

Cems in the Rough:
*How Turkish Alevis position themselves in relation to
superordinate group identities*

by

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Abstract

This research project is a qualitative analysis that looks at the position of practitioners of Alevism, a branch of Islamic mysticism, within modern Turkey. In general, the study considers the theory put forward by Gaertner *et al.* (1993, 1999, 2000) that superordinate group identities can be promoted as a means of reducing intergroup prejudice and conflict. As such, we are interested in how a cultural and religious subgroup such as the Alevis may speak of their position in relationship to available superordinate groups that incorporate oppositional subgroup identities. Specifically, the project discusses the religious, social and political issues experienced by Alevis in Turkey, including Turkey's application for European Union membership and Alevism's relationship with Sunnism and Turkey's current administration, the AKP (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi). Presenting these topics as focus materials, the research studies how Alevi participants understand these issues and negotiate their position within Turkey to an 'outsider'.

In-person interviews were conducted in Turkey with three practitioners of Alevism. A discourse analysis was then conducted on the interviews, inspecting the function of the participants' language in terms of social actions during the interview. Through the analysis of this data, the research highlights interpretative repertoires readily available to members of Alevism and illuminates several ideological dilemmas present in their discourse, paying particular attention to historical and political contexts.

Literature Review

In February 2010, Turkey's majority political power, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AKP) detained 66 members of the Turkish military, charging 31 of them with plotting a coup against the established government (BBC, 2010). Turkey's military is well known for such actions, as they have executed coups to restore secular regimes to power on three other occasions since the nation's founding in 1923 (Ahmad, 1988). The present circumstances come after the AKP has promoted certain Islamist policies, including removing a ban that prohibited wearing head scarves at universities (Shively, 2008), as well as the prohibition of bars and alcohol in some regions. This has inspired the Constitutional Court of Turkey to intervene and declare the acts violations of the principle of secularism established in their constitution (BBC, 2008).

The current conflict between secularists and Islamists in Turkey, as well as its

historical antecedents, serves as a backdrop for the present work, which considers the relation of oppositional groups within integrative superordinate groups. Specifically, the aim of this research is to investigate the position of Alevism, a branch of Islamic mysticism native to Turkey, by examining the characterisations and categorisations of superordinate and oppositional groups made available by Alevis in talk of recent Turkish political issues.

The present research assumes that one fundamental principle of identity within social psychology is that humans naturally seek to define their selves in terms that extend beyond the individual level alone. This 'social self' distinction has been the focus of many theorists (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner *et al.*, 1979, 1987; Brewer & Gardner, 1996) as it relates, in particular, to an individual's categorisation of ingroups and outgroups. In this regard, Billig *et al.* (1988) observe that many studies on group categorisation, bias and ideological differences of groups focus on two conflicting or related groups at a time. While this may be practically convenient for empirical study, ideological issues rarely manifest in simple, binary relations. In reality, group conflicts and ideological dilemmas can involve multiple, inter-related group identities, and these may be expressed by individuals as complex conceptual structures with nested, overlapping and divergent group identities (Roccas & Brewer, 2002).

Chrysochoou (2004) emphasises that conceptual, ideological boundaries and overlaps between groups are of critical importance both in understanding how groups relate to each other and also in devising ways of reducing prejudicial bias and conflict between them. With this in mind, positioning theory (Davies & Harré, 1990) is an especially useful conceptual and analytical tool for addressing the present circumstances in Turkey. Positioning theory proposes that conversations develop as a series collaborative social acts between speakers. Thus identity, groups, conflicts and all other aspects of social reality are constructed discursively through participation in institutionalised uses of language. In such a conception of a discursive social reality, individuals take up and are assigned subject-positions within particular discourses in a fluid, dynamic way (Harré & Van Langenhove, 1999). Within these subject-positions, they have access to what Potter and Wetherell (1987) call interpretative repertoires. These repertoires inform the sense-making process of individuals through metaphors, figures of speech, stories, jokes, and various other elements of speech. As such, positioning theory proves useful in the present study given that, as

Moghaddam et al. (2008) posit, it allows us to examine 'the patterns of belief, customs and habits that nourish conflict'. Before one can dive into the analytical deep-end, however, it is important to consider the context of the current issue. With this in mind, we consider the history of Alevism in Turkey and the present state of Turkish politics.

Islamic Mysticism in Turkey and the birth of Alevism

Islamic mysticism has been an influential force in Turkey's regions since the spread of Arabs into the Anatolian steppes in the 8th century (Yavuz, 2004). At the time, the mystical branch of Islam known as Sufism functioned by integrating the shamanistic, ecstatic traditions of the indigenous, tribal people of Anatolia into Arabian Islam. Through the efforts of Sufi missionaries, influential tribal shamans converted to Sufi Islam given its synchronisation with their traditional beliefs (Yavuz, 2004), and their communities followed. However, Sufism and Sunnism were frequently at odds with each other, often resulting in persecution and execution of the Sufis (Jenkins, 2008). The Sunnis particularly opposed Sufism's practice of ecstatic rituals in pursuit of a transcendental state of oneness with God (fanā) (Arberry, 1950).

Alevism arose as an offshoot of the Ottoman Safavid Sufi order of the 15th and 16th centuries (Zeidan, 1999). Unlike most Sufis, who identified with Sunnism, the Safavids were supporters of Shi'ism. This put them in direct conflict with the Ottoman Sunnis. The ideological differences escalated into a protracted war ending with the Safavids retreating to remote rural areas throughout Anatolia. For centuries thereafter the Safavids were persecuted by the Sunnis and forced to conceal their true beliefs, consequently developing a religious culture that was isolationist and focused on internal spiritual exploration and family relations (Zeidan, 1999). The Safavids in part mixed with the Bektaşî Sufi order given that they shared similar beliefs and rituals and both revered the works of Hacı Bektaş Veli, an influential Islamic mystic of 13th century Anatolia. The resultant group, the Alevis, soon developed as a distinguishable religious and cultural identity (Zeidan, 1999).

Alevism continued to develop as an endogamous culture and belief system, resistant to outside influences and dependent on hereditary regeneration instead of proselytism (White & Jongerden, 2003). Displays such as public prayer, prostration and religious holidays were avoided (Zeidan, 1999). Furthermore, there was very little in the ways of a centralised Alevi authority structure. Sahin (2005) observes that the Alevi leaders (dedes) were widely

considered repositories of esoteric knowledge. However Alevism was largely conveyed orally and disseminated through the community during a religious ceremony known as a *cem* (White & Jongerden, 2003). These cems also served various other functions for the community, including that of a civil court where disputes could be resolved (White & Jongerden, 2003). With regulations placed on religious practices in the mid 1920s by the new Turkish Republic, Alevi were prohibited from organising cems legally. This prohibition continued until the 1980s, when increased religious interest and tolerance allowed for the publication of Alevi literature for the first time and inspired the Alevi to form their first organisations (Sahin 2005). Since then, Sahin (2005) claims, there has been an emergence of an Alevi researcher-writer (*araştırmacı-yazar*) leadership and a reorganisation of traditional Alevi authority.

The nation of Turkey

The Republic of Turkey was formed in 1923 by the Turkish nationalist forces of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk with the ousting of Western forces occupying Anatolia following the defeat and disillusionment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. As the first president of the Republic of Turkey, Kemal favoured Westernisation and modernisation and saw Islamism as a hindrance to these two goals and a continuation of Ottoman theocracy (Cornell & Svanberg, 1999). Consequently he strove to separate religion from the politics of his country and promote a superordinate, secular, national Turkish identity that was tied to the diverse tribal ancestry of the region (Cornell & Svanberg, 1999). Turkish secularism, or Kemalism as it came to be known, is portrayed as encouraging that the Turk identity rise above all other potential identities, especially Islamic religious and cultural ones, to allow for civic peace and prosperity for the common good and the nation (Cornell & Svanberg, 1999).

In the 1950s, a two-party system formed consisting of a majority of secular nationalists and a minority of social conservatives/Islamists (Yavuz, 2004). While the secular nationalist position has generally been the more powerful of the two in Turkey's politics since, present-day Turkey is characterised by an increase in conservatism and a renewal or reinvention of Islamist identities. This is best represented in the rise of the AKP and the election of Turkey's first former-Islamist president, Abdullah Gül, in 2007.

Turkey and the EU

Turkey has been in the process of applying to the European Union since 1959; however, it has yet to be granted full member status. A number of EU member-states have expressed opposition to Turkey's membership, primarily due to Turkey's historically abusive behaviour towards its ethnic minorities, particularly the Kurds. The expression of the Kurdish culture in Turkey has been systematically banned in television and music (Yurdatapan, 2004). Their language is prohibited from use in public services and politics, as is any non-Turkish language (MRG, 2007). Up until 2003 there was even a ban on parents naming their children using minority languages (MRG, 2007).

Turkey's policies towards its Kurdish minority are also intricately tied with Alevism, given that some 20% of Alevis in Turkey define themselves ethnically as being Kurdish, and 25% of the Kurds in Turkey claim Alevism as their faith (Zeidan, 1999). The potential for divergence here is clear given that Alevism seems to support secularism over Islamism (and considering its history with Islamist rule), while many Kurds oppose the Turkish nation that has oppressed them (Zeidan, 1999). Thus, the present research is especially interested in how Kurdish Alevis, and Alevis in general, negotiate these conflicting positions for the researcher.

A superordinate group solution?

History suggests that, despite some shared Islamic origins, the boundary between Alevism and Sunnism is defined by religious and cultural discrimination and, at times, violence. With cases such as this, where group conflicts are deeply seated in history, it may be very difficult to overcome prejudice. One technique that has been proposed to resolve prejudicial group conflicts involves the recategorisation of members of divergent groups into a more inclusive, superordinate group (Gaertner *et al.*, 1993; 1999; 2000). This might, for instance, be a superordinate national identity that attempts to accommodate conflicting cultural group identities within itself. For example, one might consider the Turkish national identity as an assimilative, superordinate group identity made available to anyone in Turkey. Promoting the salience of the 'Turk' superordinate identity could have a mediating effect, then, on conflicts arising between subgroups within Turkey. Brewer and Pierce (2005) have noted that individuals with multiple intersecting group identities which fit under a superordinate identity express greater motivation to sustain their identification with the superordinate level than those with simple group representations. Further, Roccas and

Brewer (2002) observe that individuals in superordinate, multicultural societies characterised by integrational principles tend to exhibit more complex representations of their various subgroup identities than individuals from more homogeneous societies and this is characteristic of decreased levels of prejudice.

Of course, suggesting the promotion of a superordinate identity risks oversimplifying both the problem and the supposed solution. After all, individuals will interpret things, as mentioned, through the repertoires available from their subject-position. Further, as social actors themselves, individuals may promote their own agenda in conflict with a superordinate group 'solution'. Thus, the challenge of making the most of such a proffered solution lies in drawing out potentially critical interpretations of the issues and groups in question and showing the benefits and limitations of superordinate groups as solutions within the contexts of specific prejudicial conflicts.

Furthermore, while such a process may be advantageous in diminishing prejudice and overcoming cultural conflicts, it may be that such a generic prescription bears unintended consequences. Chrysochoou (2000) observes that status-position, for one, affects how individuals make sense of superordinate and subgroup categories. In her research, she examines how the status-position of individual European nations has an effect on how their citizens perceive the superordinate group of the European Union. She shows that admission into a superordinate group may have adverse effects on low-status subgroups, such as promoting a sense of inferiority amongst the low status subgroup.

The concept of an Ingroup Projection Model (IPM) (Mummendey and Wenzel, 1999; Waldzus et al., 2003; Wenzel et al., 2003, 2007) also offers a cause for concern when promoting superordinate group identities, in particular because it describes a similar situation to what is present in the current research. IPM proposes that ingroups may generally project distinct characteristics of their group onto abstract, inclusive, superordinate categories. This depends on the degree of abstractness of the superordinate category, as well as the degree to which the characteristics of the ingroup are compatibly prototypical with the superordinate category. However, should the representation of the ingroup with the superordinate category be cohesive, members of the outgroup will be constructed as deviant to the superordinate category and treated thusly. As such, IPM suggests that superordinate categories may be part of the problem of conflicts arising from prejudice, not just a potential

solution.

The current research, therefore, explores the position of Alevi in modern Turkey and bears two research aims. The primary research aim is to consider the social psychology of Alevism as a cultural and religious subgroup, noting how Alevism as a subgroup may relate to superordinate groups that incorporate oppositional positions. This is of interest given that the promotion of superordinate group identities has been generically prescribed as a potential solution to prejudicial group conflicts. The present research suggests that the interpretations and speaking positions of social actors must be carefully considered before effective solutions (such as superordinate group promotion) can be enacted. As such, particular attention is given in the present research to the way in which the Alevi make sense of and communicate their position in relationship to salient superordinate and oppositional subgroups. Secondly, the research will consider the present state of the Alevi in Turkey pragmatically and critically in an attempt to catalogue some of the interpretative repertoires and ideological dilemmas that are manifest in Alevi discourse and provide insight into the potential future of this group.

Methods

Design

This research was carried out as a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) of interviews of Turkish practitioners of Alevism conducted in-person. Given that very little, if any, research has been devoted to examining the psychology of this group generally or in regards to their political positions, the present research should be considered exploratory in nature.

Sampling

Through a key informant, contact was made with the Alevi Bektaşî Federation based in Turkey's capitol city, Ankara. This was identified by the key informant as being the largest organisation of Alevi in Turkey. The Alevi Bektaşî Federation was informed as to the general nature of the study and was asked to promote participation in the research among its members. Detailed participant information sheets (appendix C)¹ were made available to the organisation and to its members. The researcher designed to draw on three or four participants for

¹ The research was originally designed to take into account the position of practitioners of Sufism as well as Alevism. Thus, contact was made initially with a Sufi organisation in Istanbul for participant recruitment. Research materials such as the participant information sheet (appendix C) reflect this broader focus on 'Islamic mysticism'

interviews as this was expected to provide an adequate amount of data to conduct a rich analysis. Three Alevi participants responded to the research's call, one female and two males.

Procedure

Prior to participant recruitment, ethical approval for the research was sought from the Ethics Committee of the Faculty Arts and Human Sciences at the University of Surrey. The research received a favourable ethical approval from this institution (which can be found in appendix A).

The interviews were conducted in-person by the researcher in Turkey. We initially desired an entirely neutral territory for conducting our interviews. However, given that two of the participants were high-profile members of political organisations, concern for security made them hesitant to meet outside of familiar grounds. Fearing that this would compromise the quality of data gathered or the rapport between the researcher and interviewee, the researcher conceded to undertake the interviews in private offices within the same buildings of the

respective organisations. In addition to this, the organisation requested the presence of their English-speaking secretary to ensure the security of their members during the interviews. This gave the benefit of a second English interpreter during the interview but also raised some concerns as noted in Reflective Box 1. The interviews lasted between 1 and 1.5 hours and focused on the aforementioned research topics and questions. The interviews were semi-structured and generally consisted of two major sections, one addressing the topic of Islamic mysticism's position in Turkey's politics in general and the other focusing on Turkey's application into the European Union and its treatment of its Kurdish ethnic minorities. The

Reflective Box 1:

Having the organisation's secretary in the room raises concerns as to how this may have effected the context of the interviews and thus the data generated therein. The secretary could certainly be considered a biased interpreter, after all. However, their interpretation was checked both in the field by the researcher's interpreter and, in critical cases, through back-translation. Additionally, the secretary's mere presence may have affected the responses given by the respondents. Still, this may not have necessarily been a negative effect. Having a familiar person in the room to entrust their translations to may have inspired a confidence lacking in what was otherwise an exchange with complete strangers. This is certainly a point for contention however, and the present research is submitted with a sample transcript for examination (appendix F).

interview schedule was designed to inspire the participants to act discursively in relation to potentially oppositional subgroups and available superordinate groups through discussion of

current political issues (a sample interview schedule can be found in appendix E).

As these interviews were conducted with the goal of using a discourse analysis, the researcher was aware of a number of criticisms worth addressing pertaining to the chosen methodology. For one, the use of interviews may be seen as ‘artificially generated’ talk and thus undesirable as a source of natural discursive data (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). However, more naturally occurring data is virtually inaccessible to us presently given the scarcity of English-translated Alevi textual materials. Furthermore, given the recent radical changes in Alevi power structures (Zeidan, 1999) and the rise of Alevi authors as spokespeople, literary sources of data might account for a very specific, formalised type of talk. Nonetheless, in choosing to conduct a discourse analysis, the researcher recognised that the interviews themselves must be considered interactions subject to analysis (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, 2008). The position of the researcher, as they potentially relate to the issues and participants in question, must thus be considered. Furthermore, any findings must be located within the context of the participants' interaction with the researcher, but may none-the-less be indicative and insightful to some of the possible ways that Alevis position themselves.

The speaking position of the interviewer

There are a number of potential speaking positions that the interviewer may have inhabited or been perceived to inhabit and addressing them is not only necessary for conducting an acceptable discourse analysis, but is also potentially productive to the consideration of the interviews' interactional context. To begin with, the primary researcher and interviewer is a post-graduate social psychology student at the University of Surrey. He is an international student originally from the United States. He had no particular affiliation with any of the parties in question except for his having read a number of works of Sufi poetry during his undergraduate studies. Politically he identifies himself as a liberal. Religiously, he was raised Southern Baptist Christian, though presently he identifies himself with Taoism and Gnosticism. The above positions were intentionally kept concealed from the participants with the exception of being a post-graduate student, and a position of academic interest and objectivity was instead promoted by the researcher. However, it is very likely that participants saw the interviewer as an outsider based, at least, on his position outside of the Turkish nationality and the Alevi faith. However, this is not entirely undesirable. Cornell and Svanberg (1999) note, for one thing, that Turks, even Islamist Turks, bear no prejudice to foreigners who practise other religions; instead

they are treated with an open curiosity. Secondly, considering the status of Islamic mysticism practitioners as a minority between presently oppressive secular powers and historically oppressive orthodox Sunni powers, it is not beyond reason to suggest that participants would be more open in discussing the issues in question with a seemingly neutral outsider than with a fellow Turk who might be seen as potentially inhabiting a conflicting ideological position². Finally, the interactional context of an outsider interviewing the participants is not insubstantial when one considers the relevance of practitioners of Islamic mysticism constructing their position to a 'westerner' or the world outside of Turkey in general. As a 'westerner' or 'foreigner' the interviewer may represent a cultural position that the participants value in regards to the issues in question. This could especially be the case given the issue of Turkey's European Union application.

Data Analysis

Audio from the interviews was digitally recorded. The English portions of the interviews, including the interviewer's questions and the participants' responses as translated in the field, were transcribed orthographically. An initial screening of the English transcriptions allowed the researcher to identify excerpts that seemed relevant to the research aims. An edited audio file of the spoken Turkish from these excerpts was then submitted to a private translator for back-translation. Upon receipt of this back-translation³, it was compared with the original field translation to ensure an accurate interpretation. Finally, a critical discourse analysis was conducted on the selected texts.

Billig et al. (1988) point to language as a source of data generation for ideological issues. They argue that ideological representations are structured semantically in daily discourse. Discourse analysis is therefore ideal for the proposed research given the strong presence of ideology as an underlying theme. Critical discourse analysis (Fairclough, 1989, 1995) has been proposed as a method of discourse analysis drawing on two essential influences. The first of these influences is discursive psychology (Potter & Edwards, 1992). Discursive psychology pays mind to the functions of discursive acts as opposed to the contents of talk which have classically been seen in psychology as indicating some objective representation of

² And this may be indicated in the Alevi organisation's desire to have their secretary present during the interviews.

³ A sample of the received back-translations can be found in appendix G. Minor editing was needed on these back-translations to address grammar, spelling and punctuation anomalies (such as missing apostrophes).

internal or external phenomena. As Jäger and Maier (2009) put it, discourses are not merely a reflection of an objective reality, but constitute a social reality *sui generis*. Discursive psychology, thus, looks directly at what is being 'done' in language as opposed to what cognitive states a discourse may infer. Secondly, CDA draws on Foucauldian Discourse Analysis (FDA) (Willig, 2001), which interprets discourses in terms of power relations (Coyle, 2006; Willig, 2008). Foucauldian discourse analysis focuses then on examining how power is managed within discourse. To Foucault, power was seen not as a possession that an individual could have or go without, but instead an effect of discourse (Burr, 2005). Thus, FDA and CDA are both greatly concerned with the role discourses play in social processes involving the legitimating of power.

As a method, Fairclough (1995) envisioned CDA as involving three analytical dimensions. The first is the examination of characteristics of the text itself. The second looks at the interactional quality of the text focusing on power relations. Lastly, the text is placed within a greater, social context. The present research used this approach in conjunction with Willig's (2001) six-stage analytical approach for conducting an FDA. However, a greater emphasis was placed on macro-textual analysis (Willig, 2001) and on the text's position within a societal context than on micro-textual characteristics. This was mainly because of the sociological nature of the research and interview topics, but also because the need for interpretation and transcription limited our research from exploring interactional and micro-textual characteristics in great detail.

Finally, throughout the proposed research the researcher was conscientious of the criteria for evaluating qualitative research established by Elliot *et al* (1999). The research has been critically examined in an attempt to establish whether the work has met the criteria most critical to our research. Presently those criteria appear to be having respect for participants and contributing to knowledge about the topics in question. It is our hope in particular that the present research will reveal both specific knowledge about the position of Alevism in modern Turkey and also general knowledge in regards to the maintenance of positions within complex social identity discursive representations.

Analysis⁴

Given the breadth of the topics addressed in this study, our analysis has been

⁴Note on formatting: Parentheses indicate extra-textual notation made by the researcher.

constructed in such a way as to logically connect the most prominent findings. The analysis, thus, attempts to tell a story about the discourse of the Alevi participants in regards to their relationship with other subgroups and superordinate groups drawing heavily from their own words.

Ideological Primacy as Ingroup Projection

We begin by considering the interpretative repertoire of Alevi ideological primacy in Turkey. Herein, the Alevi participants routinely positioned Alevism as a voice chronologically preceding many competing voices in Turkish society. We begin by examining this interpretation as it relates to the Turkish language.

Murat – Alevism has such an aspect already. The literature, and the language of the literature, is the language of today, as that is called Turkish. In order to understand Alevi literature... Yunus Emre, Kaygusuz Abdal, and Pir Sultan Abdal... it must be known and understood. And their language was Turkish. And it is noteworthy to mention that the language unity of Anatolia was maintained by Alevi dedes, Alevi readers, and Alevi bards.

(...)⁵ But today, as it is known as the language of illiterates, Turkish was the language of Alevi Bektaşî dedes, Alevi Bektaşî readers, Alevi Bektaşî bards; and it was the language of Alevi worshipping. The readers, and bards who were educated in Alevi Bektaşî tekkes were using this language for their practices. By these means, that language became the common language of Anatolia.

In this passage Murat clearly stakes out a powerful element of the Alevi discourse in Turkey. In this, the language of modern Turkey is presented as being of Alevi origin, coming from the works of their historic poets. Such a statement clearly emphasises the legitimacy of Alevism in Turkish society. Murat thus places the Alevis in a position of cultural precedence in Turkey because of the linguistic influences they have supposedly had. Also worth noting in the second passage is the historical representation of the Alevi language positioning it, and the Alevis by extension, amongst the 'common' 'illiterate' people of Anatolia. This passage also implies a socio-economic and linguistic divide between the Turkish-speaking Alevis and what can only be assumed to be the Arabic and Persian-speaking leaders of the Ottoman empire. Alevism, through its language, is constructed as originally relating to Turkey's lower class.

The Alevi interpretative repertoire regarding primacy as an influence on modern Turkish ideologies does not stop with the Turkish language and literature, however. In one

⁵ An abridgment of the text

instance, Murat claims that the rise of democracy and the advent of Kemalism was either influenced by or synchronous with similar Alevi ideas and values.

Murat – When he (Mustafa Kemal) first initiated the independence war, he met with Cemalettin Chelebi, who was the leader of Alevi of that time, and had a conversation in the context that “the Alevi would support him if he was after the establishment republic”. And Mustafa Kemal, during that meeting, gave the guarantee of his intention of establishing the republic, and he asked from him (Chelebi) not to mention this to anybody”. So Alevi declared secularism and republic quite earlier than Mustafa Kemal. Historically the fight of Alevi with Sunnis and Sharia, which took almost 1000 years is assessed, the reflection of an incredible practice of struggle can be observed. Therefore, Alevi had always been in the favour of abolishment of sultanate and caliphate.

This perhaps anecdotal story claims that the Alevi were not only accepting of secularism when it arose in Anatolia, but pre-date it ideologically in their ancient struggle against Sunni dominance. As an interpretative element, such a tale may also serve the purpose of garnering some vicarious credit for the much-celebrated creation of the Turkish Republic. Murat seems to use it here to again promote the original legitimacy of Alevism within Turkey's superordinate group. The entirety of this interpretative repertoire of ideological primacy may indicate a high degree of perceived prototypicality between Alevism and the historical conception of the Turkish identity. As the Ingroup Projection Model suggests, this may reinforce prejudicial views regarding members of Turkey's superordinate group who do not fit the prototype projected by the Alevi.

Comparing Turkey to Europe

Throughout the interviews there was repeatedly conveyed a sense of apprehension and mistrust in talk of the Turkish government. This scepticism was especially directed towards the politics of the AKP. Europe, as a concept, also figures heavily into this mistrust of Turkish politics in part because of the close relationship that the Alevi have with Alevi communities in Germany and other European countries. As such, the Turkish Alevi are quick to point out disparities between their own lived experiences under the AKP administration and those of their European counterparts when expressing dissatisfaction with Turkish politics.

Murat – If there had been some Alevi who voted to AKP, it was just because of this. We are supporting the EU accession process. We see that the Alevi who live in EU do not encounter any problem in practising their Alevism. For instance, in Germany, Alevism can be educated

in the schools as a lecture. Even dreaming of this is hard. Here, we hear (the daily Sunni prayers) 5 times a day. That disturbs us, but nobody cares. If Turkey joins EU, the speakers of mosques will be taken out as the bells of the churches were silenced within EU.

The opening sentence of this excerpt illustrates an ideological dilemma; it explicitly claims that the only reason an Alevi would vote for the AKP, an oppositional subgroup, is to support the membership of the European union. However, there is any number of reasons why an Alevi would vote for the AKP. This statement shows instead how important the European Union membership is to the Alevi interpretative repertoire being that it could explain what is portrayed by Murat as an otherwise irrational behaviour for Alevis. Murat equates EU membership with increased religious tolerance and with the better lives being reported by European Alevis. In describing the Sunni prayers which are broadcast from Mosques throughout Turkey, the participant positions the Alevis as an afflicted group, plagued psychologically by an overwhelming Sunni influence. The European Union is then presented as a cure for this psychological affliction, given its banning of similar practices in Europe. The EU is thus portrayed as being appealing to the Alevis not just because of their identification with superordinate European values, nor because of the religious freedoms it could afford them, but also because of the restrictions it would place on their opposition. Murat further illustrates what he sees as the differences between European secularism and Turkish secularism by drawing on the story of Madımak hotel fire, also known as the 'Sivas Massacre', an event in 1993 when 49 people, mostly Alevis, were burned to death by a mob of radical Islamists (New York Times, 1993). The participant relates the Sivas Massacre to a similar arson attack that occurred in Solingen, Germany the same year where five Turkish Germans were killed and many more injured.

**Reflective Box 2:
Educational Reform**

While Murat expresses scepticism towards the prospect of Alevism being taught in Turkish schools, reforms of the mandatory religious lessons are currently under way with this in mind. The Turkish government is currently drawing on experts from the Alevi community to provide guidance on how best to integrate Alevism into the future curriculum (Hürriyet, 2010a).

Murat – The incident of Madımak is a lot more tragic than the incident in Solingen. The perpetrators of the incident in Solingen were not known by the state officials. If it was known that those houses (in Solingen) were set on fire by the extremists, the church or police would prevent it from happening. When we went to commemorate Pir Sultan on July 2nd (1993), we were

given permission by the governor, and financially supported by the Ministry of Culture. But the people who came out of Cuma (Sunni prayer ceremony) attacked us and set the Hotel on fire, it took 8 hours, it was broadcast live, but none of the state officials took an action to prevent it from happening. The Current AKP government still does not let that Hotel become a Museum, but Germany already turned that place where the incident happened, into a museum. I really want you to compare those two incidents carefully. The stance of the democratic and secular German government and the stance of the current AKP government can easily be visualized.

The Sivas Massacre as an interpretative repertoire here serves to engender Alevis with a sobering set of emotions: remorse, suspicion, animus. In comparing it to the attack in Solingen, the Sivas Massacre is used to reveal the disparity between the lived experiences of European Alevis in Germany and those in Turkey. While both the European and Turkish Alevis live in supposedly secular states, Murat positions the Turkish Alevis as worse-off in reality. He presents them as victims of religious persecution, but also of a government that does not protect them and their rights. The Turkish Alevis are shown to be good, organised citizens, following all the appropriate bureaucratic steps for conducting their meeting. Alternatively, the political establishment is portrayed as being incompetent, complacent, criminally negligent or even responsible for the many deaths of the Sivas Massacre. Finally, the current AKP administration is shown to be irreverent in their refusal to commemorate the site of the disaster, unlike the German government with Solingen (note Reflective Box 3).

Reflective Box 3:

Commemorating Madimak

It should be noted that in June of 2010, just after the research's interviews, the Turkish government purchased the hotel where the Sivas Massacre took place and is currently deciding how to commemorate the site (Hürriyet, 2010b).

There is, thus, put forward a certain mistrust in Turkey as a political institution. While the cultural categorisation of being a 'Turk' is portrayed as largely overlapping the Alevi position, the Turkish government is, to say the least, not characterised here as having Alevism's best interests in mind. As far as legitimate superordinate groups go, considering this, the participants express a greater deference towards the European Union. The European Union does not, however, appear to be an repertoire entirely consistent between the participants. There is some contention, for example, over whether the EU should be conceptualised as a secular organisation or a Christian one, as an economic organisation or a cultural one:

Begüm – The (Turkish) people are living below poverty limit, what would EU do for Turkey? It seems to me also that EU looks like a Christian community. They wouldn't like to see a country governed by the extreme Islamist within EU.

Begüm describes various reasons why she feels the EU will fail to accept Turkey as a member state. To her, the supposed religious values of both Turkey and the EU make them incompatible to one another. This account is in direct conflict with Ahmet's interpretation of the EU however:

Researcher – Interviewer: I'd like to just find out what his opinion is on where he believes ah-- Alevism fits in to Turkey's application to the European Union.

Ahmet – Regarding the EU, the Alevi confederations in Europe are positive about it. In this regard I believe that the Alevi associations in Turkey share the same view. We do not think of the European Union as a Christian Community. We are not against it in belief and nationality-wise, we are supporting it.

In conceptualising the EU as an organisation apart from Christianity, Ahmet avoids any religious ideological dilemmas that could arise in Turkey seeking EU membership. Instead he focuses on the EU as democratic institution that includes European Alevis and their organisations. He positions the Turkish Alevis as being similar in views to their European counterparts and thus emphasises the cultural similarity between the two groups. As an ideological dilemma the conflicting characterisation of the EU seems quite salient when one considers that both participants spoke of the EU's religious standing without specific inquiry from the interviewer. Instead the issue was on the tip of their tongues. Furthermore, while Begüm points to Turkey's poverty as prohibiting the European Union from accepting Turkey as a member state, Ahmet sees a unifying force in the 'views' shared between the Alevis and the of Turkey and Europe.

Democratic Socialism as an extension of an 'equality' interpretative repertoire

Beyond discussion of the European Union, the role of leftist ideologies and the principles of democratic socialism were repeatedly referenced as having become critical to the Alevi position, particularly to the organisations that the participants were members of.

Ahmet – After coming to Ankara in 1970s, we became relatively a closed society due not being aware of the realities of the city life and being immigrants in the city. This resulted in us finding ourselves in the part of society where socialism is an asset, among the worker groups. Thus, while Alevism stayed in the village or country, in the city we just started to know ourselves as socialists. After the military coup in 1980 our people became more closed, as this started to

change to the contrary. In 1985, the organizations with the name Alevi started to be established and the Alevis started to find their identities in those organizations rather than the former socialist groups.

Similar to Ahmet's relation of the Alevi language to the common people of antiquity, here Ahmet positions the Alevis alongside the workers of modern Turkish society. Most important of all in this passage is the trope of 'Alevism staying in the village' while the Alevis 'started to know (themselves) as socialists'. Such a line would suggest that Alevism had no presence in the city, that it had been abandoned by its urban followers and replaced by Socialism. However, the remainder of the passage reveals an ideological dilemma in that it relates how the Alevis repressed and expressed their identity depending on the political climate. Alevism clearly was not “staying in the village” but was instead present in the city alongside socialism if only to varying degrees. Such a figure of speech may have developed in an attempt to engender the Alevis with socialist subgroups they had come into contact with in the cities by down-playing their religious nature. Finally, this passage reveals a very subtle differentiation between the Alevi identity and that of the 'left ideologies'. The two are represented as partners under oppression and not entirely cohesive. Ahmet implies that when the Alevis are afforded more religious freedoms, the salience of their Alevi identities rose above that of socialist ones (note Reflective Box 4). Alternatively, Begüm presents a slightly different take on Alevism's relation with socialism, wherein the two are portrayed as highly cohesive:

Begüm – I don't think that Alevism is within Islam. Alevism is a world doctrine, a philosophy. I regard the philosophy of Alevism to a primitive socialism. As to say, it seeks its basis in humanity, it defends equality, that's why it is close to socialism, this is the reason why I am working in the association.

In this, Alevism is shifted ideologically away from Islam and towards Socialism, but also away from the religious and spiritual and towards something practical and worldly. The

**Reflective Box 4:
Ignoring Progress?**

Ahmet suggests that with increased religious freedoms, Alevis have relied less on 'leftist' groups for legitimacy. Such an interpretation is worth considering given that the Alevi are currently experiencing increased religious freedoms. At times, as indicated in the previous reflection boxes, Alevism's ability to achieve increased freedoms out-paces the participants' interpretation of the circumstances. It's difficult to say whether this is due to the participants having yet to adjust to new conditions, being sceptical of unproven policies, or intentionally presenting a pessimistic interpretation to the researcher.

value of humanism seems to supersede any supernatural or metaphysical issue in question for Begüm. Chief amongst these humanitarian values for the Alevi participants seemed to be equality. In fact, 'equality' was drawn on in the discourse of the participants for most of the issues addressed in the interviews. Equality is presented to the interviewer as a fundamental of Alevism; a value that defined the Alevi position politically and otherwise.

Researcher – Can you tell me a little bit about how Alevism and the rights of women, how those two things are related in Turkey?

Begüm – According to the laws of Turkish Republic, the rights of women are only remain on paper. Women are beaten up, seek remedy in front of the courts, they release the perpetrators on the grounds that they are the husbands.

(snickering between researcher and Begüm)

Begüm – Women are raped because they wear jeans, the judge claims that wearing jeans invoked rape. In this respect, what kind of women's rights are we talking about? For Alevis the women have no difference than men, that's why we cannot talk about women's rights. We walk hand in hand together with men in all circumstances. The women are not subordinated in Alevi society.

Here we have an account of gender equality in Turkey. Begüm portrays the laws governing women's rights in Turkey as being duplicitous. They are 'on paper' but not lived in Turkish society. As such, gender equality is constructed in her discourse as a wedge issue: a point of fundamental division between the Alevis and the conservative establishment. Gender equality is treated as common sense by Begüm's stating 'that's why we cannot talk about women's rights'. By this she seems to imply that there is either no need to speak of women's rights within Alevism because they are not threatened, or that the rights of women in Alevism are not separable as a topic from the rights of men. And yet gender equality may not be common sense to the positions of the Sunnis, the AKP or even Turkey as a nation. As Billig *et al.* (1988) observe, “an egalitarian pattern within an inegalitarian social structure is fraught with dilemmatic aspects”. There is also, again, the interpretative repertoire of mistrust or lack of confidence in the government as the participant implies that the courts are greatly influenced by chauvinistic ideologies to the detriment of social justice. Begüm contrasts this institutional sexism with an idyllic image of Alevi gender equality: a man and woman hand-in-hand as equals. Using such imagery, the participant may be demonstrating why Alevism would be more desirable than the superordinate Turkish national identity for those interested in gender equality and social justice.

Equality was also a major interpretative repertoire drawn on in discussion of Turkey's treatment of ethnic minorities. Although, Begüm reported being Kurdish, the interpretative repertoire of equality was more salient than one regarding her particular ethnicity.

Begüm – In this country, Alevi are oppressed as much as Kurds. In this country, Turkish and Cerkezs (Circassians) are oppressed as much as Alevi and Kurds.

Turkey's actions towards its Kurdish people are represented by Begüm as incidental, a symptom of an underlying inequality that everyone in the area is exposed to regardless of their heritage. Here again the legitimacy of Turkey as a superordinate national group is treated critically as many of its subgroups are portrayed by Begüm as being in a state of oppression.

Alevism disparaged

While Begüm implies that the problem of equality is more universal in Turkey, her own accounts of oppression stress that the Alevi are particularly mistreated by the Sunnis for their group affiliation, beliefs and practices.

Begüm – Regarding Alevi and Sunni, when an Alevi girl gets married with a Sunni, she faces a lot of pressure, I have lived that.

Researcher – Can she speak specifically about her experiences in that regard?

Begüm – I got married in the prison in 1980. My husband's family is Sunni and they don't talk to me because I am Alevi. Even today these things happen in the society. They are scared of Alevi. I don't understand this.

Researcher – And how does her family feel about this?

Begüm – On the other hand, when I introduced my husband to my father, he told me "It doesn't matter to which religion he belongs, he should possess high values as a human". Thus, in my family there is not such a problem. In Alevi families when a Sunni guy and an Alevi girl come home, the guy is welcomed more, his beliefs and rituals are respected. However, when we enter into a Sunni family, this is not the case. They view the marriage as a threat.

Begüm's discussion of her inter-religious marriage seems to serve a number of purposes. For one, it illustrates a supposed disparity between Sunnism and the Alevism in regards to their treatment of outsiders marrying into their families. As such, the Sunni, represented by Begüm's in-laws, are portrayed as being prejudiced, whereas the Alevi, represented by her father, are able to see past religious pretexts and evaluate individuals based on universal values. Secondly, Begüm's account characterises Sunnism as being xenophobic, 'scared of Alevi' and threatened by inter-religious marriage. Conversely, Begüm claims that Alevi are welcoming of such marriages. This interpretative repertoire of

Alevism being open to inter-religious marriage is worth considering as it runs contrary to historical literature that suggest that the Alevis have previously been an endogamous culture (White & Jongerden, 2003). Finally, this passage reveals an interpretative repertoire of Alevism being positioned by Sunnis as a threat, as something to be 'scared of'. In suggesting this repertoire is validated by her own experiences, Begüm positions the Sunnis as a group whose irrational phobias reject and endanger her own position.

Understanding how these accounts of oppression and prejudice relate to the Alevis' conception of a potential Turkish national superordinate identity is critical to the primary research aim. Begüm addresses this while providing an example of the cultural/religious alienation and mistreatment she experienced in state-run Turkish schools.

Begüm – We have lived with this. When we said that we were Alevis at school, everybody was staying away from us. This happened to me in Ankara. I came to Ankara when I was 6. The Sunnis were teaching even their children that Alevis were bad and their moral values were inappropriate. This pressure still exists in schools and military. There is a social pressure over us as well. When I was in secondary school, religious education was voluntary. My father said that he would give me religious classes himself but we were isolated. We were 6 students, the teachers didn't talk to us, the students isolated us. They accused us of not being Muslim. At schools we were faced with this pressure. Now there is compulsory religious classes. After the military coup of September 12th, the religious classes became compulsory but they haven't been teaching anything regarding Alevism. If you look at the books, you can see that Alevism is disparaged and they don't teach anything related Alevism to our children. That's why I didn't let my child attend to these classes in secondary and high school.

Here again we have Begüm interpreting Alevism as a group that has been treated as deviant by the Sunnis. In social settings, such as school and the military, she insists that the Alevis are under pressure. In describing how she and her fellow Alevi students were persecuted for not attending religious lessons, she implies that the state-sponsored secondary schools, instead of being secular academic environments, are actually hotbeds for religious intolerance. The religious lessons, made mandatory, neglected Alevism as a topic (until recently as noted in Reflective Box 2). In this respect, Begüm expresses a neglect of Alevism in Turkish educational policies.

Innovating legitimacy

The Alevi narrative, as portrayed by the participants, does not end with woeful accounts of historic oppression and modern alienation. As well, the Alevi promote many

positive interpretative repertoires in regards to their current and future position in Turkish society. Alevism is described by the participants as possessing a growing legitimacy unrelated to a Turkish national identity. Instead, Alevi legitimacy is characterised by the participants as arising from the formation of Alevi organisations in Turkey and their developing associations with European communities and leftist political powers. Murat gives an account of the formation of his own organisation as it relates to enhanced Alevi legitimacy and religious freedom.

Murat – With the help of these organisations, we can carry out activities more openly that we use to do hidden.

Researcher – In... in forming these organisations and collaborating between organisations, have there been any problems from outside or from inside? Anything...

Murat – Of course. When the Federation of Alevi Bektaşî Associations was first established, a prosecution was initiated given that the name 'Alevi' could not legally be used in the name of the association. Throughout the trial process, we went to the ECHR (The European Court of Human Rights) and received a decision in our favour. In the year 1993, when we came together in Sivas to commemorate Pir Sultan, they attacked us and let 33 friends of us burn.
(...)⁶

Murat – Let me tell you this, in the year 1970, when I came to the city to study, my father and my uncle told me to hide my Alevi identity. We used to say, “We’re leftists” but not “Alevi”. EU democracy has contributed a lot in this sense.

As we can see in the first passage, for Murat, the creation of Alevi organisations makes room in the discourse of Turkey for the Alevi position, allowing people to claim it as their own. Murat claims that this allocation of speaking rights was initially resisted. Drawing on the Sivas Massacre interpretative repertoire here, Murat deligitimises the Alevi opposition’s position by attributing a criminal and inhumane act to them. Finally, the European Union through the ECHR is portrayed as a superordinate go-between for the Alevi cause in this instance, silencing their opposition and allowing the Alevi voice to be heard. The second passage reiterates the interpretative repertoire of the European Union being conceived by Alevis as a source of increased legitimacy for their position. It is here implied that European Union democracy allowed Alevis to claim their own identity instead of hiding under a broader 'leftist' identity.

Considering the historic proximity of the Alevi position to that of the 'leftists' one

⁶ An abridgment of the text

might expect the Alevis to draw on this association itself as a sort of superordinate group for enhanced political legitimacy. However, Alevism's relationship with the conventional leftist power in Turkey, the Republican People's Party (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi, CHP), is currently interpreted as lacking by Begüm:

- Begüm – When you look at the parties like the CHP, Alevis have always been sidelined. In the leftist and social democrat parties, Alevis have always been sidelined. CHP isolated both the revolutionaries and Alevis. At one time the CHP said that the revolutionaries could not join and due to the protest of the leftists they could not pass the limit to be represented in the parliament. CHP is a party composed of Cerkez's (Circassians) Alevis have been impeded in coming to high levels such as party president.
- Researcher – If I'm not mistaken, is... the head of the CHP is... does consider himself to be an Alevi. Isn't that correct?
- Begüm – Today the president of CHP, Kılıçdaroğlu is an Alevi, but I see why he has been given that post. CHP has become a right wing party like MHP, there is no difference between them right now. US and UK observed this very well and some powers in Turkey have seen it as well. So a new party has been formed, a party also supported by Alevis – Equality and Democracy Party. I am a founding member of that party.

At first Begüm describes what she sees as the Alevi position within the CHP. Alevism is positioned on the fringe. The participant claims that Alevism is kept away from influential positions within the organisation for undefined reasons. This policy of alienating the Alevis and 'revolutionaries' is characterised as even being destructive to the party as a whole as she relates that it at one point cost the CHP their representation in Turkish parliament. Thus the CHP is interpreted as being both unwelcoming of Alevis, but also failing as a leftist organisation. However, the interviewer brings into focus a possible dilemma between Begüm's choice of interpretative repertoires and reality: the current head of the CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, is in fact a Kurdish Alevi. Begüm's response to this reveals again an interpretative repertoire of mistrust in conventional Turkish politics: she is suspicious of his being in such a position and doubts the legitimacy of the circumstances. Regardless, the proposed failings of the CHP, and the supposed recognition powers internal and external to Turkey, serves as justification for the creation of the Equality and Democracy Party (Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi, EDP), a social democratic political party new to Turkey as of 2010. It may be that the EDP is seen by Begüm and other Alevis as a party more open to Alevi interests and leadership than the CHP currently is. Regardless,

Begüm sees Alevi political power as something that is developing alongside the power of social democrats in Turkey.

Begüm – The official standpoint suggests that Alevis are the protectors of secularism in this country, however this is not the case. Because if we are the protectors of secularism, we have to have a say in the government and we do not want to be ruled but rule now. There is a wide Alevi movement right now. Alevis have become aware of the facts. You can see Alevis in the protests of labourers, against price increases and in their democratic demands.

There are a number of interesting things worthy of note in such a statement. To begin with, it begs the questions “What is this official standpoint and who holds it?” She may be implying a sort of popular consensus in Turkey, or a stance of Turkish nationalism or Kemalist Secularism. This seems, as well, to be another instance of ingroup projection given that the Alevi identity is characterised as archetypical of Turkish secularism. Regardless, appealing to even the ambiguous idea of an 'official standpoint' shows intent to add legitimacy to her suggested message. In addition to this, secularism is constructed as a principle under threat from an opposing force. Begüm suggests that Alevism has a responsibility in guarding secularism that it has been powerless to fulfil. Thus, the political motivation of Alevis can be interpreted as them seeking to fulfil this duty when in the past they have been complacent. It is interesting to note, though, that within this passage Begüm slips from talking about Alevism's role in secularism back into relating Alevism with Marxist issues. She claims that Alevis are now motivating and becoming 'aware of the facts', but instead of taking action against anti-secularism specifically they are, as ever, drawn into the protests of labourers and the generic struggles of social democracy.

Discussion

The Alevi participants make clear that they are a group under pressure. This pressure is represented as originating from the 'right': the social conservatives, the AKP and the Sunnis. All of these opponents may be positioned by the Alevis as an ideological extension of their former oppressors, the Ottoman Sunnis. As such, the participants at times act discursively as if the Ottoman empire never ended. This inspires them to position themselves responsively. They take up defensive stances, such as being 'guards of secularism'. They position themselves alongside the under-classes of antiquity and the labourers of modernity in response to what they construct as Sunni dominance.

Turkey, as it is depicted in participants' discourse, can be separated into two distinct

concepts. The first is Turkey as a culture. The participants claim a strong adherence to this Turkey. They relate to it, especially in consideration of the Turkish language, which the Alevis have used since antiquity for their poetry, songs and cems. In this respect, the culture of Turkey is one that the participants generally claim as their own. On the other hand, there is, in their discourse, a different Turkey, that of the Turkish nation. This is represented by the participants as something foreign to the Alevis. It is treated consistently with mistrust and is portrayed as being unreliable in terms of upholding social justice and ensuring the secular and democratic values it espouses. Beyond the fact that the AKP is presently in power, the Alevi are characterised as being dissatisfied with 'leftist' political parties available, such as the CHP.

The notion of a Turkish superordinate group is a concept that draws on diverse and conflicting ideologies. At the very least, it might be suggested that the Alevis would relish the promotion of a Turkish cultural identity, yet be resistant to the notion of a superordinate Turkish national identity. However, even the promotion of a superordinate Turkish cultural identity comes with the potential danger of ingroup projection by the Alevis. Already this possibility is evident in the 'ideological primacy' and 'guardian of secularism' interpretative repertoires available to the Alevis. The Ingroup Projection Model suggests that the projection of a prototypical Alevi identity onto the Turkish cultural identity could have adverse effects in Turkey. Instead of decreasing the conflict between Alevism and the Sunnism, the promotion of a superordinate Turkish cultural group could instead escalate the tension, increasing prejudicial attitudes toward the Sunnis as an outgroup deviant with the projected Alevi-Turk prototype.

The notion of a superordinate European identity is presented as a similarly complex issue, though more desirable within the participants' discourse. Here again one might make a distinction between a cultural European superordinate identity and the political superordinate identity of the European Union. Of course, such a distinction may not be necessary in this case given that both are spoken of positively by the participants. Culturally, Europe is interpreted by the participants as bearing similar values to their own, specifically those of equality and social justice. Further, the culture of Europe is expressed in desirable terms by the participants in consideration of the relative freedom of religious expression that it has afforded European Alevis. The Alevi participants also describe the

European Union positively given its influence in securing their right to form Alevi organisations. Further, the European Union features prominently in the Alevi discourse as an interpretative repertoire drawn on for rationalising the behaviour of Alevis voting for the AKP. This indicates that the participants construct the European Union as a superordinate group Alevis desire to affiliate with.

There does, however, seem to be another prominent group that the participants of this study claim: that of socialism. This, of course, is not an integrative superordinate group in the same way that 'Turkey' or 'Europe' may be. The group characteristics of 'socialism' is certainly not something that can be addressed comprehensively here. However, what is represented by our participants is that socialism, as a globally transmitted political ideology, exists as a viable group identity across national boundaries. It is likely that the participants of this study bear strong ties to socialism given their proximity to labourers in the city. As such, future research should focus on additional Alevi communities, such as those in rural areas of Turkey, for comparison. Presently, however, the participants suggest an Alevism highly synchronous with socialist ideologies organising within Turkey.

With participants describing a lack of confidence in the general politics of Turkey and the conventional leftist powers therein, the importance of forming strong organisations to secure civil liberties is emphasised. Thus, the incentive for Alevis assuming a superordinate group identity is clear: increased legitimacy and the freedom that brings. Further, while giving credit to Europe's influences in helping them to secure their present degree of legitimacy and freedom as individuals and as an organisation, the participants express conflicting ideas in regards to future EU relations. Ahmet's chosen interpretative repertoire suggests that the shared values between Turkey and Europe (social justice and equality) will draw them together. However, Begüm draws on an interpretative repertoire that proposes that the European Union will avoid admitting Turkey for economic and religious reasons. Thus, while Europe is constructed as a viable superordinate group, the delay of the EU in admitting Turkey as a member state, as well as the potential manipulation of Alevi EU supporters by the AKP for political power, has inspired some of the participants to seek legitimacy through alternative means. This has led Begüm, for example, to help form the Equality and Democracy Party: a democratic socialist party on the far left of the Turkish political spectrum. It may be that, in the absence of a viable superordinate national

or supranational identity, Alevis drawing on more socialist interpretative repertoires will gravitate to similar 'leftist' groups for emergent legitimacy.

It should be noted, of course, that the EDP, while potentially beneficial for the Alevis, seems to represent a further polarisation of Alevis away from their oppressors. Far from unifying the Alevis and Sunnis in a superordinate group, this political movement could lead to a further escalation of prejudice and tension between the two groups. Considering our second research aim, that of the specific implications for Alevism in modern Turkey, the dilemmatic interpretative repertoires surrounding the EU are of the utmost importance. The impression of the EU seems to tie closely into the Alevi discourse regarding Alevi voting behaviour, as well as political party formation. In this regard, this research suggests that the future of the Alevi social and political identity depends greatly on the availability of superordinate groups that Alevis interpret as sharing their group values. Should the European superordinate group be made more accessible, for example, by the EU's acceptance of Turkey as a member-state, it is likely that the Alevis will be welcoming of this position. However, should the EU continue to delay Turkey's membership, and should Alevi impressions of the Turkish national identity remain low, this research suggests that the Alevis will position themselves with more viable superordinate groups based on shared values.

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Ethical Approval (University of Surrey FAHSEC)

Dr Adrian Coyle
Chair: Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences Ethics
Committee
University of Surrey

Collin Jensen
MSc Student (Social Psychology)
Department of Psychology
University of Surrey

10th May 2010

Dear Collin

Reference: 445-PSY-10 RS

Title of Project: Dedes, Dervishes and Democracy: How practitioners of Islamic mysticism present their position within Turkish society (Working Title).

Thank you for your re-submission of the above proposal.

The Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences Ethics Committee has given favourable ethical opinion.

If there are any significant changes to this proposal you may need to consider requesting scrutiny by the Faculty Ethics Committee.

Yours sincerely

Dr Miranda Horvath
Deputy Chair
Faculty of Arts and Human Sciences Ethics Committee

Extended Literature Review
**Dedes, Dervishes and Democracy: How practitioners of Islamic mysticism
present their position within Turkish society**

Collin Jensen
University of Surrey

Abstract

This research project is a qualitative analysis that looks at the position of practitioners of mystical Islam, specifically Alevism and Sufism, in modern Turkey. The project will focus on religious, social and political identities in Turkey and how these are reconciled and presented to an 'outsider'. This means that this study will look at how practitioners of mystical Islam perceive of their role in Turkish society and relate it to a non-Turkish position. The main goal of this study, then, is to build on knowledge of Alevi and Sufi speaking positions their representation of group dynamics within Turkey. This study is also interested in looking at how the mystical sects of Islam present themselves and their position in Turkey to a non-Turkish 'Westerner' or 'outsider'.

The researcher intends on conducting interviews with four practitioners of mystical Islam, at least one of which will be a Kurdish Alevi. The interviews will then be transcribed and relevant excerpts will be discourse analysed, looking at the function of the participants' language in regards to the issues presented. The study hopes to answer questions about Alevi and Sufi practitioners and the way in which they position their selves in Turkish society and on certain issues. Further, a main factor of reflection in this study will be on how the interviewees present themselves to the interviewer, a non-Turkish, Western male, how they position him and how they manage their position in relation to society outside of Turkey as well as within. Further, this research project hopes to explain if these groups express a sense of voice in Turkish society, what that voice is, and how it relates to other voices in Turkey.

In terms of political issues, this study is mostly focused on Turkey and its application for admission into the European Union (or EU), a process that has been delayed for over 50 years. The main opposition for admission comes from states who claim that Turkey's abusive history toward its Islamic ethnic minorities, especially the Kurds, makes it unfit to join the EU. As such, by talking with a Kurdish Alevi, this research will begin to examine how this sub-group negotiates the potentially conflicting group positions for the researcher. We believe that this information, in particular, may serve as an exploration of a little-known,

possibly critical sub-group worth future in-depth study.

Literature Review

In February 2010, Turkey's majority political power, the Justice and Development Party (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi or AKP) detained 66 members of the Turkish military, charging 31 of them with plotting a coup against the established government (BBC, 2010). Turkey's military is well known for such actions, given that they have executed coups to restore secular regimes to power on three other occasions since the nation's founding in 1923 (Ahmad, 1988). The present circumstance came after the AKP has made pushes towards Islamist policies, including the removal of a ban that prohibited the wearing of head scarves at universities (Shively, 2008) as well as the prohibition of bars and alcohol in some regions. This has inspired the Constitutional Court of Turkey to intervene and declare the acts violations of the principle of secularism established in their constitution (BBC, 2008).

This conflict between Turkish secularists and Islamists/social-conservatives is at the heart of the presently proposed research, which considers the management of individual subject positions within cultural, religious and political group identities in Turkey. Specifically, the aim of this research is to better conceive of the position of Turkish Alevis and Sufists, practitioners of mystical Islam, by examining their relation to political issues facing Turkey in light of their respective historical contexts.

A fundamental assumption of social psychologists in regards to identity is that humans naturally seek to define their selves in terms that extend beyond the individual level alone. This 'social self' distinction has been the focus of many theorists (Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Turner *et al.*, 1979; Turner *et al.*, 1987; Brewer & Gardner, 1996) as it relates to an individual's association with ingroups and outgroups. In this regard, Billig *et al.* (1988) observe that many studies on bias and ideological differences of groups focus on two conflicting or related groups at a time. While this may be practically convenient for empirical study, ideological issues rarely manifest in simple, binary relations. In reality, group relations and conflicts can involve complicated circumstances involving the overlap and nesting of many different group identities for those involved. Social Identity Complexity Theory (Roccas & Brewer, 2002) has been proposed as a conceptual framework for exploring the potentially complicated hierarchies and interactions of an individual's group affiliations. This is done using an individual's subjective representations to illustrate

how groups and their ideologies relate to and diverge from one another. Mapping such subjective representations can, for example, reveal where groups might intersect but not be congruent and this might reveal sources of identity conflicts for individuals who are members of both.

Chryssochoou (2004) emphasizes that these conceptual boundaries and overlaps between groups are of critical importance both in understanding how the groups relate to each other and also in devising ways of reducing prejudicial bias and conflict between them. One such technique for reducing bias between groups involves the recategorisation of members of divergent groups into a more inclusive, superordinate group (Gaertner *et al.*, 1993; 1999; 2000). This might, for instance, be a superordinate national identity that attempts to accommodate conflicting cultural group identities within itself. Roccas & Brewer (2002) observed that individuals in superordinate, multicultural societies characterised by integrational ideologies tend to exhibit more complex representations of their various subgroup identities than individuals from more homogeneous societies. Further, Brewer and Pierce (2005) have noted that individuals with multiple intersecting group identities which fit under a superordinate identity express more motivation to sustain their identification with the superordinate level than those with simple group representations.

All of this being said, there may be a bias in the literature in support of universalism and integration of groups into higher superordinate groups when conflicts are present. While such a process can be advantageous in diminishing prejudice and overcoming cultural conflicts, it may be that such a generic prescription bears unintended consequences worth considering. For example, the promotion of superordinate group identities could lead to the dissolution of cultural subgroups along with their offered identities, values and perspectives. Further, promoting superordinate group identities (such as a national identity) could lead to consolidation of political power and a jeopardy to the pluralistic underpinnings to democracy. Individuals, themselves, may be resistant to such influence, as well, given pre-existing positions that they inhabit in opposition to the process in principle or based on negative impressions of the superordinate group being promoted. Essential to all of these suggestions is context which appears to be quite critical when attempting to understand, forecast or influence a social identity complex. With this in mind, we look briefly to the history of Islamic mysticism within Turkey.

Islamic Mysticism

Islamic mysticism has been an influential force in Turkey's regions since the spread of Arabs into the Anatolian steppes in the 8th century (Yavuz, 2004). Sufism functioned by integrating the shamanistic, ecstatic traditions of the indigenous, tribal people of Anatolia into Arabian Islam. Through the efforts of Sufi missionaries, influential tribal shamans converted to Sufi Islam given its synchronisation with their traditional beliefs (Yavuz, 2004), and their communities followed suit. Sufism grew with the influence of the Arabian culture in Anatolia and, to varying degrees, cohabited with the more orthodox Sunni Islam of the Seljuk and Ottoman empires.

Sufism breaks from orthodox Islam, though, on a number of issues including the practice of austerity (Arberry, 1950), teleological observance of grace (*karāmāt*) as a confirmation of faith (Turner, 1974), and most notably, the execution of ecstatic rituals in pursuit of a transcendental state of oneness with God (*fanā*) (Arberry, 1950). These essential characteristics of Sufism were frequently points of contention with the more dominant Sunni Islam. The practice of ecstatic rituals especially, tied closely to the shamanistic rituals of old, and claims of transcendental conferences with God, led the established Sunnis to declare Sufi sects and practitioners heretical on numerous occasions (Arberry, 1950).

Another mystical sect of Islam that has developed in the area of Turkey is Alevism. Alevism originated as an offshoot of the Ottoman Safavid Sufi order of the 15th and 16th centuries (Zeidan, 1999). As Shiites, the Safavid Sufis came into conflict with the Ottoman Sunnis. This escalated into a protracted war ending in the Safavids retreating to remote rural areas throughout Anatolia. For centuries thereafter the Safavids were persecuted by the Sunnis and forced to conceal their true beliefs, consequently developing a religious culture that was isolationist and focused on internal spiritual exploration and family relations (Zeidan, 1999). The Safavids in part mixed with the Bektashi Sufi order, who shared similar beliefs and rituals, and the resultant group, the Alevis, soon developed as a distinguishable religious and cultural identity (Zeidan, 1999).

Considering its oppression at the hands of the Sunnis, Alevism continued to develop as a closed system, resistant to outside influences and dependent on hereditary regeneration instead of proselytism (Zeidan, 1999). The Alevis treat their faith as something very personal, therefore displays such as public prayer, prostration and religious holidays are

avoided (Zeidan, 1999). Furthermore, there is very little in the ways of a centralised Alevi authority structure. Sahin (2005) observes that the Alevi leaders (dedes) were typically seen as superior teachers of esoteric knowledge. Rituals and knowledge then were conveyed orally and disseminated throughout the particular order (talip). This continued undisturbed until the 1980's when increased religious interest and tolerance allowed for the publication of Alevi literature for the first time and inspired the Alevis to form association with other organizations (Sahin 2005). Since then, Sahin (2005) claims, there has been an emergence of an Alevi researcher-writer (araştırmacı-yazar) leadership and a reorganisation of traditional Alevi authority. Presently, the Alevis account for around 25% of Turkey's population.

The nation of Turkey

The state of Turkey as we know it was formed in 1923 by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and Turkish nationalist forces with the ousting of Western forces occupying Anatolia following the defeat and disillusionment of the Ottoman Empire after World War I. As the first president of the Republic of Turkey, Kemal favoured Westernisation and modernisation and saw Islam as generally a hindrance to these two goals (Cornell & Svanberg, 1999). Consequently he strove to separate religion from the politics of his country and promote a superordinate, secular, national Turkish identity tied to the diverse tribal ancestry of region (Cornell & Svanberg, 1999). Turkish secularism, or Kemalism as it came to be known, generally demanded that the Turk identity rise above or replace all other potential identities, especially Islamic religious and cultural ones, to allow for civic peace and prosperity for the nation (Cornell & Svanberg, 1999).

While generally portrayed as beneficial for the nation as a whole, Kemalist policies were treated very differently between the various branches of Islam. The Naqshbandi Sufi order went so far as to openly campaign against Kemal and the homogenisation of Turkish Nationalism (Yavuz, 2004). Others chose more integrative approaches and sought to incorporate their identities into the prescribed superordinate Turkish identity, emphasizing principles shared by both (Yavuz, 2004). The Alevis, for one, generally favoured the rise of Turkish nationalism as it essentially freed them from Sunni dominance (Sahin, 2005). Kemal and his followers saw Alevism in a positive light, as well, given its tie to the Turkish tribal ancestry that the secularists admired (Sahin, 2005).

In the 1950's, a two-party system formed consisting of a majority of secular nationalists and a minority of social conservatives/Islamists (Yavuz, 2004). While the secular nationalist position has generally been the more powerful of the two in Turkey's politics since, present-day Turkey is characterized by an increase in conservatism and a renewal or reinvention of the Islamist identities. This is best represented in the rise of the AKP and the election of Turkey's first former-Islamist president, Abdullah Gül, in 2007.

The proposed research is therefore interested in exploring the position of Islamic mysticism as it relates to modern Turkey. Namely, how do Alevis and Sufis position themselves in relationship to secular and Islamist political powers to the researcher? Do they convey a sense of voice in the political discourse of Turkey, and if so, what does that voice say? Is the integrative nature that won over the shamanistic Anatolian tribes still portrayed as a salient characteristic of Sufism today? How do the Alevis conceive of and convey the growth of their political power and increase in numbers? Given their historic separation, how do the Alevis position themselves in regards to a superordinate 'Turk' identity to the outside world?

Secondly, a focus must be given to Turkey's long-delayed application for membership into the European Union. A number of EU member states have expressed opposition to Turkey's membership, a primary point of contention being Turkey's historically abusive behaviour towards its ethnic minorities, particularly the Kurds. The expression of the Kurdish culture in Turkey has been systematically banned in television and music (Yurdatapan, 2004). Their language is prohibited from use in public services and politics, as is any non-Turkish language (MRG, 2007). Up until 2003 there was even a ban on parents naming their children using minority languages (MRG, 2007). While these policies have shown notable improvements in recent years, to date the use of names with non-Turkish letters such as q, w, and x is prohibited, effectively eliminating Kurdish names which rely heavily on these (MRG, 2007).

Turkey's policies towards its Kurdish minority is also intricately tied with Alevism given that some 20% of Alevis in Turkey define themselves ethnically as being Kurdish, and 25% of the Kurds in Turkey claim Alevism as their faith (Zeidan, 1999). The potential for divergance here is clear given that Alevism seems to support secularism over Islamism (and considering its history with Islamist rule) while the Kurds bitterly oppose the

secularism that still oppresses them (Zeidan, 1999). Thus, how do Kurdish Alevi, and Alevi in general, negotiate these conflicting positions for the researcher? Will they reveal a potential schism between Turkish and Kurdish Alevi, or is Alevism itself constructed as a superordinate identity that unifies the two conflicting cultures? Finally, how do the Alevi illustrate their conception of Turkey's potential membership to the European Union and what cultural or political benefits or concerns do they express and why?

Methods

Design

The proposed project will be a qualitative study carried out as a critical discourse analysis of interviews of Turkish practitioners of Islamic mysticism, both Sufists and Alevi, conducted in-person. Given that very little research has been devoted to examining the Alevi generally or in regards to their political positions, we consider the proposed research to be somewhat exploratory in nature.

Sampling

With the aid of a key informant, 4 participants will be selected based on their status as members of Islamic mysticism. In an attempt to broadly explore the potential positions of the present issues, sampling will be somewhat purposive beyond the initial criteria. A focus will be placed on Alevism given its importance to the second topic of research. Furthermore, at least one of the Alevi participants will be of Kurdish cultural origins so as to account for that potentially sensitive position, as well. All told, our aim is to obtain one Sufi participant and three Alevi, and at least one participant identifying themselves as Kurdish and Alevi. Given the researcher's inability to speak Turkish, all participants will be required to speak English. The participants will be gathered within Turkey, potentially from the regions of Istanbul and Ankara. Ideally, our study would desire to draw on participants from the more remote areas of central and South-East Turkey as a greater distribution of Kurdish and Alevi inhabit those regions. However, given our lack of an informant in those regions, as well as time and resource limitations, the present research will need to be confined to more densely populated and geographically/socially accessible areas.

Procedure

The interviews will be conducted in-person by the primary researcher at a predefined location convenient to the participant. These locations will be neutral territory located at either

University or public library facilities within reasonable distance of the participants' community. The interviews will last between 1 and 1.5 hours and focus on the aforementioned research topics and questions. The interviews will be semi-structured and will consist of two major sections, one addressing the topic of Islamic mysticism's position in Turkey's politics in general and the other focusing on Turkey's application into the European Union and its treatment of its Kurdish ethnic minorities. Further information regarding interview materials is featured in the enclosed sample interview schedule.

As these interviews will be conducted with the goal of using a discourse analysis, we are aware of a number of criticisms worth addressing pertaining to our chosen methodology. For one, the use of interviews may be seen as artificially occurring talk and thus undesirable as a source of natural discursive data (Potter & Hepburn, 2005). However, more naturally occurring data may be virtually inaccessible given that Turkish policies have a way of stifling dissenting Islamic voices from public and political discourse. Furthermore, given the recent radical changes in Alevi power structures (Zeidan, 1999) and the rise of Alevi authors as spokespeople, it may be that literary sources of data are not completely representative of the potential positions that common Alevis assume. Nonetheless, in choosing to conduct a discourse analysis we recognize that the interviews themselves must be considered interactions subject to analysis (Potter & Hepburn, 2005, 2008). Essential to the study, then, will be defining the position of the researcher as they potentially relate to the issues and participants in question. Furthermore, any findings will need to be located solely within the context of the participants' interaction with the researcher.

The speaking position of the interviewer

There are a number of potential speaking positions that the interviewer may inhabit or be perceived to inhabit and addressing them is not only necessary for conducting an acceptable discourse analysis, but is also potentially productive to the consideration of the interviews' interactional context. To begin with, the primary researcher and interviewer is a post-graduate social psychology student at the University of Surrey. He is an international student originally from the United States. He has no particular affiliation with any of the parties in question except for his having read a number of works of Sufi poetry during his undergraduate studies. Politically he identifies himself as a liberal. Religiously, he was raised Southern Baptist Christian, though presently he identifies himself philosophically with Taoism and Gnosticism.

It is very likely that participants will see the interviewer as being an outsider considering these positions. However, this is not entirely undesirable. Cornell and Svanberg (1999) note, for one thing, that Turks, even Islamist Turks, bear no prejudice to foreigners who practice other religions; instead they are treated with an open curiosity. Secondly, considering the status of Islamic mysticism practitioners as a minority between presently oppressive secular powers and historically oppressive orthodox Sunni powers, it is not beyond reason to suggest that participants would be more open in discussing the issues in question with a seemingly neutral outsider than with a fellow Turk who might be seen as potentially inhabiting a conflicting ideological position. Finally, the interactional context of an outsider interviewing the participants is not insubstantial when one considers the relevance of practitioners of Islamic mysticism constructing their position to a 'westerner' or the world outside of Turkey in generally. As a 'westerner' or 'foreigner' the interviewer may represent a cultural position that the participants value in regards to the issues in question. This could especially be the case given the issue of Turkey's European Union application.

Data Analysis

Audio from the interviews will be digitally recorded. The recordings will then be transcribed by the primary researcher and a postgraduate student research assistant. The transcriptions will be coded and excerpts will be selected based off of their potential relevance to the research topics. A critical discourse analysis will then be conducted on the selected texts.

Billig et al. (1988) point to language as a source of data generation for ideological issues. They argue that ideological representations are structured semantically in daily discourse. Discourse analysis is therefore ideal for the proposed research given the strong presence of ideology as an underlying theme. Specifically we will be implementing critical discourse analysis (Wetherell, 1998) that has been proposed as a method that incorporates two very different approaches to discourse analysis. The first of these approaches is discursive psychology. Founded on the principles of social constructionism, Coyle (2006) relates that discursive psychology pays mind to the functions of discursive acts as opposed to the contents of talk which has classically be seen as indicating some objective representation of internal or external phenomena. Jäger and Maier (2009) further emphasize the importance of discourses by insisting that they are not merely a reflection of an objective reality, but constitute a social reality *sui generis*. Discursive psychology, thus, looks directly at what is being 'done' in

language as opposed to what cognitive states a discourse may infer. Secondly, critical discourse analysis draws on the approach of Foucauldian discourse analysis, which interprets discourses in terms of power relations (Coyle, 2006). Foucauldian discourse focuses then on examining how power is managed within discourse. To Foucault, power was seen not as a possession that an individual could have or go without, but instead an effect of discourse (Burr, 2005). Thus, Foucauldian discourse analysis is greatly concerned with the role discourses play in social processes involving the legitimating of power. This application is critical considering the presently proposed study's interest in the power relations of Islamic mysticism within Turkey, especially the notable rise of Alevism in the recent past.

Finally, throughout the proposed research we will be conscientious of the criteria for evaluating qualitative research established by Elliot *et al* (1999). Upon completion of the analysis we will critically examine the work and report on the degree to which we have met the criteria most critical to our research. Presently those criteria appear to be having respect for participants, contributing to knowledge about the topics in question and owning the perspective of the researcher. It is our hope in particular that the present research will reveal both specific knowledge about the position of Islamic mysticism in modern Turkey and also general knowledge in regards to the maintenance of positions within complex social identity discursive representations.

Timetable

Conducting background research:	November 2009 – April 2010
Organising Interviews in Turkey:	January - May 2010
Applying for ethical approval:	March 2010
Conducing Interviews in Turkey:	19 - 22 April 2010
Coding of data:	June 2010
Detailed data analysis:	June-July 2010
Write-up:	July 2010

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Participant Information Sheet

Main Investigator:
Collin Jensen
Email: cj00059@surrey.ac.uk
Phone Number: +44 (0) 7513 377394

What is the purpose of the study?

This study is looking at the position of practitioners of mystical Islam in Turkey in general and in regards to certain political issues. This means that we will be looking at how you perceive the role of your faith within Turkish society. In terms of political issues, this study is mostly focused on the issues of Turkish secularism, religious freedom, Turkey's policies towards its Islamic ethnic minorities and Turkey's application to the European Union . The main purpose of this study is to build our understanding of modern Turkish Alevism and Sufism, particularly their political positions, and illuminate some present group dynamics within Turkey.

Once I take part, can I change my mind?

Absolutely. After you have read this information sheet and asked any questions you may have, we will ask you to complete an Informed Consent Form. However, if at any time, before, during or after the interview you wish to withdraw from the study, please just contact Collin at the email or number listed above. You can withdraw at any time, for any reason, and you will not be asked to explain your reasons for withdrawing.

Where will the interview take place and how long will it take?

The interview will take place at a University or public library within reasonable distance to your location. It should take no longer than 1.5 hours.

Is there anything I need to do before the sessions?

There is nothing that you would need to do before the interview. This study is trying to fill a gap in the academic literature regarding mystical Islam and Turkey, so we will be asking you questions about your opinions, feelings, and perceived position within Turkish society and on various political issues.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your interview will be completely confidential. After the interviews are transcribed, names will be stricken and all records will be made completely anonymous. You should feel comfortable knowing that the only person who will know who any of the participants actually are will be the Main Investigator Collin, who will be conducting the interviews by himself. Audio recordings of the interviews will be destroyed after the interviews are transcribed. Transcriptions will be kept indefinitely, but, as stated before, they will be completely anonymous. Electronic copies of the transcriptions will be kept on a secure, password protected computer system with all hard copies destroyed after use.

What will happen to the results of the study?

The results of this study will be published as a Master's dissertation for the Main Investigator, Collin. Publication in scholarly journals is an option for the final study at a later date.

I have some more questions who should I contact?

For any questions, please contact Collin, the Main Investigator, on the email or number listed above.

What if I am not happy with how the research was conducted?

Any complaint or concerns about any aspects of the way you have been dealt with during the course of the study will be addressed; please contact Collin, the Main Investigator, on the email or number listed above.

Sample Consent Form

- I the undersigned voluntarily agree to take part in the study on Islamic Mysticism in Turkey.
- I have read and understood the Information Sheet provided. I have been given a full explanation by the investigator of the nature, purpose, location and likely duration of the study, and of what I will be expected to do. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions on all aspects of the study and have understood the advice and information given as a result.
- I agree to comply with any instruction given to me during the study and to cooperate fully with the investigators. I shall inform them immediately if I suffer any deterioration of any kind in my health or well-being, or experience any unexpected or unusual symptoms.
- I understand that all personal data relating to volunteers is held and processed in the strictest confidence, and in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). I agree that I will not seek to restrict the use of the results of the study on the understanding that my confidentiality is preserved.
- I understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time without needing to justify my decision and without prejudice.
- I confirm that I have read and understood the above and freely consent to participating in this study. I have been given adequate time to consider my participation and agree to comply with the instructions and restrictions of the study.

Name of volunteer (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed

Date

Name of researcher/person taking consent (BLOCK CAPITALS)

Signed

Date

Interview Schedule
**Dedes, Dervishes and Democracy: How practitioners of Islamic mysticism
present their position within Turkish society**
(Working Title)

Introduction:

First, let me begin by again thanking you for taking part in this interview. I'm sure that your participation will be highly informative to my study, which of course looks at the position of practitioners of mystical Islam in regards to certain political issues in Turkey. Considering the relatively limited scholarly material available on this topic, our time today will largely be spent discussing issues in broad terms to explore your interpretations of them. The first half of the interview will be primarily focused on gathering information about you as an individual. The second half will be directed at getting your opinion and observations on political issues. I want to encourage you then, to speak freely and not be afraid to discuss related issues if they seem relevant. Also, at times, I may ask follow-up questions to have you elaborate or clarify on comments you have made.

Before we begin, though, I'm required to get your formal consent to take part in this study. As part of this I want to make sure that you have had a chance to go over the information sheet that I provided you. Were you able to examine this thoroughly? Did you have any questions about it? Do you have any other questions in regards to the study or to the interview?

Excellent, now I'd like to make clear that you have every right to stop this interview at any time should you feel uncomfortable or compromised in any way. If that's understood, I'll finally just ask for you to read through this consent form and sign it if you agree to its terms.

With your consent then, I'll now begin recording and we can start the interview.

Section A:

1.) I'd like to begin by asking you to give us some general information about yourself. Where you're from, what you do as a profession – that sort of thing.

a. Do you define yourself in terms of a particular ethnicity or culture?

2.) How would you define yourself in religious or spiritual terms?

a. Is there a particular religious or spiritual community that you participate in or identify with?

b. For how long have you associated with (your religious identity/community)?

s. How did you come to your particular faith?

d. Can you describe some of the defining characteristics or values of (your religious identity/community)?

e. Can you describe some of the activities of (your religious community)?

3.) Can you describe for me any political affiliations or stances that you may have?

- a. Are there any particular political issues that are especially important to you as an individual?
- 4.) Do you feel that your political and religious affiliations are at all related, and if so in what way?

Thank you for these personal details. At this point I'd like to move gathering your observations and opinions about certain issues facing Turkey.

Section B:

- 5.) Starting from a broad perspective, how would you describe the position of (your religious community) in Turkish society?
- a. Do you see this position in Turkish society as something that is changing or has changed? If so, in what way?
 - b. Does (your religious community) experience conflicts with other groups? If so can you speak to this?
 - c. Do you feel as though (your religious community) is adequately represented in politics and in the public eye?
- 6.) Can you speak to the issue of secularism in Turkey and its present application?
- a. Do you approve or disapprove of its present use in Turkey?
- 7.) In the recent past there has been some changes made by the current AKP administration which have been resisted by secular forces. Specifically, there was the lifting of the headscarf ban at universities. Can you discuss the current issues of religious freedom of expression and secularism?
- a. What role, if any, do you feel (your religious community) has in this issue?
- 8.) Turkey has for many decades now been in the process of joining the European Union (or EU). Can you speak a little bit about your personal opinion as regard this issue?
- a. Supposing Turkey is eventually admitted into the EU, how do you feel this would affect you personally?
 - b. How do you think this would affect (your religious community) in Turkey?
 - c. What role, if any, do you feel (your religious community) has in this issue?
- 9.) One of the primary arguments given by opponents of Turkey's joining the EU is that Turkey has a history of abusive policies and behaviours directed at its Islamic ethnic minorities. Turkey's treatment of its Kurdish people has been called into particular question. Can you address this issue?
- a. Have Turkey's policies affected you at all? If so, how?
 - b. What can you say in regards to the conflicts between the Turkish military and Kurdish secessionists?
 - c. Has the relation of the Kurdish people with the Turkish State changed under AKP rule? If so, in what way?
 - d. How do you think the Kurdish people will fair in the future?
 - e. How would Turkey's membership in the EU change the circumstances of the

Kurdish people or other ethnic minorities in Turkey?
f. How does (your religious community) relate to this issue?

10.) Finally I would like to ask if you would speak broadly about the present state of (your religious community)'s position in Turkey.

a. Do you feel that (your religious community) has something to offer Turkey in practical terms?

11.) Do you have any additional issues or concerns that you would like to discuss or elaborate on?

Sample Interview Transcript With Back-Translated Excerpts⁷ Participant: Murat

Researcher: So, you can let him know that we're gonna, we're gonna start by asking very personal questions about his relationship to Alevism and his upbringing and following that, we're going to be asking more general political questions. #00:01:53.0#

Researcher: So you've already, he's already given us some information about where he's from but, um, if he can tell us other details about himself, like what his profession is. Yeah, that sort of thing. #00:02:12.4#

Interpreter: When he was a student he had a... an activist socialist life #00:02:26.9#

Interpreter: From 79, February 79, uh... starting from there, five years he was in prison. #00:02:45.3#

Interpreter: After he, you know, came out of jail, he was sent, you know... I don't remember the word again... He was sent to some other provinces by the, you know, government forces to live there. #00:03:04.2#

Researcher: He was relocated maybe... #00:03:12.5#

Interpreter: Yeah yeah. Kind of. To keep him away from the center... #00:03:19.7#

Interpreter: Since then, he... he worked uh... in the press offices of some municipalities or some other state... foundations and cooperation for... you know, agricultural cooperation. So, as a journalist or media advisor kind of. #00:04:01.1#

Interpreter: Then he got too tired. Now he's enjoying his retirement. #00:04:10.4#

Interpreter: In his personal life, Pir Sultan has a big influence, his poems. #00:04:22.2#

Interpreter: He had a lot of torture by the police when he was you know... #00:04:28.4#

Interpreter: When he was alone in that situation, the poems of Pir Sultan (indecipherable) gave himself a lot of strength and courage to stand. #00:04:46.6#

Interpreter: When they, (indecipherable) When they started the Pir Sultana association in Adana #00:05:15.4#

Interpreter: Since it was founded in 1993, he has been one of the secretaries in the association always. #00:05:24.8#

Researcher: Okay. #00:05:28.2#

Interpreter: Since the 1984, he's been, you know, researching, reading and writing about the Alevi... #00:05:37.8#

Interpreter: He was in prison. In he had an incidence #00:06:02.9#

Interpreter: The manager of the... #00:06:03.1#

Secretary: Jail, prison manager #00:06:08.9#

Interpreter: He took their books away. #00:06:07.1#

Interpreter: He gave a... #00:06:10.2#

⁷Notes on formatting: Parentheses denote extra-textual comments of the transcriber or back-translator. Numbers surrounded by pound signs are timecode markers from the audio recording. Back-translations are featured by tables and appear to the right of their original interpretations. Frequent breaks in 'Interpreter' lines generally indicate Turkish portions of the interview recordings.

Secretary: Applied to the manager to give, give them the books which are not banded outside of jail. #00:06:22.0#

Interpreter: And the manager called him to help himself to check all the books together. They requested him. #00:06:36.2#

Interpreter: He found a book that did not belong to him and he took it. #00:06:42.9#

Interpreter: The name of the book was... #00:06:47.4#

Secretary: (Baba lala? indecipherable) #00:06:46.0#

Interpreter: (Baba lala?) is our... just like a really ancient call of Alevism. #00:06:57.2#

Interpreter: The book was about Hacı Bektaş when he was a commander of a right, a big big right #00:07:41.9#

Secretary: In 1240. Yeah. #00:07:41.7#

Interpreter: 1240.

Interpreter: He is the son of an Alevi family. He had known, already, a lot about Alevism. #00:07:59.3#

Interpreter: But he had not known that Hacı Bektaş was... #00:08:04.4#

Secretary: Take a role in that right. #00:08:10.7#

Interpreter: When he found out that Hacı Bektaş had such an identity as a, you know, leader in a tribe, his interest in him got, grewed a lot bigger. #00:08:25.0#

Interpreter: That information helped him, or caused him to (indecipherable) have a larger point of view. He says he grewed, improved his understanding about the things in Alevism. #00:08:56.3#

Interpreter: He's been writing in the, you know, magazine and Internet pages within thirty or (indecipherable) foreign countries eh... or giving lectures about this subject. #00:09:26.0#

Interpreter: Because of these, his point of view about Alevism can be a bit different than all the other people you are going to interview, he says. #00:09:44.9#

Researcher: So he he-- has already defined himself culturally-- or ethnically at least-- as Alevi. Is there any other associations to groups like that that he has? Does he consider himself ethnically or culturally anything... #00:10:01.5# #00:10:01.8#

Interpreter: He wanted to add something.... #00:10:03.8#

Secretary: Just to add a point, he was Marxist. He was researching about Marx. #00:10:10.7#

Interpreter: ...when he discovered... #00:10:24.2#
#00:10:45.2#

Interpreter: He defines himself a socialist Alevi. Nothing else. #00:10:51.6#

Interpreter: He is a Turkmen. From a Turkish origin. #00:10:56.2#

Secretary: Eh... he is (indecipherable) is original. Turkmen means they're coming from Turkmenistan. #00:11:11.9#

Initial Translation	Back-Translation
Interpreter: The... Alevis, Alevi people has a point that, you know, the literature, the language that the	Murat: Alevism has such an aspect

Alevis use is what we use in Turkey today. So...
#00:11:37.3#

Interpreter: Way to know about Alevi culture is to read Yunes Emre, Pir Sultan, and (indecipherable) and all really old characters, but the language they used, that, that in that time is the Turkish spoken here today.
#00:12:09.4#

Interpreter: If you let him, he want to add another thing #00:12:16.7#

Interpreter: During the language, the common language we are talk-- speaking in Anatolia today...
#00:12:25.3#

Interpreter: Uh...brought-- that this language has been, has brought today, by these, you know, Alevi poems and... #00:12:41.3#

Secretary: Trou-- troubadors. In English you don't have any term like that #00:12:47.6#

Researcher: A bard... #00:12:52.3#

Secretary: A man who is just, like writing and singing.
#00:12:55.2#

Interpreter: Troubador's poems #00:13:01.9#

Researcher: Yes, that makes sense. #00:13:08.5#

Interpreter: and other Alevis... #00:13:06.6#

already. The literature, and the language of the literature, is the language of today, as that is called Turkish. In order to understand Alevi literature... Yunus Emre, Kaygusuz Abdal, and Pir Sultan Abdal... it must be known and understood. And their language was Turkish. And it is noteworthy to mention that the language unity of Anatolia was maintained by Alevi dedes, Alevi readers, and Alevi bards.

Secretary: Especially, I was just searching about that, Troubadour, is a little like that, the way he was writing and reading about this... very important.

Interpreter: Since... Since the Seljuk empire in... through all the 1600's from... the language of religion use to be Arabic and the language of culture was Persian by the empires. By the management. #00:13:54.6#

Interpreter: Turkish, as a language used to be considered as the language of the uneducated in the palace or around palace. #00:14:09.1#

Interpreter: But this language considered as the uneducated people's language of the palace has been the language of literature or the, you know, Bektaşî leaders and Bektaşî culture. It was Bektaşî's, become Bektaşî's language for Alevi Bektaşî. #00:14:47.3#

Interpreter: When these, you know, Alevi poets, and all Dedes, the leaders went into the public to share things and do cem and tell them things, the use to use this language. #00:15:19.8#

Interpreter: This became the common language in Anatolia. #00:15:32.9#

Murat: But today, as it is known as the language of illiterates, Turkish was the language of Alevi Bektaşî dedes, Alevi Bektaşî readers, Alevi Bektaşî bards; and it was the language of Alevi worshipping. The readers, and bards who were educated in Alevi Bektaşî tekkes were using this language for their practices. By these means, that language became the common language of Anatolia.

Secretary: The... Albanian, the Albanian nationalist leaders were using the Turkish language. #00:15:45.6#

Interpreter: They use to teach their militias both Albanian and Turkish. #00:15:58.9#

Interpreter: Because you needed to know Turkish to understand, you know, Yunes Emre, Pir Sultan, and these Alevi Bektaşî poems and writers. #00:16:20.9#
#00:16:32.2#

Interpreter: Same as you have to know Arabic to read and understand Islam. And to understand Bektaşism, Alevism, you have to know Turkish. #00:16:47.5# #00:16:45.9#

Interpreter: He said, the Alevis have a... positive effect... #00:16:59.1#

Secretary: In this language, in this culture. #00:17:00.9#

Interpreter: Yeah #00:17:04.0#

Interpreter: And the second important person in the Alevi literature after Yunes Emre is the (indecipherable) #00:17:22.0#

Interpreter: He was... #00:17:22.8#

Secretary: (indecipherable) Egypt #00:17:31.1#

Interpreter: He founded 16... #00:17:36.2#

Secretary: Lodges #00:17:34.4#

Interpreter: Lodges #00:17:36.6#

Secretary: In Cairo Egypt. #00:17:40.4#

Secretary: They're (indecipherable) with this Turkish language. #00:17:46.6#

Secretary: He wrote in Turkish, mostly his poems in Egypt #00:17:55.7#

Interpreter: The guys that moved from the lodge into the United States, and they made a lodge there in United States and it is still there. #00:18:20.0#

Interpreter: What we call Alevi-- Alevism in Anatolia... #00:18:27.2#

Interpreter: Despite, it has been forbidden by the state and, you know, managing powers... #00:18:41.4#

Interpreter: It has-- it has grown up in the public, in the, you know, people and brought a lot of, you know, positive things to his people and this language. #00:18:57.9#

Interpreter: Today's Turkish traditional music mostly depended on these Alevi Bektaşî writers, song (indecipherable) musicians... and same as the, you know, st-- st-- stories.. funny stories mostly. #00:19:16.2#

Interpreter: We should never forget that, you know, one of the main points of the Bektaşî prayer is the, you know, Saz (musical) instrument you know, the Turkish... #00:19:40.5#

Interpreter: In the Ottoman empire it was forbidden to play the Saz #00:19:51.3#

Interpreter: They use to... uh... brought out... they brought out some verses that said, you know, in that Saz there is evil. #00:20:03.1#

Interpreter: But because of these musicians that made music with this... uh... within this Alevi culture, today's music, cultural music in Turkey became what it is today. #00:20:30.6#

Interpreter: When you think of something that represents all Turkey and Anatolia, you can think of Sars. #00:20:39.6#

Interpreter: Both today's language and this Saz has been... eh... carried, given life by the Alevi culture, today's, today's people, today's Turkey. #00:21:17.7#
#00:21:12.8#

Interpreter: If you want us to.... #00:21:14.6#

Researcher: Yes, yes. I have-- I have a couple questions, but keeping on that topic, would he suggest that the current regime, the current politics are very open to those types of expression of music and, and that sort of thing? #00:21:39.3#

Interpreter: When... when the Turkish Republic was first founded, you know, there wa-- there was not a kind of education-- musical education to define or teach this Alevi traditional music. #00:22:40.5#

Interpreter: They started this kind of training for this traditional music and this instrument after 1975. #00:22:58.3#

Interpreter: It was forbidden on the Turkish radio and television to sing this kind of music until recently. #00:23:10.7#

Interpreter: These Alevi musician and this Saz has broke, you know, broke all the roles and #00:23:25.2#

Secretary: Made everything really big pressure on these (indecipherable) #00:23:31.7#

Interpreter: Two famous (indecipherable) players and some writers (indecipherable) if you focus on their biographies you can see all this #00:23:53.3#

Researcher: We've spoken briefly about uh, him having a Marxist past and being socialist, but are there any present political parties that he affiliates himself with? #00:24:10.5#

Interpreter: No. #00:24:24.9#

Secretary: Trotsky... Like the umm... second... after Stalin he made a fight with Stalin and he just he kicked his ass (laughter) the other side of... #00:24:43.6#

Secretary: They didn't even know a thing about the Alevi people, these classical leaders. #00:25:05.6#

Secretary: They just talking about Utopic socialist people #00:25:25.6#

Secretary: You know that most importantly Campanella is about the Sun Empire. #00:25:25.9#

Secretary: Utopia is a book, Campanella... #00:25:34.8#

Secretary: If you compare that, Alevi's Utopia and Thomas Moore's Utopia... #00:25:45.2#

Secretary: Its really close to Marx, Alevi's people's Utopia is very close to Marx. #00:25:55.1#

Secretary: Most important book of our Buyruk is like, telling about the loyalty.... #00:26:06.1#

Secretary: As a common start, there is like, the value of money is nothing #00:26:25.4#

Secretary: Its very close to Marx ideology that which he defined like a... a state is not a state. #00:26:36.5#

Murat: One of the most important of these is 'City of Sun' by Campanella, and the other one is 'Utopia' by Thomas Moore. If you compare Thomas Moore's Utopia with Alevi's utopia, you notice that it is closer to Marx. In 'Buyruk', which is a reference book for Alevi, there is a chapter where a city named 'Rıza' is mentioned. In the city 'Rıza', it is told a the society where equality is common, and possession of any commodity is not seen, and that the money is not used. This is closer to the society model defined by (indecipherable).

Secretary: Mostly (indecipherable) uh... Western authors, they don't, they discover Alevism is really

late. #00:26:51.5#

Secretary: So, go ahead (indecipherable) Let them to ask questions. #00:27:07.1#

Researcher: So, just kind of, kind of building off of what you've just said, there's um... Alevism has sort of opened recently. Do you think that there's a growing political interest in-- and interest in general from the outside world on the Alevi? #00:27:25.0#

Researcher: Like Europe for example... #00:27:42.7#

Interpreter: Ah... they used to be sued to use name Alevi. When they, you know, used, you know, Alevi they were accused... #00:28:35.0#

Secretary: Mostly they were living in villages before Republic #00:28:48.4#

Secretary: After 1950's they moved to cities. #00:28:54.6#

Secretary: They started to establish or found mostly Alevi association or foundations. #00:29:04.9#

Secretary: Mostly the, first Alevi's foundation were men, really famous Alevi peoples, named associations. #00:29:23.9#

Secretary: In 1964 they establish Hacı Bektaş foundation in Hacı Bektaş city. #00:29:31.2#

Secretary: This foundation founded in 76 in Sivas in (indecipherable) in Pir Sultan's village. #00:29:55.2#

Secretary: They forbid our association as (indecipherable) in 1980s #00:30:02.4#

Secretary: 1988 we uh.. we established our uh... foundation, our association. #00:30:13.2#

Secretary: There all branches of our foundations all as you see that #00:30:33.7#

Secretary: Like Hacı Bektaş association all over

Secretary: We establish um... a federation Alevi Bektaş federation with, uh lots of association like thirty different associations, just come together (indecipherable) and form federation. #00:31:00.4#

Secretary: We made up the fifth congress of our federation last weekend. #00:31:04.6#

Interpreter: He said, the organization or organizing each other, now we're being accepted by all the society and the state. #00:31:31.9#

Secretary: (indecipherable) These organizations... #00:31:38.8#

Secretary: The state were refusing our identities. Because of these associations they accepted our identity. #00:31:45.2#

Secretary: We made a workshop, the state uh.. the government made a workshop last uh... month and just eh... they invited all these associations and they listened to our problems, about our problems and about our politics. #00:32:05.5#

Secretary: Mostly we were just hiding our-- while we were praying we were hiding our IDs. Now we are just praying openly. #00:32:21.0#	Murat: With the help of these organizations, we can carry out activities more openly that we used to do hidden.
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Researcher: In, in forming these organizations and collaborating between organizations, have there been any problems from outside or from inside anything... #00:32:36.0#

Interpreter: When they founded these federations, Alevi Bektaş communities, federation (indecipherable) they were sued again by the state judge. #00:33:10.7# Interpreter: They were told that they could not establish organizations with the name Alevi. #00:33:18.5#	Murat: Of course. When the Federation of Alevi Bektaş Associations were first established a prosecution was initiated due that the name Alevi should not be used
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<p>Interpreter: During this court, before it was finished, they had a, you know, decision made by the European, you know, Human Rights Court that they can found, establish an organization with this name in Turkey. #00:33:54.3#</p> <p>Secretary: We went to Sivas, the richest city that Pir Sultan... #00:34:07.5#</p> <p>Secretary: So , 1993 there was a tragedy, tragedy in Sivas. They burned-- they burned our friends in Sivas while just we were doing a festival there in Sivas. Fundamentalist people, under control of government, they attacked to our friends and they burned their hotel. #00:34:46.8#</p> <p>Researcher: Can you spell the name of this place again? #00:34:44.5#</p> <p>Secretary: S-I- #00:34:49.3#</p> <p>Researcher: Sivas? #00:34:53.7#</p> <p>Secretary: And they burned 33 person in hotel there. #00:34:59.1# #00:35:04.2#</p>	<p>in the name of the association. Throughout the trial process, we went to the ECHR and received a decision in our favour. In the year 1993, when we came together in Sivas to commemorate Pir Sultan, they attacked us and let 33 friends of us burned.</p>
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Researcher: And who was this that that did this action? #00:35:06.8#

Interpreter: Fundamentalists #00:35:11.7#

Secretary: Fundamentalists under control of government #00:35:18.8#

Researcher: So, I want to take a step back and-- and speak in general terms about Turkey's politics. And I'd like to first address Turkish secularism and how Alevism fits into Kemalism as a political stance. #00:35:36.9#

Interpreter: Alevis were already on this-- this side #00:36:03.5#

Secretary: They were all Republicans. Alevi just, were all Republicans.

Interpreter: There is a saying in Alevism, like, hand-to-hand, hand-to-God. You know, if people could hold each other's hands, then, you know, without holding each other's hands you cant go anywhere... #00:37:06.4#

Secretary: If you are not good for crowd, you are not good for God. #00:37:15.6#

<p>Interpreter: When Mustafa Kemal was stating this, you know, eh... Independence War he met with one of these Alevi leaders and they told him that they were going to help him, providing that he's going to found the Republic. #00:38:15.7#</p> <p>Interpreter: Mustafa Kemal said to him that that woul--</p>	<p>Murat: When he (Mustafa Kemal) first initiated the independence war, he met with Cemalettin Chelebi, who was the leader of Alevis of that time, and had a conversation in the context that “the Alevis would</p>
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<p>they-- that would be a secret between them. No one should hear it but... #00:38:30.0#</p> <p>Secretary: Its my childhood aim, as well. Its my type of aim as well. #00:38:40.2#</p> <p>Interpreter: It means that Alevi people declared independence and Republic before... #00:38:53.1#</p> <p>Secretary: And secularism before Ataturk, Kemalism. #00:38:58.5#</p> <p>Interpreter: You look at the, you know, the struggle for a thousand years between all the Alevi against the Sunnis, Sunni Muslims... #00:39:29.0#</p> <p>Secretary: They were just looking for to ban Caliph and empires (indecipherable). Just Alevi people were against these two subject. #00:39:45.5#</p> <p>Interpreter: Sultans and Caliphs #00:39:46.4#</p>	<p>support him if he was after the establishment republic”. And Mustafa Kemal, during that meeting, gave the guarantee of his intention of establishing the republic, as he asked from him “not to mention to anybody”. So Alevi declared secularism and republic quite earlier than Mustafa Kemal. Historically the fight of Alevi with Sunnis and Sheriah, which took almost 1000 years is assessed, the reflection of an incredible practice of struggle can be observed. Therefore, Alevi had always been in the favour of abolishment of sultanate and caliphate.</p>
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Secretary: It is one of his poems, in Pir Sultan poems, he's a troubadour in that time. In eh... 15th century he lived in Anatolia, this guy #00:40:11.7#

Secretary: A cruel state has to be banned with the- in Istanbul as well #00:40:26.7#

Interpreter: That crown should fall where it is... (indecipherable) something like that #00:40:31.7#

Secretary: Yeah, there was lots of common-- in common, Kemalism and Alevi people. #00:40:47.3#

Secretary: Because of (indecipherable) #00:40:54.7#

<p>Interpreter: Kemalists forbid Alevism as they ban all these Tekkes, lodges. When they were all forbidden, A-- A-- Alevism was forbidden as well. #00:41:18.3#</p>	<p>Murat: The Kemalists, based on a law, addressing the closure of tekkes adopted in 1925, banned the Alevism. Due that law, it was banned to express the identity of ‘dede’, that relatively meant to ban ‘cem’. In addition, the Alevi ideology, Alevi dedes were based on ‘tekkes’. Then, when the tekkes got closed, the education of Alevi dedes were taken underground.</p>
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Researcher: Was that more a formal thing, or was it actually enforced? #00:41:20.7#

Interpreter: That's a law. #00:41:28.1#

Interpreter: The law which made these all tekkes and lodges to be closed #00:41:34.1#

Interpreter: Had banned also saying that your Dede and cemevi #00:41:49.2#

Secretary: Is the managing of like Imam, Dede means Imam #00:41:56.3#

Researcher: The head... #00:41:59.4#

Secretary: Yeah, its really important for Alevi people, the rules managing the Alevis pray.
#00:42:02.1#

Researcher: Yes. #00:42:05.2#

Secretary: Meaning... eh.. forbidding Dede means that, of eh... forbidding cem #00:42:13.6#

Interpreter: And these Alevi ideology, Alevi mentality, Alevi Dedes use to go educated in the Tekkes
#00:42:32.5#

Interpreter: When they closed these tekkes, it become Alevi education gone under ground.
#00:42:44.4#

Interpreter: The books #00:42:48.1#

Secretary: They burned our books and they collected our books and they di--didn't allow us to read these books.

Researcher: And who is-- who uh.. are we saying again this is the fundamentalist... #00:43:00.8#

Interpreter: Not Kemalism, but the Republic era, the beginning of the Republic era. #00:43:14.5#

Interpreter: until 1985 cem ceremonies were secret. #00:43:33.5#

Interpreter: For example when they were going to have a cem in his village #00:43:41.7#

Interpreter: He use to watch men all around the village. #00:43:46.9#

Interpreter: And in to the-- in front of the building where they going to have cem they use-- they use to put a watchman as well so that the state people, you know, government people in the village could not come in... eh... get in. #00:44:08.5#

Interpreter: cem was use to take place at night and all the people going to cem use to leave their lights open, turned on, in their houses so to make people think that they're home. #00:44:32.4#

Interpreter: There was a stone, Twelve corners that represents Alevism was.. was you know,... they have a museum here, and they have some examples of that stone. He will show you later.
#00:45:00.6#

Researcher: So what happened in 1985 that changed the situation? #00:45:06.0#

Interpreter: Uh.. they started to establish these associations in 85 and also in the Europe, in the foreign countries, the Alevi-- Turkish-Alevi brothers, they started to found cem houses. #00:45:43.7#

Interpreter: World get smaller. #00:45:46.3#

Interpreter: Alevis started to open cem houses in England, in Germany, in Switzerland and everywhere. #00:46:03.4#

Interpreter: They were, eh... doing their cem ceremonies openly, freely there without hiding.
#00:46:16.3#

Interpreter: When they rec-- had a research about this, how do they do it, and they saw that that's, uh... has to of-- laicism, secular eh... state #00:46:33.4#

Interpreter: So they thought that if Turkey is a secularist, like laicist country, it should be the same in Turkey. #00:46:44.8#

Interpreter: And these, you know, Alev-- youth, Alevi youth ehh.. had already been, you know, getting information and knowledge before 80 in the socialist and, you know, left eh... organizations. They already were being educated about it... #00:47:16.7#

Interpreter: Before that they use to be afraid of telling that they are Alevis. #00:47:24.9#

Interpreter: They found some kind of courage not to hide themselves any more. #00:48:07.8#

Interpreter: And they started to uh... establish associations that, saying that we are Alevis.
#00:48:17.1#

Interpreter: He says that this is a very important question, he could, you know, talk lots and lots more about this eh eh, especially on this subject, but you know, now he has to cut short.
#00:48:33.2#

<p>Interpreter: Eh... talking about the Alevi identity, when he came to this city at 1970 his father and grandmother, grandfather and uncles, they told him to not to tell anybody that he is Alevi. #00:49:01.3#</p> <p>Interpreter: They use to say that they were part of the left ideology that there was nothing to be afraid of telling that but they use to be afraid of saying that they are Alevi. #00:49:21.4#</p> <p>Interpreter: Europe, democracy in Europe helped us uh... to bring things to today's situation. #00:49:37.9#</p>	<p>Murat: Let me tell you this, in the year 1970, when I came to city to study, my father and my uncle told me to hide my Alevi identity. We used to say, "we're leftists" but not "Alevi". EU democracy has contributed a lot in this sense.</p>
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Interpreter: But he don't know anything about that. #00:49:45.6#

Researcher: I'd like to ask some specific questions now if that's alright #00:49:53.9#

Interpreter: You can ask whatever you want! (laughter) #00:50:05.5#

Researcher: So to be brief, but, we're looking especially at issues that the... for example the AKP has put forward a number of new policies, like they've tried to remove the headscarf ban and they've been doing things like that. Are there specific things like that that are important, specific political issues that are important to Alevis um... and how do they feel about the AKP's current policies that they are enacting. #00:50:46.3#

Interpreter: AKP is been stealing Alevi's time. He says, you know, its saying that they are going to do something but doing nothing and the best example is the mandatory lessons in the schools. The mandatory religion lessons. #00:51:35.1#

Interpreter: These mandatory religion lessons in school that teaches Sunni Islam, teaching, and it is mandatory for all the students. #00:51:57.7#

Secretary: We won't use them Sunni Islam, just we call them Sunni #00:52:05.5#

Researcher: Sure. #00:52:07.0#

Interpreter: They started a court #00:52:23.0#

Secretary: Human right courts in Europe. We got (indecipherable) was out of that court. We sued them. #00:52:23.7#

Secretary: We took them to EU human rights court. #00:52:36.8#

Secretary: And they said, okay, the state won't force you to take these lessons. #00:52:46.3#

Interpreter: European human rights court is a superior court, so the decisions they made has to be put to action immediately. #00:53:03.4#

Interpreter: But AKP government is not still accepting this decision. #00:53:11.8#

Interpreter: That's why they are...(indecipherable) They... #00:53:30.6#

Interpreter: They told the European ministers #00:53:37.8#

Secretary: We sued them to court #00:53:42.3#

Interpreter: Higher European court #00:53:46.8#
Interpreter: Actually, cem houses in Turkey in actual life #00:54:03.1#
Interpreter: And all around the world and in European countries #00:54:10.4#
Interpreter: cem houses is accepted like church, or you know... #00:54:17.5#
Interpreter: because its a, you know, praying house. #00:54:23.1#
Interpreter: But the AKP government do not accept that they are places of prayer. #00:54:32.9#
Interpreter: That's one of the reasons of the fight. #00:54:36.4#
Interpreter: There are two reasons, two points of conflict and one of them, this is one.
#00:54:47.8#
Interpreter: This fire in the hotel in Sivas #00:54:53.4#

Researcher: Yes. #00:55:07.6#

<p>Secretary: Its really tragic you cannot compare the death fire in Germany, Solingen as a city they fired Turkish people, seven people died there. #00:55:12.5# Secretary: In that, eh.. tragedy, the government uh... was not, uh, informed about this tragedy, but in Turkey government control and support them. #00:55:31.9#</p> <p>Interpreter: If the church or police or secret police, they would know that there were gonna be a tragedy in Solingen like that, they would stop it. #00:55:51.8# Interpreter: But they went to Sivas, they... #00:55:59.3#</p> <p>Secretary: They got permission from that government, governor, #00:56:04.2#</p> <p>Interpreter: Governor of the city so they were already been informed about that... #00:56:09.8# Interpreter: And the minister of culture supported them economically, financially. #00:56:13.8# Interpreter: But the people came out of the mosques and the (indecipherable) came and burned the hotel. #00:56:24.3#</p> <p>Secretary: It took 8 hours, that event, that tragedy. #00:56:33.0#</p> <p>Interpreter: There were televisions live, but no-- nobody #00:56:40.8#</p> <p>Secretary: They didn't stop. #00:56:44.6#</p> <p>Interpreter: The AKP government still do not make this place a museum. #00:56:56.5# Interpreter: But Germany turned that place following the tragedy (indecipherable) near taking place turned that into a museum already. #00:57:07.1# Interpreter: Compare this to things happening in Sivas... #00:57:15.5#</p>	<p>Murat: The incident of Madımak is a lot more tragic than the incident in Solingen. The perpetrators of the incident in Solingen were not known by the state officials. If it was known that those houses (in Solingen) were set on fire by the extremists, the church or police would prevent it from happening. When we went to commemorate Pir Sultan on July 2nd (1993), we were given permission by the governor, and financially supported by the Ministry of Culture. But the people who came out of Cuma (Sunnı prayer ceremony) attacked us and set the Hotel on fire, it took 8 hours, it was broadcast live, but none of the state officials took an action to prevent it from happening. The Current AKP government still does not let that Hotel become a Museum, but Germany already turned that place where the incident happened, into a museum. I really want you to compare those two incidents carefully. The stance of the democratic and secular German government and the stance of the current AKP government can easily be visualized.</p>
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Interpreter: The attitudes of eh... democratic secular country, Germany and the attitude of AKP and mentality, you can compare... #00:57:42.4#

Researcher: I'd like to move on so we can finish up with speaking about the European Union membership that Turkey is pursuing. #00:57:43.8#

Researcher: So we'll-- we'll go ahead and skip some of the introductory bit, but the main thing we're interested in is... uh, the Alevi perspective on the European Union, joining the European Union and how the issue of the Kurdish and Islamic minorities has affected European-- the European Union membership status. #00:58:21.8#

Interpreter: These's eh.. organizations of associations, federation... #00:58:47.8#

Secretary: Mostly they just thought that the integration of E-- European Union is really good for Alevi people. #00:59:07.2#

Secretary: And there is, you know, the diaspora in Europe. We know when we're getting information from them and we know that they are in a good conditions #00:59:23.6#

Secretary: (indecipherable) they really desire to go into EU. #00:59:37.9#

Interpreter: Any of the, you know, Alevi people gave their votes to AKP, AKP bec-- that should be only because of this reason, because they wanted to go (indecipherable) European Union. #01:00:01.5#

Interpreter: Eh... They support this European Union application and system in Europe. #01:00:11.7#

Interpreter: The've seen that the Alevi people in Europe can live their beliefs without any conflicts and problems. #01:00:26.6#

Interpreter: In Germany Alevism is a-- one of the lessons in school #01:00:37.8#

Interpreter: It is almost impossible-- impossible to eh.. think that, imagine that this is gonna be in Turkey. #01:00:50.7#

Interpreter: You know, five times you have the adhan prayer. #01:00:55.5#

Interpreter: Loud. Disturbs Alevi people sometimes, but, you know, normal here...#01:01:06.8#

Interpreter: When they started the European Union they banned some of the, you know, #01:01:19.9#

Secretary: Really loud, Adhan... #01:01:23.3#

Researcher: Megaphones? #01:01:21.3#

Secretary: Yeah, megaphones also. #01:01:23.6#

Interpreter: Also they banned the churches to ring the bells loudly. #01:01:32.2#

Murat: If there had been some Alevis who voted to AKP, it was just because of this. We are supporting the EU accession process. WE see that the Alevis who live in EU do not encounter any problem in practicing their Alevism. For instance, in Germany, Alevism can be educated in the schools as a lecture. Even dreaming of this is hard. Here, we hear ezan 5 times a day that disturbs us, but nobody cares. If Turkey joins EU, the speakers of mosques will be taken out as the bells of the churches were silenced within EU.

Researcher: To finish up I would just like to ask, is there... I mean, what is the prospect for Alevism in Turkey? Are... are Alevis becoming more politically active? Do... you have any anxieties about

the future of Turkish politics for your organization? #01:02:05.4#

Secretary: He make really crowded meetings last year and this year as you see that in these photos. #01:02:32.1#

Researcher: Wow. #01:02:34.5#

Secretary: That was in Ankara, that was in Istanbul. #01:02:42.0#

<p>Secretary: The basic demand of these meetings are just being an equal citizen of this country. #01:02:52.1#</p> <p>Interpreter: The Turkey never had an Alevi vice-president or Alevi, you know chief general. #01:03:05.4#</p> <p>Secretary: They don't allow Alevi people being governor or just really important state person or state manager. #01:03:25.6#</p> <p>Secretary: We don't say that we're all these minorities, Kurdish, Turkish or something like that, has to be equal until if they deserve this they have to be um... go as a career to the top of this state. They have to just go to the top of this state. They don't uh... ban or stop that because of these minority IDs. #01:04:09.4#</p> <p>Secretary: If they don't uh... stop us we will just show our abilities and we'll try to become like governor or just prime minister or just president or something like that. They don't allow us. #01:04:33.1#</p>	<p>Murat: The main reasons of these meetings were seeking the equality of citizens. In Turkey, no Alevi could be prime minister or chief of general staff. There are only a small number of Alevis who works as the governors within the administrative structure of Turkey. Thus, we say that everybody who deserves to get to those positions without the consideration of their identity as Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, or Circassian must be equal. And if the Alevis are not prevented and if they are let to show their capabilities within the democratic means, then they can be prime minister or governor.</p>
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Secretary: In an old city that which I lived #01:04:39.4#

Secretary: most of the democratic (indecipherable) or something like that, the leader of these (indecipherable) and chambers of commerce or something like that, these leaders that, these are Alevi people. #01:04:59.5#

Secretary: If you don't make a pressure for to Alevis, they will just elect to these positions. #01:05:09.9#

Secretary: We are just trying to make lots of really crowded meetings last two years. #01:05:19.2#

Secretary: We just want, desire to be at equals (indecipherable) #01:05:25.7#

Interpreter: Don't give us extra but, let everybody be eq-- equal. #01:05:40.2#

Secretary: Hegemonic culture, just like... make pressure on Alevis people. Yeah#01:05:49.7#

Secretary: This is bothering us. #01:05:59.2#

Secretary: We imagine that if you just join to EU just they don't allow us like a discrimination like this. #01:06:08.7#

Secretary: Its very important for us. #01:06:12.9#

Researcher: Is there anything he would like to add? #01:06:17.9#

Secretary: Not to be forgotten #01:06:24.5#

Secretary: All the religion of Alevi in Ottoman Empire #01:06:31.3#

Secretary: Like they're really free. Live like free states. #01:06:36.6#

Secretary: Marxists in Europe, they don't know about this situation #01:06:44.9#
Secretary: They don't really need anything or just looking for the state... #01:06:49.3#
Secretary: They just collect taxes from their citizens #01:06:54.3#
Secretary: Like Comm-- Commons... #01:06:59.8#

Researcher: Communism? #01:07:02.1#

Secretary: Communism. They live together. #01:07:01.2#
Secretary: They don't make together without any help of state. All the citizens are just make together. #01:07:19.1#
Secretary: And cem, the ceremony. #01:07:32.8#
Secretary: And they made a judgement who makes... uh... who acts out of this law of Jam. #01:07:41.0#
Secretary: Common... uh... common law? #01:07:47.4#

Researcher: Uh-huh. #01:07:51.6#

Secretary: In England, they are not written but verbally, everybody knows that. Like that, everybody knows this law. #01:07:56.6#
Secretary: Just like there is a jury system in our Alevi and cem ceremony #01:08:21.5#
Secretary: There was managing this cem #01:08:28.7#
Secretary: Everybody has to declare what-- what they know about this subject while they are judging. #01:08:36.7#
Secretary: and the dede has to asked to the people and crowd 'how do you want to punish this guy?' #01:08:46.8#
Secretary: We'll just, they declare this punishment. #01:08:53.7#
Secretary: Its really very, its important #01:09:00.4#
Secretary: Never just, they don't in this punishment, they were just murdering a person. #01:09:12.8#
Secretary: They were just against violence. #01:09:17.4#
Secretary: Never just they killed a person as punishment. #01:09:26.1#
Secretary: They're really proud of this situation. We never killed, we never do just something like that and we were against violence. #01:09:39.1#
Secretary: Its really important for being a nice person for to others and just like keep their heart is well balanced. #01:09:47.3#
Secretary: The most strong punishment is not to talk with this punishment like in Christianity like they don't allow them to pray together. #01:10:08.0#
Secretary: In 1921 #01:10:12.0#
Secretary: A historian guy who wrote while his (indecipherable) people #01:10:25.6#
Secretary: He was against Alevi people and he was a Kemalist #01:10:28.2#
Secretary: Every village was a... um... a free state. #01:10:42.2#
Secretary: In order to be a state #01:10:46.2#
Secretary: You have to have a law, (indecipherable) jury, judgement, collect tax, take in taxes. #01:11:01.5#
Secretary: As I told that there was a term in Marxism that which is the state is not a state. #01:11:14.0#
Secretary: Everybody knows that what does he mean if you search Marxism? #01:11:25.2#
Secretary: All these states which are in Alevi's villages uh... especially the... this is the Marx which pointed eh... this situation. He pointed this kind of state. #01:11:45.2#
Secretary: This non-government state acting or something like that! As a term (laughter) #01:11:53.6#
Secretary: I have to chat about this situation.

Sample Back-Translation
Excerpts from Participant Murat

Turkish	English
<p>Aleviliğin zaten şöyle bir yanı vardır. Alevilerin literatürü, edebiyatı ve edebiyat dili bugünkü konuştuğumuz dildir, buna da bugün Türkçe denir. Bugünkü alevi edebiyatını bilmenin yolu Yunus Emre'yi, Kaygusuz Abdal'I, Pir Sultan'ı bilmekten geçer. Bunların kullandığı dil Türkçe'dir, önceden başka şekilde isimlendirilmiştir. İzin verirse söz sırası geldiği için şunu da söyleyeyim, Anadolu'da bugünkü konuştuğumuz dil birliği, bizim Aleviler dediğimiz, ozanlar, aşıklar ve dedeler sayesinde sağlanmıştır.</p>	<p>Alevism has such an aspect already. The literature, and the language of the literature, is the language of today, as that is called Turkish. In order to understand Alevi literature... Yunus Emre, Kaygusuz Abdal, and Pir Sultan Abdal... it must be known and understood. And their language was Turkish. And it is noteworthy to mention that the language unity of Anatolia was maintained by Alevi dedes, Alevi readers, and Alevi bards.</p>
<p>Ancak bu cahillerin dili olarak bilinen Türkçe Bektaşî tekkelerinde; Bektaşî dedelerinin, Bektaşî aşıklarının ve Bektaşî ibadetinin dili oldu. Bektaşî tekkelerinde eğitilen ozanlar, aşıklar, dedeler topluma çıktıklarında onlarla ibadet ederlerken cem yaparlarken bu dili konuşuyorlardı. Bu sayede bu dil Anadolu'nun ortak dili oldu.</p>	<p>But today, as it is known as the language of illiterates, Turkish was the language of Alevi(Bektashi) dedes, Alevi(Bektashi) readers, Alevi(Bektashi) bards; and it was the language of Alevi worshipping. The readers, and bards who were educated in Alevi (Bektashi) tekkes were using this language for their practices. By these means, that language became the common language of Anatolia.</p>
<p>Bunların en önemlilerinden biri Campanella'nın Güneş Ülkesi'dir, diğeri de Thomas More'un Ütopya'sıdır. Thomes More'un Ütopya'sını Alevilerin ütopyası ile kıyaslarsanız Alevilerin ütopyası Mars'a çok daha yakındır. Alevilerin başucu kitabı olan Buyruk'ta Rıza kenti diye bir bölüm vardır . Rıza Kenti'nde paralı bir toplumdan paranın olmadığı bir topluma geçtiklerini, kadınlarla erkeklerin nasıl eşit olduğunu, bütün varlıkların nasıl ortaklaşa paylaşıldığını anlatır. Marx'ın Bellaton ve Bellek Toplumu diye izah ettiği toplum modeline bu daha yakındır, ne yazık ki Marx ... (Missing).</p>	<p>One of the most important of these is 'City of Sun' by Campanella, and the other one is 'Utopia' by Thomas More. If you compare Thomas More's Utopia with Alevis' utopia, you notice that it is closer to Marx. In 'Buyruk', which is a reference book for Alevis, there is a chapter where a city named 'Rıza' is mentioned. In the city 'Rıza', it is told a the society where equality is common, and possession of any commodity is not seen, and that the money is not used. This is closer to the society model defined by (??), unfortunately Marx....(Missing)...</p>

Bu dernekler sayesinde önceden gizli yaptığımız ibadetleri artık açıktan yapabilmekteyiz

Elbette. Alevi-Bektaşî Dernekleri Federasyonu kurulunca savcılık bizi mehkemeye verdi, Alevî adı ile dernek, teşkilat kuramazsınız denildi. Bu mahkeme sürecinde AİHM'den bu isimle dernek kurabileceğimizin kararını aldık. Pir Sultan'ı anmak için Pir Sultan'ın yaşadığı kent Sivas'ta 1993 yılında biraraya geldiğimizde bize saldırarak 33 arkadaşımızı yakdılar.

(Mustafa Kemal) Bu mücadeleye girdiğinde o zamanki Alviliğinin başı olan Hacı Bektaşî Postişî Cemalettin Çelebi Atatürk ile görüşerek "Cumhuriyeti kuracaksan, o zaman biz sana destek olalım" demiştir. Mustafa Kemal o görüşmede "bu aramızda kalsın, kimseye söyleme ama benim de niyetim o" demiştir. Yani Aleviler cumhuriyetle laikliği Mustafa Kemal'den önce ilan etmişlerdi. Tarihsel olarak 1000 yıl süren Alevilerin Sünniler ile, şeriatla kavgası, bakıldığında şeriata karşı korkunç bir mücadelenin pratiğini yansıtır. Bundan dolayı da Aleviler padişahlığın yıkılmasını, halifeliğın kaldırılmasını tarihsel olarak hep isteyegelmişlerdir.

Ama Kemalizmin tekçil bir ideoloji olmasından dolayı Kemalsitler 1925'te çıkardıkları Tekke ve Zaviyelerin Kapatılmasına ilişkin kanun ile Aleviliği yasaklamışlardır. Tekke ve Zaviyelerin Kapatılmasına yol açan kanun, "dedeyim" ve

With the help of these organizations, we can carry out activities more openly that we used to do hidden.

Of course. When the Federation of Alevi-Bektashi Associations were first established a prosecution was initiated due that the name Alevi should not be used in the name of the association. Throughout the trial process, we went to the ECHR and received a decision in our favour. In the year 1993, when we came together in Sivas to commemorate Pir Sultan, they attacked us and let 33 friends of us burned.

When he (Mustafa Kemal) first initiated the independence war, he met with Cemalettin Chelebi, who was the leader of Alevis of that time, and had a conversation in the context that "the Alevis would support him if he was after the establishment republic". And Mustafa Kemal, during that meeting, gave the guarantee of his intention of establishing the republic, as he asked from him "not to mention to anybody". So Alevis declared secularism and republic quite earlier than Mustafa Kemal. Historically the fight of Alevis with Sünnis and Sheriah, which took almost 1000 years is assessed, the reflection of an incredible practice of struggle can be observed. Therefore, Alevis had always been in the favour of abolishment of sultanate and caliphate.

The Kemalists, based on a law, addressing the closure of tekkes adopted in 1925, banned the Alevism. Due that law, it was banned to express the identity of 'dede', that relatively meant to ban 'cem'. In addition, the Alevi ideology, Alevi dedes were based

“çelebiyim” demeyi yasaklıyor. Dede, Alevilerin ibadetini yöneten kişidir. Dedeyi yasaklamak demek Cem’i yasaklamak demektir. Ayrıca Alevi düşüncesi, Alevi ideolojisi, Alevi dedeleri tekkelerde yetiştirilirdi. Alevi tekkeleri kapatılınca bu eğitim yer altına alındı.

Şunu söyleyeyim, 1970 yılında ben şehre okumaya geldiğimde babam ve amcam bana Alevi olduğumu söylememi söylemişlerdi. Solcuyuz derdik ama Aleviyiz demeye çekinirdik. Avrupa Birliği demokrasinin bu anlamda bize büyük katkısı olmuştur.

Ayrıca Madımak Oteli’ndeki yangın Solingen’deki yangınla kıyaslanamayacak kadar fecidir. Solingen’deki yangını yapan kişilerin eyleminden devletin haberi yoktur. O evlerin miliyetçiler tarafından yakılacağını (Solingen’deki), kilise, polis veya devlet birimleri bilseydi mutlaka buna engel olurlardı. Biz 2 Temmuz’da(1993) Pir Sultan’ı anmaya giderken validen izin alarak gitmiştik, Kültür Bakanlığı da bize parasal destek sağlamıştı. Ancak Cuma namazından çıkan insanlar geldiler bizi yaktılar, olaylar 8 saat sürdü, televizyonlardan canlı olarak yayınladılar, ama bizim yakılmamızı engellemediler. AKP hükümeti burayı hala müze yapmıyor, ama Almanya Solingen katliamının olduğu yeri müze yaptı. Bu iki olayı bu anlamda kıyaslamamızı isterim. demokratik ve laik bir ülke olan Almanya’nın tavrı ile AKP’nin bu konudaki tavrı çok açık görülmektedir.

Alevilerden AKP’ye oy verenler olduysa sadece buna aldandıkları için olmuştur. Yani biz AB’ye giriş sürecini ve AB’nin

on ‘tekkes’. Then, when the tekkes got closed, the education of Alevi dedes were taken underground.

Let me tell you this, in the year 1970, when I came to city to study, my father and my uncle told me to hide my Alevi identity. We used to say, “we’re leftists” but not “Alevi”. EU democracy has contributed a lot in this sense.

The incident of Madımak is a lot more tragic than the incident in Solingen. The perpetrators of the incident in Solingen were not known by the state officials. If it was known that those houses (in Solingen) were set on fire by the extremists, church, or police would prevent it to happen. When we went to commemorate Pir Sultan in 2 July (1993), we were given permission by the governor, and financially supported by the Ministry of Culture. But the people who got out of Cuma prayer attacked us and set the Hotel on fire, it took 8 hours, it was broadcasted live, but none of the state officials took an action to prevent it from happening. Current AKP government still does not let that Hotel become a Museum, but Germany already turned that place, where the incident happened, a museum. I really want you to compare those two incidents carefully. The stance of democratic and secular German government and the stance of current AKP government can easily be visualized.

If there had been some Alevis who voted to AKP, it was just because of this. We are supporting the EU accession process. We

demokratik laik düzene uyum sürecini bizler destekliyoruz. Biz şunu gördük ki, AB’de yaşayan Aleviler Aleviliklerini yaşarlarken hiçbir sıkıntıyla karşılaşmıyorlar. Örneğin Almanya’da Alevilik ders olarak okutulmaktadır. Bunları Türkiye’de hayal etmek bile zordur. Burada günde 5 kez çok yüksek sesle ezan okunuyor, bundan Aleviler rahatsızdır, ancak kimse ilgilenmiyor. AB’ye girince nasıl kilise çanları çalınmaz olduğuydu AB’ye girildiğinde camiler de megafonlarını çıkaracaklardır.

Bu mitingleri esas talebi eşit yurttaş olmak istiyoruz şeklindeydi. Türkiye’de hiçbir Alevi başbakan olmamış, hiçbir genel kurmay başkanı Alevi olmamıştır. Türkiye’nin idari yapısında görev yapan vali, kaymakam gibi personelden çok azı Alevidir. Bundan dolayı biz diyoruz ki Türkiye’de yaşayan herkes, Türk olsun, Kürt olsun, Çerkez olsun, Ermeni olsun eşit yurttaş olmalıdır ve liyakatlerine göre de hak ettikleri yerlere gelmelidir. Eğer Alevilerin önlerine engeller konulmаса Aleviler de becerilerini, yeteneklerini demokratik yollardan gelerek gösterbilirler, başbakan da vali de olabilirler.

see that the Alevis who live in EU do not encounter any problem in practising their Alevism. For instance, in Germany, Alevism can be educated in the schools as a lecture. Even dreaming of this is hard. Here, we hear ezan 5 times a day that disturbs us, but nobody cares. If Turkey joins EU, the speakers of mosques will be taken out as the bells of the churches were silenced within EU.

The main reasons of these meetings were seeking the equality of citizens. In Turkey, no Alevi could be prime minister or chief of general staff. There are only a small number of Alevis who works as the governors within the administrative structure of Turkey. Thus, we say that everybody who deserves to get to those positions without the consideration of their identity as Turkish, Kurdish, Armenian, or Circassian must be equal. And if the Alevis are not prevented and if they are let to show their capabilities within the democratic means, then they can be prime minister or governor.