are instructed in a detailed categorizing of actions that render a prayer valid or invalid.

Apart from its underlying conceptual orientation to the lifeworld, Islamic instruction in Germany places a higher value on imparting a catechism than either Protestant or Catholic religious instruction. Several possible explanations exist for this focus on knowledge: First, the oft-cited higher priority that Islam supposedly attaches to religious observance creates a need for practical knowledge. Second, the Islamic prospectuses are largely developed along the lines of extra-curricular religious instruction, which aims to introduce religious doctrine and obligations. Finally, many Muslim immigrant children do not learn basic religious teachings within the family, making it necessary for religious instruction in the schools to step in to fill the gap.

In Austria, it is not only the Islamic curriculum that places a heavy emphasis on the imparting of a catechism, but also the Protestant, and particularly the Catholic and Jewish instructional curricula as well. This is due to the fact that the Austrian religious syllabi are all founded on a tradition of religious pedagogy that aims to provide an "enrollment into religious observance".⁶ Since the religious communities enjoy full independence in the design of their syllabi and the training of their teaching staff, they have remained largely autonomous from pedagogic developments in other school subjects. These circumstances might well account for the tendency of Austrian religious communities toward self-sufficiency.

The following analysis compares the instructional curricula of the two institutions that regard themselves as religious communities. The first is the prospectus proposed by the German umbrella organization, the Central Council, which has not yet been implemented. The second is the IGgiÖ program, which has been put into instructional practice in 1983. Finally, I compare the results of my analysis to the instructional material proposed by the IPD.

Umma versus Diaspora Community

⁶ "Enrollment into religious observance" is the phrasing employed by the Austrian Islamic curriculum.

The instructional models described here all employ fairly similar terminology for positioning Muslim children, but the terms often are weighted and interpreted quite differently. The most obvious form of positioning is via the principles underlying the constitution of the community. The Central Council prospectus envisions community within the concept of the *'Umma*, understood as the global community of Muslims. The community plays a key role in the educational concept, since its stabilization as a safe haven for a minority that is subject to discrimination remains the central goal of the Central Council's efforts. Its curriculum planner's main motivation was to guide children toward this community as a site of safety and security.⁷ In the IGgiÖ educational model, the community also features prominently, but as a "diaspora community" rather than as part of the global *'Umma*. This diaspora community's most sacred duty is passing on the teachings of religious obligation, which it regards as the positive symbol of its difference (from the majority). On the IGgiÖ's list of priorities, the community ranks lower than religious observance, since the community is regarded as the means, while observance is the goal. The IGgiÖ does not endorse the notion of a global *'Umma*, since this would imply common community with Muslims outside of Austria. Thus, even though the concept of the *umma* is key to Islamic thought, it is absent from the Austrian syllabus and instructional materials. Instead, the goal of the diaspora community is to develop into a strong and independent entity, and to achieve critical distance from both the Austrian non-Muslim majority and from influences of their countries of origin. While this should not be equated with a kind of solipsism, contacts to the outside world are regarded as of secondary importance. The Other is the non-Muslim as well as the Muslim who is subject to another national jurisdiction. Consequently, every Muslim who resides in Austria for at least one year is automatically represented by the IGgiÖ, and may not decline such representation unless they renounce their membership in Islam. In addition to this general membership, there is another form of membership within the IGgiÖ, the "definitive membership", which requires the payment of regular dues. These revenues would in turn be used to fund the expansion of the religious infrastructure. Whether the IGgiÖ will succeed in expanding its autonomy will depend greatly on the acceptance of definitive membership by Austrian Muslims.

⁷ See Stefano Allievi, *Les convertis à l'Islam. Les nouveaux musulmans d'Europe*, Paris: L'Harmattan, 1998, p. 293, who discusses the risks associated with promoting the community to the central goal, rather than regarding it as the means to an end.

In the Central Council's prospectus, the concept of the *'umma* is linked to a differentiated system of formal and material tolerance, not the least because the global *'Umma* itself comprises an immense diversity in need of accommodation. Within the boundaries of the *'Umma*, material tolerance is necessary; outside the community, material tolerance is to be replaced by formal tolerance. In contrast, the IGgiÖ's model of religious instruction does not address the problem of internal diversity, let alone that of external diversity, and so lacks a vocabulary of tolerance or acceptance. For relations with the world and others, the IGgiÖ model employs the religiously approved concept of "neighborliness". Ideological differences play no role in this conception, since neighborly associations are required to uphold values such as helpfulness and consideration toward all persons.

Another concept involving relations to others outside the *'Umma* or diaspora community is the concept of integration, which is a professed goal of both educational curricula. Both the German Central Council and the Austrian IGgiÖ conceive of integration as the sole responsibility of the Muslim community, without the Austrian society bearing a reciprocal responsibility. The Central Council aims to promote integration by providing security and self-confidence. Its prospectus, which has at its core an idealized vision of the *'Umma*, demonstrates openness toward the non-Muslim communities that form the context at its periphery. In these regions at the periphery, which do not affect the core of religion, Islam proves itself able to accommodate to the local context. But wherever they live, Muslims largely remain positioned within the *'Umma* for their primary relationships, while relations to others take place at the periphery. In contrast, the focus of the IGgiÖ is not psychological support but the expansion of an infrastructure founded on orthopraxis to offer concrete support for Islamic life in Austria.⁸ It is so consistent in its autonomy that it largely ignores the Other and devotes no space to the issue in its religious curriculum. With the limited amount of time available to religious instruction, the focus must remain on socializing students into their own religion. Indeed, as noted above, this is the overall pedagogical tradition for religious instruction in Austria. Integration is perceived largely as a matter of law, just as the IGgiÖ is anchored in the Austrian state through law. It is not the individual Muslim, but the Islamic community as a whole that is to integrate into the structure of Austrian society. The IGgiÖ devotes less attention to issues of social integration, which has only recently become a matter of greater public debate following the events of September 11, 2001.

⁸ The religious infrastructure comprises, for example, educational institutions, possibilities for religious worship in hospitals and the military, and Islamic cemeteries.

The two perspectives on community are further illuminated by an analysis of the position of God in the two instructional models. Following its focus on the *'Umma*, God remains largely an abstraction in the Central Council prospectus, which deliberately excludes God as a central subject.⁹ However, the IGgiÖ curriculum is by no means God-centered. God's absence or marginal role in the Central Council's and IGgiÖ's religious thought can be explained by the historical conviction that God is both the self-evident origin of faith as well as the absolute Other, before whom humans must maintain a respectful distance. Closeness, love, and tenderness are instead associated with Mohammed as man and prophet. Baki Bilgin, author of several IGgiÖ textbooks, is fully aware of the limited space he has accorded to the topic of Allah in the texts, and agrees that his textbooks therefore may not be regarded as catechism. According to Bilgin, the decision to avoid a detailed discussion of God is not only historically anchored, but has been reinforced by the circumstances of the diaspora. In the diaspora, highest priority must be assigned to the teaching of the commandments and the prohibitions, since the only opportunity for many children to learn these important norms is via religious instruction in the schools. It is the community's responsibility to ensure that the next generation acquires the knowledge necessary to maintain the Islamic way of life.

The Unarticulated Relationship to the Koran and Sunna

As the example of community formation has demonstrated, these complex and intertwined definitional notions are more than mere matters of doctrinal terminology, but rather are central to conceptions of Islam as a whole. In general, the basis for the curriculum planner's relations with the world can be found in their attitudes toward the source texts, their estimation of the nature of the sources, and the potential that they accord to interpretation. It is their stance toward the source texts that determines which elements are deemed so critical to Islam and to "being a Muslim" that they must be removed from the realm of debate¹⁰. The individual's mode of thinking-in-

⁹ The table of contents of the Central Council's prospectus does not include a chapter devoted to Allah/God, which might mistakenly lead one to conclude that their religion lacks any conception of God.

¹⁰ See Nasr Hamid Abu Zaid, *Islam und Politik. Kritik des religiösen Diskurses* Frankfurt/M, Dipa-Verlag, 1996, p. 29. On the concept of "being a Muslim", see Tariq Ramadan, *To be a European Muslim. A Study of Islamic Sources in the European Context*, Leicester, The Islamic Foundation, 1999.

relationship remains rooted in his or her stance toward the source texts, even when this remains unarticulated.

Neither the Central Council nor the IGgiÖ devote any attention to explicating their own perspective toward the source texts in their curricula. The Central Council depicts religion as a matter of ritual and ethics that had their original basis in the source texts, but which have taken on an existence largely independent of them. The ritual and ethical commandments are legitimized in the curriculum and educational material via individual Koran or *hadith* texts, and are not open to student debate. The selection, organization and interpretation of the texts is not problematized. The book of the Koran is not itself used in class. Rather, passages from the Koran, which are depicted as unequivocal and not in need of additional interpretation, are cited without any explicit discussion of the criteria for selection. Just as in the case of the community, the religion portrays itself as solid at the core but flexible toward the context on its periphery. An example of this might be the question whether it is permitted for a Muslim woman to shake a man's hand if refusal to do so might be misunderstood as impoliteness. Since the source texts are not analyzed and taught in systematic detail, but rather via selected, approved extracts, their use in the curriculum remains static and devoid of dynamism. Such dynamism would in any case be regarded as undesirable, since the larger goal is to preserve and not transform religious understanding.

The situation is very similar in the case of the IGgiÖ, whose top priority is the teaching and practice of Islam as a set of detailed rules. The foundational canon of knowledge may only be modified when it conflicts with the lifeworld – that is, when a child or a young adult is hampered or prevented from maintaining the Islamic way of life. In the IGgiÖ sanctioned religious curriculum, neither primary nor secondary school students read the Koran, even though students receive a Koran as a gift from the community when they enter school. Once the children realize the Koran is not used in their classes, even the most enthusiastic leave the Koran at home rather than carry it to school each day. Thus the IGgiÖ employs a kind of filter to mediate between the student and Koran and *hadith*, preferring a more indirect approach toward the texts. No provisions are made for independent study of the Koran, and the dominant perception is that the Koran is too holy to be subjected to analytical study. Merely touching the Koran is an act fraught with religious regulation. The texts have already been studied and analyzed by others far better than could be accomplished today. The IGgiÖ executive

board is in charge of determining which scholars are recognized as authorities in the interpretation of the source texts.¹¹

Abandonment versus Stronghold of Islamic Tradition

The Central Council's prospectus tends toward the modernist method of Koranic interpretation, and is thus inclined to neglect tradition, understood here as the historical interpretations of Islam. Rather than working through Islamic tradition, the curriculum planners circumvent tradition, selecting only a few elements to suit their current purposes. Their appropriation of tradition is thus highly selective, unsystematic and unarticulated. As a consequence, their interpretations are never explicitly founded on exegetical texts. Instead, the underlying so-called modernist rationale advocates exploring the sources as independently as possible, rather than allowing the examination of current issues to be determined by traditional solutions. However, such independence in the Central Council's program is the privilege only of the educator; the students are presented with a received canon of knowledge. According to the curriculum planners, primary school students are too young to be permitted independent access to the source texts. It is taken for granted that the prospectus conforms to the consensus of the present day 'Umma.¹² This interpretive filter enables the Central Council to isolate and preserve what it has identified as the core of religious doctrine, even in the absence of suitably qualified scholars. Though they are not cited in the prospectus, the elucidation of the Koran and Sunna by prominent authorities of contemporary Islam such as Yusuf al-Qaradawi and Fazlur Rahman clearly have influenced the curriculum planners. The fact that two such divergent thinkers within modern Islam as al-Qaradawi and Rahman could both have made an impression upon the Central Council curriculum suggests that the two scholars were chosen primarily because their works have been translated into a number of European languages and address contemporary circumstances. Directly citing the scholarly authorities, however, would serve to align the prospectus within a specific school of thought, which the Central Council clearly wishes to avoid.

¹¹ In practice, this has been the chair of the IGgiÖ executive board, since key positions in the religious community, such as the head Mufti and the *Shura* council, have to date remained unoccupied in Austria.

¹² See Norman Calder, "Tafsir from Tabari to Ibn Kathir: Problems in the Description of a Genre. Illustrated with Reference to the Story of Abraham", in G. R. Hawting and A.-K. A. Shareef, eds., *Approaches to the Quran*, London: Routledge, 1993, p. 124, 131.

The Central Council's rejection of a reliance on exegetic tradition is itself founded on a particular tradition of interpretation. This is not the tradition of the classical *tafsir* as described by Normal Calder, in which the recitation of authorities and variant readings, and their selection and presentation, is taken to demonstrate authorial originality.¹³ Rather, in the Central Council's prospectus it is the selection and presentation of the sources themselves – the Koran and the *hadith* – that illustrates the religious and theological approach. While direct access to the sources is seen to underwrite the modernist conception of religion, the Central Council implicitly promotes this to stand in for "Islam" as a whole. The Central Council takes its disregard for tradition for granted; indeed, they reject any notion that an engagement with tradition might be necessary to justify their own theological position. This conception of Islam is orthodox to the extent that it presupposes the modernist perspective to be Islamic orthodoxy by definition.¹⁴

In contrast to the prospectus under debate in Germany, the IGgiÖ curriculum favors a traditionalist approach, though it does not employ the term as such. Similar to the Central Council, the IGgiÖ makes repeated reference to the "true" Islam that it claims to represent. Neither the syllabus nor the textbooks include mention of a modernist partiality for the Koranic texts. Instead, they found their approach on a conception of Islam promulgated by the Hanafite legal scholars of Turkish descent, a conception that correlates to a legalistic understanding of Islam, an Islam founded in law rather than theology.

The question of Islamic law plays a larger role than theology in debates on contemporary and historical Islam in both Europe and predominantly Muslim countries. However, there remains no consensus on the extent to which the science of Islamic law (*fiqh*) might be suited to promoting a European Islamic reformation, or whether a theological engagement with the modern that would address the nature of the revelatory texts themselves might not be a more appropriate means to achieving this end.¹⁵ The IGgiÖ clearly gives *fiqh* priority over theology, whereby their conception of *fiqh* is quite obviously the classical one. Thus, in addition to the Central Council's unquestioning acceptance of the binding nature of *'ibadat* (ritual obligation), the IGgiÖ puts forth the *muamallat* (transactions) as an unquestioned authority in its curricular materials.¹⁶ Yet this wholesale

¹³ See Calder, 103f; and Abu Zaid, 83.

¹⁴ On the development of the concept of *salafiya*, see Abu Zaid, 195.

¹⁵ See Jorgen Nielsen, "Preface", see Ramadan, xiii.

¹⁶ *Muamallat*, or transactions, refers to human actions within the social, economic, legal and

adoption of *shari‘a* as valid and binding conceals a problem, namely the diversity of Muslim opinion within the realm of *muamallat*, which the IGgiÖ neglects in favor of the Hanafite position. Indeed, the diversity within *muamallat* is generally regarded as greater than within *‘ibadat*. The latter would thus appear to be more amenable to the form of essentialism advanced by the Central Council. In contrast, the IGgiÖ rejects the notion that some form of essentializing is required in the teaching of religious obligations. Instead, the IGgiÖ textbooks focus exclusively on Hanafite rite, the historically preferred rite that continues to predominate among Austrian Muslims today. The so-called *Islamgesetz* (Islam Law) of 1912, which served as the basis for the convening of the IGgiÖ many years later in 1979, granted recognition to the Hanafite jurisprudential school rather than to Islam per se. The curriculum offers no explanation for its decision to limit its scope to the Hanafite rite, and so fails to problematize the issue. Islam is simply understood to equal the Hanafite *fiqh*.

After being instructed in Hanafite legal tradition – though it is not explicitly acknowledged as such – during their primary school years, Muslim secondary school students are suddenly confronted with al-Qaradawi’s work, "The Permitted and the Forbidden in Islam". In this work, al-Qaradawi aims to compile from all four Sunni schools of law the prohibitions and commandments that are founded in "forceful arguments and valid proof".¹⁷ In the absence of textbooks suited for the upper grades, the IGgiÖ has elected to assign al-Qaradawi 's book, which at least maintains the focus on law, if not on the Hanafite rite. However, it is not only secondary school students who are not provided with criteria that would permit independent study of the sources, or at least a means to define their own position against that of scholarly authority. Even the students at the Islamic Pedagogical Academy (IRPA)¹⁸, who themselves will later become instructors of religion, are trained according to a precept that emphasizes the accumulation of canonical knowledge rather than the practice of *ijtihad*, or well-grounded opinion.

Islam as Rite versus Islam as a Way of Life

Both the IGgiÖ's and the Central Council's conception of religious instruction remain focused on the transmission of commandments and

political realm, as opposed to *‘ibadat* (acts of worship), which are human actions in relation to God.

¹⁷ See al-Qaradawi, 12 ff.

¹⁸ The IRPA is the institution for teacher training supervised by the IGgiÖ.

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prohibitions. Employing the principle of essentialism, the Central Council restricts the commandments and prohibitions to a ritual realm defined as religious (*'ibadat*), and excludes any teaching of *muamallat*. This strategy makes it possible to prepare Muslims for integration in a secularized society and to establish themselves alongside other European religious communities. The Central Council's prospectus is thus secular to the extent that it assumes a distinction between religion and other spheres of society and culture. The goal of the Central Council is to de-emphasize difference and reduce Islam to its few most basic elements, hoping to make Islam viable for the coming generation. The IGgiÖ instead insists on difference, and considers its duty to make it possible for future generations to live their lives as Others. In line with its emphasis on positive difference, the Austrian religious community attaches additional significance to the prohibitions and commandments, regarding them as valid for the entire lifeworld. However, if all aspects of society and culture and every action are to be classified in terms of Islam, the diaspora community must expand its infrastructure. The IGgiÖ continues to make progress on this issue. In addition to the implementation of Islamic instruction in the schools, in Vienna the IGgiÖ is overseeing the above-mentioned teacher training institute (IRPA), an Islamic secondary school, and, more recently, a vocational college. By virtue of its state recognition and corporate status, the IGgiÖ has full autonomy in these internal matters.

The Common Denominator

Apart from these differences in religiously and theologically argued positions on Islam, the Central Council's and the IGgiÖ's curricular programs do display a certain phenomenological similarity in their definition of Islam as based on the *tawhid*, the "five pillars", the six articles of faith, and other overarching ideas. These consensus elements constitute a common denominator that can serve as a basis for relations among Muslims. The Central Council and the IGgiÖ attach great importance to these commonalities, ignoring the differences between the various Islamic currents, schools of law, and customs, and ignoring the existence of heterodox movements within Islam. The Central Council essentializes the commonalities into a religious core that serves as the locus for a variety of compatible "customs". Any dissent beyond this level is stigmatized as "fragmentation". The IGgiÖ universalizes a legalistic, Hanafite form of Islam as constitutive of Islam as a whole. In the debates on unity and diversity within Islam, both organizations repeatedly insist that any

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differences within Islam are comparatively trivial, by no means analogous to the splits within Christianity.

Table: Variables Characterizing the Central Council, IGgiÖ, and IPD Prospectuses

Variables	Central Council	IGgiÖ	IPD
Constituent principle of community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ being of Muslim faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>shahada</i> ■ „definitive membership,, in the IGgiÖ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ „createdness“ ■ religion ■ gender
Community designation	<p>The '<i>Umma</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ of Muslims ■ as minority 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ diaspora community 	<p>the '<i>Umma</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ of all humans ■ of Muslims ■ kinship of religions
unity and diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ enrichment ■ fragmentation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ unification of community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ dialectic founded in <i>tauhid</i>
Principles in relation to others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ material tolerance ■ formal tolerance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ neighborliness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ freedom of religion
Interpretation of the sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Koran and <i>hadith</i> ■ direct access ■ prohibitions and commandments ■ '<i>ibadat</i> ■ core and periphery ■ not reflective, founded on "true" Islam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Hanafite school ■ prohibitions and commandments ■ '<i>ibadat</i> and <i>muamallat</i> ■ no theologizing ■ not reflective, founded on "true" Islam 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Koran ■ analogy (<i>qiyas</i>) ■ global/multi-dimensional ■ pluralistic/anti-dogmatic ■ good and evil ■ reflective, founded on a variety of interpretations
Cconcept of knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ fixed ■ flexible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ highly detailed ■ canonical 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ holistic ■ harmonious ■ Islamization of knowledge
decision-making authority	<p>consensus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ tacit ■ relates to the mutable aspects of knowledge ■ of the living community 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ IGgiÖ chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ <i>ra'i</i>
Interpretive principle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ essentializing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ universalizing the Hanafite school of jurisprudence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ expansion and integration

Key Differences between the Two Islamic Communities and the IPD

Although the Central Council and the IGgiÖ proposals for positioning Muslim students differ from one another, the International Institute for Pedagogy and Education's (IPD) proposal is a pronounced contrast to both. This may partly be accounted for by the fact that the IPD, as a committee of independent experts, is able to be more innovative, even though they regard all Muslims as their target group. Another characteristic of the IPD is that the team has deliberately chosen to cast its work within an interreligious framework, and recently was awarded a prize for innovative interreligious educational concepts.

One key difference between the IPD and the Central Council and IGgiÖ can be located in the principles that govern their conception of community. In contrast to the other two organizations, which perceive of themselves as religious communities, the IPD does not direct its appeals only to Muslims as followers of Islam. Instead, the IPD appeals to a universal image of God's creation as the common denominator of **all** humans. This emphasis is key to the intended positioning: „createdness“ (*Geschöpflichkeit*) is the founding principle of human relations. Employing the concept of createdness, the IPD places Muslim children at the center of society and humanity instead of perceiving them as members of a distinct community. Being a "Muslim" can now revert to its broader meaning of "wholeness" and so expand beyond the narrow definitional category promulgated by the Islamic community. According to this interpretation, all people, regardless of worldview, share a common longing for wholeness and harmony, which is the broadest meaning of Islam.

Finally, the IPD curricular material also includes the principle of gender identity alongside and parallel to all other religiously based modes of community formation. As is apparent from the IPD interpretations, the Institute has chosen an entirely different route toward Muslim integration than the Central Council and the IGgiÖ, electing instead to expand on the concept of community rather than shielding it or encouraging autarchy. Expansion and integration are the principles that underlie all IPD analyses, lending an element of openness to every Koranic expression.

In contrast to the Central Council's and the IGgiÖ's curricular models, God remains the focus of attention rather than the community or the teaching of obligations. The curriculum planners thus have abandoned the more typical model of God as embodying reverent distance and Mohammed as embodying closeness. Instead, the IPD looks to the relationship to God for security, closeness and protection, qualities that the Central Council instead

locates in the community. The IPD curricular model thus reflects the notion that each child must develop its own relationship to God, and that this individual relationship constitutes the sole foundation for an Islamic way of life.

As has already been demonstrated, religious sources are presented in an indirect and implicit manner in the Central Council and IGgiÖ instruction. Students are confronted with text extracts devoid of any context that might serve to legitimize the theological teachings and the universally valid commandments and prohibitions. The IPD approach is quite different: the totality of the world is revealed through the text, while the text emerges from the concrete lifeworld. As a result, the sources – their nature, scope and interpretation – assume a position of paramount importance in the IPD proposal. This results in a vigorous and reciprocal give and take in which definitions of Islam and Muslim progressively expand. As a result, a multiplicity of contemporary lifestyles and perspectives become amenable to integration into the understanding of Islam. Within this dynamic relationship, it is only the Koran, not the *hadith*, that is equal to the lifeworld. Justifying its characteristic reticence toward the *hadith* with the claim that more time and personnel would have been required to undertake a revision of tradition on a historical and theological foundation, the IPD tends to avoid the *hadith* in instruction as much as possible. The IPD program thus also fails to fully engage with historical Islam, but theirs is not an unarticulated omission, as is the case for both the Central Council and the IGgiÖ¹⁹.

The focus on the individual and his or her relationship to God prompts the IPD curriculum planners to emphasize individual answers and paths, akin to the *turuq* that all lead to God – the term *tariqa* divorced from its mystical background.²⁰ But this primacy of individual access within the IPD's logic by no means entails a restriction of religion to one among many reference systems. Instead, the logic implies its validity for the entirety of the non-secular lifeworld. However, in contrast to the Central Council and the IGgiÖ, the IPD instructors do not believe in teaching '*ibadat* and/or *muamallat* as a canon. The goal of the IPD is instead to transform the children into *fuqaha*' and '*ulama* by encouraging them to think

¹⁹ Rahman argues that the systematic lack of interpretation and reformation of Islamic tradition is characteristic of modernist Islam. See Fazlur Rahman, *Islam and Modernity. Transformation of an Intellectual Tradition*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982, p. 139.

²⁰ *Tariqa*, pl. *turuq*, means path, way; in a mystical context, the term implies a brotherhood.

"analogically", "globally", and "in dialogue".²¹ The children are instructed in the method for analyzing their source, the Koran, independently so that they might learn to creatively encounter a variety of new life circumstances. However, it is taken as a given that the Koran is a worthy guide to all questions and circumstances. In the IPD concept, individualism does not entail the privatization of religion, nor does it imply secularization.

While *tariqa* refers to the individual path to certainty and perfection, *shari'a* refers to the divinely dictated and publicly visible way of life of the entire community. The Central Council and the IGgiÖ tend to promote a public rather than a private structure of belief.²² Following Halstead, it might be accurate to suggest that Islamic instruction as professed by the Central Council and the IGgiÖ respects individual freedom in the development of spiritual capacities and feelings, but does not extend this freedom to the public face of religion and to the obligation toward a unified way of life.²³ In contrast to the IPD, neither the Central Council nor the IGgiÖ address the issue of individual religiosity.

Conclusion

According to the Central Council and the IGgiÖ, the purpose of religious instruction is to counter the disorientation experienced as the crisis of the individual in a fragmented world by providing a single orientation via a single religious perspective as transmitted by the community. The IPD curriculum planners, in contrast, conceive of the lifeworld as a constant individual impetus toward learning, to be made accessible to the student via religious instruction. The IPD planners intend to provide Muslim children an opportunity to orient themselves in a universal culture, Islam, understood as a natural perspective on the world. In so doing, the children may form alliances with others and focus on positive commonalities, perceiving themselves as members of a pluralistic society rather than as a minority that remains subject to discrimination.

The form of positioning envisioned by the various organizations who wish to provide Islamic instruction is dependent on several factors: whether the curricular planners perceive of themselves as the Self or the Other in their

²¹ *Faqih* (pl. *fuqaha'*) are jurists trained in Islamic law; *calim*, (pl. *'ulama*) are scholars or learned men trained in the Islamic sciences.

²² On distinguishing between the public and private dimensions of Islamic educational philosophy, see J. Mark Halstead, "Towards a Unified View of Islamic Education", in *Islam and Christian-Muslim Relations* 6:1 (1995): 38.

²³ See Halstead, 39.

context, whether they identify with or differentiate themselves from their context, and whether they wish to defend and uphold the Self or perceive it as one truth among many. Moreover, the preceding analysis would tend to lend support to an overarching thesis that the conception of the Self is reflected in its relation to inner plurality – that is, the Self and the Other **within** the community.

The assumption that secularism is what gives rise to pluralism, and thus the possibility of difference, is refuted by the IPD's approach to religious instruction.²⁴ The approach conceives of itself as "holistic", not as secular, while still remaining deliberately pluralistic. In contrast, the secularist Central Council prospectus does not conceptualize or thematize Muslim plurality. Systematic secularism and the capacity for pluralism would appear to be independent variables. But secularism is not only a systematic description of a specific relationship between the state and the religious communities, but may also be a narrative that assumes that religion is not an adequate mode of interpretation for every aspect of life. It is this idea of pluralism and secularism that the German authorities continue to demand as the prerequisite for the recognition of Islamic organizations as religious communities, despite the German courts repeated rejection of this demand. In contrast, the IGgiÖ, which is legally anchored in a secular state, is not required to display a capacity for pluralism or secularism and thereby conform to the narrative; indeed, no religious community in Austria is required to fulfill these two norms.

The theory and practice of Islamic instruction in schools is a dynamic question in both Germany and in Austria. In Austria, the pedagogic academy overseen by the IGgiÖ is training a new generation of teachers. Unlike the current generation of instructors, the new generation is not an import, and their socialization in Austria has resulted in the development of a network of relations to the larger Austrian society. As has increasingly become evident, the conception of Islam put forth by the younger generation differs from that of the older generation who presided over the convening of the IGgiÖ and who laid the theoretical foundations for Islamic instruction in Austria's schools. In the case of Germany, some of the *Länder* that as yet lack practical experience are planning over the medium term to enact an instructional program under Muslim authority. It remains to be seen whether these curricula will reflect the diversity of Islamic and pedagogic principles.

²⁴ This is also Trautner's hypothesis, who states that "successful accommodation of plurality is by and large independent of the degree to which political systems ... are formally ... secularised". See Bernard J. Trautner, "The Clash within Civilisations: Islam and the Accommodation of Plurality," *InIIs-Arbeitspapier* No. 13/99 (Universität Bremen, 1999): 3.