

BOOK REVIEWS/COMPTES RENDU

Ruth Mandel, *Cosmopolitan Anxieties: Turkish Challenges to Citizenship and Belonging in Germany*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008, 440 pp. \$US 24.95 paper (978-0-8223-4193-2), \$US 89.95 hardcover (978-0-8223-4176-5)

In migration studies, problems of Turkish immigrants in Germany have been a paradigmatic way to approach immigrant integration and challenges to nation-based citizenship in Western Europe. Turkish immigrants to Germany constitute a population of approximately 2.5 million people. Even though they have been discriminated against by German immigrant policies, they have effectively challenged these policies. The case of Turkish immigrants in Germany is interesting for scholars of migration studies, because they stand on the dividing line between East and West, repeatedly challenging the blurred boundaries. They constitute a vibrant and diverse cultural, political, and social community, giving new meaning to German identity. They are also affected by the ongoing contextual discourses, which are transforming them from “guest workers” to “Muslims” of Germany.

Focusing on Turkish immigrants in Germany, Mandel’s book aims to contribute to the anthropology of movement and change, critically examining discussions of ethnicization, deracination, diaspora, displacement, and emplacement of immigrants. She questions cosmopolitan challenges to an ethnic definition of German identity by Turkish immigrants who have been living in Germany since the 1960s. She spans the different Turkish immigrant niches (specifically providing an interesting discussion of Alevite communities as opposed to Sunnite) to give an in-depth portrayal of Turks in Germany.

Mandel beautifully contextualizes the case of Turkish immigrants by drawing comparisons to the experiences of the German Jewish minority, and to a lesser extent, those of the *Aussiedler* from the former Soviet Union and Eastern European countries who have German ancestry and have returned to settle in Germany. Through these interesting and comparative analyses of “the Other,” Mandel shows how immigrants and minorities challenge an ethnic identity of being and becoming “German.” Hence, the “cosmopolitan anxieties” of the title — referring to challenges to ethnic-based forms of belonging and citizenship.

What is most striking about the book is Mandel's craft in combining different aspects of being a minority in German society during the last 20 years. She looks at various scenes, ranging from literature to music, from people's homes to Berlin cafes, and discussions with former presidents. Mandel meets people, not to collect "data," but to become part of this environment, part of these personal and political scenes, thereby including herself in discussions about immigration.

One amongst many very interesting topics is the discussion of "eating pork" as an ethnic metaphor dividing Turks and Germans. Mandel captures the "thick description" of abstinence from eating pork among Turks in Germany. She says that many Turks "make an explicit association with the consumption of pork" and "being adulterous, unjealous and dishonorable" (p. 266). Mandel refers to pork abstinence as a strong symbolic statement used to dissociate oneself from Germanness. On the other hand, eating pork may be seen as a sign of modernity, as secularism and integration into the German society. As this example shows, Mandel's insights into the Turkish traditions and culture go beyond merely reflecting field work data; she provides an in-depth discussion of the meaning of her data in the German context. This is a major strength of her work.

Mandel has been a pioneer in research on Turkish immigrants in Germany, publishing one of the first articles on the headscarf debate in 1989, an ongoing debate in the social sciences literature that she discusses in detail here. This book also gives clues about a number of underresearched subjects, such as politics of resistance in immigrant communities, Islam and the discrepancies of multiple identities (especially in the Alevi communities), and the lives of middle class German Turks, just to name a few — it is an inspiration and a challenge at the same time.

Mandel's command of three languages (Turkish, German, and English) is astonishing, although the spelling of foreign words needs some correction. The book contains photos and art work related to being an immigrant or a minority which add to its appeal and sophistication.

Although Turkish immigrant communities in Germany are of interest to migration studies scholars, books on this theme usually remain partial, not reflecting the multifaceted lives, paradoxes of cultures, and subtle occurrences of racism throughout Turkish history in Germany. Most importantly, most research on this theme does not give a human face to immigrants. Ruth Mandel's book is a gem in this literature, encompassing a period of 20 years of research and scholarship. It is almost impossible not to be surprised at the richness of her fieldwork data, her sharp and detailed observations on ethnic and racial relations in Germany, and her sophisticated discussion that carefully combines theory and practice.

Mandel not only describes the events, the context, and the people, she also makes the reader walk through the scenes and live through the time period. She blends personal and political, making it a pleasure to read “everyday” events. If I were asked to suggest a classic and readable book on Turkish immigrants in Germany, this would be my choice.

In short, Mandel’s book is an instant classic for scholars of anthropology, sociology, political science, cultural studies, and history. It is beautifully written, sure to capture not only academics but sophisticated readers who are interested in the issues of contemporary German society.

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