

A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY
GOVERNMENT'S ALEVI INITIATIVE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF ALEVI
ORGANIZATIONS

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis analyzes the Justice and Development Party government’s Alevi Initiative which was launched in 2007 as a part of the “Democratic Opening” project that included an Alevi Initiative as well as Kurdish, Roma, Armenian and Greek Orthodox initiatives as well as several Alevi Organizations’ approaches to the Initiative. Even though the Alevi Initiative and especially the Alevi Workshops which constituted the heart of the whole process was represented as a sincere attempt on the part of the Turkish State to understand Alevis’ problems and meet their demands, a considerable part of Alevi Associations have expressed strong criticisms regarding the structure, aim and outcome of the Initiative from 2007 to this day. This thesis evaluates the course and outcome of the JDP government’s Alevi Initiative by analyzing the transcripts of the 7 Alevi Workshops which were held in 2009-2010 and the outcomes of the in-depth interviews that were conducted with the representatives of five Alevi Associations in July and August 2012. This study concludes that the ‘unsatisfactory’ outcome of the Alevi Initiative can be explained with the help of the Foucauldian conceptualization of governmentality as the Alevi Initiative aimed to construct a certain kind of knowledge about Alevilik and through it tried to internalize and control Alevi community, Alevi Organizations’ main demands remained unanswered to a great extent.

Keywords: Alevi Initiative, Alevi organizations, Governmentality, Power-knowledge relation

ÖZ

ALEVİ ÖRGÜTLERİNİN BAKIŞ AÇISINDAN ADALET VE KALKINMA PARTİSİ HÜKÜMETİNİN ALEVİ AÇILIMININ ELEŞTİREL BİR DEĞERLENDİRMESİ

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Bu tez Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi Hükümetinin 2007 yılında başlattığı ‘Demokratik Açılım’ projesi dahilinde Kürt, Roman, Ermeni, Rum Ortodox Açılımlarının yanısıra hayata geçirilen Alevi Açılımını ve Alevi Örgütlerinin Alevi Açılımına yaklaşımını konu edinmektedir. Her ne kadar Alevi Açılımı ve Alevi Açılımının özünü oluşturan Alevi Çalıştayları, Türk Devletinin, Alevilerin sorunlarını anlaması ve isteklerini karşılaması noktasında samimi bir adım olarak betimlenmişse de, Alevi Örgütlerinin önemli bir bölümü 2007 yılından bu güne Alevi açılımının yapısı, amacı ve sonuçları ile ilgili ciddi eleştirel ortaya koymaktadırlar. Bu tez AKP hükümeti tarafından ortaya konulan Alevi Açılımı sürecini ve bu sürecin sonuçlarını 2009-2010 yılında düzenlenen Alevi Çalıştaylarının deşifrelerine ve Temmuz-Ağustos 2012 döneminde beş Alevi Örgütünün Temsilcileri ile yapılan derinlemesine görüşmelerin sonuçlarına dayanarak incelemektedir. Bu çalışma Alevi Açılımının ‘tatminkar’ olmayan sonuçlarını, Foucault’nun ‘yönetim sanatı’ kavramsallaştırması bağlamında ele alarak, Alevi Açılımının Alevilik hakkında belli tür bir bilgi üretmeyi amaçlaması ve bu üretilen bilgi üzerinden Alevi toplumunu içerseyerek, control etmeye çalışması üzerinden açıklamaktadır. Alevi Açılımının amacı Aleviliği ve Alevi toplumunu içermek ve control etmek olduğu düzette, Alevi Örgütlerinin talepleri Alevi Açılımı sonucunda cevapsız kalmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Alevi Açılımı, Alevi Örgütleri, Yönetim sanatı, Güç-bilgi ilişkisi

To Didem who had the courage to defend her faith against an accusing teacher
during a 'Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge' class...

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study analyzes the process named as the ‘Alevi Initiative’ launched in 2007 by the governing Justice and Development Party (JDP) to address the ‘Alevi Issue’. The process was represented, by the coordinators of the project, as an attempt of dialogue, a sincere move towards getting to know Alevis and meeting their demands. A considerable number of Alevi associations, on the other hand, perceived ‘Alevi Initiative’ as an attempt by the state to tame and reform Alevilik to be able to control the considerable Alevi population in Turkey. The Preliminary Report which is resulting document of the Alevi Workshops’ –which were designed as the central part of the Initiative– as well as the transcripts of the Workshops themselves reveal that meeting Alevis’ main demands was not taken to be a possible option by the coordinators of the Alevi Initiative. Rather the Workshops and the Preliminary Report dwelt on Alevi community’s structure and internal problems in an attempt to come up with an ‘acceptable’ definition of Alevilik. Such an attempt arguably displays that the Alevi associations’ reservations about the Alevi Initiative were not in vain. This study aims to question to what extent the Alevi Initiative of the JDP government aimed to control Alevilik and Alevi community by including a tamed version of it within the state apparatus rather than meeting Alevis’ demands for their religious, cultural, and communal rights.

Although the Alevi community has constituted an inherent segment of the Republic of Turkey, and before that, the Ottoman Empire, arguably their problems and demands became an important issue within Turkish Politics only after 1980s with the establishment of Alevi associations. 1980s proved to be a period during which Alevi community embraced identity politics and started to voice their religious and cultural demands and Alevi opinion leaders publicized Alevis’ lack of official recognition of

the state and communal rights (Soner & Toktaş 2011, 421). Although Alevis' demands for their communal rights were not met in this period, by the end of 1980s Alevi identity was partly recognized by the state by some gestures such as attendance of the ministers to the Hacı Bektaş Veli Festival of Alevis (Poyraz 2005, 509). By 2000s Alevi Issue became one of the critical areas of Turkish politics if not a central one but it was impossible to observe a serious attempt to meet Alevis' demands from any of the governments from 1980's to 2007. In its first term as single party government, the Justice and Development Party which is known to have a "predominantly Sunnite constituency and a culturally conservative profile" did not have any Alevi MPs among its 363 MPs and the party or its leader Recep Tayyip Erdoğan showed little to no interest in the Alevi issue (Köse 2010, 147). Before the 2007 elections, however the JDP included two Alevi MP Candidates İbrahim Yiğit and Reha Çamuroğlu in its election list, from which Çamuroğlu went on to serve as the Prime Minister's advisor on the Alevi Issue and got known to be the architect of the Alevi Initiative. After its victory in 2007 elections, the JDP launched a "democratic opening" and it included an Alevi Initiative as well as Kurdish, Roma, Armenian and Greek Orthodox initiatives (Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi 2011, 132). The Alevi Initiative of the JDP government included 7 Alevi Workshops with the participation of both Alevi and Sunni opinion leaders as well as social organizations such as Alevi Iftars and visitations to Cemevis by the president Abdullah Gül and several ministers.

While Alevi Workshops' moderator Subaşı¹ defined Alevi Initiative as a noteworthy step "in order to open the necessary channels for an honest and sincere exchange with the Alevi community", Prime Minister's advisor on the Alevi issue Reha Çamuroğlu stated that "our Prime Minister is a politician who knows problems cannot be solved by ignoring them. He made a step forward in this issue" (Subaşı 2010b, 165; Hürriyet November 23, 2007). Although it was accepted by the Alevi associations that "among the governments of the Republic of Turkey, the JDP

¹ Subaşı graduated from Atatürk University Divinity School in 1986. For a short period he taught compulsory religion classes in Balıkesir and Konya. He received his Ph.D. in Sociology from Selçuk University. He served at several departments and universities. During the Alevi Initiative, he served as the Ministerial Consultant. He is currently employed at the Strategy Development Department of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs.

government recognized Alevi Issue which has become a burning problem for 20 years for the first time and displayed will and intentness for the resolution of problems”, the JDP’s sincerity in meeting Alevis’ demands and method of the Alevi Initiative was questioned throughout the process (Request Report 2009, 5). While general director of the *Alevi Bektaşi Federasyonu*, Turan Eser argued that Reha Çamuroğlu was trying to come up with an acceptable form of Alevilik by getting opinion from only a certain group of Alevis, head of *Cem Vakfı*, İzzettin Doğan argued that the JDP government had a secret agenda and Alevi Initiative was meant for the Sunnification of Alevi community (Hürriyet November 23, 2007). The first Alevi *iftar* which was organized by Reha Çamuroğlu in 2008 and was perceived as the first step of the Alevi Initiative raised similar complaints from the Alevi associations and a majority of the associations did not attend the organization on the grounds that there is no concept of *iftar* in Alevi fasting tradition and this organization can only be perceived as the first step of assimilating Alevi community (Hürriyet January 11, 2008). It is also necessary to state that the architect of the Alevi Initiative Reha Çamuroğlu who is also a well-known Alevi intellectual resigned from his duty as the advisor of the prime Minister on the Alevi Issue as he believed that no steps were taken towards the Alevi Community (Radikal November 14, 2008). After Çamuroğlu’s resignation another Alevi *iftar* was organized by the government in 2009 which was boycotted by a considerable part of Alevi associations although some associations such as *Cem Vakfı* and *Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı* which did not attend the Iftar in 2008, was represented in this organization (Hürriyet January 6, 2009).

After Çamuroğlu’s resignation, Faruk Çelik, Minister of State responsible for the General Directorate of Religious Affairs came in charge of Alevi Initiative. The first Alevi Workshop which was organized by the State Minister Faruk Çelik and moderated by sociologist Necdet Subaşı consisted of representatives of Alevi Associations. The remaining 6 workshops focused on certain approaches to Alevilik and were attended by academicians, theologians, representatives of non-governmental organizations, politicians respectively while the 7th and last workshop was organized as a combined session. Transcripts of the Workshops reveal that even during the Workshops both Minister Çelik and Moderator Subaşı stated their reservations about Alevis’ demands and impossibility of meeting them. Findings of the 7 Alevi

Workshops were shared with public with a Preliminary Report written by the moderator of the meetings, Necdet Subaşı in 2010. As it will be elaborated upon in the third chapter, the Preliminary Report is far from meeting Alevi's demands and its approach to Alevi community, Alevilik and Alevi's problems is found to be rather biased by the Alevi associations.

1.1. The Research Problem

As it will be detailed in the third chapter, Alevi Initiative can be interpreted as an attempt by the government and the state to include Alevilik and Alevi community into the state apparatus and by doing so transforming it into a more 'acceptable' structure. In that sense, it is possible to take this initiative as a break with the Republic of Turkey's approach to the Alevi Issue. While the state mostly ignored the existence of Alevi and their problems to a great extent and tried to control Alevi community via repression in the history of Republic of Turkey, the Alevi Initiative of JDP government arguably aimed to transform this community into a more governable entity. It can be argued that Alevi community remained mostly an inaudible and unobservable part of the Turkish nation and it was not a 'sensible' part in the eyes of the Turkish nation state until 1980's-apart from its linkage with communism through 1960s and 1970s. As Ranciere argues that "a partition of the sensible refers to the manner in which a relation between a shared 'common' and the distribution of exclusive part is determined through the sensible," in similar fashion, Alevi community's religious, cultural, social and communal rights were ignored by the Turkish Nation State (Ranciere 2001, 9). After the 1980s however, Alevi community's rapid organization around Alevi associations and their insistence on acquiring their rights made it almost impossible for the state to ignore this community any longer (Soner and Toktaş 2011, 421). It is also necessary to mention that starting with 2004; European Union's Progress Reports for Turkey have been criticizing the state for its partial stance towards Alevi community. Although internal and external pressures forced the government to deal with the Alevi Issue, the contents and structure of the Alevi Initiative as well as its results makes it difficult to observe the process as a sincere attempt to solve Alevi's problems. On the contrary, this attempt can be interpreted as a Foucauldian 'art of government' that is developed

to control Alevi community and Alevilik itself through inclusion. Foucault specifies what he means by the term ‘art of government’ by stating that “I wanted to study the art of governing, that is to say, the reasoned way of governing best and, at the same time, reflection on the best possible way of governing” (Foucault 2004b, 2). In *The Subject and Power* Foucault argues that the term government should be understood in the broad meaning it had in the sixteenth century which

Did not refer only to political structures or to the management of states; rather, it designated the way in which the conduct of individuals or of groups might be directed... It did not only cover the legitimately constituted forms of political or economic subjection but also modes of action, more or less considered or calculated, which were destined to act upon the possibilities of action of other people.. To govern, in this sense, is to structure the possible field of action of others (Foucault 1982, 790).

It is also necessary to state that “to govern” refers to “the control one may exercise over oneself and others, over someone’s body, soul and behavior” and in that sense the object of governance is “never a state, a territory, or a political structure. Those whom governs are people, individuals, or groups” (Foucault 2004a, 167). As the main demands of Alevi Associations have been articulated and represented in the public sphere more than 20 years and these demands were also transmitted to the governments, the JDP government’s attempt to ‘understand’ Alevis’ main problems and demands through Alevi Workshops can be interpreted as an attempt to ‘govern’ Alevi community and their demands. A close reading of the Alevi Workshops’ transcripts and the Preliminary Report would reveal to what extent the JDP government’s Alevi Initiative can be taken as an attempt of an ‘art of government’. It is also necessary to point out that the Alevi Workshops and the transcripts of the meetings which were shared with the public bears the claim to be “an important referans point for the understanding of Alevilik” while the Preliminary Report is designated as a “road map to handle and meet Alevis’ demands” (Workshop 1 2009, 9). From a Foucauldian perspective the JDP government’s claim to produce legitimate knowledge about Alevilik and Alevis problems and demands can be considered in relation with a “nexus of power-knowledge” (Foucault 1997, 53). As Foucault argues that power “always has to be considered in relation to a field of interactions,

contemplated in a relationship which cannot be dissociated from forms of knowledge”, it is necessary to question the relation between the knowledge that is produced through the Alevi Workshops and the existing power structure that constituted the bases on which Alevi Initiative was raised. This thesis aims to question to what extent the JDP government Alevi Initiative can be evaluated through Foucault’s concepts of governmentality and power-knowledge relation and how the outcome of the Alevi Initiative can be interpreted from such a perspective.

Even though one of the common criticisms towards the Alevi community is that there is no unity among Alevis themselves in terms of conceptualization of Alevilik as well as their collective problems and demands, a closer reading of the Workshops’ transcripts reveals that the ideological and philosophical differences between the Alevi associations do not reflect much upon their demands. Although making a classification of Alevi associations as modernist-secularist and traditionalist-religious is common, such a division does not clarify the differences between Alevi associations. Therefore, it would arguably be more beneficial to categorize Alevi associations based on their interpretation of the state-religion relationship. While Alevi associations with a statist inclination accept Alevis’ inclusion within the state apparatus as an acceptable solution for Alevis’ problems, the reformist wing defends total separation of the state and religion. Regardless, both of these groups outline their demands under six main headings: (1) dismantling of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs or its restructuring as an autonomous institution, (2) abolition of compulsory religious classes and restructuring them as elective courses, (3) official recognition of Cemevis as places of worship, (4) recognition of Alevi Dedes as religious leaders, (5) Return of Hacı Bektaş Veli Lodge to its real owners i.e. Alevis, (6) and renovation of Madımak Hotel into a Museum in the memory of the victims of the Sivas Massacre. Although Alevi associations of a more statist tradition settles for ‘partial’ solutions for Alevis problems such as inclusion of Alevis and Alevilik within the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and Compulsory Religion Courses, both statist and reformist Alevi associations agree that above mentioned demands constitutes the ideal solutions for Alevis’ problems without an exception. Departing from this fact, it would be illogical to blame Alevi associations’ ‘fragmented nature’ for the deadlock that the Alevi Initiative has reached. On the

contrary, it would be more fruitful to question the method of the workshops as well as their coordinators' impartiality on the matter; chapter three attempts this analysis through a diligent content analysis of their transcripts. This attempt reveals that the Alevi associations are not satisfied with the Alevi Initiative and its results perhaps because the whole process problematized Alevilik and Alevis themselves while obsessing over an official definition of Alevilik in an attempt to reshape this community's perceptions and demands, rather than searching a way to remedy their legal and social problems.

1.2. The Research Methodology

This study focuses on content analysis of the available material on Alevi Initiative and Alevi Workshops in particular, available literature on the Alevi issue as well as analysis of the in-depth interviews conducted with five Alevi Associations' representatives between June and August 2012. The study tries to clarify the reasons behind the JDP government's Alevi Initiative and Alevi Workshops failure to satisfy Alevis' demands and leading to, strengthened suspicions of the Alevi associations' regarding the 'real motivation' behind the whole process.

In the Second chapter, titled 'Understanding Alevi Issue,' a brief historical background is provided regarding the sources of Alevis' main problems and demands in the history of the Republic of Turkey. The section is aimed at enabling the reader to have a general idea about the roots of the 'Alevi Issue' that has become a hot topic in contemporary Turkish politics. The second chapter also includes a literature review which elaborates on the various possible ways of dealing with the 'Alevi Issue' via dichotomizing the literature into sociological and political works dealing with Alevilik, Alevi community and/or 'Alevi Issue'. As there is no consensus on the definition of Alevilik and making such a definition is not desired by a majority of Alevi associations, this work takes Alevilik as a 'difference' within a homogenized Sunni society and tries to evaluate the possible relations between Alevis' problems and the ideal of a homogenized society –or invisibility of difference- within the Turkish Nation State. It is argued within this theoretical section that among the available theoretical concepts, Ranciere's conceptualization of 'the partition of sensible' offers an opportunity to grasp the inaudibility of the 'Alevi Issue' before

the JDP government's Alevi Initiative, while Foucault's 'governmentality' concept explains the process of Alevi Initiative as well as its goal and the reasons of its failure quite comprehensively.

The third chapter, titled 'the JDP Government's Alevi Initiative', mainly focuses on the seven Alevi Workshops which constituted the core of the JDP's initiative. A close reading of the workshops' transcripts as well as the analysis of in-depth interviews is included in the chapter. Several reports published by Alevi associations during and after Alevi Workshops and Alevi Associations' statements about the Initiative process are also included within the chapter to provide additional depth from the Alevis' perspective. The main topics of argument which frequently emerged during the research are elaborated under their respective sub-sections. In addition to the aforementioned six main demands of Alevi associations, two other headings are included into the chapter, namely the issues of 'constructing a new language' and 'defining Alevilik', as these issues were discussed at great length during the workshops and unpacking their contents would help to shed light on the government's and state's approach to the Alevi issue as these examples arguably constitute a significant part of the official discourse. In the beginning of the Alevi Workshops and especially in the Preliminary Report 'constructing a new language' for the discussion and solution of Alevis' problems is repeatedly mentioned by the moderator, Necdet Subaşı. Likewise, another central issue that the coordinators of the Alevi Workshops greatly emphasized was 'defining Alevilik', although the Alevi associations never expressed their concerns for a unanimous definition. Hence, in contrast to the six main demands of the Alevi Associations, these two headings can be regarded as what the JDP government brought to the negotiation table, and their analysis might be helpful in illuminating the government's and state's true motivation throughout the process.

As each of the seven Alevi Workshops was attended by participants from certain societal or political segments, a close reading of the transcripts makes it possible to assess each group's approaches to the issue. The first Alevi Workshop consisted only of the representatives of Alevi Associations and was attended by 36 Alevi representatives. The second workshop was planned to represent academicians from

several disciplines of social sciences and was attended by 30 participants. The third workshop included only Sunni theologians and included 38 participants, while representatives of non-governmental organizations were listened to in the fourth workshop in which 33 participants was present. The fifth workshop was attended by 27 journalists, and the sixth workshop included 36 politicians. The seventh and last workshop consisted of a mixed group of former workshops' participants and it included 39 participants, of which 20 of them were Alevi and 19 of them were Sunni. Another vital primary source of the third chapter is the Preliminary Report which was authored by the moderator of Alevi workshops Necdet Subaşı and published as the official outcome of Alevi Workshops. The findings of and the conclusions reached by the Preliminary Report as well as the language used by Subaşı is quite significant in understanding the aim and the outcome of the Alevi Workshops.

Along with the newspaper pieces on Alevi Associations' evaluations about the Alevi Workshops, two main documents prepared by the *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* are also included in the third chapter. *Birinci Etap Alevi Örgütleri ve Temsilcileri Toplantısı, Değerlendirme ve İstem Raporu* –from here on, the Request Report– was published in June 2009 and presented to authorities in the First Alevi Workshop (Request Report 2009, 3). It was also commonly stated by the interviewees that the Request Report did not only represent the *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı*'s demands, and it was produced following a meeting participated by all the Alevi Associations who took part in the First Alevi Workshop. *Alevi Çalıştayları Nihai Raporu Üstüne Bir Değerlendirme* –from here on, the Assessment Report– was prepared by the *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* with the participation of Alevi academicians as a response to Preliminary Report. The criticisms of the Preliminary Report included in the Assessment Report provide insight from the Alevis' perspective on the outcome of the Alevi Workshops and Alevi Initiative.

Evidence and results of the empirical study conducted for this thesis is primarily used in the third chapter as the focus of in-depth interviews was designed to be the process of Alevi Workshops and its outcome. Five in-depth interviews were conducted with the representatives of available Alevi associations in Ankara which are: *Hacı Bektaş*

Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı, Cem Vakfı Ankara Şubesi, Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, Yeni Mahalle Şubesi and Pir Sultan Abdal İki Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı between July 20, 2012 and August 10 2012. The interviews lasted approximately 30 minutes with each participant and the transcripts of the interviews are evaluated in the third chapter. The questions asked in the interviews and full transcripts of each interview are also included in the appendix of the thesis.

Lastly it is necessary to emphasize that this study is not shaped to assess Alevi community's overall approaches to the issues at hand and the material used in this study is not sufficient to make statements about the Alevi community. Rather this study focuses on several Alevi associations' main religious, social and cultural demands and the state's approach to these demands during the JDP government's Alevi Initiative. It is significant to point out that although Alevi associations are known to have a certain level of representation of the Alevi community as it can be observed via the participation of over one million citizens in a meeting organized by Alevi associations (Hürriyet April 28, 2007), a study conducted only through Alevi associations cannot make a statement about the Alevi community in general. It is also necessary to state that contents of this thesis is not exhaustive of all the demands Alevi Associations voice, however, for the purposes of this study, the six main demands, which were dominant themes throughout the workshops, elaborated above is taken as the primary demands of the Alevi community.

CHAPTER 2

UNDERSTANDING 'ALEVI ISSUE'

Even though this study does not offer a definition of Alevilik, it would be beneficial to point out some of the basic characteristics of the Alevi community before moving on to the related literature. Even though no official statistics exist to specify the population of ethnic and religious minorities of Turkey, “according to unofficial estimates, the Alevis comprise 15 to 30 per cent of the total population of the Republic of Turkey” (Vorhoff 1998, 228). Even though it is not possible to offer an exact number of Alevis in Turkey, they “constitute the country’s second largest religious community, after the Sunnis” (Zeidan 1999, 74). According to Bruinessen “Alevi is a blanket term for a large number of heterodox communities whose beliefs and ritual practices differ significantly” (1996, 7). Even though Alevi community is a heterogeneous community² not only culturally but also ethnically and linguistically, there are certain points which are repeatedly emphasized to be the main characteristics of Alevilik and Alevi community. Unlike Sunni Muslims, “Alevis use Turkish rather than Arabic for their religious ceremonies and literature” (Zeidan 1999, 74) and men and women are equally included within the Cem Ayini³ (Zeidan 1999, 80). The religious leaders of the Alevi community are called *dede* and “the *dede* or the spiritual leader of the community, must belong to an *ocak* (hearth), the genealogy of which goes back to Ali” (Melikoff 1998, 6). Even though every Alevi village do not have a *dede* who is a resident of the village “every Alevi village is

² Bruinessen states that “In the eastern province of Kars, there are communities speaking Azerbaijani Turkish and whose Alevism closely resembles orthodox Twelver Shi’ism of modern Iran. The Arabic speaking Alevi communities of southern Turkey (especially Hatay and Adana) are ethnically part of Syria’s’ Alawi community and have no historical ties with the other Alevi groups” (1996, 7). Bruinessen designates the large Alevi groups as Turkish and Kurdish speakers both of which “appear to be the descendants of rebellious tribal groups that were religiously affiliated with the Safavids” (1996, 7).

³ Melikoff states that *Ayin-i Cem* is the repetition on earth of the Banquet of the Forties that took place during the Night of *Mirac*, the ascension of the Prophet (Melikoff 1998, 6). The ceremony “includes a sacrificial meal (*lokma*), a ritual alcoholic drink, *nefes* hymns accompanied by music on the saz, dance (*semah*), and the ritual lightning and extinguishing of candles (Zidan 1999, 80).

connected to an *ocak* and the *dede* who belongs to that *ocak* is obliged to visit at least once a year all the villages in his dependence” (Melikoff 1998, 6). The difference of Alevilik from Sunni Islam is also pointed out in several sources and its emphasized that “instead of adherence to the *shari’a*, Alevis profess obedience to a set of simple moral norms; they claim to live according to the inner (*batin*) meaning of religion rather than its external (*zahir*) demands (Bruinessen 1996, 7). Another difference of Alevilik from Sunnilik is its strong devotion to the House of the Prophet (*Ehlibeyt*) which included Muhammed, Ali, Fatima, Hassan and Hussein (Zeidan 1999, 79). T

It is impossible to comprehend the “Alevi Issue,” and the process of Alevi Initiative in particular, without evaluating historical events related to Alevilik, Alevi community and state-Alevi community relations within the Turkish Nation State history. In that sense it is necessary to point out the laws, institutions, and practices as well as social phenomena that constitute the base on which Alevi associations build their demands. This chapter deals with the historical background of the ‘Alevi Issue’ as well as its various interpretations in both scholarly and popular works. While the historical background section is designed to explain the historical phenomenon, the literature review section makes an assessment of the existing works related to the ‘Alevi Issue’.

2.1. Historical Background

Oppression of Alevis’ by the Ottoman Empire constitutes an important factor of Alevi history and identity. Yavuz Sultan Selim’s reign, during which the massacre of approximately forty thousand “migrants and villagers because of their alleged pro-Iran positions in Eastern Anatolia” occurred, is frequently cited to be a turning point for the Alevis’ status within the Ottoman Empire (Ulaş Tol 2009, 56). Although Alevi-Kızılbaş identity and Bektaşî order was considerably respected by the Ottoman Empire especially vis-à-vis the Janissary Corps, the ‘politico-religious’ war between the Safavids and the Ottoman Empire led to the deterioration of this relationship from the 16th Century onwards (Açikel and Ateş 2011, 719). It is argued by some scholars and expressed by the participants of the interviews that as a result of the continuous harassment and oppression from the Ottoman Empire “Alevis retreated to mountainous areas, [that were] isolated and hard to access” (Ulaş Tol 2009, 57). It is

also argued that although Alevi community developed certain traditions and practices to distinguish themselves from the Sunnis, they also pretended to be “Sunnis using *taqiya* to conceal their faith and survive in a hostile environment” (Zeidan 1999, 76). With the Turkish War of Independence and the foundation of the Turkish Nation State, Alevis’ relations with the state and the Sunni community transformed to a great extent. Although it is practically impossible to isolate political and social phenomena, which shaped the ‘Alevi Issue’ to its current form, from each other, it is necessary to distinguish between, where possible, the political phenomena which is linked to the Turkish Nation State to a great extent and sociological phenomena related to Alevis’ communities’ inner dynamics as well as their relations vis-à-vis the Sunni majority.

2.1.1. Political Phenomena Related to ‘Alevi Issue’

It is widely believed that Alevi community supported the Ankara government and Mustafa Kemal during the War of Liberation and Kemalist revolution during the early years of the new Turkish Republic (White 2003, 57). Mustafa Kemal’s visit to the Hacı Bektaş Veli Lodge at the beginning of the War of Liberation and Bektaşî *postnişin* Cemalettin Ulusoy’s encouragement for Alevis and Bektaşîs to join the War displays the warm relations between the Alevi community and Ankara Government (Ulaş Tol 2009, 58). Cemalettin Ulusoy’s becoming an MP of the First Assembly is also generally perceived as a rupture with the era of oppression under the Ottoman Empire (Ulaş Tol 2009, 58). Following the victory in the War of Liberation, the newly founded Turkish Nation State took important steps for secularization and modernization of both the state and the society. It was mentioned by the participants of the interviews on multiple occasions that Alevi community supported the modern and secular reforms that were implemented right after the foundation of the Republic and these reforms created a new sphere of individual freedoms for the Alevi community. Kemalist reforms which implemented “a modern bureaucracy, a Western legal system, progressive national education,” as well as full civil rights for women (Smith 2005, 437) were evaluated by the Alevi community as the promise of equal citizenship. Abolition of the Caliphate, the Office of the *Şeyhülislam*, and the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Pious Foundations in March

1924 displayed the Republic's determination to put an end to 'the Ottoman concept of 'religion and state' (din-ü devlet)" (White 2003, 63). By 1938, religion classes, which were based on a Sunni interpretation of Islam, were abolished in state schools (Kaplan 2002, 118). In 1928 the clause which stated that "the religion of the Turkish State is Islam" was removed from the constitution (Koçan and Öncü 2004, 471). As these reforms signaled the dismantling of Sunni religious leaders' political powers, and the state's discontinuation of perceiving religion as a public matter, Alevi community assumed that "in a state that regards religion merely as a private matter, they could hope not to be molested because of heterodox religious views and practices" (White 2003, 64).

Even though, it is commonly argued that "when the Turkish Republic replaced the Ottoman Empire, the Bektaşis embraced Atatürk's cause and supported his efforts to create a secular state" (Poyraz 2005, 504) arguably the relation between Alevis –and Bektaşis- and the Turkish state was not that smooth. Despite the Dersim uprising of 1938, and the state's heavy handed response to it, the event is rarely discussed in the literature on Alevilik. It is necessary to emphasize that representatives of Alevi Associations who participated in the interviews interpret the event as a very important moment and even as a turning point of the Alevi community-Turkish Nation State relations. Furthermore, it is argued by some scholars that the uprising was not supported by Sunni Kurds, and in that sense, the Dersim uprising should be seen as an Alevi uprising rather than a Kurdish one (Bruinessen 1999, 103; Ateş 2011, 269). In response to the Dersim uprising which consisted of Kurdish Alevis of the region, the Ankara government dispatched nearly 25,000 soldiers and twenty warplanes to the region, resulting in many civilians casualties (Cağaptay 2006, 112). In October 1938, the Turkish military crushed the rebels "after much bloodshed on both sides" (Cağaptay 2006, 112). The Dersim incident is usually mentioned along with other direct assaults to the Alevi community of both the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Nation State periods.

Several laws implemented and institutions established during the foundation period of the Turkish Nation State reveals that Alevis 'different' religious position was for the most part disregarded by the state. The General Directorate of Religious Affairs

(GDRA) which was founded on the day Caliphate was abolished is usually taken by the literature to be the most obvious sign of Turkish Nation State's tendency to ignore Alevi community and their religious specificity (Koçan and Öncü 2004, 471). The GDRA functioned under the Undersecretariat of the Prime Ministry and through it imams and other religious leaders of the Sunni community became civil servants (Sakallıoğlu 1996, 234). As the GDRA did not have a place for other religions or even diverse interpretations of Islam in its structure, it is possible to argue that "Turkish Republican Secularism created a strong linkage to religion through the GDRA and created a Sunni-centered public control over religious institutions and groups" (Soner and Toktaş 2011, 421). It is now conventional wisdom that the aim of this institution was to control the Muslim community of the newly founded Turkish Nation State and enlighten the society with 'true Islam' (Açikel and Ateş 2011, 722; Soner and Toktaş 2011, 421; Koçan and Öncü 2004, 471; Smith 2006, 312; White 2003, 63). It is necessary to emphasize that while the 'law on the Presidency of Religious Affairs, its establishment, and Obligations,' which was accepted on 14 June 1935, specified the duty of the GDRA simply as giving religious services, the 1961 Constitution stated that it was GDRA's duty "to 'enlighten society on the topic of religion' and 'manage the beliefs, practices, and moral principles of Islam'" (Bianchi 2004, 149). It is stated in the official website of the GDRA that "this [1961] law initiated a new phase for the Presidency of in its historical development and made its central organization gain today's organic structure" (GDRA, 2012). The 1982 Constitution also stated that "the Department of Religious Affairs, which is a part of the general administration, shall exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law... for achieving national solidarity and integrity" (1982 Constitution, Article 136). Another adverse development for the Alevi community –although it was not directly aimed at this minority– was the acceptance of the Law 677 of 1925 on the "termination of religious covenants and dervish lodges and ban on the usage of certain religious titles". The law stated that within the borders of the Turkish Republic all lodges and monasteries were shut down indefinitely. It also banned the usage of certain religious titles such as "*şeyhlik, dervişlik, müritlik, dedelik, seyitlik, çelebilik, Babalık, emirlik, nakiplik, halifelik, falcılık, büyücülük, üfürükçülük* etc." (Ministry of Justice, 2012). Along with the other Alevi and Sunni Lodges, Hacı

Bektaş Veli Lodge, which is accepted to be a place of pilgrimage by a considerable part of Alevis, was banned and all of its possessions were confiscated by the state (Ulaş Tol 2009, 58). Between 1958 and 1964 the Ministry of Education and General Directorate for Foundations restored the Lodge and reopened it as a Museum on 16 August 1964 (Hacıbektaş.com, 2012). Due to this law, Alevi *dedes* -who can be easily identified due to their untrimmed long beards and moustaches- “were often arrested because of illegal religious and ‘superstitious’ activities” and Alevi community’s Cem prayers were hindered to a considerable extent as “state trespasses on Alevi religious gatherings occurred frequently in the Republic, especially in the 1930s and early 1940s” (White 2004, 64). Although the Law 677 is still in force, its implementation is not as strict as it was before and Alevi Dedes are able to lead Cem rituals publicly.

Although initially religion classes in public schools were completely removed from the public schools, the transition period to multi-party politics led to their re-introduction into the education system. In 1949 the RPP introduced religion classes to the 4th and 5th grades of Primary Schools (Kaplan 2002, 118) and announced the establishment of a Faculty of Divinity in Ankara University (Zürcher 2004, 233). After the Democrat Party won the majority in 1950 elections and formed the government they made the religious education *de facto* as the parents had to opt out instead of opting in and it was quite “compulsory” to do so because of social pressure (Zürcher 2004, 233). The DP government also opened Qor’an courses and İmam-Hatip junior and senior high schools (Kaplan 2002, 118). All these religion courses and schools gave education according to a certain interpretation of Sunni Islam as any other interpretation of Islam including Alevilik was not recognized by the Turkish state. In 1982 the Religious Culture and Morals course was made compulsory with the Article 24 of the Constitution (Kaplan 2002, 120). Article 24 stated that

Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under the state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Other religious education and instruction shall be subject to the

individual's own desire, and in the case of minors, to the request of their legal representatives (The 1982 Constitution, Article 24).

Although the 'religious culture and morals' class is still compulsory in primary and secondary schools today, several non-Sunni parents expressed their discontent with the course and some of them applied to the European Court of Human Rights. Hasan and Eylem Zengin –an Alevi family- v. Turkey case was brought to the ECHR in 2007 and the court ruled that 'religious culture and morals' classes in Turkey violated Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (ECHR 2012, 7) which stated that

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions (European Convention 2010, 34).

Apart from the central regulations which have planned the practice and education of Islam, other laws and administrative regulations signified the Mosque as the sole place of worship for the Muslim community and ignored Alevis' place of worship i.e. Cemevis. It is possible to give numerous examples to such laws and regulations but the one of the most emphasized of them is 1924 village law which states that "people who live in collected or loose residences along with their public properties such as mosques, schools, fields, pastures constitutes a village" (Village Law 237). It is argued that especially after 1980s, this law enabled local governments to force Alevi villages to build Mosques. As Mosque was mentioned in the definition of a village "in many central Anatolian villages, Alevi communities were given the choice between allowing a mosque to be built or being deprived of basic amenities such as roads, clear water and schools (Ateş and Açikel 2011, 726). The cabinet degree which specifies the places of worship which are exempt from electric charges as Mosques, *Mescits*, Churches and Synagogues also ignores the Cemevis as places of worship.

During 1990's state organs acknowledged the existence of Alevi community in several ways. Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Research Center was founded within the Gazi University, Turkish Radio and Television started to air programs

about Alevi culture during the Muharrem month when Alevis fest and the General Directorate of Religious Affairs conducted a symposium about contemporary Alevilik and Bektaşilik in January 1992(Ateş 343, 355). Even though official recognition of the Alevi community was an important development, no steps were taken to meet Alevis demands which are based on the historical formation of certain institutions and laws that are specified above. Although it is impossible to argue that Alevi identity is ignored by the state to this day, institutions and laws such as the GDRA, compulsory religion classes, Law 677 related to the closure of religious covenants and dervish lodges and ban on the usage of certain religious titles still continue to exist and constitute the heart of the ‘Alevi Issue’.

2.1.2. Social Phenomenon Related to ‘Alevi Issue’

Most of the academic works on Alevilik traces the roots of the Alevi identity to the 16th century. It is argued that “Aliveness as a religious and ethnic group was born in the 16th century, shaped by the polarization between Iranian Safavids and the Ottoman Empire” (Ulaş Tol 2009, 56). Due to its close relation with Shia Safavids, Alevilik, which is a syncretic belief system and bears traces from Shamanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Christianity, Judaism and, polytheist religions of Anatolia, (Ateş 2011, 235) arrived at its current form by incorporating themes from Shiism and opposing to the dominant ideology of Orthodox Sunni Islam in the Ottoman Empire (Okan 2004, 58). As stated above, from 16th century on, the Alevi community started to live in geographically remote locations and had little communication with the outside world. Alevis’ isolated life from other religious groups therefore reinforced the development of Alevilik as a distinct identity (Ulaş Tol 2009, 57). As such it is possible to conceptualize “Alevilik” as an “umbrella term” that refers to the culmination of heterodox and diverse religious groups such as “Bektaşî, Kızılbaş, Nusayri, Abdal, Ocakzade, Çelebi, Tahtacı, Çepni” etc. (Erdemir 2005, 938). It should also be remembered that the Alevi community is not an ethnically homogenous one as it includes Turks, Kurds, Zazas and, Arabs (Bruinessen 1999, 118). Even such ethnic and religious divergence within the Alevi community cannot fully represent the heterodox and syncretic character of the community because “Alevilik as a collective identity points to an ongoing process of

identity construction and an equilibrium that is relational and shaped through time” (Ateş 235). In that sense it is quite difficult to make a universally agreed-upon definition of Alevilik as “there is no single element in terms of political, cultural and social leanings or in a sense of overall consciousness to which Alevis are supposed to subscribe” (Koçan and Öncü 2004, 473). It is also necessary to state that any attempt to define Alevilik bears the possibility of excluding or marginalizing a certain understanding or practice of Alevilik. As Açıkel and Ateş states that “there is less agreement among the Alevi about what they are not than what they are” (2011, 719), it would be beneficial to conceptualize Alevilik as a ‘difference’ from the Sunni interpretation of Islam.

Although foundation of the Turkish Nation State and its secular structure offered a certain extent of security for the Alevi community, it was not until the 1950s that Alevis left their remote villages and migrated to cities *en masse* (Bruinessen 1996, 7). Based on his field research, Shankland states that

Until the 1950s, only a few men from each village seem to have migrated to look for work in the towns...Seasonal migration was prevalent, either to pick fruit on the Black Sea coast or casual work in the sub-province centre. Migration is said to have increased in the 1960s, and then accelerated enormously in the 1970s as people began to realize that to work in Germany or another European country could be lucrative and secure occupation (Shankland 2003, 44).

During this period “many Alevis migrated from their rural villages, which tend to be peripheral and underdeveloped, to the large industrialized cities of Western Turkey and to Western Europe, mainly Germany” (Zeidan 1999, 74). It is also argued that due to Alevi community’s greater material deprivation, they “participated much more in migration processes” (Rittersberger-Tılıç 1998, 69). Although Alevis’ migration to big cities in Turkey necessitated continuous interaction with the Sunni community, the immigrants preferred to dwell around their kin and fellow villagers thus constituting separate Alevi neighborhoods (Bruinessen 1999, 120). While compulsory schooling, improved communications, and massive migration to large cities increased the frequency of everyday dialogue between Alevi and Sunni

communities, it is often argued that Sunnis' prejudices against Alevi remained active (Zeidan 1999, 77). Accusation of immorality and perversion against the Alevi community (Bruinessen 1999, 120) is most clearly revealed in the case of *Mum Söndü*, a popular myth that accuses Alevi of engaging in incestuous intercourse during their Cem prayers. Even though the growing Alevi population in big cities significantly escalated the tension between Alevi and strict Sunnis (Bruinessen 1996, 8), Alevi saw migration and education "as a gateway to social upward mobility, and from 1960s on a new Alevi middle class appeared" (Zeidan 1999, 77).

Urbanization of the Alevi community from 1950s onwards also had effects on the structure of Alevi community and its belief systems. It is argued that urbanization and modernization of the Alevi community led to dissolution of Alevi belief, practices and rituals (Ulaş Tol 2009, 65). It is argued that as the Alevi community became urbanized, their beliefs and rituals lost some of their original meaning, leading to "Alevi [becoming] increasingly secular and left-leaning, [and] neglecting their traditional institutions" (Zeidan 1999, 77). Similarly, Okan states that due to the urbanization and modernization, Alevi community's 'ethnic' character was partly disconcerted and Alevi individuals started to acquire various identities (Okan 2004, 116). As urban life was not suitable for Alevi practices such as *Musahiplik*, *Düşkünlik*, *Dervişlik* and even for Cem prayers in its traditional structure, "solidarity loosened, ritual and ceremony lost some of their meaning, and the spiritual leadership gradually lost its authority" (Zeidan 1999, 77). Furthermore, Okan argues that Alevi experienced the destructive effects of urbanization more severely than Sunnis because *Dede-Talip* relationship which is argued to be the core of Alevilik could not be maintained in the urban setting (Okan 2004, 117).

By the 1970s, perception of Alevilik was mostly stripped of its religious aspect and was relegated to a secondary status behind the Marxist politics embraced by the Alevi youth (Ulaş Tol 2009, 60). It is also argued that "the resurgence of Sunni fundamentalism that began in the 1950s and has recently become much stronger also pushed Alevi to the political left" (Zeidan 1999, 77). According to Vorhoff, "the generation of young Alevi active in 1968 and in the seventies chose [Marxism], as they were still confronted with discrimination and prejudice in a Sunni-dominated

society and state while at the same time receiving little ‘spiritual’ backing” (1998, 230). Alevis’ participation in leftist movements was supported by the radical left who construed “the Alevi rebellions of the past as proto-communist movements” and considered Alevis as their natural allies (Bruinessen 1996, 8). As quoted in Tol, Çamuroğlu argues that “Alevis have lent their mustache and folk songs to leftists and borrowed more than enough positivism and statism from them” (Tol 2009, 62). The Turkish-Islam synthesis which claims that “Islam and Turkishness had made up a harmonious and inseparable whole ever since Turks converted to Islam” was articulated by *Aydınlar Ocağı*, a group of conservative intellectuals, in 1960s and diffused to the political realm by the 1970s (Vorhoff 1998, 231). As the Turkish-Islam synthesis presupposed a homogeneous Sunni and Turkish society, it was argued that for Islam to strengthen, the division of Sunnilik and Alevilik had to be eradicated (Ateş 2011, 304). Ideas of the *Aydınlar Ocağı* began to be increasingly effective under the National Front coalition governments (Smith 2005, 27). The 1970s witnessed the invention of three stereotypes to stigmatize Alevis; “three Ks in Turkish: *Komünist, Kürt, Kızılbaş*” (Açikel and Ateş 2011, 725). As these stereotypes fanned the inherent suspicions of the Sunni community towards Alevis, “spreading rumors that Alevis had bombed a mosque or poisoned a water supply unfailingly drew Sunnis into the extreme right camp” (Bruinessen 1996, 8). By the end of the 1970s, attacks of the extreme-right groups to Alevi neighborhoods in Çorum, Malatya, and Kahramanmaraş caused the deaths of hundreds of Alevis as “thousands of Alevi families were forced to leave their homes and resettle in other cities” (Açikel and Ateş 2011, 725). Benhabib states that before the army could restore order, “unknown” assailants “marched into specific Alevi districts in Kahramanmaraş, where they murdered, looted, torched and plundered for two days” (Benhabib 1979, 16).

Although the 1980 military coup did put an end to all non-state violence, including violence against Alevi community, the Turkish-Islam synthesis being supported by the interim military government and the following Özal government arguably lead to great distress among Alevis (Zeidan 1999, 77). The same period also witnessed Alevi Revival as through 1980s and 1990s Alevi community organized itself via associations, cultural organizations, media, Cemevis, cultural intellectual and

theological publications (Soner and Toktaş 2011, 422). It is important to note that Alevi associations did not articulate their demands merely on Alevis' specific problems but rather employed a rhetoric based on "freedom, democracy, social justice and progress as dating from the time of Hacı Bektaş Veli, if not from that of Imam Ali (Vorhoff 1998, 240). In that sense Alevi organizations did not only support their own claims but also other minorities such as Laz and Kurds (Zeidan 1999, 78). It can be argued that 'Alevi Revival' is the first time in modern history in which "Alevis publicly accepted their stigmatized identity, articulated their collective interests towards the state, and demanded equality with the Sunni majority" (Zeidan 1998, 78). Although Alevis did not traditionally open their rituals to strangers, the situation dramatically changed with the 'Alevi Revival' and "secretive Alevi ways have almost entirely disappeared" (Ulaş Tol 2009, 67). Return of some immigrant Alevis from Germany also contributed to 'Alevi Revival' as they provided a considerable financial support and organizational experience to Alevis in Turkey (Rittersberger 1998, 74). It is also necessary to note that some 'secular-liberal' Sunni groups supported Alevi organizations and their demands as can be seen in the first Alevi Declaration which was written and signed by Alevi, Sunni and Atheist intellectuals in 1989.

Even though Alevi community has developed strong organizations and acquired considerable visibility and voice during 1990s, violence towards Alevis did not diminish. Pir Sultan Abdal association organized a cultural festival in Sivas in July 1993 which was attended by "numerous prominent authors and other artists, including the aged Aziz Nesin (not an Alevi, incidentally) who had recently provoked the anger of many Sunni Muslims by announcing his attention to publish a translation of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*" (Bruinessen 1996, 9). The protesters who can be defined as "a large group of violent right-wing demonstrators" (Bruinessen 1996, 9) sieged and set a fire the Madımak Hotel in which attendants of the festival took refuge. The fire and fumes killed 37 people, including two of the demonstrators (Zeidan 1999, 78). In addition, "the violence was legitimized by a toxic Sunni-nationalist discourse" (Smith 2005, 463). Security forces' were reluctant to intervene to the incident and it is argued that the "local police and local government officials did not stand above communal divisions but sided with the

aggressors” (Bruinessen 1996, 10). Only one year later, famous talk-show host Güner Ümit reproduced the verbal Sunni defamation towards Alevis on prime-time national television by mentioning the stereotypical incestuous relations among *Kızılbaş* which led to great anger among Alevis. Çaha states that “more than ten thousand people gathered around the Star TV and protested against Ümit and the TV channel” (Çaha 2007, 333). In the end, Ümit apologized from the Alevi community by saying that he did not know the term *Kızılbaş* referred to the Alevis and his programme was cancelled by the TV channel (Çaha 2007, 333).

On 12 March 1995, unidentified aggressors in a stolen taxi shot at teahouses in Gazi neighborhood –an Alevi neighborhood on the outskirts of İstanbul- killing one and wounding several (Bruinessen 1996, 9; Marcus 1996, 24). When it was heard that the attackers were not seized by the police, hundreds of Alevis started a demonstration and “the Cemevi leaders had been on the phone all night trying to get a response from government officials” as the police force surrounded the neighborhood (Marcus 25). The primary target of the uprising was a police station which was believed to be staffed by fascist and anti-Alevi police-officers (Bruinessen 1999, 127). Furthermore, it is argued that in the second day of the uprising, the police “completely went out of control; instead of using conventional methods of crowd control, they repeatedly shot into the crowds, killing 15 people” (Bruinessen 1996, 10). As these assaults were mostly perceived as a continuation of previous ones during 1970s and before that the Ottoman Empire, Sivas massacre, and Gazi uprising constituted a major theme in Alevi identity politics (Ulusoy 2011, 414).

2.2. Literature Review

Although “Alevi issue” cannot be perceived in any sense as a contemporary phenomenon, it has gained increasing visibility since 1980’s. The significant rise of publications concerning Alevilik, Alevi identity, Alevi history etc. can be taken as an open indicator of this process. Publications concerning “Alevilik” in general appear both in popular and scholarly works and they differ extensively in terms of their perceptions of the “Alevi Issue”. This literature review focuses on both scholarly and popular works which are at least partly concerned with the social, political, cultural and economic problems and demands of Alevi community especially after

the ‘Alevi Revival’. It also deals with the major theoretical approaches to notions such as nation, nationalism, ethnicity, minority rights, multiculturalism etc. as they constitute a key part in understanding the Alevi issue properly.

As different disciplines approach to the ‘Alevi Issue’ from different perspectives, it is necessary to evaluate them under different sections. Although it is impossible to make a clear cut differentiation between sociological and political approaches to the ‘Alevi Issue’, works that mainly deal with the inner dynamics and transformations of Alevilik and Alevi community is categorized under the section ‘Sociological Approaches to Alevi Issue.’ The section ‘Political Approaches to Alevi Issue’ mainly dwells on the works related to the state-Alevi community relations.

2.2.1. Sociological Approaches to ‘Alevi Issue’

As the ‘Alevi Issue’ remains as a controversial topic in Turkish politics and academia, its sociological interpretations show a great degree of variety. The works included in this section have arguments ranging from those that claim that the existing knowledge about Alevilik mostly consists of “myths consistently reproduced by scholars” (Bozarslan 2003, 3) to those who argue that it is impossible to talk about an Alevi-Sunni division in Turkish society at all (Bilgiseven 1991, 8). Without dwelling on each approaches’ specific interpretations of historical material, their perceptions about the source or nature of Alevilik and ‘Alevi Issue’ is analyzed here.

Before proceeding to discussions on the main characteristics and transformation of Alevilik, it is necessary to state that there are some works which argue that it is not possible to sociologically distinguish Sunnilik and Alevilik, and even if they exist as separate entities, they are the outcomes of ‘ignorance about Islam’ or ‘plots of the external forces’ (Bilgiseven 1991; GÜNGÖR 2007). Özcan GÜNGÖR argues in his book *Araf’taki Kimlik: Alevilik/Bektaşılık*, which is an adaptation of his Doctoral thesis, that as the Turkish national identity cannot be thought apart from its Muslim traits, differences within the practice of Islam cannot be taken as a major distinction (GÜNGÖR 2007, 90). According to GÜNGÖR, his field research revealed that both Sunni and Alevi Muslims owned a Koran, visited Mosques, and performed similar rituals in the cases of death, birth, marriage etc. thus taking Alevilik as a sect that is equal and

different from Sunnilik would only serve to undermine religious and national unity (Güngör 2007, 92). From a similar perspective Bilgiseven argued in her book *Türkiye’de Milli Birliği Bozan Ayrılık* that Alevi-Sunni division is an outcome of ignorance about Islam and argued that the Alevi-Sunni division within the society is the outcome of non-Muslim communities plots (Bilgiseven 1991, 50). It is also pointed out in her book that unlike the common acception Alevi community follows the same rituals for prayer (Bilgiseven 1991, 142). *Günümüzde Alevilik and Bektaşilik* that is a collection of the speeches that were delivered in a related panel which was held by Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı in 1992 also adopts similar concerns about the Alevi/Sunni division. Majority of speeches that are included in the book are delivered by Alevi thinkers and there is a dominant message shared by almost all of them. That message seems to be valuing national unity and integrity above any other devotions. For instance chairman of the panel, Hayri Bolay, argues that both Alevi and Sunni Muslims have circumcision, cook Aşure and have great love for Ehl-i Beyt and in that case it would not serve to the best interests of the nation to create a tension about Alevi-Sunni division within Turkey (Diyanet Vakfı 1995, 6). One of the participants of the panel, an Alevi academician Mustafa Yılmazkılınç stated that

The definition of Alevilik should also include the definition of Sunnilik. “Those who accept the holy book and the *Sünnet* (sayings and doings of Prophet Muhammad) as a base for their religious conduct, those who dwell on the *Sünnet* are called Sunni”. If both of the descriptions are taken into account, there is no difference in principal. Both groups take the holy book and *Sünnet* as bases. The only difference is that Alevis take *muhabbet* – love for Hz. Ali and 12 Imams- as a must while Sunnis doesn’t (Diyanet Vakfı 94).

Although such approaches put emphasis on the unity and solidarity of the Turkish society and overlook the differences between Alevi and Sunni communities, Reha Çamuroğlu, a prominent Alevi thinker and the previous director of the Alevi Initiative of the JDP government, argues that such an argument ‘is an attempt to assimilate Alevis into Sunnilik because such assertions are usually followed by questions such as ‘why are not they attending the Mosque then’ (Çamuroğlu 1992, 79). According to Çamuroğlu, reducing Alevilik to the love of Ehl-i Beyt and Prophet Ali leads to Alevilik’s ruin (Çamuroğlu 1992, 81). Considering Çamuroğlu’s

point that Islam is only one of the components of Alevilik (Çamuroğlu 1992, 57), the argument about the inherent similarity of Alevilik and Sunnilik becomes rather meaningless.

It can be argued that, there is a wide consensus about the heterodox and syncretic nature of Alevilik. According to Murat Okan, Alevilik's syncretic structure is related to its position as Folk Islam (*halk İslamı*). The notion of Folk Islam envisages a religious sphere which includes several elements from various religions which is constituted by people adopting new beliefs and rituals without completely leaving existing ones behind (Okan 2004, 37). Irene Melikoff also states that "Bektashism, as well as Alevism are both, in their earlier stages, examples of religious syncretisms" and have quite rich and complex religious and cultural backgrounds (Melikoff 1996, 1). Similarly, Kazım Ateş, in his book *Yurttaşlığın Kıyısında Aleviler*, argues that the Turkish heterodoxy that evolved into Alevilik and Bektaşilik incorporates elements from Shamanism, Buddhism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, as well as Islam and Islamic Sufism (Ateş 2011, 235). Contrary to the works which define Alevilik as a heterodox and syncretic belief system, there are also approaches which arguably attempt to "reformulate and reshape" Alevilik (Vorhoff 1998, 234). Vorhoff argues in her article *Imagining Alevi Community* that "in an attempt to unite all Alevi in one social and political force, Alevi spokesmen repeat tirelessly that the Alevi community is actually united by one faith, by one ethical system, and even by one basic ritual practice" (1998, 240). In an attempt to prove the 'originality' and 'legitimacy' of 'Alevi Islam' this branch of the literature argues that

Sunnism is nothing more than the ideological construct of a decadent, corrupt, and indeed areligious class of oppressors and exploiters propagated for the accomplishment of their selfish ends, Sunni Islam constitutes in fact a distorted, manipulated Islam, whereas Alevism appears as an Islam faithful to the 'original' (öz) message (Vorhoff 1998, 248).

The interviews conducted with the representatives of Alevi associations also revealed that some of the Alevi associations embraced the definition of Alevilik as the original form of Islam. Okan also argues that İzzettin Doğan, head of the *Cem Vakfı*, defines Alevilik as Turks' interpretation of Islam and the original form of Islam in an attempt

to exclude all kinds of negativities and emphasizes Alevi devotion to tolerance, love, peace, and equality (Okan 1994, 164). To the extent that these views find a correspondence in the Alevi community, Vorhoff argues that this group can nowadays best be conceptualized as another of Anderson's 'imagined communities'" (Vorhoff 1998, 251).

Alevi community's inherent devotion to modernity, science, secularism, democracy, and progress is a common theme of both scholarly and popular works regarding Alevilik. Bedriye Poyraz, in her article titled *The Turkish State and Alevi*, states that "much discussion is taking place today on how to characterize Alevilik but near consensus has been reached in academic and popular literature that the Alevi are a primarily secular, democratic, and tolerant community" (2005, 503). A similar point is made by Nedim Şahhüseyinoğlu in his book *Alevi Örgütlerinin Tarihsel Süreci* in which he states that "Alevi are a community which tries to maintain and develop their traditions and morals under the light of science and reason" (2001, 14). Okan argues that such an understanding of Alevilik is inherent to the Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği also as they argue that Alevilik already bears the values of secularism, modernity, human rights etc. in its essence, and hence it constitutes an indispensable life style for democracy (Okan 1994, 182). Çamuroğlu, on the other hand, argues that Alevilik cannot be defined as a modern belief because like all other beliefs Alevilik bases its claims on an eternal truth and cannot be reduced to the realities of a single era i.e. modernity (Çamuroğlu 1992, 69). Vorhoff also states that even though Alevi associations base their claims about the modern, democratic, egalitarian, and progressive nature of Alevilik on Hacı Bektaş-I Veli if not Imam Ali, these claims "can be re-interpreted as a claim of an unmistakably political character, born out of the contemporary experience of being faced with the growing pressure of political Islam and the political repression following 1980 coup" (1998, 241).

Alevi community's urbanization process which started in 1950s constitutes a main focus of the sociological interpretations of current Alevilik. While some thinkers state that urbanization has led to the degradation of Alevi beliefs and rituals, others argue that this process hasn't caused any fundamental change in Alevilik. It is also important to note that Alevi urbanization is not limited to Alevi immigration to big

cities in Turkey but also to European countries, especially Germany. Fuat Bozkurt argues that “beliefs are living organisms, just like human beings. The survival of a belief system is closely bound up with the environment in which it exists. Beliefs have to renew themselves with the passage of time. The concepts of revolution and evolution also hold good for beliefs” (Bozkurt 2003, 85). Bozkurt defines Alevilik as a belief system who is structured for “the organization of daily life in an isolated location” and with Alevis’ mass immigration to the big cities the community “entered a period in which the inner dynamism, religious attitude, and collective self-knowledge of the community” underwent fundamental change (Bozkurt 2003, 92). In his Doctoral Thesis, Tol also argues that “there are a lot of components of Alevi faith which require the existence of a small, self-enclosed community” and thus “modernization’s main effect on dissolution of Aleviness occurred during the process of urbanization (Tol 2009, 65-66). Çamuroğlu on the other hand argues that as a belief system, Alevilik is capable of protecting its main principles in urban and rural settings (1992, 114). Çamuroğlu also points out that arguing Alevilik met with urban life only after 1950s means reducing Alevi community to *Ocaklı Alevis* and totally ignoring the urban *Babagan* branch that dates back to the Ottoman Empire (1992, 113). According to Çamuroğlu as long as sufficient Cemevis exist in big cities, Alevi community would be able to transform certain aspects of Alevi tradition according to the necessities of urban life (1992, 117). Şahhüseynoğlu also argues that even though ‘*köy Aleviliği*’ went through certain transformations to adapt to the urban life, Alevis’ managed to protect their identity and resist assimilation through Alevi associations (2001, 60).

Alevi immigrants to Europe and especially Germany also went through a process of organization as early as 1967 (Rigoni 2003, 163). Rigoni also states that “since the dynamics of the Alevi associations, media, and publications started a bit earlier in migration than in Turkey, one can assume that migrants in Europe may have to some extent stimulated the Alevi awakening in their native country” (Rigoni 1993, 167). According to Rigoni, even though Alevis managed to acquire a certain degree of recognition in Germany, in other European countries they lack the same degree of visibility (Rigoni 1993, 167). Based on the field research that she conducted in 1988 and 1996, Tılıç argues that Alevi returnees from Germany contributed to the local

Alevi Revival in their home town by “providing a large part of the financial resources” while migrants still abroad constituted a certain degree of ‘ideological leadership’ (Tılıç 2003, 77). It is also significant that by 1996 the *Almancı* identity which was prominent in 1988, was suppressed “by a mainly self-defined Alevi identity” (Tılıç 2003, 74) and in that sense “parallel to the Alevi renaissance on the national level the small town also experiences such a revival” (Tılıç 2003, 78).

As this section reveals, it is quite hard to explain or define Alevilik or ‘Alevi Issue’ due to the wide-ranging approaches to various phenomena. It is necessary to state that the works or issues included in this section are by no means exhaustive; rather they are included due to their relevance to the discussions that was dealt with during the Alevi workshops and interviews with the Alevi associations.

2.2.2. Political Approaches to ‘Alevi Issue’

Publications that are placed under this section take the relation between the Turkish State and Alevi community as an important variable in understanding ‘Alevi issue.’ The most fundamental difference among these sources appears in the way they explain the roots of the Sunni inclinations of the Turkish State. While some of the works base the Turkish State’s close relation with Sunnilik on the foundation period, others argue that especially after the 1980’s Turkish state has been increasing its emphasis on the Sunni-Muslim identity of the Turkish Nation and consequently this has led to the intensification of the conflict between the State and the Alevi community.

Contrary to the conventional wisdom on the unconditional partnership of the Alevi community and the secular Turkish State especially during its founding years, a considerable part of the literature focuses on the inherently exclusionary nature of Turkish nationalism vis-à-vis the Alevi community. For instance, in their article *Ambivalent Citizens*, Açıkel and Ateş argue that “the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion judge the Alevi on the basis of their symbolic capability to be incorporated into an organically defined nation” (2011, 714). For the ethno-cultural nationalism that constituted the official ideology during the foundation period, the only way to include Alevis into the ‘national imaginary’ was to take Alevi version of Islam as the

“least Arabized and the least cosmopolitan, and one that kept intact successfully the ancient democratic traditions of the Turks” (Açikel and Ateş 2011, 723). As can be seen, Açikel and Ateş’s description of the ‘ethno-cultural’ nationalism of the Turkish state during the foundation years bears great resemblance to Anthony Smith’s ethno-symbolic nationalism which supposes that

Cultural attributes as kinship and descent, language, religion, and customs, as well as historical territory, assume a prominent place; they tend to give rise to that sense of communal belonging we call ethnicity and ethnic community; and they form the basis for the subsequent development of nations and nationalism (Smith 2000, 5).

According to Smith nations which are based on shared myths and memories as well as civic elements such as laws, single economy, and a public culture has the potential to “develop beyond single ethnies and alternatively, to incorporate and accommodate diverse new ethnies in a polyethnic and multicultural nation” (Smith 2000, 65). Ateş also argues that Kemalist nationalism is characterized by its emphasis on ethnicity and descent while political and territorial citizenship remains secondary (Ateş 2011, 152). That is why “Alevi are accepted to the national community as bearers of Turks’ authentic Asiatic culture, while they were excluded due to the syncretic and heterodox roots of their beliefs” (Ateş 2011, 21).

Another criticism of the Kemalist ideology is related to the ideal of a homogeneous society. According to Okan, during the single party period “profile of the citizen which is desired to achieve a homogeneous nation was envisaged. This citizen represented a modern, secular, patriotic, and nationalist individual who is adapted to a tamed version of Muslimhood” (2004, 87). Okan states that the secularist politics of the era represented a desire to control the Muslim population and the GDRA was an outcome of this tendency (2004, 87). From a similar perspective Thomas Smith argues that during the single party period, secularism aimed to “smash folk cultures and replaced them by a unified national culture” (2005, 455). He stated that the only explicit minority rights were not included in the ‘Kemalist social contract’ but implemented by the 1923 Lausanne Treaty and Alevi were not within the range of its provisions (Smith 2005, 437). According to Smith “from its inception, the

machinery of the state has been dedicated to homogenizing a diverse populace ... Religion has been nationalized. All but the most folkloric of minority cultural expressions have been discouraged” (2005, 437). Bodrogi also argues that “if the Alevis hoped to achieve religious freedom, they were mistaken, as in secular Turkey orthodox Sunni Islam remained the only legally recognized Islamic confession and every manifestation of popular and heterodox religiosity was banned” (2003, 64). Koçan and Öncü in their article *Citizen Alevi in Turkey* state that even though the new state claimed to be secular and abolished the constitutional clause declaring that Islam was the state religion in 1928, “it explicitly adopted the Sunni Islamic identity as a new mythology and incorporated this into its institutional structures” (2004, 472). By making so, the state forced all citizens to comply with this certain form of Islam and this did not only lead to the homogenization of Turkish nation but also to exclusion of certain religious communities from the national body (2004, 472). Koçan and Öncü argue that “the pragmatic political choice of the founding elite during the nation building process resulted in the production of a unique model of ‘secular’ citizenship that was culturally exclusionary” (2004, 472).

In the theoretical literature concerning nationalism, ‘constructed homogeneity’ of nations has a considerable place. To give a couple of examples, Brackette F. Williams states that

in the formation of identities fashioned in the constraints posed by the nexus of territorial circumscription and cultural domination, the ideologies we call nationalism and the subordinated subnational identities we call ethnicity result from the various plans and programs for the construction of myth of homogeneity out of the realities of heterogeneity that characterize all nation building (1989, 429).

According to Williams, ‘nation builders’ are bound to be ‘mythmakers’ at the same time to be able to strengthen a certain identity as the ‘normal’ one and thus fixing ‘abnormal’ identities as ethnic or minority ones (Williams 1993, 154). From a similar perspective Craig Calhoun argues that

The categorical nature of national identities is linked strongly to ideas of purity and normalizations of the ‘correct’ way to be a member of the nation.

Nationalisms linked to state power are often repressive, thus not only of the members of 'alien' nations or ethnic minorities but of their own members (1993, 231).

Ernest Gellner also states that even though nation states claim to be impartial towards all its citizens "this fair-sounding principle only serves to disguise the tyranny on one group over another. The nation and all its citizens must be animated by the same spirit. Differences are divisive and therefore treasonable" (1981, 767).

As the historical phenomenon reveals that Alevi identity was not officially recognized by the Turkish state, it becomes rather challenging to explain Alevis' commonly accepted devotion to the reforms and values of the single party period. Soner and Toktaş argue that even though the foundation of GDRA left no place for religious plurality "the majority of Alevis did not interpret the Kemalist modernization project to impose state control over religion as favoritism of Sunni-Islam" (2011, 421). As quoted by Soner and Toktaş, Zurcher and Linden argue that "Alevis were prepared to accept that the Republic did not recognize them as a religious community, as long as that same Republic would deny all forms of religion a place in the public sphere" (2011, 421). Prominent Alevi intellectuals Çamuroğlu and Şahhüseyinoğlu's approaches to the single party period and foundation of the GDRA support Soner and Toktaş's analysis regarding Alevis' perception of the newly founded state and its relation with the Alevi community. Çamuroğlu argues that the GDRA was founded in 1924 to protect the State's secular nature, and while its Sunni essence was not originally intended, it was distorted by some of the institution's pro-Shari'a staff (1992, 19). From a similar perspective, Şahhüseyinoğlu states that "while the new republic implemented radical reforms [abolishment of Caliphate and *Şeriye ve Evkaf Bakanlığı*], it had to consider the structure of the society which was shaped by 600 years of *kul* and *ümmet* tradition" (2001, 42). According to Şahhüseyinoğlu the GDRA was established with a good intention and under the strict control of the state (2001, 42).

In contrast to the common acceptance regarding Alevis' unconditional devotion to the founding principles of the Turkish Republic, some of the participants of the interviews expressed their discontent with the foundation principles of the Turkish

Republic. Sadık Özsoy, The general secretary of the *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı*, argued that the state's perception of Alevilik was the same during the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic, and Alevis continued to experience similar problems. According to Özsoy, Alevis experienced some relief with the foundation of Republic as they came into contact with the cities, but the state's perception of Alevis did not changeⁱ. Onur Çağan, manager of *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği's* Yenimahalle Branch stated that even though they supported reforms aimed to modernize the Turkish society such as women's rights, they acknowledge that the new Republic aimed to homogenize the society through Turkish identity and a designated form of Islam. Çağan argued that the Republic ignored the existence of Alevi community from the start and foundation of the GDRA is a clear indication of it. From a similar perspective, Emel Sungur, chairperson of *Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı*, stated that with the transition from Shari'a rule to the Republic, Alevis enjoyed a certain extent of freedom but from its start, the Turkish Republic supported the idea of a single belief and single language. Sungur also expressed that from the day the GDRA was founded, Alevis have always been excluded.ⁱⁱ On the other hand, Faruk Ali Yıldırım, Chairperson of *Cem Vakfı's* Ankara Branch, argued that when Atatürk visited Hacı Bektaş Lodge and established the Turkish General Assembly with Alevi leaders, Alevis' freedom started. Yıldırım states that although Alevis could not live according to their beliefs in this period due to the law regarding the closure of Dervish Convents and Lodges, the state never massacred Alevis.ⁱⁱⁱ

Approaches to the Alevi Issue from a political perspective i.e. state-Alevi community relations, takes the post-1980 period as a breaking point both in terms of new semi-official position of 'Turkish-Islam' synthesis and the Alevi revival. The period between the foundation of the Turkish Republic and 1980 military coup *d'état* is mainly evaluated from a sociological perspective i.e. transformation of Alevilik and its relation with the Sunni community as it is evaluated in the previous section. About the Turkish state-religion relation in post-1980 era, Bruinessen argues that

The official attitude toward Islam since 1980 has represented an even greater departure from the Kemalist tradition, actively fostering a Turkish Islamic

synthesis... Religious education, previously an optional subject, was made obligatory. The General Directorate of Religious Affairs was strengthened, numerous new mosques were built and imams appointed-not only in Sunni towns and villages, but also in Alevi communities (1996, 8).

Similarly Thomas Smith states that “after the 1980 coup, the Turkish-Islamic synthesis became the centerpiece of the military’s ‘retraditionalization’ policies to promote a Turkish national culture” (Smith 2005, 460). After 1980, the state supported the Sunni religious education in state schools and became “feeders for the national Sunni movement” (Smith 2005, 460). Faruk Bilici states that

it goes without saying that this constitution [1982] characterized as it is by the stress on uniformity and conformity, displays no open inclination towards any particular group. But the actual practice [compulsory religion classes] founded upon this and the textbooks prescribed clearly display a quite remarkable fusion of Turkish nationality with the Sunni religious approach (1996, 58).

According to Açıkel and Ateş in “1980s and 1990s both the conservative and nationalist parties, far from recognizing the Alevi’s religious-cultural rights, stubbornly censored the Alevi identity and, via the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, tried to assimilate the Alevi into the Sunni-Islamic beliefs of the majority” (2011, 725). Joost Jongerden also argues in his article *Violation of Human Rights and the Alevi in Turkey* that “after the 1980 coup, the military leaders adopted new policies directly inspired by the Türk-Islam Sentezi, which aimed at switching Alevi identity to Sunni identity” (2003, 80). According to Jongerden two main problems for Alevi emerged in this period: the state’s newly formed understanding of Alevi identity and its policies to convert Alevi into Sunnis (2003, 81). In *State-Community Relations in the Restructuring of Alevism*, Fuat Bozkurt also refers to the state’s new perception of Alevilik and Alevi, which takes Alevilik as a part of Islam in contrast to its pre- 1980’s position, and states that

At the root of this change in attitude lies a concealed process of erosion, an attempt at intellectual assimilation. Alevism is rapidly becoming absorbed within Sunni doctrine. This is being achieved not by methods such as exclusion

or rejection of their beliefs, which can only give rise to hostility, but by methods of much greater circumspection and sophistication (1998, 93).

It is also important to note that semi-official status of 'Turkish-Islam' synthesis and the rise of political Islam during 1990s is taken to be among the important motivations for 'Alevi Revival' and politicization of Alevilik (Çamuroğlu 2003, 80; Poyraz 2005, 506; Okan 2004, 112). Çamuroğlu argues that "the most important motive for the establishment and rapid expansion of Alevi organizations today lies in the defensive instinct of the Alevi against the rise of Islamism" (Çamuroğlu 2003, 80). Bruinessen also states that "the embrace of Sunni Islam by the government no doubt contributed to the Alevi revival" (1996, 8). The most commonly accepted approach to the political roots of Alevi Revival focuses on three major phenomenon which are the rise of political Islam and the 'Kurdish Problem' as well as the fall of communism after 1980s (Erman and Göker 2000, 99; Bruinessen 1996, 8). It is argued that along with the secular elements, Alevi organized themselves as the counterpart of Sunni political Islam as they were no longer "willing to sacrifice their communal identity on the altar of class-struggle and began consciously to identify themselves as a political group on the basis of a shared religious identity" (Zeidan 1999, 78). Kurdish Alevi also started to increasingly emphasize their religious identity over their ethnic identity in the public discourse (Erman and Göker 2000, 100). According to Bruinessen these developments paved the way for Alevi Revival and

As the ban on associations which were implemented with the 1980 military coup started to relax in 1989 "Alevi voluntary associations sprang up all over the country, Alevi rituals (Cem), which had been practically banned since 1925, were publicly performed and houses of worship (Cemevi) were opened" (Bruinessen 1996, 8).

The cooperation between the 'secular' segments of the Turkish society and Alevi community is also mentioned by some authors. For instance Aykan Erdemir states in *Tradition and Modernity: Alevi's ambiguous terms* that "a sizeable group of bureaucrats, intellectuals, and journalists' who feel threatened by Sunni Islamic movements in Turkey see the Alevi as a 'life jacket'" (2005, 938). Poyraz on the

other hand argues that especially after 1990s state-Alevi community relations escalated to a considerable extent in the aim of restraining the rise of political Islam. According to Poyraz

As an irony of fate, after the 1980 coup d'état, the military government used Islam to control the left, which included most of the Alevis. In the 1990s, the policy was reversed and the Alevis became an important part of the struggle against fundamentalism (2005, 506).

Even though the literature concerning Alevilik puts emphasis on 1980s as the period in which 'Turkish-Islam' synthesis became prominent within the state and thus led to further Sunnification of the republic, none of the participants of the interviews mentioned 1980s as a break point for the state-Alevi community relations or mentioned the 'Turkish-Islam' synthesis. When they were asked "do you think Alevis' condition within the Turkish state got better or worse in certain time periods", almost all of the participants stated that states' approach to the Alevi community showed no significant divergence since the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Representative of PSAİTKEV, Emel Sungur answered the specific question by stating that even though approaches of certain governments to the Alevi community differed from time to time, no significant change happened in terms of state's general attitude. PSAKD's Yenimahalle Branch representative Onur Çağan only mentioned the Dersim incident as a break point in terms of state-Alevi community relations. It is necessary to state that the physical assaults to the Alevi communities in Maraş, Çorum, and Sivas etc. were repeatedly mentioned by the participants as a proof of continuing exclusion of and aggression towards Alevis and state's unchanging position. The interviews revealed that the secular establishment of the Turkish Republic protected Alevis' right to life which was far more important in their eyes than their cultural and religious rights. Even though the Turkish State supported the ideal of a homogeneous nation and overlooked cultural and religious specificities of Alevis to a certain extent, Alevis continued to support the secular Turkish State.

CHAPTER 3

THE JDP GOVERNMENT'S ALEVI INITIATIVE

1980s and 1990s witnessed the birth and growth of Alevi associations and foundations which were organized in order to demand Alevis' religious rights on the grounds of human rights and equal citizenship. *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* (1988), *Hacı Bektaşî Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* (1994), *Cem Vakfı* (1995), and *Dünya Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı* (1996) can be taken as examples of such organizations that served to a greater recognition of Alevis' main demands. Through these organizations, "Alevi community mobilized itself in the 1990s as social force through community organizations, cultural activities, cem houses, theological and intellectual publications, and various other media channels" (Soner and Toktaş, 2011:422). It is important to note that Alevi communities in Europe also went through a similar process of organization and had a significant role in the development of Alevi Revival both in Turkey and Europe. Alevi associations in Europe provided financial support to their counterparts in Turkey and also "at an European Union level, Alevi advocacy groups have helped insert the Alevi question into Turkey's EU accession process and encourage their host countries' governments to exert pressure on Turkey to recognize Alevi identity" (Soner and Toktaş, 2011: 422). In response to Alevis' demands, starting in 2000, Turkey Progress Reports written by the Commission of the European Communities included Alevis problems and demands under the headings of Human Rights and Protection of Minorities (200: 18). For instance Turkey 2000 Progress Report states that

The official approach towards the Alevis seems to remain unchanged. Alevi complaints notably concern compulsory religious instruction in schools and school books, which would not reflect the Alevi identity, as well as the fact that financial support is only available for the building of Sunni mosques and

religious foundations. These issues are highly sensitive; however, it should be possible to have an open debate on them (2000: 18).

Similarly in 2004, Turkey progress report states that “Alevi are still not recognized as a Muslim minority” (2004: 54). Although the report pointed to the main concerns of Alevi such as “difficulties in opening places of worship” and failure of compulsory religious courses to recognize Alevilik, Alevi community gave a rather negative reaction against being defined as a “minority” (2004: 44). In October 2004, heads of several Alevi associations states that Alevi cannot be viewed as a minority as they are one of the constitutive elements of the Turkish State and society (Hürriyet, 8 October 2004). The following Progress Report of Turkey in 2005 touched on the Alevi issue without classifying Alevi as minority and stated that

In particular, Alevi continue not to be officially recognized as a religious community and they are not officially represented in the Diyanet. They still experience difficulties in opening places of worship - their places of worship, ‘Cem’ houses, have no legal status - and they receive no funding from the authorities. In January 2005 the Alevi community was refused permission to build a ‘Cem’ house in Ankara on the grounds that it could not be considered as a place of worship. Although Alevi have been increasingly vocal in their demands, the authorities, in particular the Diyanet, have not accepted the need to change current practice (2005, 31).

Along with the Progress Reports, *Zengin v. Turkey* case that was brought to European Court of Human Rights after exhausting internal appeals also helped the Alevi issue to gain greater public recognition. In 2007 the ECHR judged that “the syllabus gave greater priority to knowledge of Islam than to that of other religions and philosophies” and “the fact that parents were obliged to inform the school authorities of their religious or philosophical convictions was an inappropriate way to ensure respect for freedom of conviction” (Netherland Institute of Human Rights). For these reasons the court “found a violation of Article 2 of Protocol No. 1” which states that “No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions” (Convention on Human Rights

2010, 34; Freedom of Religion 2012, 7). In light of these events, Soner and Toktaş state that “Turkey’s Alevi have been searching for a way to be treated as a group with distinct cultural and religious needs pertaining to their sect, but without being classified as a minority” (2011, 419).

It can be argued that Alevi associations’ growing influence both in social and political arenas and the European Union’s requirements forced the JDP government to develop a new approach towards Alevilik and Alevi community. Öktem argues that “the softening of state policies, together with EU-induced reforms and an increasingly well-organized, albeit fragmented transnational Alevi civil society network, have created a lively public sphere with numerous radio and TV stations, journals, online portals and ever more visible cem evleri” (2008: 6). The legal reforms on freedom of association that were implemented in 2003 can be taken as an example of such “softening of state policies” as they “lifted the ban on associations founded on the basis of racial (ethnic), religious, sectarian and regional differences or with an intention to create minorities based on the same differences” thus enabling Alevi organizations to be officially recognized by the state (Soner and Toktaş 2011). On the other hand the JDP during its first term in government (November 2002- July 2007) did not deal with Alevi’s problems and demands thus “many Alevi felt they were socially, politically and economically discriminated against and marginalized by the governing party and its constituents, as had always been the case during center-right governments of the past” (Köse 2010: 147). Both the JDP’s presumed conservative Sunni inclinations and the lack of specific statements in relation to Alevi problems in its party program along with the fact that all 363 MP’s of the JDP were from a Sunni origin strengthened Alevi’s reservations about the governing party (Köse 2010: 147). Soner and Toktaş argue that

The party continued to shape its policies similar to the conventional statist view, rather than the Party’s principles of liberal secularism, pluralism, democracy and human rights. In its first governmental term, the JDP displayed an inconsistent attitude, focusing, in accordance with the demands of its conservative-religious electorate base, more on the dissolution of secularist restrictions on religious Sunnis than on responding to Alevi complaints (2011: 426).

The JDP's initial approach to recognizing Alevis' problems and demands can be taken as the candidacy of well-known Alevi intellectual Reha Çamuroğlu and İbrahim Yiğit on the JDP ticket for the 2007 general elections. Especially Çamuroğlu became a prominent figure in terms of enhancing the relation between the JDP and various Alevi associations. After Çamuroğlu was appointed as the chief adviser of the Prime Minister on the Alevi question, he organized two Alevi *iftars* on the Alevis' holy month of Muharrem, attended by the Prime Minister Erdoğan and representatives from a number of Alevi organizations which can be taken as the first step of the JDP's Alevi Initiative (Soner and Toktaş 2011:429). The second step was the seven "Alevi workshops," first of which was held on 3-4 June 2009 and attended by the representatives of Alevi organizations. The remaining six workshops aimed to incorporate "non-Alevi public opinion leaders, theology specialists, members of civil society organizations, media representatives, academics and political parties" into the debates about Alevis' problems and possible ways to meet their demands (Soner and Toktaş 2011: 430). All workshops were held with 30-40 participants adding up to a total of over 300 participants (Devlet Bakanlığı 2010: 26). The moderator of the workshops and writer of the Preliminary Report of the process, sociologist Necdet Subaşı states that

The new opening was expected to bridge the gap between the Alevi community and the state (and the government) with the goal of eventually eliminating the problems that concern the Alevi community. Because the Alevis have endured discrimination, wrongdoing, and injustice, the main objective of the 'Opening' is to carve out a larger space for the Alevis within Turkish society and give them equal status on par with other citizens both materially and psychologically. Overall, these recent efforts have fostered new partnerships between the Alevis and the general public (Subaşı 2010:166).

The outcome of these "Alevi Workshops", namely The Preliminary Report, was aimed to be a "roadmap" for the government to determine the possible steps for the solution of Alevis' problems (Subaşı 2010, 166). The Preliminary Report divides its evaluations of and suggestions for the Alevis' main demands into eight headings: Some Signs, Recognition and Definition, Discrimination based on religious identity,

Constitutional and legal issues, General Directorate of Religious Affairs, Religious Education, Cem houses, *Dedes* and Restructuring, Madımak Incident.

Until 1980s, Alevi identity was inaudible and unobservable both for the Sunni majority and the Turkish state for the most part as it was elaborated on in the previous chapter. “In secular Turkey orthodox Islam remained the only legally recognized Islamic confession” (Bodrogi 2003, 64) and GDRA’s structure and content as well as religious education and several laws that prevailed under the consent and supervision of the Turkish state, which are based on the Sunni doctrine, ignored the existence of Alevilik and Alevi community. In that sense, the relation between the Alevi community and the state until 1980s can be understood through Rancière’s conceptualization of the ‘police’ (Ranciere 2001, 8). According to Rancière, the essence of the police is “a certain manner of portioning the sensible” and this partition refers to the manner “in which a relation between a shared ‘common’ and the distribution of exclusive parts is determined through the sensible” (Rancière 2007, 9). Ranciere explains ‘the essence of the police’ as

to be a partition of the sensible characterized by the absence of a void or a supplement: society consists of groups dedicated to specific modes of action, in places where these occupations are exercised, in modes of being corresponding to these occupations and these places. In this fittingness of functions, places, and ways of being, there is no place for a void. It is this exclusion of what ‘there is not’ that is the police-principle at the heart of statist practices. (Ranciere 2001, 9).

As the police functions through leaving no place for a ‘void’, and the ‘partition of the sensible’ recognizes neither lack nor supplement within the given community, groups that are left out of the ‘partition of the sensible’ becomes invisible and inaudible in the police (Rancière and Panagia 2000, 124). From this perspective it can be argued that as orthodox Sunni Islam was the only legalized form of Islamic devotion in Turkey, Alevi community remained as ‘surplus subjects’ in the ‘partition of the sensible’ and their problems and demands became inaudible and invisible for the Turkish state (Rancière and Panagia 2000, 124). As Alevi community was not a sensible part of the Turkish society, they were not included in the GDRA and their

beliefs were not taught in the religion classes. ‘Alevi Revival’ of 1980s and 1990s can be interpreted as a turning point for the Turkish state’s position towards the Alevi community as it became rather impossible to ignore the existence of Alevilik and Alevis. According to Rancière

the notion of dissensus means... politics is comprised of a surplus of subjects that introduce, within the saturated order of the police, a surplus of objects...their actions are the manifestation of a dissensus; that is, the making contentious of the givens of a particular situation (Rancière 2000, 124).

The problems and demands expressed by the Alevi community starting with 1980s corresponds to Rancière’s understanding of political action that is

Certain subjects that do not count create a common polemical scene where they put into contention the objective status of what is ‘given’ and impose an examination and discussion of those things that were not ‘visible’, that were not accounted for previously (Rancière 2000, 125).

Especially after 1980s Alevi community opposed the existing policy of Turkish state which is “about ‘right’ names, names that pin people down to their place” with politics which is “about ‘wrong’ names misnomers that articulate a gap and connect with a wrong” (Rancière 1992, 62). As Alevis increasingly expressed their demands for their religious, cultural and communal rights via their associations, publications, and declarations such as the 1989 *Alevilik Bildirgesi*, they started to become rather visible in the eyes of the society and the state. As Rancière argues that “the essence of the politics... is to disturb this arrangement [police] by supplementing it with a part of the no-part identified with the community as a whole” (Rancière 2001, 9), Alevi associations’ struggle to point out the very existence of Alevi community within the Turkish State as well as their problems within the ‘police’ can be evaluated as a political action. However, it would not be accurate to claim that their demands that were voiced and mostly became known by the end of 1980s were taken into consideration by the Turkish State. Even though Rancière argues that men become subjects of their rights “when they can do something with them to construct a dissensus against the denial of rights they suffer” (Rancière 2004, 305), the Turkish State did not take the necessary steps to meet Alevi community’s demands except

some gestures such as attendance of the ministers to the Hacı Bektaş Festival of Alevi, indicating a partial recognition of the Alevi community on the part of the state at best.

Post-1980 period witnessed a new turn in terms of the state-Alevi community relations as it became almost impossible to ignore the Alevi community and their demands due to the increasing numbers of Alevi associations, publications, TV channels etc. As Alevi community was no longer a ‘surplus subject’, the Turkish State took some steps such as founding Turkish Culture and Hacı Bektaş Veli Research Center in Gazi University, airing programs and documentaries about Alevi culture during the Muharrem month in the state television, conducting symposiums about contemporary Alevilik and Bektaşilik etc. (Ateş 2011, 343-355). Interestingly enough, focus of the state’s approach was based on producing knowledge about Alevilik rather than dealing with Alevi community’s problems and demands. When the state’s position is evaluated from a Foucauldian perspective in relation with his *governmentality* conceptualization, understanding the focus on knowledge production about Alevilik becomes more revealing. Foucault defines governmentality as

the tendency, the line of force, that for a long time, and throughout the West, has constantly led towards the pre-eminence over all other types of power-sovereignty, discipline, and so on- of the type of power that we can call ‘government’ and which had led to the development of a series of specific governmental apparatuses on the one hand, and on the other to the development of a series of knowledges (Foucault 2004a, 107).

In his conceptualization of governmentality, power-knowledge relation constitutes an important part as knowledge is conceptualized as both the outcome and the source of power. Foucault further states that

We should admit... that power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations (Foucault 1995, 27).

Foucault also puts emphasis on the term ‘police’ in his conceptualization of *governmentality* even though the term has a different connotation than Ranciere’s usage (Foucault 2004a, 145). Foucault argues that the term police referred to “a form of community or association governed by a public authority” and “the set of actions that direct these communities under public authority” during 15th and 16th centuries” (Foucault 2004b, 408). 17th century onwards ‘police’ attains a related but different meaning that is “the calculation and technique that will make it possible to establish a mobile, yet stable and controllable relationship between the state’s internal order and the development of its forces” (Foucault 2004b, 408). According to Foucault ‘police’ which is “a set of very specific instruments, the formation of which is exactly contemporaneous with the art of government” constitutes one of the three “major points of support on the basis of which that fundamental phenomenon in the history of the West, the governmentalization of the state, could be produced” (Foucault 2004b, 145). Even though Ranciere takes the ‘police’ as a ‘manner’ and Foucault describes it as ‘a set of very specific instruments’, both understandings of the term acknowledges that the term signifies the will to ‘control’ and ‘govern’ a community by ‘regulations’ and ‘disciplines’ (Foucault 2004b, 145).

From this perspective, it is argued that especially after Alevilik and Alevi community became a sensible part of the Turkish society, the state aims to transform and ‘govern’ the Alevi community via producing knowledge. It is argued in this chapter that even though the JDP government’s Alevi Initiative was presented as a genuine move on the part of the state which aims to understand Alevis and find solutions to their problems (Workshop 1 2009, 7), a close reading of the transcripts of Alevi Workshops and the Preliminary Report as well as Alevi workshops’ structure and participants reveals that, the Initiative’s aim was to produce a certain set of knowledge about Alevilik and thus control the Alevi community. In his assessment of Foucault’s *governmentality*, Lemke argues that the term has two sides, first of which points to government’s ability to “define a discursive field in which exercising power is ‘rationalized’... by delineation of concepts, the specification of objects and borders, the provision of arguments and justifications” (Lemke 2001, 191). Lemke states that such an approach enables the government to pin-point certain issues as a

problem and offer certain solutions for handling the problem (Lemke 2001, 191). The second side of governmentality enables the state to intervene to the issue

For political rationality is not pure, neutral knowledge which simply ‘represents’ the governing reality; instead, it itself constitutes the intellectual processing of the reality which political technologies can then tackle. This is understood to include agencies, procedures, institutions, legal forms etc., that are intended to enable us to govern the objects and subjects of a political rationality (Lemke 2001, 191).

This study aims to demonstrate how the JDP government’s Alevi Initiative corresponds to Foucault’s conceptualization of governmentality and specifically the knowledge-power synergy.

3.1. An Assessment of Alevi Workshops

This chapter evaluates the Alevi Initiative and Alevi workshops under eight headings which constituted the main areas of argument throughout the process. First of all, the necessity to “construct a new language” was continuously emphasized both by the moderator and several participants of the workshops. It is stated in the preliminary report that “Alevi Initiative and as a basic part of the process Alevi workshops proved that what was sought, above all, was a new language” (Subaşı 2010a, 13). In that sense, evaluating the main prospects of this new language and how it was constructed through the Alevi Initiative is crucial for the purposes of this study. Secondly, the issue of “defining Alevilik” constituted one of the most controversial issues throughout the workshops and was also extensively emphasized in the Preliminary Report. Even though Alevi associations did not make any demands concerning these two issues before or during the Workshops, dealing with the content of these discussions helps to reveal the government’s approach to the ‘Alevi Issue’. The remaining headings will focus on the main demands of Alevi organizations, approaches of the Workshop’s participants to these demands, and the Preliminary Report’s stance vis-à-vis the associations’ demands. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these main demands are basically formed around the headings of (1) General Directorate of Religious Affairs, (2) Compulsory Religious Classes, (3) Cemevis, (4) Dedes and their employee personal rights, (5) the Madımak Massacre,

and (6) the Hacı Bektaş Veli lodge. Although all the representatives of Alevi Associations accept that issues under these headings constitutes the main problems of Alevis, their solutions occasionally differ from each other as it will be elaborated on under each respective heading. The principal sources of this chapter will be transcripts of Alevi Workshops, the Preliminary Report of the Alevi Initiative, and the transcripts of the in-depth interviews conducted with the representatives of available Alevi Associations in Ankara, namely *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* (HBVAKV), *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* (PSAKD), *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği Yenimahalle Şubesi* (as they insisted that their views about Alevilik and the Alevi Initiative considerably differed from the PSAKD's official stance), and *Cem Vakfı and Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı*(PSAİTKEV) .

3.1.1 Constructing a New Language: Dialogue and Representation during the Alevi Initiative

To begin with, from the insistent emphasis put on it, ‘constructing a new language of empathy and mutual understanding’ was obviously one of the main agendas of the Alevi Workshops for its planners. In his Preliminary Report, this point is emphasized by stating that

There is a need for a new language which prioritizes empathy and compassion and takes understanding as a prerequisite of mutual liberation. No progress can be made through daily reproduced fictions. How to reach a plural language which is free from all other languages, without getting lost in the spiral of an antagonistic, aggressive and *casual* language? The workshops succeeded in meeting that *average* (Subaşı 2010a, 34).

Similarly, Faruk Çelik⁴ who was the state minister responsible for religious affairs and also coordinator of the JDP government's Alevi Initiative, argues that “we have been approaching the matter in a supra-political language and manner” (Workshop 5 2009, 16). Along with the purportedly “supra-political and objective” method of the

⁴ Faruk Çelik graduated from the Bursa University High Institute of Islam, served as the vice president of the Virtue Party and became MP İN 1999. He was among the founders of the Justice and Development Party in 2001 and after the 2007 elections served as the Minister of State responsible for the General Directorate of Religious Affairs. After the 2011 elections he became the minister of labor and social security.

Alevi workshops, its capacity to include a large variety of societal segments was attributed great importance by its organizers. According to Subaşı, meetings which were held through the workshops helped different social units to understand and even deeply feel Alevis' problems and enabled them to contribute to the solution of these problems (Subaşı 2010a, 34). As these workshops were planned to be "forums for dialogue enabling the Alevis to express and share their grievances with the state and the general public", representatives of various societal segments were brought together in those meetings (Subaşı 2010b, 166). As it can be understood from Subaşı's statements, the value of the Alevi workshops was based on its structure which enabled the representation of various understandings of the Alevi issue on an equal footing. To emphasize the inclusive nature of dialogue that was put into use during the Alevi Workshops, Subaşı states that "In this process, it was unacceptable for any language to be ignored or excluded. All participants were addressed due to only one reason which were the ideas they defend, no matter how politicize or aggressive they were" (2010a, 32). The continuous emphasis on the 'supra-political' and 'objective' nature of the language and structure of the Alevi Workshops on the part of the government can be interpreted as an attempt to justify the 'unbiased nature' of the 'knowledge' produced within the process. As the final objective of the Alevi Workshops was arguably to produce 'knowledge' that will be accepted by the population as 'truth', the 'objective' and the 'scientific' nature of the workshops is constantly emphasized by the coordinators.

Throughout the workshops, similar demands for a new language were expressed by the participants from various societal segments, even though their discontent with the existing "language" was not necessarily based on the same reasons. For instance, Tayyar Altıkulaç, former head of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, argues that the existing language serves to widen the differences between Alevis and Sunnis and for that reason "instead of dwelling on politics and solutions which increases diversification, we should dwell on an approach which familiarizes these diverse groups, and unites them under the least common denominator" (Workshop 4 2009, 86). As it can be seen the approach that was employed by the GDRA during the Contemporary Alevilik/Bektaşilik Seminar, which aimed to underplay the differences between Sunni and Alevi communities, is reproduced by the former head

of the GDRA Tayyar Altıkulaç. On the other hand, Ali Çolak, editor of the Zaman Newspaper Culture and Art Supplement, argues that the existing language aims to homogenize societal differences while marginalizing the “others” and it poses a serious problem. He states that

One of the problematic of this language is that it is directed to homogenization. For example the emphasis made on the 99 percent Muslimness... On the other hand the usage of a marginalizing language. Similarly, there is the approach of “tolerance”. The term “tolerance is a hegemonic one and it is used through marginalization. It is a situation about the toleration of the lower by the higher. On the contrary, what we should do here is to understand each other. That is a democratic language. We should try to understand each other (Workshop 4 2009, 92)

Similarly, Sırrı Süreyya Önder, representative of Cinema Workers’ Union, highlights the hierarchical nature of the existing language of the debate concerning Alevi issue and argues that “at the micro level, the reason for this matter to be an obstacle in these lands is to look at the issue in terms of “us” and “them”. If you see yourselves as omnipotent, the owner, representative and, the truest, no benefit would come from it (Workshop 4 2009, 51).” It should also be noted that some complaints were made about the “marginalizing” effects of Alevi’s discourse. Ali Bulaç, a well-known conservative writer and a columnist of the pro-JDP Zaman Newspaper states that “Alevi in Turkey goes into the direction of marginalization when they give voice to their ideas, complaints and demands. It disturbs a wide Sunni segment. I think it is necessary to overcome this approach through negotiation” (Workshop 5 2009, 31). The marginalization accusation towards a certain segment of Alevi Workshops is made throughout the Alevi Workshops and it can be interpreted as an attempt to delegitimize their views and demands.

Although a considerable part was allocated to the necessity of constructing a new language throughout the Alevi workshops and within the Preliminary Report, it is still not easy to pinpoint what was meant by this highly desired supra-political, objective and inclusive language of debate. As a matter of fact, some participants of the Alevi workshops and interviewed representatives of Alevi associations voice

their concerns about the method of the Alevi workshops and alleged objectivity of the language used in workshops and the Preliminary Report. For instance Tekin Özdil, chairman of the *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Tanıtma Dernekleri* openly states that “we declare that we reject all approaches which take Alevis problems as a problem which can be reduced to a matter of bilateral bargain and political negotiation” (Workshop 1 2009, 98). Similarly Dilek Kurban, representative of TESEV argues

That is an issue of rights and liberties and it is necessary to look at it through a perspective of rights. That is why what is important is not the definition of Alevilik but what Alevis demand as citizens... I do not think it is necessary for us to take into consideration non-Alevi Muslims’ sensibilities, their uneasiness about the issue while we evaluate those demands (Workshop 4 2009, 107).

From a similar perspective, Hayri İnce, a representative of *Genç Siviller*, draws an analogy between the ban on the entrance of veiled women into the university and the injustices Alevis have been put through and argues that both of the issues can only be dealt with through a perspective based on human rights and liberties (Workshop 4 2009, 176). He argues that it would be unacceptable to deal with the headscarf issue in a referendum or in terms of a negotiation as it is an issue of rights and liberties. In that sense the method of the workshops “takes the issue (Alevis’ problems) in a rather adverse way while it is an issue of rights and liberties in reality... I do not find it necessary to have a negotiation” (Workshop 4 2009, 176). In “An Assessment of the Alevi Workshops’ Preliminary Report” written by *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* (HBVAKV), the emphasis on a new language and dialogue is interpreted as a cover which conceals the social, political and legal inequalities behind the imaginary equality based upon the constitutive power of the “discourse” (2011, 17). As the emphasis upon dialogue becomes an indispensable part of the Alevi Initiative, the inequalities become inherent parts of the process itself and “on this ground which is marked by inequalities, the subject who is bound to remove these inequalities, for instance the government or more generally the state who makes a call for dialogue, rather than taking those steps, secures the inequality of the process by dialogue itself” (Assessment Report 2011, 17).

Along with the oppositions to the method of Alevi workshops, rather low representation rates of Alevis throughout the meetings also caused discontent among some of the participants. In HBVAKV's assessment, a classification of all the participants according to their ideological positions was included and it is argued that there was a dominance of participants "who were engaged at various levels to the defence of General Directorate of Religious Affairs and Sunnilik, or the JDP government" (Assessment Report 2011, 133). According to this work while 31 scholars of Divinity participated in the workshops, only 11 scholars from Social Sciences found a place within the process (Assessment Report 2011, 132-133). This source claims that the participant lists of the Alevi Workshops were not accurate and only 237 participants took active role during the Alevi Workshops, and 118 of these participants were representatives of "Sunni religiosity" (Assessment Report 2011, 132). If the claims of the HBVAKV are to be accepted, the number of Sunni participants is equal to half of the total number and it may point to disproportionate representation of Alevis throughout the Alevi Workshops. When the list of participants of the workshops is analyzed, a rather high attendance of the "conservative Sunni" figures can be observed. For instance, the fifth workshop of the process which was dedicated to the relation between Alevilik and the media, included 8 representatives of conservative Sunni newspapers such as Vakit, Zaman and Milli Gazete, while only one representative of Alevi media, Musa Özügurlu, news director of the Cem TV, was present (Workshop 5 2009, 202-203). Seventh on the other hand -which was the only workshop that brought together prominent figures from Alevi and Sunni communities- was attended by 20 Alevi and 19 Sunni representatives. As the representatives of Alevi associations found such high representations only in the first and last workshops, it would seem legitimate to question the rate at which Alevis were represented throughout the process. Even though the Alevi Workshops claimed to reach a supra-political, objective, and inclusive language of debate, including Sunni participants as much as Alevi ones in a symposium about the problems and demands of Alevi community is arguably rather contradictory. It should also be noted that representatives from other religious minority groups were not incorporated into the process and raised questions about

the position of Sunnilik within the Alevi workshops. HBVAKV draws attention to this point by asking

Are the confirmation of Alevis problems and execution of their demands depended on the will and desire of the attendants who are assumed to be Sunni or representatives of Sunnilik? What does the inclusion of Sunnilik or Sunnis as a party within the framework of Alevi workshops mean in terms of politics? If Sunnis are a party, why are not other segments of the society who are neither Sunni nor Alevi parties? (Assessment Report 2011, 49)

In addition to the complaints about the unfair representation rates of Alevis through the Alevi workshops, the language used in the Preliminary Report was found rather biased by a number of Alevi associations. The main criticism to the language of the Preliminary Report is based on the insistence on identifying some of Alevis demands as “fantastic” and “boundless” (Assessment Report 2011, 50). An example of such an attitude can be found in his words:

Some provocative outburst which emerged throughout the workshops was neutralized by the careful and attentive efforts of the participants. Such outbursts did not find a considerable acceptance; It was accepted by the participants that with ideas that can be seen partially fantastic, imaginary suggestions, unscrupulous demands; existing problems cannot be solved (Subaşı 2010a, 26).

As a majority of Alevi associations who took part within the Alevi initiative brought forward similar demands and presented a rather uniform stance in relation to Alevis’ problems and demands, what is taken as “fantastic” and “boundless” demands is not crystal clear. To have a better idea about the nature of these allegedly “boundless” demands, it is necessary to look at Subaşı’s specific assessments about Alevilik and Alevi associations. In that sense, Subaşı’s statement about the supposedly Marxist tendencies of some Alevis would be revealing. In the chapter titled “What Happened in the History”, he states that

Alevis who recognizes no boundaries in representing all the opposition and rebellion in the Ottoman social order as a manifestation of their feelings, are politicizing the history and society imaginations in reality under the influence of

Marxist historical methodology. The most obvious point that attracts attention today is the boundless enthusiasm of the approaches which reflects the Alevis as the partners of the existence of any kind of opposition in representing the protest culture as mainstream tendencies (Subaşı 2010a, 52).

Subaşı's words indicate that Alevis' political stance as well as their interpretation of history can be perceived as "boundless". From a similar perspective the "identity construction" of Alevi community is questioned and it is stated that "today Alevis construct their identity on a language of victimhood. It is necessary to pay attention to the aspects of this language which damages the desire for intimacy in social relations" (Subaşı 2010a, 99). As Alevis main perceptions about their identity, history, and political position are defined to be boundless; the Preliminary Report problematizes Alevis demands for the solution of their problems to a certain extent. In the introduction of the Preliminary Report it is stated that "proposals for the solution firstly leads to the widening and increase of exploitation areas, engagement of the Alevi youth with rigid ideological courses and imprisonment of them within the language of victimhood by marginalizing themselves" (Subaşı 2010a, 15). In another article of his, Subaşı criticizes the Alevi associations from a similar perspective and questions their legitimacy by stating that

Their [Alevis] insistence on voicing their demands, their search for a discourse, and their demand for equal citizenship did not find an appropriate outlet. Instead, they find themselves wedged between a mythical/romantic ideal and limited representative institutions. The reaction by the Alevis to this mentality not only produced tensions but also triggered a sentiment of anger. Any attitude, suggestion, or discourse geared towards securing the Alevis' permanent existence in these lands was suppressed (Subaşı 2010b, 174).

This condemning language towards Alevi community in a way reveals the kind of Alevilik which is not desired by the state; i.e. Marxist, Leftist and activist Alevis, and hints at the form and essence of Alevilik that is desired to be attained through the Alevi workshops. As the Preliminary Report mainly deals with the inner problems of Alevi community and Alevi associations, it does not dwell on the relation between the structural injustices of the Turkish Nation State toward religious groups such as the Sunni dominant structure of the GDRA, compulsory religion classes etc. and

Alevis' problems in a considerable length. Rather it reduces Alevis problems to their political and ideological positions, lack of representative institutions and "fantastic", "boundless" and "unscrupulous" demands. It is also necessary to state that even though it is claimed that the "Alevi Workshops transcripts are employed among the basic references of the Preliminary Report", it is impossible to find any direct or indirect reference to the specific discussions that took place during the workshops in the Preliminary Report. It can be argued that even though it is claimed that the document presents 'objective' data based on the outcome of the Alevi Workshops, the content of the Preliminary Report mostly reflects moderator's own perceptions of Alevilik, the Alevi community and the Alevi associations. From this perspective, several Alevi associations' discontent with the Preliminary Report appears rather reasonable, to say the least.

As a response to the Preliminary Report of the Alevi Workshops, several Alevi associations made statements reflecting their displeasure. Ali Yıldırım, chairman of the *Alevi Araştırmaları Merkezi*, states that "the report is accusing Alevis, and argues that Alevis do not clarify their positions and does not know what they want" (Bianet.org, April 1, 2011). Similarly Kemal Bülbül, head of the Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, argues that "this report is nothing else than a more polite expression of what has been said and done about Alevilik since Yavuz Selim..." (Bianet.org, April 1, 2011). In their assessment of the Preliminary Report, HBVAKV also points to the report's lack of interest in the existing inequalities of the Turkish Nation State. In the analysis of the common stance of the Preliminary Report it is argued that

According to this approach there is no concrete problem. It is impossible to talk about a concrete discrimination. There are only claims which Alevis believe to be concrete... That is why the problem to be solved should not be about practices of negative discrimination but should be firstly and foremost about Alevis characteristics, their obsessions of victimhood. There is Aleviler as a sickly community and a political will which attempts to cure them (Assessment Report 2011, 89).

Similar complaints were expressed during the in-depth interviews conducted with several representatives of Alevi associations. Head of the Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği Yenimahalle Branch, Onur Çağın^{iv} states that

Please pay attention to that report. It is written by a man called Subaşı, an assistant professor. Even the language used in that report disgusts us. There is such a language there... Alevis are always inadequate; they are unaware of their own culture. But Sunnis... are more moderate, they are represented as a group who approaches to the issue more tolerantly. There is no such reality. We do not have any problem with Sunnis; our main distinction is between progressive democrat people and people who are not progressive democrats, reactionary movements who disregard other identities, other cultures. Our problem is with Sharia, with fascism.

Similarly, Chairperson of the *Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı*, Emel Sungur also criticized the Preliminary Report and said

I guess you have seen the huge volumes of reports. When you open them, the important point is that whether you can see yourself in them. I cannot see myself. Then it is not my report. In that sense if someone else's report is named after me, it is hypocrisy. We have been together with the moderator of the workshops, Subaşı, and it is necessary to state that the intention is very important.^v

Rather positive statements concerning the attitude of Sunni representatives for the solution of Alevis problems that is included within the Preliminary Report also deepens Alevi associations' conviction about the biased position of the writer of the Preliminary Report. For instance the Report implies that Sunnis have a better understanding of their relation with the Turkish Nation State by stating that

One cannot encounter among Alevis a critic or assessment about the reasons of the ban on sufistic lodges among which many Alevi and Bektashi lodges were included as Sunnis have put forward about their own losses. Without doubt, Alevis also need to make an assessment about the grounds on which they will maintain their relations with the state from now on" (Subaşı 2010a, 102).

The Preliminary Report also points to Sunnis success in their organizational skills in relation with their success in “accelerating the institutionalization of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs with a supra-language and representation which puts emphasis on the common values of beliefs rather than their differences” (Subaşı 2010a, 119). Although the Preliminary Report continuously defines Alevi organizations’ demands for rights as “ideological”, “boundless” or, “fantastic”, its assessments about Sunnis’ success in demanding and taking their rights seems to be rather positive. In that sense, the Preliminary Report does not only produce knowledge in regards to Alevis, but also Sunnis, and the knowledge produced reflects the existing power relations during the Alevi Workshops when it is considered that along with numerous participants, both the minister and the moderator who organized the events come from a Sunni background. It becomes easier to understand Alevi associations’ disbelief in the objectivity of the Preliminary Report of the Alevi Workshops and its writer. Although one of the main aims of Alevi workshops was determined to reach a supra-political and epithetical new language and Subaşı claimed that “the workshops succeeded in meeting that goal”, a close reading of the Preliminary Report suggests otherwise (Subaşı 2010a, 34).

3.1.2. Defining Alevilik: Is it indispensable or unacceptable for the solution of Alevis’ problems?

The Preliminary Report defines Alevilik as “non-Sunni Anatolian Muslims’ *yol, adab* and *erkan* whose dominant feature is a devotion to the Prophet Mohammed and his family, especially Hz. Ali and his lineage with deep love and respect” (Subaşı 2010a, 39). Although the definition seems to be rather acceptable for Alevis, the very notion of defining their religious beliefs proves to be undesirable for an important segment of the Alevi community and various Alevi associations. Necdet Subaşı on the other hand takes the lack of a uniform definition of Alevilik as an important hindrance for the solution of Alevis problems. The importance attributed to a uniform definition of Alevilik is visible in the words of Subaşı: “This argument is not an important question for the state which does not have an organic partnership with a religion. But it is the problem of Alevis who feels the desire to be defined, who wants to be addressed. Alevis have to do this definition themselves... The question

of what Alevilik is an incendiary one” (Workshop 1, 73). Representatives of Alevi associations on the other hand have diverse approaches to the issue; while some representatives claim that Alevilik can be defined on the common religious beliefs and rituals of Alevi, others find such an attempt destructive, unacceptable, or even impossible. These approaches and the reasons behind them can be traced throughout the Alevi workshops and in the in-depth interviews conducted with several representatives of Alevi associations.

During the First Alevi Workshop which was attended only by the representatives of Alevi associations, several opinions were voiced about the possible motives and consequences of defining Alevilik. Several definitions of Alevilik were also presented by the attendants. Soner and Toktaş argue that the difference between the approaches of Alevi associations about the issue of definition can be based on the different positions of two main Alevi camps: traditionalist-religious and modernist-secularist (2011, 423). The first camp consists of Alevi associations which choose to define Alevilik only on Islamic terms such as “the original version of Islam” which is not tainted with the hypocrisies of political and religious leaders” (Soner and Toktaş 2011, 423-424). The modernist-secularist camp, on the other hand, defines Alevilik as “a syncretic belief system, a philosophy, a culture as well as a lifestyle constructed originally as the community interacted with various religions, including, Shamanism, Manichaeism, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam, as well as other polytheistic religions of Anatolia and the Middle East” (Soner and Toktaş 2011, 424). The problem with the classification of the Alevi associations as ‘traditionalist-religious’ and ‘modernist-secularist’ is that such a classification bases the difference on the religious stance of the associations and their members which cannot be assessed through their demands. Instead the classification can be made through their political positions such as ‘statist’ and ‘reformist’. While ‘statist’ Alevi associations such as *Cem Vakfı* supports integration of Alevilik into the state apparatus and thus to become both an object and subject of the power-knowledge relation, ‘reformist’ associations such as *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Vakfı* and *Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* demand complete separation of the state and religion. Veli Güler’s definition of Alevilik in the first Alevi workshop can be taken as an example of the statist associations’ approach as Güler states that “Alevilik is the Muslimhood itself and the core of

Islam” (Workshop 1 2009, 128). Although it is a common concern that the reformist associations’ definition of Alevilik would break the tie between Islam and Alevilik, it would be rather groundless to argue that the totality of reformist camp takes Alevilik as a belief system independent from the religion of Islam. As Ali Kenanoğlu, a representative of the Hubyar Sultan Alevi Kültür Derneği, states, “a majority of Alevis see themselves within the religion of Islam... Although there are ones who see themselves out of Islam, a majority doesn’t. The point is that it is not the Islam understood by the Diyanet, state, government or other institutions. They [Alevis] have a different interpretation, understanding and practice of Islam in their heads, thoughts and, beliefs” (Workshop 1 2009, 80-81). It is also necessary to state that the desire to exclude or marginalize Alevis who define Alevilik out of the scope of Islam serves to the production of a certain kind of knowledge about Alevilik.

Throughout the Alevi workshops, the argument about the definition of Alevilik remained as an important subject and examples of various approaches were voiced. Some of the Alevi participants argue that defining Alevilik would serve towards the solution of Alevis’ problems as lack of such a definition would hinder the state from taking legal measures. İzzettin Doğan, Head of the *Cem Vakfı*, explained the need for a definition of Alevilik by arguing that

Alevilik is our problem but there are also several Alevi versions which were put forward by *mongers* who try to do politics via Alevilik. If an issue about Alevilik does not attain a definition during the period of legalization, nothing remains for the government and the state to do. Because everyone can have the belief he desires and lives according to it in his inner world in relation with the freedom of conscious. But what are we looking for? It is the situation in which Alevi citizens may benefit the rights and liberties which are provided to other religious groups as legal rights by the state. It is legalizing this situation. From this perspective, there is no harm in defining Alevilik (Workshop 7 2010, 31)

Musa Özüğurlu also states that “some differences of opinion have emerged among Alevis. That is why there are many *ocaks*, that is why there are Anatolian Alevilik, Arabian Alevilik, Bektaşilik or Shiism....Accordingly, Alevis need to make the definition which they were not allowed to make in Turkey until today” (Workshop 5, 2009, 22). On the other hand, Kurtcebe Noyan, the only representative of Bektaşî’s

throughout the Alevi Workshops, stood for a definition of Alevilik not for the state but for the Alevi citizens themselves. He states that

Today, a considerable part of our Alevi citizens do not have a serious idea about Alevilik... Then it is necessary to put this definition in front of them. Apart from that those who are not Alevi, Bektaşî are curious about Alevilik, Bektaşîlik... It is necessary to make a definition of this [Alevilik]. It is already done in İzzettin Doğan's books... Why are we so afraid of this definition?" (Workshop 7 2010, 107)

Some of the participants presented their definitions of Alevilik which constituted the base on which the definition in the Preliminary Report was made. Veli Gülsoy's⁵ quite comprehensive definition of Alevilik was that

it is a sufistic way, belief and even *ikrar* which internalize Islam, believes in the oneness of God, knows and acknowledges Hz. Muhammad as the right prophet, accepts Koran as its holy book, loves Hz. Muhammad's family, unites *namaz* with *niyaz*, makes its prayer in the mother tongue, loves humanity, believes in the unity of creator and the created instead of their separation, embraces love of God instead of fear of God... believes in the essence of Koran instead of its form and thrives to achieve spiritual maturation through reason and soul" (Workshop 7 2010, 52).

A number of other definitions mainly focused on Alevi's great love and respect for Hz. Mohammed and his family and especially Hz. Ali and his lineage (Workshop 1 2009, 107-215-; Workshop 4 2009, 57; Workshop 6 2009, 28-42; Workshop 7 2009, 37-45). Faruk Ali Yıldırım, head of *Cem Vakfî*'s Ankara branch, who was the only representative throughout the interviews that was willing to make a definition, defined Alevilik as "being able to live ones' beliefs in a human oriented way, free from hacıs' and hocas' oppression". He also made an emphasis on the religious aspects of Alevilik such as attending Cemevis, knowing the *twelve duties*, and having a *musahip* brother.^{vi} It was possible to observe that through the interviews and Alevi workshops, apart from the religious emphasis, all participants were willing to

⁵ Representative of Gazi Cemevi, İstanbul.

mention libertarian and human oriented nature of Alevilik as a fundamental and uniting aspect.

Sunni participators, especially during the third workshop which solely consisted of scholars of Divinity and representatives of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, put great emphasis upon the need of a formal definition of Alevilik. Although Alevis' reservation towards non-Alevi participants' and especially towards theologians' definitions of and assessments about Alevilik was well-known throughout the workshops, the third workshop mostly focused on theological assessments about the nature of Alevilik and its position within Islam. It is also important to note that Subaşı heartened the participants to debate around the issue of possible definitions of Alevilik by posing the question "How can we approach to Alevilik as a matter of definition from the perspective of theology?" as a central focus point (Workshop 3 2009, 25). As such, several theologians presented their ideas about the place and nature of Alevilik. For instance, Professor Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı⁶ argues that "it is impossible to call this [Alevilik] a religious sect in reality. If there is a very different political or ideological point of view about this impossibility... then it is impossible to find a consensus" (Workshop 3 2009, 43-44). Fiğlalı defined Alevilik as "a thing mixed with Shamanism" while classifying Bektaşilik as "a strand that can be interpreted within the classification of cults in Turkey" (Workshop 3 2009, 43). Hüseyin Yılmaz⁷, on the other hand, argues that the most serious problem of Alevilik is its esoteric structure and states that "as the modern world is bound to the observable, concrete things completely, the lack of *zahirilik* in Alevilik obstructs its existence in the modern world. What we mean by *zahirilik* here is the lack of a serious tradition in terms of religious practices. Of course there are things done in the Cemevis but these are batni prayers" (Workshop 3 2009, 120)."

Apart from the attempts to define Alevilik, the Third Workshop provided the environment for some theologians to criticize their own approaches to the issue. For

⁶ Ethem Ruhi Fiğlalı is a Professor of Theology and former Rector of Muğla University between 1992-2002.

⁷ Hüseyin Yılmaz is an Associate Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Yüzüncü Yıl University.

instance, Ömer Özsoy⁸ states that “I have the impression that Alevilik studies in the Turkish divinity schools have an orientalist character. Just like the Islamology studies which look at Islam from an external perspective, these studies look at Alevilik from an external perspective. They may have the importance to affect it [Alevilik] but still they are looking from outside” (Workshop 3 2009, 65). Mustafa Öztürk⁹ also criticized theologians’ approach to Alevilik by arguing that “as Sunni theologians, we have a Sunni identity. Until today we have approached to the issue in terms of definition, instead of striving to know them... We have been standing in the place of representatives of truth” (Workshop 3 2009, 58). From a similar perspective Saffet Sarıkaya argues that the theology circle in Turkey had a significant problem of ethics as they “still have a structuralist, communitarian mentality which justify its own position while marginalizing the rest” (Workshop 3 2009, 76) There were also theologians who criticized the methodology of producing knowledge about Alevis within theology. Mehmet Çelenk¹⁰ for instance states that “the information used by my colleagues, my professor friends, are dependent on verbal data and image. Academic interest towards understanding the nature of Alevilik is scarce” (Workshop 3 2009, 47). It can be argued that although a majority of participants of the third workshop agreed that lack of a formal definition of Alevilik was a serious obstacle for the solution of Alevis problems, the manner in which such a definition would be laid out turned out to be a more complicated question. Although Minister Çelik argues that “even the most superficial observation cannot ignore the value of knowledge about and approaches to Alevilik produced by theologians”, Alevi associations insistent resistance to a definition produced by theologians as well as these theologians’ own criticisms about the position of divinity schools towards Alevilik cast doubt on theologians’ ability to make such a contribution (Workshop 3 2009, 17).

⁸ Ömer Özsoy is the Foundation Professor of Islamic religion at first at the Faculty of Protestant Theology and at the Institute for the Study of Culture and Religion of Islam at the University of Frankfurt.

⁹ Mustafa Öztürk is a Professor of Theology at the Çukurova University.

¹⁰ Mehmet Çelenk is a doctor of Islam Denominations History at Uludağ University

A considerable part of Alevi participants of the workshops and representatives of several Alevi associations voiced their objections to the notion of defining Alevilik. These objections were based on mainly two reasons: the pluralist nature of Alevilik and inconsequential nature of making such a definition in relation to meeting Alevis main demands. Even though some participants argued that uniting all Alevis under a definition would prove to be useful, making such a definition was perceived as an “internal issue” of the Alevi community and out of the scope of the Alevi Initiative. Tekin Özdil argues that defining Alevilik could only be a concern for Alevis themselves and it was unacceptable for the state to make such a demand. According to Özdil Alevi Workshops’ duty was to solve Alevis’ problems that stemmed from the state itself. Özdil illustrated these problems by stating that “Alevis are not building mosques in their villages by force or they are not forcing their children to take compulsory religion classes. These are state’s problems” (Workshop 1 2009, 95). Taha Akyol, a columnist of *Milliyet*, also makes emphasis to the political and sociological aspect of Alevis’ problems and argues that

I want to state that this problem cannot be described as a religious problem... What is the definition of Alevilik? These are academic issues and I believe that the government should not get involved with these issues. What we are supposed to solve here is the religious services of Alevi citizens and their sensitivities about their identity. The government should certainly avoid approaching to the issue with a discourse of advice, preach or academic dialect by totally ignoring Alevi citizens’ sensibilities. Such approaches would not solve the Alevi issue (Workshop 5 2009, 32).

Ali Kenanoğlu also criticized the claims which take Alevis’ lack of understanding and expressing their own beliefs as a major obstacle for solution by stating that

When we think with the perspective of the state, the government and Diyanet, the state has a definition of Alevilik in reality... As long as it is not freed from that frame of definition, it is impossible to solve Alevis’ problems... It is said that Alevis are confused. Alevis are not confused in reality. Alevis’ suggestions for the solution are very clear. In reality, the institutions and authorities who have the potency to produce solutions are confused. Alevis are saying that Cemevi is our house of worship. Within the existing context, either the state, or

its religious foundations are confused about how to define this Cemevi (Workshop 1 2009, 80).

In addition to the objections based on the irrelevancy of making a definition of Alevilik in relation with the main demands of Alevi, there were also participants who questioned the Alevi workshops' authority to produce such a definition. For instance Murtaza Demir of the PSAİTKEV argues that "if we make a definition of Alevilik, we face the danger of making the performance and outcome of the workshops highly debatable as a part of Alevi understandings that are not here will feel foreclosed... Secondly, a debate can be made about if this board has the qualification as it is formed only for the solution of Alevi problems" (Workshop 7 2010, 28). Ethen Mahcupyan, columnist of *Taraf*, on the other hand debated that making a definition of Alevilik would prove to be meaningless whether it is made by the state or the Alevi themselves because

The world today shows us that the instant we define something, the definition slips from our hands... Spontaneous processes and social dynamics change those definitions constantly... Even if today all Alevi would unify and agree on a definition, someone would step out of that door and say I am a different kind of Alevi and he would have a right to do so. In that sense it is quite natural for Alevi to have a pluralist structure.

In addition to Alevi and participants of the Alevi workshops who perceive defining Alevilik as inconsequent or unnecessary, there are also those who argue that producing such a definition would damage Alevilik itself. For instance Kelime Ata, a representative of PSAKD İstanbul, argues that it is impossible to make a single definition of Alevilik without oppressing other interpretations of Alevilik and in that sense "it would be meaningless to produce a theological consensus and generating an Alevilik... Actually it is impossible to produce such a consensus as it brings forth the question which *yol* would be valid" (Workshop 1 2009, 225). General Secretary of HBVAKV, Sadık Özsoy also put an emphasis on the pluralistic nature of Alevilik and states that defining Alevilik is not "within the power of the minister [Faruk Çelik], the representatives of Alevi associations, or dedes who carry out the Alevi

belief. In the end people experience this belief whatever way they want. Everyone has a personal Alevilik”^{vii}. Similarly, Emel Sungur claimed that

It is impossible to define Alevilik. We say, every person should live and believe in an Alevilik in the way s/he defines it. Alevilik is a way of life which has a cultural aspect but also has a very deep religious aspect... First of all, it is a libertarian belief. That is why it is impossible to fit it in a single mold. It is a belief defined as ‘one way, a thousand and one trajectories (yol bir, sürek binbir)... We will have different views, there are different *ocaks*, they have different *Semahs*, and there are various *cems*. Fitting such a belief with differences in a single mold is out of question.^{viii}

HBVAKV’s assessment of the Preliminary Report also criticizes moderator Subaşı’s insistence on defining Alevilik and perceives the definition included in the Preliminary Report as a reductionist one (Assessment Report 2011, 57). It is stated that “the insistence on the claim that Alevis have a problem such as defining Alevilik and every attempt made to solve this problem results in the neglect of the syncretic structure of Alevilik. The definition of Alevilik which is included within the Preliminary Report stands as a clear proof of that” (Assessment Report 2011, 58). It is also stated within the assessment that, any kind of definition would result in drawing a line and makes it inescapable to emphasize the insiders while signaling the existence of outsiders (Assessment Report 2011, 57). In that sense making a definition of Alevilik would harm the pluralistic but still integrated structure of Alevilik and the lack of interest in defining Sunnilik- which also cannot be perceived as a homogeneous entity- can be taken as a natural outcome as “such a mentality would not endure the manifestation of the existence of differentiation within Sunnilik” (Assessment Report 2011, 57). When moderator’s insistence on the obstructiveness of pluralist nature of Alevilik in making a definition and reaching a solution is considered, analysis made in the assessment seems quite significant.

Although minister Çelik repeatedly states that “we are not in the effort of defining Alevilik. We are focusing on the question of how we can solve the problems of our citizens who perceive and define themselves as Alevi”, a considerable part of Alevi workshops and the Preliminary Report was allocated to defining and classifying

Alevilik. Especially Subaşı was quite insistent on making a definition and moving forward in accordance with that definition. In the first workshop, as a response to some Alevi representatives' rejection of participating in a debate about the definition of Alevilik, Subaşı asked "what should I do? Why should I show mercy to you? Why should I look after you? Why should I feel a desire to be equal with you? I do not know you. But when I desire to know you, a very strong fragment rejects it" (Workshop 1 2009, 204-205). His rhetoric reflects the power hierarchy that is inherent in the structure of the Alevi Workshop itself and Subaşı's insistence to produce a definition of Alevilik, knowledge to limit and control Alevilik itself. A similar approach can also be observed within the preliminary report.

It is important to note that the Preliminary Report makes a differentiation between 'traditionalist Alevis' and 'political groups which have the potency to marginalize Alevilik' (Subaşı 2010a, 49). Although both groups seem rather inefficient in terms of making a sound definition of Alevilik, their motives and inadequacies are claimed to be different from each other. It is argued that

it is doubtful if traditionalist Alevis have sufficient preparation and knowledge to overcome their hardships. Possibilities of representation, their ability to control international interest, familiarity with a modern language and even more a popularity which lives on a political rhetoric makes traditionalist Alevis voiceless in a surprising way and political groups which have the potency to marginalize Alevilik have been filling traditionalist Alevis' places (Subaşı 2010a, 49).

Although it is implied that these political groups do not have a high representation rate among the Alevi community in reality and "prominent themes within the existing representations are processing independent from the character of traditional Alevilik", he also does not portray traditionalist Alevis well-equipped enough to lead the way for a solution (Subaşı 2010a, 48). The Preliminary Report's central suggestion for the solution of Alevis' problems is again related to the issue of definition. He states that "first of all, representative groups of Alevis should endeavor to present Alevilik which is defined as a tradition of belief and *erkan* within the frame of *Hak-Muhammed-Ali* in a clear way and the state should provide a

strong assurance for the removal of problems that will be met in this context” (Subaşı 2010a, 92). Clearly, the writer completely excludes the Alevi associations which perceive Alevilik as a syncretic belief system by stating that the definition should be formulated around the frame of *Hak-Muhammed-Ali*. Furthermore, Subaşı claims that apart from the inner dynamics of Alevi community, Alevis’ demand from the state also necessitates such a definition. He states that “it is impossible to speak of the state’s right to define the borders or interfere to the content of a religion. But the state has the right to get clear information about the beliefs and rituals its participants attend. It is natural for the state to demand such knowledge for the designation of curriculum, realization of the services related to beliefs and, continuation of communication and dialogue between the state and the society” (Subaşı 2010a, 89). Although Subaşı’s argument is relevant with the current relationship between the state and religious communities, a significant part of Alevi associations demand for complete separation of religion from the state, and autonomy of religious communities, makes his argument rather unacceptable for this specific segment.

Such a reasoning in explaining the necessity of a definition of Alevilik, also stigmatizes a considerable segment of Alevi associations and their supporters. As ‘political approach’ to the Alevi issue is presented as a negative one throughout the Preliminary Report, ‘political groups’ among Alevi associations are depicted as the exploiters of the problem or obstacles in front of the solution. For instance, it is argued in the Preliminary Report that “Entities which close themselves to new experiences always presents the other as the source or addressee of the problems in an attempt to overcome its hardship in explaining its actual state. Alevis’ desire to handle their problems in a coolheaded manner and to solve them through licit means is under the pressure of groups which thinks that problems can only be solved via a strategy of tension” (Subaşı 2010a, 66). As Subaşı excludes a political approach to the Alevi issue and dwells on the necessity of a theological clarification of Alevis themselves’ on the way for the solution, he seldom refers to notions such as human rights and equal citizenship. It can be argued that at some points Subaşı seems to be inclined to overlook the structural inequalities within the state apparatus to answer Alevis’ ‘unjust’ demands. For instance he argues that “Alevis objections are about the state’s inability to give them a consistent, equal and fair place within the

understanding of laicism which it bears the claim to institutionalize. But the principle of laicism is taken under the protection of the constitution with the claim of preventing the state from inclining itself to a certain religion or belief and thus, enabling it to play the role of an arbitrator among religions and beliefs” (Subaşı 2010a, 137). It is also significant that perceives the ‘political groups’ among Alevi are perceived as a hindrance for the Alevi community to attain their rights and places as equal citizens of the Turkish nation state and as it is argued that “Alevi must break the mangle of radical, mythic and romantic outbursts produced by the narrow organizational structures with their insistence in voicing their demands, searches for a new language and, demands for equal citizenship” (Subaşı 2010a, 76). Subaşı’s assessment of the Alevi community seems quite contradictory as the ‘political groups’ among Alevi base their demands on human rights and equal citizenship unlike ‘traditional Alevi’ who employ a theological rhetoric. It can be understood from the Preliminary Report that the definition of Alevilik required in the Preliminary Report can only be produced by ‘traditionalist Alevi’ as he puts it and it seems quite unlikely that such a definition would include ‘political groups’ among Alevi. How this definition would serve the Alevi community in its inner dynamics and with its relations with the state remains as a challenging question. This attitude towards the issue of defining Alevilik significantly corresponds to Foucault’s argument that

A whole series of objects were made visible for possible forms of knowledge on the basis of the constitution of the population as the correlate of techniques of power. In turn, because these forms of knowledge constantly carve out new objects, the population could be formed, continue, and remain as the privileged correlate of modern mechanisms of power (Foucault 2004a, 109).

Even though within the Preliminary Report a definition of Alevilik is included, the interviews elaborated upon reveals that Alevi associations do not comply with that definition and resists becoming ‘correlates of techniques of power’.

3.1.3. Cemevis: Debates about the Official Status of Cemevis

The demands for the acceptance of Cemevis as places of worship constituted the most significant and least controversial of Alevi’s demands throughout the

workshops. A closer reading of the first Alevi workshop's transcript reveals that all representatives of Alevi associations attributed great importance to that specific demand. Veli Gülsoy revealed the importance of the issue by stating that "as an Alevi dede, I openly declare that official acceptance of Cemevis as prayer houses, approval of our legal rights is our uncompromising demand because Cemevis themselves is the essence of worship for Alevis" (Workshop 1 2009, 154). Some of the participants also pointed to the bestowment of an official status to Cemevis as a step that would have a potency to positively affect the whole process. Necdet Saraç, a representative from Yol TV – a channel established by European Alevi Associations Federation –, for instance argues that as the image of the Alevi associations is a fractured one, and it is usually argued to be the cause of deadlock, making the issue of Cemevis a common cause for all the associations would deprive the political authority from the opportunity to blame Alevis themselves. In that sense Saraç states that "Cemevis' acceptance as legal places of worship would change the whole process" (Workshop 1 2009, 92). It can be observed that a majority of the participants supported Saraç's proposal and defined the demand for the official recognition of Cemevis as places of worship the most prominent demand of Alevis (Workshop 1 2009, 95; 101; 251; 257). During the interviews Onur Çağın representative of the PSAKD Yenimahalle Branch states that "the state asks if we are a part of Islam or not. It does not matter whether we are a part of Islam or not. Both approaches attend the same cem and follows similar rituals. There is no difference there. But the state drops this bomb intentionally. But the differentiation generated from this question is an artificial one."^{ix} According to him the government's reluctance in acknowledging Cemevis as prayer houses shows their insincerity as it is a demand voiced by all the Alevi associations without exception. Sadık Özsoy, interviewed representative of HBVAKV, also attributed the governments' reluctance to acknowledge Cemevis with their insincerity. Özsoy said "we do not want to evaluate how sincere the political party which organized the Alevi Workshops. We know their intentions. The society should evaluate the outcomes. Was it that difficult to define Cemevis as places of worship? Is it that hard? Why are they afraid of Cemevis?"^x

The demand for the official recognition of Cemevis as places of worship was voiced by a considerable part of participants throughout the workshops and several explanations were presented for the necessity of this change. Ertuğrul Aslan, a representative of Abdal Musa Vakfi, for instance based his explanation on the democratic nature of the Turkish Nation State and argues that “In any democratic state of the world, if thousands, hundreds of thousands of citizens state that “we worship in these places, what we do is worship and these are places of worship”, any democratic government would accept it without making it a topic of discussion and would make the necessary legal changes” (Workshop 1 2009, 61). Ercan Geçmez of the HBVAKV, on the other hand, argues that “the vital importance of Cemevis in addition to being a place of worship stems from its existence as a place of civil religiosity. We want to be a model for the world through Alevilik as a civil religion and Cemevis as its place of residence” (Workshop 1 2009, 136). Other participants questioned the state’s authority to decide what a place of worship can be. From such a perspective Şenol Kaluç, Director of LDT Alevi Research Center, argues that “It should be no one’s and especially not state’s problem if the Cemevis were places of worship or not historically. As an outcome of the modernization process, today Cemevis are necessary for Alevis and a considerable segment prefers them. The road for Alevis’ re-construction of their beliefs via Cemevis should be secured and Alevis themselves should decide the qualifications of Cemevis” (Workshop 4 2009, 26). İzzettin Doğan argues that the Turkish Nation State cannot be taken as a religious authority which would grant some places of worship an official status and deny the same status to others. Doğan pointed to the clauses of European Convention on Human Rights and argues that

if we are talking about fundamental rights and freedoms related to the freedom of thought and faith, there is only one organ which tells how to understand it and that is European Convention on Human Rights. It’s definition is “everyone’s freedom to believe whatever he wants, his freedom to practice his belief in places he wants and, his freedom to do it alone or with others... If we accept it as such, we will put a lot of unnecessary discussions away. Should we accept Cemevis as places of worship or not? That is not necessary. If the convention has that ruling and especially if this government accepts European

Convention on Human Rights and Community acquis as the axis of its primary policies, then it is not necessary to discuss that (Workshop 7 2010, 100).

Representative of DİSK also argues that bringing someone's beliefs up for discussion is a totally anti-democratic approach that can be compared to "telling the proletariat not to unionize, forcing women wearing headscarves to drop it or trying to assimilate Kurdish people" (Workshop 4 2009, 39). Apart from the arguments which were based on the principles of democracy, equal citizenship and human rights, some of the participants answered common objections to Alevi demands about the status of Cemevis. As a response to the most common objection which is mainly based on the assumption that all Abrahamic religions have only one place of worship and it is the *mescit* for the Muslims and within the Turkish context it was named *Cami*, Doğan Bermek, President of Alevi Foundations Federation, argues that "it is said that there is *mescit* in Islam. In Anatolia we call this *mescit*, *Cami*. Cemevi cannot be an alternative to *Cami*. Very well then but why should I not have the right to call the *mescit* of Islam, Cemevi when you have the right to call it *Cami*? It is also a *mescit*. Is it a typology, an architectural structure that we are debating about or are we talking about the belief system itself? (Workshop 7 2010, 84) Murtaza Demir also responded to the same criticisms about a possible acceptance of Cemevis as places of worship and argues that

Some official or unofficial groups in our country are trying to influence decision makers and public opinion by debating if Cemevis are places of worship or not, although they do not have any knowledge of or interest in Alevi belief. Debating how people will live, blaming and discriminating them for their religious conviction is a crime according to the tenth article of the constitution. This explicit crime is committed in front of the public prosecutors of Turkey. It is committed by the state and the government (Workshop 1 2009, 50)

Cemal Şener on the other hand answered the criticisms towards Alevi based on the acceptance that Alevi did not have a clear idea about what they want or their demands were aimed to limit Sunnis' religious freedoms. Şener argues that

It is a great injustice to claim that Alevi do not know what they want. Alevi demand that their Cemevis have an official status; they demand that their

Cemevis are not called *cümbüş evi* by state officials... While Alevis demand these rights, they do not feel the necessity to argue that the same rights should not be given to Sunnis. It would be a great injustice to Alevis if we are compared to Sunnis, just because we demand our rights. We just demand %10 of the rights Sunnis have in Turkey. In Turkey Alevis neither benefit from minority rights nor the rights of the majority. They are deprived of all rights (Workshop 5 2009, 84).

As it can be derived from the declarations of Alevi associations representatives' an official acknowledgement of Cemevis as places of worship is one of the most vital demands of Alevis'. While some representatives found this demand on the religious "validity" of Cemevis as places of worship within the religion of Islam, others argues that even making this demand a matter of negotiation was casting shadow on the democratic nature of Turkish state and the government. Still the demand concerning the status of Cemevis can be accepted as the only demand on which all Alevi associations agreed.

Several suggestions were made by the participants of Alevi workshops for the provision of Alevis' demands concerning Cemevis. While some of the participants argues that a permanent solution for the problem can only be achieved through the abolition of Law 677 of 1925, others argues that it was not necessary as Cemevis were not mentioned in the respective law (Workshop 1 2009, 76; Workshop 1 2009, 40). The most common suggestion for the solution was adding Cemevis to the construction law which lists places of worship as *Cami*, Church and Synagogue as it would mean officially acknowledging Cemevis and would also have practical outcomes (Workshop 1 2009, 83-60-98-124-138-241). As construction bylaws which are based on the construction law does not recognize Cemevis as places of worship Cemevis cannot benefit from reserved building plots for the places of worship or excuses from several regulations (Construction Bylaw 2010, 21). Similarly Cemevis cannot benefit from the discounts in the prices of electricity and water which is available for officially recognized places of worship (Request Report 2009, 41). As it can be seen official recognition of Cemevis as places of worship would provide significant benefits and Alevi associations' demands in this way are not totally idealistic. It is also important to state that there are different suggestions concerning

the way in which Cemevis would acquire the same resources as other places of worship. HBVAKV for instance criticizes the notion of including Cemevis in the list of other recognized places of worship (Request Report 2009, 37). In its Assessment and Request Report four possible ways of official recognition of Cemevis are listed which are abstract set formula, open list formula, closed list formula and specific determination formula (Request Report 2009, 36-37). It is argued within the report that the abstract set formula which includes only general terms such as religion, belief, prayer instead of making a list of recognized religions or places of worship is the most favorable option for reaching a total equality among different religious positions (Request Report 2009, 36). The requests for the inclusion of Cemevis within the list of recognized places of prayer correspond to the closed list formula. Although such a regulation would serve Cemevis to have the same resources with other recognized places of worship, it would still exclude other religious communities' places of worship and that is why "making a regulation based on the closed list formula would lead to the result of legalizing inequality" (Request Report 2009, 37). From that perspective the report argues that "some Alevi circles would favor to be included in the closed list with their own terms; although it would still be seen as a struggle for their rights, it would no longer be seen as a struggle for equality" (Request Report 2009, 37).

A majority of Alevi participants of the workshops voiced their sensitivities about Sunni representatives' position and the nature of their contributions within the process. For instance Binali Doğan, a representative of *Erikli Baba Kültür Derneği*, openly states that "if my state asks, tries to get confirmation or shows references from other communities about Cemevis' position as places of worship, it hurts our feelings... If it asks Diyanet whether Cemevis can be accepted as places of worship or not, it would hurt us because the same question can also be asked about Cami" (Workshop 1 2009, 251). Regardless of Alevi representatives concerns, several Sunni participants of Alevi workshops voiced their own assessments about Alevilik and Cemevis and a considerable part argues that Cemevis cannot be accepted as places of worship. Especially theologians based their objections to a possible disintegration within Islam that would stem from Cemevis' acceptance as places of prayer. Former

head of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, Tayyar Altıkulaç expressed his concerns by arguing that

If we accept Cemevis as places of worship by law, what kind of a situation will emerge? Think about Islam as a big umbrella. Alevi and Sunni are under this umbrella but their places of worship are different. As if their beliefs are different or they believe in different Gods and prophets... I kind of see it as a beginning which will further separate the community and urge them to perceive each other negatively... I say that we should avoid such applications and carelessness which would totally separate the community (Workshop 7 2010, 393).

His suggestions for the solution also reflect similar concerns. He argues that

Christians have one place of worship, Jews have a single place of worship, Muslims including both Sunni and Alevi also have a single place of worship. But Sunni or Alevi may choose not to go to *Cami*, he may perform his prayers or not. That is another issue. But my Alevi brother says "I will perform my prayer in Cemevi". There is no obstacle for that according to me. A status should be given to Cemevi. There is also no obstacle for that. But the image of two places of worship annoys me when I look from the perspective of the community's sensitivities... (Workshop 7 2010, 417)

İzzet Er¹¹ also claimed that it would be inappropriate if Alevi associations forced other segments of the society to recognize Cemevis as places of worship. Er said that

From the beginning, in the history of Islam, the place of worship is *Cami*. It is *Mescit* in Arab culture and *Cami* in Turkish culture. To demand a second one in addition to *Cami*, would be like a contradiction. We will both say that Alevilik is a part of Islam and present it as if it is out of Islam. In that sense it would be more appropriate for Cemevis to remain as *niyaz evi* or *dua mekanı* instead of a place of worship. My Alevi brothers can call them places of worship. They can call it whatever they want. I would respect that but I think my Alevi brothers should not force me to say that Cemevis are places of worship or to acknowledge them (Workshop 3 2009, 175-176).

¹¹ İzzet Er is a Professor of Religion Sociology, and is the Vice President of the GDRA since 2005.

From a similar perspective Yasin Aktay¹² states that “There is no meaning in calling Cemevi a place of worship as an extra quality. It is sufficient to know Cemevi as Cemevi. There is also a consensus about the issue on the part of the state. A religion can only have a single place of worship” (Workshop 7 2010, 461). Some of the participants also questioned historical roots of Cemevi and argues that Cemevi was a modern phenomenon and cannot be perceived as a place of worship. Hamza Aktan for instance argues that “Alevi have never used the term Cemevi. It emerged after urbanization, before it was called by names such as *tekke*, *zaviye*, *niyaz evi* or *büyük ev* and they performed their special rituals and invocations in those places. Others religious orders also have similar places” (Workshop 3 2009, 143). Some of the participants were also willing to categorize Alevilik and object to Alevi demands concerning Cemevis. While Necati Ceylan, the President of *Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı*, argues that Alevilik and Bektaşilik were religious orders and thus Cemevis cannot be accepted to be an alternative of *Cami*, Prof. Dr. Sönmez Kutlu¹³ states that it was inappropriate to take Alevilik and Sunnilik as equal entities (Workshop 3 2009, 31-147). Another concern for some of the Sunni participants of the process was the threat of pressure on Alevi who choose to attend *Cami* instead of or in addition to Cemevi. From such a perspective Sönmez Kutlu argues that “if we continue like this we will take Alevi who go to *Cami* out of there. If we prevent them from enjoying their freedom of consciousness, it would not be right. Let people perform the sharia all together and go to their own places in the part of *erkan*” (Workshop 7 2010, 400-401).

In addition to the Sunni participants who rejected acknowledging Cemevis as places of worship, other participants argue that there was no obstacle to meeting this demand. Yaşar Nuri Öztürk¹⁴ for instance explained his point from a theological perspective and states that “we should not lie for the sake of unity of Islam, not to call Cemevi a place of worship... Islam is a religion which is against the idea of an

¹² Yasin Aktay is a Professor of Religion Sociology at the Selçuk University, and a fellow at Institute of Strategic Thinking.

¹³ Sönmez Kutlu is a Professor of Religion at the Ankara University Divinity School.

¹⁴ Yaşar Nuri Öztürk is a retired Professor of Religion. He served as a member of the Parliament between 2002 and 2007 for the RPP.

official place of worship... There is the concept of *Mescit* in Islam... Mescit is the surface of earth... “(Workshop 3 2009, 184) Theologian, İlhami Güler¹⁵ on the other hand approached to the issue from a perspective of human rights and equal citizenship. Güler argues that

Alevis basic demands are acceptance of Cemevis as places of worship... These demands should be based on the status of equal citizenship at the most basic level. In that sense I cannot imagine someone who interiorized the democratic, secular state of law rejecting these demands... If Alevis perceive Cemevis as places of worship I do not have the authority to make the simplest comment on the issue... If they see it as a place of worship, and pray in that structure, how can you make a statement about the criteria to judge it as an outsider of that sect? (Workshop 3 2009, 116-119).

It is important to note that a considerable part of Sunni participants states that it would only be appropriate to accept Alevis’ decisions on the issue and exchange ideas about how to meet their demands without causing more serious problems (Workshop 4 2009, 170; Workshop 5 2009, 35; Workshop 6 2009, 82; Workshop 7 2010, 375, 384, 407).

In the Preliminary Report which is designed to present the findings of the Alevi Workshops, Subaşı makes a rather negative account regarding Alevis demands about the status of Cemevis. His attitude toward the issue can also be observed in his statements during the workshops. In the fifth workshop he states that “I say this as someone who has a connection with the field, there is not a live enthusiasm about the issue. There is a discourse which makes emphasis on Cemevis but it when you scratch the surface it is used as a discourse intensifying requisitions of Alevi associations” (Workshop 5 2009, 37). It is also significant that Subaşı defined the representatives of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs’ anxieties as well-grounded while he criticized Alevi participants’ insistence on the issue of official recognition of Cemevis by arguing that

Alevis do not have a detailed analysis regarding these places [Cemevis] being places of worship. There is only the idea and enthusiasm to accept them as

¹⁵ İlhami Güler is a Professor of *Kelam* in Ankara University Divinity School.

places of worship. It is necessary to say that is a very strong excitement. Today all Alevis have this expectation. It is not even possible to talk about exceptional groups regarding this issue” (Workshop 5 2009, 117).

Apart from the inconsistency of his argumentation with his previous one, his statements regarding Alevis’ and Sunnis’ position can be accepted to cast a shadow on his impartiality as the moderator of the whole process. Similar statements regarding the inexpediency or groundlessness of this demand were included within the Preliminary Report. Although it is accepted in the Preliminary Report that demands concerning official recognition of Cemevis’ status as places of worship was a common acceptance among Alevis, he states that

That is a quite new phenomenon and it is necessary to analyze existing acceptances in an objective and coolheaded manner beyond emotionality. For this end, it is not necessary to explain that views of theologians’ and scientists’ who are respected by both sides are needed. Apart from all this expectations, when the question whether Cemevis are places of worship or not is handled within theological criteria, it is seen that as Alevilik followed a mystic and sufistic path in its history, its existing structure does not allow Cemevis to be seen as places of worship (Subaşı 2010a, 172).

As it can be seen while the Alevi Workshops are claimed to dwell on objective discussions, in the case of Cemevis, theological body of knowledge is employed due to its ‘scientific’ nature even though it is known that Alevi community does not accept theology as an objective body of knowledge. Foucault states that the legitimacy of ‘scientific’ knowledge depends on

Playing local, discontinuous, disqualified, or nonlegitimized knowledges off against the unitary theoretical instance that claims to be able to filter them, organize them into a hierarchy, organize them in the name of a true body of knowledge, in the name of the rights of a science that is in the hands of a few (Foucault 2003, 31).

By taking theology’s superiority over the Alevis’ knowledge and ideas about their own places of worship, Subaşı denies the legitimacy of Alevis demands’ concerning Cemevis. It is quite significant that while Subaşı dismisses the accuracy of Alevis’

demands on the grounds of a theological approach, he pays considerable attention to some of the Sunni participants' anxieties and shapes his conclusion in that manner. He presents this approach as the objective outcome of the 7 workshops when he argues that "Among the non-Alevi participants, some concerns were voiced regarding these places [Cemevis] definition as places of worship. That is why suggestions like, enabling their associations and foundations without calling Cemevis "places of worship"; and as long as they do not disturb the public order, supporting them via respective administrations were supported and it was emphasized that all these suggestions necessitated technic examination as a consequence (Subaşı 2010a, 175).

When it is considered that the Preliminary Report does not even mention concepts such as human rights and equal citizenship regardless of some participants' emphasis on these terms in relation with the status of Cemevis during the workshops, brings the objectivity of the Preliminary Report under suspicion. From this perspective İzzettin Doğan's argument becomes even more legitimate when he argues that "the government must make a decision. Will they be a part of the system of values known as European civilization or European values...will taking the steps towards this end gain the government point or will they look from the perspective of sharia law, and even the classical sharia law? The decision will be made by the government" (Workshop 7 2010, 418-419).

3.1.4. Dedes: Status and Rights of Alevi Dedes

During the workshops, Alevi participants' demands concerning Dedes' employee personal rights were not as uniform as their demands about the official recognition of Cemevis as places of worship. There are two different perspectives of the status of Dedes which can be categorized as statist and reformist.. While participants from the statist camp demand Alevi Dedes to have the similar status with *İmams*, representatives of reformist camp argues against their demands and states that such a regulation would put Alevilik under the control of the state (Workshop 1 2009, 41; Workshop 1 2009, 227). While participants who demanded that Dedes to become a permanent staff and receive regular salary from the state, others either argues that dedes' source of income was set within the Alevi tradition itself or it would be

supplied by the Alevi associations. Similar divergences among Alevi associations were also observed during the interviews.

İzzettin Doğan, head of *Cem Vakfı* argues that it was indispensable for the future of the Alevi community to grant Alevi dedes to become a permanent staff and receive regular salary (Workshop 1 2009, 41). He claimed that “it must be accepted that it is a very hard thing to both strive to earn money and dedicate yourself to improve your knowledge. That is why Dedes’ and Babas’ personal employee rights should be acknowledged for them to improve their knowledge and strengthen this institution which is weakening...” (Workshop 1 2009, 41) From a similar perspective Remzi Özbalı, President of the *Atayolu Derneği*, argues “Dedes should be totally impartial because they conduct *Cem* and *görgü*. He must be just. Dedes must be economically independent. That is why I support the demand to give Dedes salary. Dedes must have the economic independence to be always in the path of justice” (Workshop 1 2009, 185). It was also argued by some participants that without Dedes’ who have the economic means to serve, gaining official status for Cemevis would be meaningless as it would be like “building schools without teachers and hospitals without doctors” (Workshop 1 2009, 197). From this point of view Ali Rıza Uğurlu of the *Cem Vakfı*, argues that “we, Alevi organizations have always thought about Cemevis and concrete walls. We have never thought about the people who will serve in” (Workshop 1 2009, 197). In the interview, head of the *Cem Vakfı*’s Ankara branch, Faruk Ali Yıldırım also repeated *Cem Vakfı*’s demands concerning personal employee rights of Alevi Dedes and also added that a university for the education of Dedes was necessary. Yıldırım states that

Our Dedes and children of our Dedes should get an education in schools or related departments of celestial religions. This education should also be given by our Dedes. Also our Dedes are conducting Cems in their houses for long hours. Some of our Dedes have retirement salaries but there are also Dedes who does not have that. How can they serve us in our prayers as religious leaders? Today *İmams* get salaries from the state. They take our money and give it to them... That is a great injustice. Today there are 25-30 million Alevis in Turkey, we did not remember a single Alevi Dede who received salary from the state. We want our Dedes to have their personal employee rights.^{xi}

In addition to the Alevi participants of the Alevi Workshops a considerable part of Sunnis also argues that Dedes should be given an official status and regular salaries. The most common explanation for their position was Alevi Dedes' 'lack of knowledge' (Workshop 3 2009, 72-112, Workshop 4 2009, 124-154; Workshop 7 2010, 331). It would be beneficial to give examples to reveal some of the Sunni participants understanding of Dedes' positions and necessities. In the third workshop which was attended solely by theologians, Mehmet Ali Büyükkara said

I will give a very simple example. The ones who participated in Cem rituals may have seen it. When Dedes are reciting the verses of Quran or prayers from hadiths, they are citing them wrongly... Of course these are done by mistake because they learn them by hearsay. For example if Dedes will work in Cemevis with salaries... give religious services... the curriculum of the Divinity Schools can provide assistance for them (Workshop 3 2009, 72).

Bircan Akyıldız, President of *KAMU-SEN*, also argues that Alevi Dedes' "ignorance" was a fundamental problem for the Alevi community and said "it would meet the most part of Alevi community's demands, if the state gave financial support to the community and started the necessary preparations for the foundation of a Department of Sufi Discipline for the education of Dedes" (Workshop 2009, 124). Mehmet Doğan also mentioned the lack of a mechanism of religious education for Dedes and argues that "I do not have any clue about the nature of the Alevi religious authorities because being an Alevi religious leader comes from the family and it does not necessitate education or training...I do not have information about if they get an education except the nuncupative information acquired from family and Cemevi community" (Workshop 4 2009, 154). A considerable part of Sunni participants of the Alevi workshops saw informal nature of Alevi Dedes' education as an important problem of the Alevi community although their view was not shared by a majority of the Alevi representatives. It is quite significant that some Alevi associations' demands for the personal employee rights of Alevi Dedes were directly related to their lack of education and 'ignorance'. It is necessary to state that there were Sunni participants who drew attention to the possible negative effects of making Dedes a staff of the state. Yılmaz Ensaroğlu, a representative of SETAV, for instance argues that

We have seen that when our *Imams* became civil servants they ceased to be religious leaders and became civil servants whose only job is to serve the community only during five time *namaz*, we have lived it and you have watched it. When we think about the future of Dedelik, it is necessary to draw lessons and maybe to develop some demands without ignoring it... When we try to solve this [Dedelik] in the mechanism of the state, in a legal status, these problems should also be considered (Workshop 7 2010, 343).

Some of the Alevi participants' negative assessments regarding Dedes' appointment as civil servants revealed that there was not a consensus among Alevi associations about the issue at hand. A considerable number of Alevi participants voiced their concerns regarding the harm that can be done to the autonomous nature of Alevilik and Alevi Dedes if Dedes are seen as civil servants and receive their salaries from the state (Workshop 1 2009, 227-238-240-243-264). Veliyeddin Ulusoy, *Postnişin* of Hacı Bektaşî Veli lodge, for instance argues that if Alevi dedes receive salaries from the state it would be the death of Alevilik because "Dedes who fulfilled the necessities of our path for centuries become a civil servant who receives money from the state and surrender themselves to a salary, becomes obliged to fulfill the demands of the governments... A Dede who receives salary from the state cannot be my Dede. He becomes the employee of the one who pays his salary" (Workshop 1 2009, 238-239). As it can be observed from Ulusoy's statements a possible dependence of Alevi Dedes and Alevi community on the state constitutes the major theme of his argumentation. From a similar perspective Kelime Ata argues that

Giving salary to Alevi Dedes or representing Alevilik within *Diyanet* means including Alevis into the state apparatus. Do we want to create a new power by demanding from the state to pay Dedes salaries and by establishing a new relation between the belief and money? Is Dedelik a new occupation? Do we want to open an Alevi holding next to the *Diyanet's* Sunni factory? How independent and free will Dedes feel when they are told to explain Alevilik in a certain way by the state... when they are exposed to the interventions of the government? Will they do the requirements of their beliefs or their wallets? (Workshop 1 2009, 227)

Some of the Alevi participants who rejected the idea of Alevi Dedes receiving salaries from the state argues that the state would support Alevi associations and in turn Alevi associations may financially support Dedes who conduct their Cem services (Workshop 1 2009, 243-240). In the Assessment Report of the HBVAKV it is argued that what authorities did within the preliminary report was blackmail as it was argued that if Alevi Dedes were supposed to become civil servants, they were supposed to go through a course of education which was approved by the state itself. According to the report it was an open intervention to Alevi belief system itself as it openly declared that “from now on we will decide who will be a Dede and how a Dede will be” (Assessment Report 2011, 117). The report also interprets *Cem Vakfi*'s demand for such a regulation from a different light. It is argued that

Within the Alevi community, even the groups which are most inclined to make calls of intervention such as demanding salaries for Dedes, firstly formed the same sentence: Since Sunni religious leaders are fed from the state treasury, are ours [Dedes] stepchildren of the state? In that sense Alevis are expressing that they are tired of giving the common revenue created by Alevis themselves to Sunnilik which was created by the state. But power holders interpret this will as ‘we will also turn Dedes to civil servants who receive salaries from state’... (Assessment Report 2011, 117)

It is necessary to state that HBVAKV's argument seems quite legitimate when it is considered along with the statement of the head of *Cem Vakfi*'s Ankara Branch who, during the interviews, put emphasis on the unequal treatment of Alevi Dedes by the state.

In the Preliminary Report a sociological assessment of the history and current situation of Dedelik is included. It is argued within the Preliminary Report that “Dedelik, being in the first place, and much of the basic constituents which coordinate the existential integrity of Alevilik are exposed to a very serious loss of content” (Subaşı 2010a, 66). It is also argued that today Alevis' traditions were not strong enough to support Dedes as it is stated that “today it is out of the question for an Alevi to consult to a Dede about a legal problem or payment of *Hakkullah* to the Dede by the congregation. In this process it became meaningless and groundless for

Dede to wander among his *talips* and to keep the sacred network alive” (Subaşı 2010a, 166). Apart from these assessments about the nature and current situation of Dedelik, the Preliminary Report also narrates the discussions made during the Alevi workshops and concludes that

if the state will form Cemevis and take Dedes as the central point, in that case it is necessary to reevaluate the traditional structure of Dedelik and to move it to a new status that can be accepted within the borders of modern democratic state. To able to address this need, it is necessary for Dedes to benefit from some training programmes” (Subaşı 2010a, 170).

As the writer takes it as a necessity for Alevi community to have educated Dedes, he argues that

the real problem that must be considered is how to maintain charisma in the modern organizations that are based on merit. First and foremost this question must be answered by Alevis themselves. As a consequence of that a study should immediately be started for a new regulation which will carry Dedelik into the center of Alevilik while considering the existing conditions of Dedes” (Subaşı 2010a, 170).

By stating that Dedes must go through a training program, the writer again constructs a hierarchical relation between Alevi Dedes’ “local, disqualified and nonlegitimized” knowledge system and scientific knowledge which is shaped by Sunni theologians since the foundation of the Turkish State. As Alevi dedes still constitute the source of religious knowledge for the Alevi community, educating Dedes via state apparatus would most probably lead to dissemination of a certain set of knowledge about Alevilik and such a concern can be observed in mentioned statements of Alevi participants.

3.1.5. The General Directorate of Religious Affairs: Several approaches to its nature and future

The General Directorate of Religious Affairs’ ‘unfair’ and “undemocratic” structure has constituted one of the most well-known criticisms of the Alevi community towards the Turkish Nation State. During the interviews and Alevi Workshops

Alevis' discontent with the existing structure of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs was highly emphasized. Although it is commonly supposed that Alevis main opposition to the General Directorate of Religious Affairs is based on the services supplied to the Sunni community by the institution while Alevis are rejected such services, Alevis' discontent is related to the undemocratic structure of the institution which is formed to unite all Turkish nation under a certain interpretation of Sunni Islam. It is quite significant that participants of the interviews argues that the General Directorate of Religious Affairs is a constraint for the Sunni community as much as it is for the Alevis. Sadık Özsoy, a Representative of HBVAKV, states in his interview that

In Turkey there are no Alevi or Alevilik problems. The real problems are our Sunni brothers' problems because a religion is imposed on them. That is why there is no need for an Alevi Initiative in Turkey. Alevis know what they want, Alevis know how to pray, how to follow their rituals but there is a Diyanet imposition on the Sunni community. You will perform your daily prayers in that *Cami*, you will recite these prayers, you will listen to these sermons, you will worship in this way. There is such an imposition on our Sunni brothers... The real problem is an imposition executed by the state.^{xii}

From a similar perspective Yıldırım, interviewee from *Cem Vakfi*, argues that there was not any group pleased with the services of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey. According to Yıldırım even though it would not happen in near future, Diyanet is bound to collapse as it does not serve any section of the society in spite of all its means. Yıldırım said

one day Diyanet will become an institution which is rejected by all the segments of the society because it is not clear who it serves. It has 3-4 billion dollars budget and almost 200 thousand personnel cadre. If I am not pleased with it just like Sunnis, Nuseyris, Caferis, and members of our government who also used to express their discontent with it until recent time, who this institution serves?^{xiii}

During the Alevi Workshops a majority of both Alevi and Sunni participants expressed their discontent with the General Directorate of Religious Affairs. Both its

current structure and its historical duty to create an “enlightened” form of Islam were criticized by the participants. A considerable part of participants agreed on the idea that the General Directorate of Religious Affairs’ current structure was not for the benefit of religious communities as the purpose of its foundation was different. Mehmet Bekaroğlu¹⁶ for instance argues that

this problem is the outcome of the plan for the creation of a Turkish nation. As you know, non-Muslim communities’ numbers were reduced through migration, deportation, massacres and death and the remaining Muslim community was used for the construction of Turkish nation. It was supposed to be a modern and homogeneous community in terms of language, religion and in every other sense. The belief of this nation was to be a religion constructed by the General Directorate of Religious Affairs from Sunni-Hanefi sect. From this perspective I fully understand why our Alevi friends criticize *Diyanet* but our Sunni friends should also criticize the General Directorate of Religious Affairs. It is a governmental agency and it should not be able to define the religion of the majority as well as the religion of minorities. In that sense the General Directorate of Religious Affairs interferes into not only Alevis or Sunnis but all religious communities and it should not exist in a democratic state (Workshop 6 2009, 100).

From a similar line of argument an Alevi participant Fevzi Gümüş argues that the discussions concerning the undemocratic nature of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs was not specific to the Alevi community (Workshop 1 2009, 84). On the contrary “Sunni intellectuals argue that through the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, Sunnilik was pulled into the state’s vortex” (Workshop 1 2009, 84). As it can be seen the General Directorate of Religious Affairs’ structure which aimed to control, transform and standardize Muslim community and the religion of Islam itself was criticized by the participants. In addition to these criticisms, *Diyanet*’s inconsistency with a secular state was repeatedly mentioned by both Sunni and Alevi participants. Doğan for instance argues that although *Diyanet* was receiving billions of Dollars from the state treasury “it represents an approach that

¹⁶ Mehmet Bekaroğlu is a Professor of Psychology. He served as a member of the Parliament under the Welfare Party. He is currently the Vice President of The People’s Voice Party.

does not take account of Alevis, and due to its structure, it converses the constitution and the principle of equality of citizens before the law which constitutes the bases on which the secular republic is founded” (Workshop 7 2010, 284). Ensaroğlu also argues that it was impossible to perceive Turkish Nation State as a truly secular one as it makes a definition of religion through the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and retains the religious life of Sunni community (Workshop 7 2010, 340). In addition to its power of control over Sunnilik and Sunni community, Ensaroğlu states that

Diyanet totally ignores the existence of non-Sunni Muslims and no matter how the state defines itself as a secular one it does not give religious services to these non-Sunni communities... It also mediates violation of citizens’ property rights...For instance although I do not wish to, I am forced to perform my daily prayers behind an Imam who takes its salary from the taxes of non-Muslim or non-Sunni citizens (Workshop 7 2010, 340).

As the General Directorate of Religious Affairs reason for foundation was accepted to unify and control the “Muslim” Turkish Nation, and thus interfere into the religious life of its citizens, some of the participants argues that “Turkish secularism” cannot be accepted to be secularism at all. Sami Evren, General President of *KESK*, argues

as long as the General Directorate of Religious Affairs exist, Turkey cannot be a secular state because the state and its freedom of consciousness and religion is tied to a specific sect. To control this specific sect for the well-being of the state is inherent to its foundation principles. It is a mechanism to control religion. Because of that in all the sermons of the Diyanet, you can see phrases which continually praises the state and the nation (Workshop 4 2009, 82).

From a similar perspective, Tekin Özdil states that

The definition of secularism which is accepted in Turkey takes the mean as a goal in itself. When the problem is considered from this perspective, the goal of secularism should not be a strong state but to build a political community consisting of equal and free citizens. The General Directorate of Religious

Affairs contradicts this goal fundamentally and it must be abolished (Workshop 1 2009, 98).

It is necessary to express that some of the Sunni participants of the Alevi Workshops perceived the General Directorate of Religious Affairs as an institution founded and developed by the Sunni community which should be perceived as the outcome of Sunnis' democratic struggle (Workshop 3 2009, 24). For instance Zeki Aslantürk¹⁷ states that "Our Alevi brothers do not have the right to demand Sunnis' institutions' i.e. Diyanet's abolition. Sunnis have established these institutions through struggle. The state did not give these institutions, Sunnis built them... [Sunnis] formed their demands based on laws and forced the state to meet these demands. It was the victory of democracy" (Workshop 3 2009, 24). From a similar perspective Yasin Aktay argues that

If Diyanet evolved into its current form, it is the outcome of democracy and demanding attitude of Sunnis. Even if the state has such an attitude today to the Sunni community, it was because Sunnis' followed the democratic path and gained its rights and not all of them in that case... I wish Alevis also had started the same struggle earlier. But Alevis did not demand anything about Alevilik until 1980s and even 1990s, as you all know. They engaged with different ideologies. They did not demand religious rights and religious services from the state. Now there is a belated demand for these rights (Workshop 7 2010, 254).

Obviously, from this point of view the General Directorate of Religious Affairs is not perceived as a tool of the state which aimed to control religion and religious communities, but as a gain of the Sunni community. It also states during the workshops that %65 of Turkish society is pleased with the services given by the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and desired its continuation (Workshop 4 2009, 115).

Although a considerable part of Alevi and Sunni participants expressed their discontent with the very existence of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, they state that it was not realistic to expect its abolition in the near future (Workshop 1 2009, 42-65; Workshop 3 2009, 185; Workshop 4 2009, 27-179 Workshop 6 2009,

¹⁷ Zeki Aslantürk is a Professor of Sociology of Religion at the Marmara University Divinity School.

193). From this perspective, the arguments mainly focused on the possible ways for the reorganization of the institution in compliance with a pluralistic, secular and democratic state structure while its abolition remained as a long term projection. One of the most favored suggestions to meet this end was reforming *Diyanet* into an autonomous legal entity (Workshop 7 2010, 315). It was argued that through transforming *Diyanet* into an autonomous structure, it would be possible to remove the ties between the state and religion. Several suggestions were made about possible ways to transform the General Directorate of Religious Affairs into a democratic and egalitarian institution. For instance Aykan Erdemir¹⁸ said

It is obvious that Diyanet has a problematical structure but it is also obvious that there is a need for supervising and regulating religious activity in Turkey... My suggestion is that a Supreme Board of Religious Services should be founded independent from the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and it should be similar to market regulation commission. It should not offer services, receive funds and remain only as a supreme board which only supervises and regulates religious activity. It should include representatives of religious groups without any prerequisites (Workshop 2 2009, 88).

Ercan Geçmez of the HBVAKV also argues that duties of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs should be redefined and its authority should be delimited (Workshop 1 2009, 133). He suggested that *Diyanet's*

Qualifications which enable it to become a monopoly within the sphere of Islam should be eliminated. Its duty to enlighten the society in terms of morals and religion should be removed. Its quality as the manager of places of worship should be bereaved and should be confined to supervision only. Its desire to pose itself as the only authority for Islamic reference should be restrained... All legislation regarding the General Directorate of Religious Affairs should be redrawn with an emphasis on the fact that the institution is limited by the principles of secularism and its foremost duty is to protect secularism (Workshop 1 2009, 133).

¹⁸ Aykan Erdemir is an Assistant Professor of Comparative Social Science at METU, and a member of the Parliament since 2010 from the RPP.

İzzettin Doğan's suggestions for the reorganization of *Diyanet* repeated a similar line of argument. He states that

The General Directorate of Religious Affairs should be reorganized from a to z as an autonomous and independent organization in a manner which allows all religious groups representation at the rate of their population without a pecking order. That would allow it to transform into a democratic organization and if it becomes such an organization, its prestige and authority would significantly increase. It would also not be in contradiction with the secular state due to its democratic organization (Workshop 7 2010, 285).

As it can be seen the participants put emphasis on the importance and necessity of total economic independence, a pluralist and democratic structure and, authority limited only to supervision and regulation of religious practices for a reconstructed General Directorate of Religious Affairs. Apart from those who favored a pluralistic and integrative structure for a future *Diyanet*, others argued that inclusion of Alevilik into such a structure would never solve Alevis' problems. On the contrary they argued that such an attitude would serve the continuation of statist tradition (Workshop 1 2009, 211). From such a line of argument Yalçın Özdemir states that "Looking for a solution in the context of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs for Alevis' problems is a sham of statist traditions instead of existing political power and it is one of the main elements which would strengthen Alevi-Sunni conflict" (Workshop 1, 211).

In addition to some Alevi representatives' concerns regarding Alevis' inclusion into the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, there were also Sunni representatives who rejected the necessity to change *Diyanet*'s current structure. For instance Ahmet Şişman, the President of *ENSAR Vakfı* argues that a majority of the Sunni population is pleased with the current form and services of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and if Alevis can call for its abolition or restructuring in the name of secular identity of Turkish Republic it would just like Sunnis arguing that "although you have built Cemevis you cannot perform Cem ritual because the intents of your Cem ritual is against our current legal regulations" (Workshop 4 2009, 115). It seems that Şişman does not consider it is an important difference that while *Diyanet* is an

institution which is funded by the state and part of the state mechanism and thus obliged to serve on the bases of equal citizenship and secularism, Alevis' Cemevis remains as private property which can be put into use for the needs and interests of its owners. Sönmez Kutlu argues that Diyanet itself was not a problem in itself and it did not have a problem with the Alevi community. According to Sönmez, the problem should be defined as Diyanet's representation among Alevis (Workshop 7 2010, 308). He suggested that the problem can be solved through a closer relation between Alevi community and the General Directorate of Religious Affairs (Workshop 7 2010, 308). He states that "some Alevi Cemevis have Koran courses; even if they do not have Koran courses, *Diyanet* can appoint religious advisers with the title of Religious Service Expert" (Workshop 7 2010, 308). Sönmez's approach obviously does not require a structural change of *Diyanet* and totally ignores the lack of confidence among Alevi community to Diyanet. It is also significant that once again, educating Alevis with the help of existing body of knowledge about Islam is presented as a solution for Alevis problems. Vecdi Akyüz¹⁹ on the other hand argues that inclusion of Alevis within the General Directorate of Religious Affairs would not be convenient and it can be understood from his expressions that he does not perceive Alevilik as a part of Islam or as a legitimate belief system. He argues that

There are discussions about whether there should be a department of Alevilik within *Diyanet*. I think it is not right. There is a very old regulation of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and other non-Muslim minorities' self-regulation, and it continues. I believe existence of such a department in the General Directorate of Religious Affairs is not correct. It may be thought as a part of Ministry of Culture. I think it would be more convenient. I believe, developing a project within the Ministry of Culture like Alevilik Studies or regarding solutions for their -I do not know what to call them- religious leaders, dedes (Workshop 3 2009, 104).

Still other participants argue for the inclusion of Alevis within the General Directorate of Religious Affairs without making a structural change. Bircan Akyıldız, the President of KAMU-SEN, for instance argues that "Due to the fact that Turkish Republic embraces a secular vision and does not have an official religion or

¹⁹ Vecdi Akyüz is a Professor of Religion at the Marmara University Divinity School.

sect, the General Directorate of Religious Affairs should be open to every belief and culture and provide services for national unity and solidarity. At that point it is necessary for the General Directorate of Religious Affairs to appoint Alevi citizens within its ranks and reach a level of maturity to be able to deal with Alevi citizens' problems and to provide their religious services" (Workshop 4 2009, 124). When Alevis discontent and mistrust towards the existing structure of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs is considered, Akyıldız's suggestion seems quite impossible to maintain. Apart from *Diyanet's* natural tie with the Sunni sect, a considerable part of Alevi Associations observe the institution as the state's mean to intervene into the religion and express their determination to remain as an autonomous belief system (Request Report 2009, 35).

During the Alevi workshops both Subaşı and Minister Çelik put emphasis on the positive aspects of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs. It is necessary to state that, the law on political parties is a restriction on active politician's freedom to express their ideas about the General Directorate of Religious Affairs as the law bans politicians to offer any change in the structure of the institution and Minister Çelik's statements showed that he was not willing to discuss a fundamental change for the General Directorate of Religious Affairs (Law of Political Parties 1983, 5727). Minister Çelik states that "apart from the law on political parties, citizens are generally pleased with *Diyanet*... if we also problematize this sphere; we will come to an impasse point. There may be criticisms and operational mistakes that can be corrected" (Workshop 6 2009, 64). In his assessment of Alevis' positions regarding the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, Subaşı repeated his categorization of moderate "traditionalist Alevis" and idealist marginal Alevis. In his opening speech of the seventh and last workshop Subaşı states that

while a group of Alevi associations wish to abolish the General Directorate of Religious Affairs due to their absurdly idealistic understanding of secularism and go on, a different group which wishes to see the realities of Turkey in a more even tempered manner claims that abolishing the General Directorate of Religious Affairs cannot be expected and organizations should be formed in a manner which takes notice of this asset (Workshop 7 2010, 26)

It is quite significant that in addition to continuing to accuse a considerable part of Alevi associations with marginality and absurdity, the Preliminary Report reduces Alevis' approaches to the General Directorate of Religious Affairs into two extreme cases and does not even mention commonly voiced demands for the restructuring of Diyanet into a pluralistic, democratic and egalitarian form. A similar approach can be observed within the Preliminary Report towards both Sunni and Alevi participants' positions. For instance it is argued that "suggestions for the abolition of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs in relation with idealistic forms of secularism, especially when they are voiced by Alevis, are not accepted by Sunnis by no manner of means and they are not seen reasonable" (Subaşı 2010a, 98). As it can be seen while the writer approaches to the matter with reductionist categories such as 'Sunnis', he totally denies commonly voiced complaints of Sunni participants about the oppressive and anti-democratic structure of Diyanet and also argue for either abolition or total restructuring of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs. It is also significant that the Preliminary Report both accepts the Sunni nature of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs and argues that the institution is a neutral one which emphasis the common values of all Muslims through 'core-Islam' (Subaşı 2010a, 119). It is argued that although Diyanet reached its current form with the "existing legal acquis and Sunni communities' powerful pushes... Especially in recent years, in an attempt to approach its founding principles, the institution is going beyond sectarian and communitarian differences and following a discourse of core "Islam" as an outcome of restorations within the General Directorate of Religious Affairs (Subaşı 2010a, 119). The writer reveals his stance about the discussions of Diyanet by arguing that "Diyanet is a factual reality of Turkey and it is one of the institutions whose non-existence is "unthinkable" because of many reasons, first of which is its being coeval with the republic" (Subaşı 2010a, 126). Again the possibility of restructuring the General Directorate of Religious Affairs is not mentioned and the conclusive suggestion is structured as "It is necessary to make studies at every level and found legal commissions to define and delimit existing problems and find necessary solutions in compliance with Constitution" (Subaşı 2010a, 132). When the constitutional law which states that "The Department of Religious Affairs, which is within the general administration, shall exercise its duties

prescribed in its particular law, in accordance with the principles of secularism, removed from all political views and ideas, and aiming at national solidarity and integrity” is considered, it becomes obvious that the Preliminary Report does not advise to abolish the Department of Religious Affairs or reconstruct it as an autonomous legal entity (The Constitution 2001, 47). What is proposed in the Preliminary Report is including Alevi community within the existing power-knowledge relation which is shaped via the GDRA (Subaşı 2010a, 191) and it is obvious that such an inclusion would oblige Alevilik as well as the Alevi community to go through a transformation and become more ‘governable’.

3.1.6. Sivas Massacre: Oscillation between approaches of human rights and national security

It can be safely argued that all Alevi associations agree on their demand from the state to nationalize Madımak Hotel and to either transform it into a museum or replace it with a monument in the memory of the victims of Sivas Massacre (Workshop 1 2009, 50-84-93-112-210-228-241-259-264-272). Several participants of the Alevi workshops also voiced their expectations for the illumination of Sivas Massacre’s background and punishment of all the offenders. It was argued by both Alevi and Sunni participants that Sivas Massacre cannot be comprehended as a problem specific to Alevis. It was also argued that Sivas Massacre should be perceived not as a petty crime but a violation of human rights and freedom of conscious. Şenol Kaluç emphasized this point by stating that Madımak “is not a problem of Alevis’ and it should be considered in relation with human rights and freedom of conscience... Madımak Hotel is an important symbol in this initiative process. This place should be made into a center of societal reconciliation and a symbol of moral plea of guilty” (Workshop 4 2009, 26).

Contrary to the importance attributed by Alevis to the Sivas Massacre and symbolic value of the hotel in which 37 people died, other participants argued that such incidents should not be continually reminded. For instance, Hasan Ekşi, the General President of the *Türkiye Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Platformu*, said “Our friends talk about Madımak Hotel again and again. Such isolated incidents happened in Turkey. Let’s break with the past. Of course people died there and it is a heavy wound... But

such sources of trouble appear now and then” (Workshop 4 2009, 47-48). The pleas to break with the past and forget about the bad events that took place such as Sivas Massacre generally aimed not to increase the tension within the society and damage social unity and solidarity. From such a perspective Ahmet Gündoğdu argues that

when issues such as Sivas and Başbağlar are brought to the agenda, I pay attention not to follow projects such as making a museum which would set Alevis, Sunnis, Turks and Kurds, the people who live in this country at loggerheads. I have the belief that we should advance for our unity and avoid all projects that would create revanchist feelings” (Workshop 4 2009, 64).

Although such a discourse aims social harmony and peace, it should be remembered that such an approach disregards the moral and ideological issues which would enable a considerable number of people to participate in a massacre and thus does not offer a long term solution for recurring attacks towards Alevi community.

Some of the participants argued that it would be more convenient for Alevi associations to put more emphasis on their demands concerning capture of Sivas Massacre’s offenders and their due punishment. Alper Tan, Executive Editor of *Kanal A*, explained this position by arguing that

It is impossible to explain how offenders of Madımak are still not captured. In a country ruled with democracy and law, it cannot be explained. That is why, before thinking about what we will do with Madımak, we should question where the offenders are, why they are not found, why and by whom they are protected, in what purpose Madımak was planned” (Workshop 7 2010, 161).

From a similar perspective, Yasin Aktay states that “Of course we should remember and remind Madımak. But I think the best way to keep Madımak and Sivas alive or to secure justice for Madımak is discovering real actors of Madımak. I think the best monument to be erected in Sivas is discovering real offenders” (Workshop 7 2010, 189).

It was revealed during the Alevi workshops that a considerable part of Sunnis are convinced that Aziz Nesin’s attendance to the festival drew Sunnis’ reaction and was

the main motivation for the Sivas massacre. Ahmet Faruk Ünsal, the President of *MAZLUM-DER* argues that

it must be remembered that Madımak Incident is not an event in which Sunnilik took revenge on Alevilik, punished Alevilik which was cornered. If you remember there was a book called *The Satanic Verses* written by Salman Rüşdi. Aziz Nesin translated that book and he was promoting it everywhere...The incident started as a protest of Aziz Nesin's work but got out of hand" (Workshop 4 2009, 220).

Likewise, Yasin Aktay used an accusing language against the Alevi association which organized the Festival and whose members were attacked and murdered. Aktay argues that

When it was obvious that Aziz Nesin had something which would come like a bombshell even in Istanbul let alone Sivas, what he was doing in Sivas that day in the invitation of Alevi federation or Alevi organization? I invite my Alevi brothers to make self-criticism. Firstly they should do that then accuse the Sunni community...It is also necessary to state that masses have a right to protest. It is also injured by these discussions (Workshop 7 2010, 188).

Ali Bulaç also argued that

the main factor used for provocation was Aziz Nesin's insistent declarations about publishing Salman Rüşdi's *The Satanic Verses* and then his arrival to Sivas. I mean the object; the aim which was reacted against was not Alevis. We were reacting against *The Satanic Verses*. I think this must be underlined" (Workshop 7 2010, 169).

Although it was generally accepted by the Sunni participants of the workshop that Aziz Nesin was the sole cause of Sunnis' anger, Arif Sağ, one of the survivors of the Sivas Massacre argues that the reactions had begun long before the festival and Aziz Nesin's translation of *The Satanic Verses* (Workshop 7 2010, 172). Sağ states that "Sivas events did not start on the day we arrived Sivas. It did not start with *The Satanic Verses* either... Essays started to be written about Pir Sultan Abdal memorial in local newspapers of Sivas a year earlier" (Workshop 7 2010, 172).

Although “Aziz Nesin provocation” has been presented as an excuse for the Sivas Massacre, it is generally ignored that in a democratic and pluralistic society Aziz Nesin’s enjoyment of his freedom of conscience and faith as well as his freedom of travel is not supposed to lead to the death of 37 people. Ethem Cankurtaran²⁰ drew attention to this point by arguing that

I will not accuse the people who burnt the Hotel. But how did we raise this human model? How did this state develop these people and we live with them side by side as citizens? Is not it the state’s duty to question that? We cannot go one step further whatever we talk, as long as we are not willing to change this human model we raised... We need to create the type of citizen which can empathize, accept that different people are still human beings, acknowledge that it is favorable to live among people with differences (Workshop 6 2009, 37).

As a response to the claims about “Aziz Nesin provocation” Cankurtaran argues that “We should question ourselves as individuals. Why are we inclined to be provoked? Why do we want to break the neck of someone who tells something we do not like, we do not want? Why do we want to strangle him? Why are we such a human type? How will we dissuade society from these inclinations? (Workshop 7 2010, 171)

At the end of discussions concerning Madımak Massacre, Minister Çelik states that “what we will do from now on is to make Madımak a center which does not evoke hatred and grudge... We will conclude this session by stating that we should be flexible in terms of the way we reach that end; it can be a museum, monument, public garden or cultural center” (Workshop 7 2010, 203). It is also explained within the Preliminary Report that “the government revealed their intention to purchase and nationalize the building and to transform it into a place that would strengthen societal peace and prevent a possible blood feud (Subaşı 2010a, 182). It should also be mentioned that before the Preliminary Report was published, the government evacuated the chophouse which was at the entrance of the hotel and was a great insult to the victims of Sivas Massacre as well as the Alevi community and started the initiatives to nationalize the building (Hürriyet, December 11, 2010). In October 2011 the building was reopened as a “Center of Science and Culture” (Hürriyet

²⁰ Ethem Cankurtaran is a former member of the Parliament who served from Social Democratic Populist Party between 1987 and 1991.

October 1, 2011). Although Alevi associations' main demand was turning the Madımak Hotel into a museum in the memory of Sivas Massacre's victims or demolishing it to erect a monument, Minister Çelik argues that like all other demands' of Alevis Madımak was solved through communication, reconciliation and, taking notice of realities (Hürriyet March 30, 2011). Contrary to Çelik's statements, Alevi associations argue that their demand was not met and it was unacceptable that two of the offenders' names were also included at the memorial corner of the "Center of Science and Culture" (Hürriyet November 25; July 2; June 30, 2011). One of Sivas Massacre's victims, poet Metin Altıok's daughter Zeynep Altıok severely criticized the attitude of the government and in her speech titled "has your father even been burned alive?" (Hürriyet September 23, 2011). In her speech she argues that

What happened in Sivas was not a natural disaster like a flood or earthquake. There raving masses killed people. You cannot say "we cannot make discrimination because our perspective is human oriented". People did not die there by accident. You cannot consider the murderers and the victims. While it is unacceptable that you carefully avoid meeting our demand and establishing a "museum of shame" and found a self-styled "center of science and culture", you cannot use the names of our losses- especially without our leave. Putting the names of the victims and murderers side by side is not carelessness. It is a conscious choice. It is a challenge, a threat, a demonstration of power, remorselessness, revilement, insolence. I demand the removal of my father's name from there immediately (Hürriyet September 23, 2011).

The outcome of the "Sivas Trial" also led to severe criticism from Alevi associations towards the JDP government. In March 2012, the charges against the living suspects of Madımak Massacre were dropped due to status of limitation and offenders were discharged. Prime Minister Erdoğan's response to courts' decision "*Hayırlı Olsun*" was also taken as an offense by Alevis and Alevi associations. In the interview Özsoy states that

If a prime minister say "*Hayırlı Olsun*" from the perspective of the offenders when the Sivas Trial is dropped due to status of limitation, it is necessary to look for the sincerity of the Alevi Initiative there. A deputy from his political

party made a speech in the assembly... He showed the insolence to say “people who are at the jail are as innocent as the people who died in Madımak.”^{xiv}

Çağın also made emphasis on the Prime Minister’s declaration and states that

the Prime Minister said “*Hayırlı Olsun*” about the outcome of the trial and it is not tongue slip. He stands behind his words. He says “people are aggrieved in the jail... They made a museum in Madımak, two of the murderers died there also by suffocation; they put their names on the wall.”^{xv}

Yıldırım also argues that the current form of the Madımak was not enough to please Alevis and Alevi associations. He also states that the issue should also be embraced by the Sunni community. Yıldırım states that

Sivas incident is a huge disgrace. It is a disgrace for the state, not for the Alevi community. We want to have a museum in Madımak. We want to end this suffering. Every second of July, thousands of people gather there and shout that 35 people were burned alive and they are not all Alevi. They are citizens of the Turkish republic. Those intellectuals both Alevi and Sunni were burned there alive that day. But our children who come to world today do not know about that incident and if the state can solve this problem, they can grow together like brothers and sisters without becoming enemies.”^{xvi}

In the Preliminary Report, the “Sivas Incident” is explained as “in the incidents which happened following Pir Sultan Abdal Festival in Sivas, Madımak Hotel was set afire by unidentified person or people and it was followed by an affray during which 37 people –mostly Alevis- died due to carbon monoxide intoxication on 02 July 1993” (Subaşı 2010a, 122). It is also argued that

Although it was obvious that the incident was not simply an Alevi-Sunni conflict, [Alevi] community’s previous traumas made it easier to associate the issue with certain addresses. Before everything else, the parties reckon upon statements which would justify their existing positions dangerously. However the parties openly agree that the incident was a provocation (Subaşı 2010a, 180).

Apart from this insistence to describe Sivas Massacre as a sad incident which is an outcome of provocation, it is also implied that the tension and offenses between Alevis and Sunnis is a bilateral one. It is stated in the Preliminary Report that

the matter which cannot be accepted under any situation is that the existence of the reasons which enable Alevis and Sunnis to become instruments of such provocations...Both Alevis and Sunnis potential to become a part of such a conspiracy whose outcome cannot be mended in a long time is quite worrisome (Subaşı 2010a, 180).

As a response to such an approach to the Sivas Massacre, HBVAKV's Assessment Report argues that

The aim is obvious. That entire unacceptable and unserious picture is nothing else than an attempt to refuse Alevis' demands to make Madımak Hotel a museum by manipulating and associating Alevis into the massacre. It is so that, the mentality which refuses Alevis' demands for museum, puts aside the issue of how to reorganize Madımak Hotel and proposes to hang such a text into the Hotel: Memorial of Mutual Sorrow...A very saddening incident which is one of many caused by lovelessness and lack of good sense happened here. We memorialize the victims of this incident along with all other victims of lovelessness. We believe it is necessary to remind the writer of the report that victims of Madımak did not die due to lack of love. They died because the Hotel was put a fire! (Assessment Report 2011, 125)

Apart from all the discussions, the Preliminary Report's insistence on defining the issue as "Sivas Incident" while all Alevi associations and a majority of Alevis reject to see it nothing less than a Massacre would be enough to represent the distance in terms of understanding and evaluation between the two parties.

3.1.7. Status of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge

Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge in Hacı Bektaş, Nevşehir is accepted by a considerable part of Alevis and Bektaşis as a center of pilgrimage (Workshop 7 2010, 347). As it is explained in the previous chapter along with other Sunni and Alevi lodges it was closed with the Law on Closure of religious convents and dervish lodges and artifacts belonging to the lodge were moved to Ankara, Ethnography Museum (Hacıbektaş

Web 21.08.2012). The Lodge was started to be mended by the Ministry of Education in 1958 and it was reopened as a museum on 16 August 1964 (Hacıbektaş Web 21.08.2012). A considerable part of Alevi associations voice their desire for the return of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge to its rightful owners i.e. Alevi community although it is not such a central demand as the official recognition of Cemevis as places of worship, (Workshop 1 2009, 85-119-187-201; Workshop 4 2009, 52; Workshop 6 2009, 163-296). This demand is formulated in HKVAKV's Request Report as "it is unacceptable that Alevis enter the most important center of Alevilik as guests and pay for the entrance. The real owners of the Lodge are Alevis and it should be returned to its real owners" (Request Report 2009, 49). It was also pointed out that Alevis' do not perceive the Mosque which was added to the Lodge by Mahmud the second after the abolishment of guild of janissaries and prosecution of Alevis and Bektaşis as a part of the Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge. It is argued within the report that

Although *Cami* is not accepted as a place of worship in Alevi belief, the fact that the *Cami* is open to worship without any charge while the Lodge is open only for visitation and demands a charge is a significant problem and it must be solved immediately... In that case what should be done is to take the Lodge including its property from the General Directorate of Foundations, return it immediately to Alevis, its' real owners and remove all the obstacles in front of reopening the Lodge to worship (Request Report 2009, 49).

In the interview Emel Sungur, representative of PSAİTKEV explained the importance of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge for Alevis by stating that "first of all the place they built a *Cami* on, the place they are visiting as a museum is Alevis' religious center in reality. It is a must that they return it to its real owners i.e. Alevis. But they will not do it either. It is obvious"^{xvii}. Sungur explained the injury caused by being have to pay to visit their religious center for Alevis: "Do you know how hard it is for a person? You pay for *Camis* also; they are constructed with your taxes. You have a limited number of religious centers and you enter it as if you visit a museum only to look."^{xviii} From a similar line of argument Cengiz Güleç²¹ states that opening

²¹ Cengiz Güleç is a Professor of Psychiatry at Hacettepe University and a former member of the Parliament from the Democratic Left Party.

Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge to worship and returning it to the Alevi community would be a symbolic step on the part of the government to show their sincerity (Workshop 6 2009, 163). Sırrı Süreyya Önder also said

the government can take painless steps to show that their intention is sincere. For instance Alevis still enter the *Pirevi* by paying for museum tickets... It is not very hard for a Sunni Muslim to empathize. Think that you enter your place of worship by buying a ticket. You can understand how it offends someone's feelings (Workshop 4 2009, 52).

The lack of attention and financial support to Hacı Bektaş Town was another source of criticisms towards the state. Nafiz Ünlüyurt, the President of *Hacı Bektaş Derneği*, states that "Alevi people see Hacı Bektaş just like Sunni people's Mecca and Medina. Every year more than a million people come to Hacı Bektaş...Hacı Bektaş is our hometown...Hacı Bektaş should become a center worthy of these people, this belief (Workshop 7 2010, 347). From a similar perspective Veliyeddin Ulusoy argues that it would be better if the Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge remained as a museum but the income from the museum should be given to the Hacı Bektaş town (Workshop 1 2009, 240). He argues that

I think Hacı Bektaş Lodge should remain as a museum but it should be turned over to Hacı Bektaş municipality. If it is not possible its income should be given to the municipality. Although it is one of the most visited museums, not a penny of its income remains in Hacı Bektaş and the only institution that serves in this town is the municipality (Workshop 1 2009, 240).

Ulusoy also drew attention to the lack of a modern and adequate Cemevi in the Hacı Bektaş Town and suggested that "if the state really wants to help us, it should build a Cemevi on an at least 4-6 acres of land with a project designated after an architectural competition. It should be a project worthy of Hacı Bektaş in beauty because it is an important need" (Workshop 1 2009, 241). It was also mentioned in the first workshop that a majority of the employees in the Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Museum were Sunni citizens and they did not have the fund of knowledge to answer visitors' questions (Workshop 1 2009, 246). Muhammer Ercan of the HBVAKV argues that "I think employees who will be appointed there at least the ones who will

serve as guides should be able people who know the Hacı Bektaş Lodge's history and historical figures, so that the visitors can be satisfied" (Workshop 1 2009, 246).

It is necessary to point out that there were Sunni participants who evaluated the importance attributed to the Hacı Bektaş-I Veli Lodge by Alevis as a threat to the unity of Islam. Hüseyin Hatemi for instance argues that

At that we say *Hak-Muhammed-Ali*, we should work for the unity of Islam by leaving expressions such as 'Hacı Bektaş repealed the pilgrimage to Mecca' which contradicts even with his name, 'our place of pilgrimage is in the Hacı Bektaş Lodge' or, 'our place of worship is different' (Workshop 7 2010, 320).

From a similar perspective İzzet Er argues that Alevis' different way of prayer is not based on historical reality and states that

In Hacı Bektaş *Tekke, Lodge and Cami* are side by side. They [Alevis] demand return of the Hacı Bektaş Lodge to themselves and it is an important point. It means that is our historical background. If Alevis embrace the lodge by stating that they want it back, they also indirectly mention the *Cami* that is beside it. But they may not say it frankly" (Workshop 3 2009, 173).

Although the historical background of that Cami along with its perception by the Alevis above is explained above, it would be necessary to include a suggestion made during the workshops to solve this problem. In the first workshop Remzi Özbali, President of the *Atayolu Derneği*, states that "one of our demands is cancelation of the *Cami* within the Hacı Bektaş Lodge and demolition of the minaret because this *küllüye* is totally constructed around Alevi philosophy. In 1834 the Cami was built for the goal of Islamizing Alevis by Mahmud the Second. Its texture is tainted" (Workshop 1 2009, 187). It is also stated within the Request Report of HBVAKV that "as the Lodge and Mosque are not seen as parts of a whole, and the Cami is considered apart, passing for the *Cami* from the Lodge should be closed, no access should be provided within the Lodge" (Assessment Report 2009, 49).

Although it is accepted within the Preliminary Report that "for Alevis' it is an offending and even injurious situation to pay to visit their religious center", the writer draws attention to the legal obstacles in meeting Alevis' demands concerning

the return of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge to Alevi community (Subaşı 2010a, 110). It is also stated that “it is necessary to be extremely optimistic to think that it is possible to go beyond a legal regulation which even cannot be said to be unconstitutional with palliative responses” (Subaşı 2010a, 110). within the Preliminary Report, it is argued that “opening Hacı Bektaş Veli Lodge into service in accordance with its original aim would necessitate similar other places to be reopened. Solution of Alevi citizens’ problems expressed in relation with freedom of conscience and faith would enable non-Alevi citizens to enjoy the same freedoms” (Subaşı 2010a, 112). In the assessment of Alevi’s and Sunni’s approaches to the issue the writer says

The idea of re-evaluating the Law on closure of religious convents and Dervish Lodges did not receive enough approval. Among the reasons of insouciance, the fear regarding the possibility that from such a regulation Sunni orders would also benefit proved to be determinant. It is worth attention that from Alevi’s perspective a link between Sunni orders and reactionary centers is easily drawn. Alevi who repeatedly express that it was a sound decision to take Sunni orders’ legitimacy away, do not opine about the same state’s founding regulations about Alevi... In contrast to that Sunni groups do not adopt an attitude as reserved as Alevi regarding re-evaluation of this law. As it was also observed during the workshops, several participants advocated that the state should remove this ban and treat all religious groups in an egalitarian manner without considering their characteristics (Subaşı 2010a, 113).

Apart from the non-egalitarian approach to Alevi’s and Sunni’s approaches to the issue-and lack of justification from the transcripts of the workshops-that is dominant in the Preliminary Report, it is quite significant that the writer puts emphasis on equality and freedom of conscience and faith under this topic while he mainly focuses on concepts such as national security, unity or solidarity under the topics of Cemevis, Madımak Massacre, the General Directorate of Religious Affairs etc. Subaşı’s approach to the issue may be evaluated by some that when Alevi’s demands opens the way for further freedoms for the Sunni community, the writer of the Preliminary Report becomes a champion of human rights and equal citizenship.

3.1.8. Compulsory Religion Classes: Several Approaches to Religious Education in State Schools

One of the most central demands of Alevis' is known to be the annulment of compulsory "religious culture and moral knowledge" classes which are commonly known as religion classes. Transcripts of the First Alevi Workshop reveals that such a demand is shared by a majority of Alevi associations (Workshop 1 2009, 38-50-62-84-118-155). It is necessary to state that classes of Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge were made compulsory with the 1982 constitution with Article 24:

Education and instruction in religion and ethics shall be conducted under state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and moral education shall be compulsory in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Other religious education and instruction shall be subject to the individual's own desire, and in the case of minors, to the request of their legal representatives.

During the workshops Alevi participants questioned both states' authority to give religious education and one-sided structure of the existing curriculum. One of the most common criticisms to the religion classes was related to its non-pluralistic, Sunni-oriented structure. Hüsniye Takmaz, the President of *Alevi Bektaşî Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı*, for instance states that "religious classes are very important. If you give children younger than 14-15 a one-sided religious education, he would grow into an adult who does not open his mind to different peoples and beliefs. He would assess events from a one-sided perspective" (Workshop 1 2009, 155). Hayri İnce also emphasized Sunni-oriented structure of the classes by giving specific examples. İnce states that

I guess I am the youngest of the participants and a person who took the religious classes most recently; during 90's... Our religion teacher-that was what he was called not a teacher of "religious culture and moral knowledge"- because the class is a religion class during which students are forced to perform salaah on desks, to memorize surah, in case you do not know...I mean forcing an Alevi child to learn Sunni Islam is accepted to be persecution by Alevis. No one has a right to taint Muslims in this way. Of course it is done by the state not by Sunni Muslims (Workshop 4 2009, 181).

It was also argued by several Alevi and Sunni participants that states intervention to religious education is directly against secularism. It was argued that it was a must for the state to withdraw itself from religion and such a move must also include annihilation of compulsory religion classes (Workshop 1 2009, 84-155). From such a perspective Fevzi Gümüş argues that “From the context of state-religion relationship, our demand is to break the ties between the state and religion...Alevi’s problems cannot be solved with the existing twisted understanding of secularism. In that sense it is necessary for Alevi to break the routine. In a secular state, compulsory religion classes cannot exist. It may be offered upon request, but it cannot be compulsory” (Workshop 1 2009, 84). Hayri Kırbaşoğlu also states that

In the practice of compulsory religion classes, serious problems exist not only for Alevilik but also Sunnilik. As a member of Sunni tradition, I have never been pleased with the religious education my child received. As a parent I do not have to accept a religious education which is designed to raise ‘good subjects’, ‘good citizens’. As a Sunni, I also have problems with the state’s religious education. Accordingly, it should not be ignored that not only Alevi but also Sunnis have problems with compulsory religion classes (Workshop 3 2009, 179).

From a similar perspective, Yılmaz Ensaroğlu argues that to decide the nature of religious education a child will receive should be decided not by the state but by the parents of the child. He added “we cannot easily ignore the questions ‘can the state teach religion’ or ‘what happens when the religion is thought by the state’. Whichever state teaches religion; it automatically politicizes and instrumentalizes religion. It is necessary to dwell on this question” (Workshop 7, 2009, 339). European Court of Human Rights’ decision which found a violation of freedom of conscience and faith in its examination of “Ministry of Education’s guidelines for lessons in religious culture and ethics and school textbooks” was also reminded by the participants (Freedom of Religion 2012, 7). It was argued that as the ruling of ECoHR proved “in its current form practice of compulsory religion classes is a violation of human rights. Accordingly this practice must be annihilated. It may become an elective course” (Workshop 1 2009, 82).

The main solution offered by the Alevi participants was reforming religion classes as elective courses to which children's legal representatives can opt in upon their request. It was argued that offering Alevi parents to opt out of religion classes cannot be perceived as a serious solution. Arif Sağ explained this demand by stating that "it is very hard to express what you do not want in our country. A child should not be put in a position to face "not wanting". If parents prefer, they should go and express their demands for religious education. They should say I want my child to have religion course. But most people cannot go to a school and say I do not want religion course for my children. A majority cannot do that" (Workshop 5 2009, 117). Head of *Cem Vakfi*, İzzettin Doğan was the only participant who argues that including Alevilik into the curriculum of the compulsory religion courses would solve the problem. In the 7th workshop he states that "It would be most convenient for the religion courses to remain as compulsory classes but the content of the curriculum must be reviewed with a democratic approach to be more inclusive for other religious groups. The path the Ministry of Education has taken is the right way" (Workshop 7 2010, 288). Ali Yaman²² on the other hand argues that the information about Alevilik which is included into the curriculum of the compulsory religion courses is biased and in that sense unacceptable. He also drew attention to the practical obstacles in front of including Alevilik into the compulsory religion classes and argues that

We should pay attention to the headings of the textbooks of religion courses. It says 'Alevi-Bektaşî Thought'; this heading cannot be accepted by Alevis... It says 'Cem Ceremony'; can you say 'Salaat Ceremony'? You cannot say that. They must examine how Alevis define them and include this information according to it. Our Prime Minister said that 32 pages of information about Alevilik are added to the textbooks. I read them all. I add and multiply the numbers but it does not reach 32... There are also problems with the staff. Whatever you write into this book, it will be taught by Sunnis. A friend from Sunni belief and culture will give his views, ideas and beliefs to the students. I think, if we cannot introduce an egalitarian approach, we should abandon this practice" (Workshop 7 2010, 266-267).

²² Ali Yaman is an Associate Professor Political History at the Abant İzzet Baysal University International Relations Department.

As a response to Alevi's demands for the annihilation of compulsory religion classes a considerable part of Sunni participants argues that these classes were necessary for the youth to learn their religion and to be raised as moral individuals (Workshop 3 2009, 132-151; Workshop 4 2009, 89; Workshop 5 2009, 175; Workshop 7 2010, 223-236-242). Former head of the General Directorate of Religious Affairs, Tayyip Altıkulaç argues that

When a child goes to school, he will learn his country's rivers, plains and mountains but he will not learn the belief system in his country, he will not know his own community. If you object to the compulsory religious classes, I see it in that way. If we teach this child Ottoman History, geography or biology of a frog with all its details... the beliefs of the community in which I live should also be thought? Why do we object to that? (Workshop 4 2009, 89)

The distinction made between 'religious instruction' and 'religious education' in Article 24 of the 1982 Constitution was emphasized by several participants to point out that while 'religious instruction' was made in an objective manner 'religious education' which would be done via elective courses was meant to be organized around certain sects. From this perspective compulsory religion classes were observed to be inclusive, objective and pluralistic. In that sense, The General Director of Religious Education, İrfan Aycan perceived 'religious instruction' as a right and argues that

Especially in recent times, the community we can call Alevilik come to a point while they line up their demands, they disseize a larger community's rights. In that sense we did everything we could as the Ministry. Most recently after the ruling of the ECoHR... we added 40 pages of information about Alevilik into our textbooks. We say it here again; if they are deficient we can supplement them. We are open to suggestions which would come from them or our theologians (Workshop 3 2009, 135).

It is quite significant that while The General Director argues that 'religious instruction' is given in an objective manner, he can still refer to Sunni theologians as 'our theologians'. As Aycan represents the state's approach to 'religious instruction' as the General Director of Religious Education, his terminology would give an idea

about how ‘objective’ are the compulsory religion classes. His approach to the issue reveals the relation between the ‘objective’ body of knowledge called theology and the state apparatus which has the power to legitimize certain sets of knowledge while denying others on the basis of their ‘particularity’ or ‘illegitimacy’. Hamza Aktan also shared Aycan’s point of view and argues that ‘religious instruction’ must be seen as a right of every children and as parents’ duty to prepare them for life while ‘religious education’ was another issue (Workshop 7 2010, 223). According to Aktan when we do not give ‘religious instruction’ to children “when they become open to every kind of insemination, they are drawn into the vortex of some kind of Satanist groups, they become Atheist, they are drawn to missionaries’ activities” (Workshop 7 2010, 223). Alper Tan also argues that “new generations should not be left into a spiritual hole” (Workshop 7 2010, 236). Still other participants argued that ‘religious instruction’ is a must for the dialogue between religious groups. Zafer Üskül²³ for instance states that “I think our children must be educated in terms of religious culture and morals. Because if we raise a youth who does not know different religions, who perceive Christians as enemies and kill them, it is not right and it must be thought” (Workshop 5 2009, 175).

Minister Çelik’s approach to the issue of compulsory religion classes revealed that he did not see it necessary to make a change in the constitution to meet Alevi demands. He states in the 5th Workshop that “If we read Article 24 of the constitution, we will find the solution there. If we separate ‘religious instruction’ and ‘religious education’ as it is done in Article 24... If we dwell on that we can easily find the way out” (Workshop 5 2009, 200). In his closing speech Minister Çelik states that “I believe we have reached a consensus that the compulsory religion classes should have a curriculum which includes everyone” (Workshop 7 2010, 356). As it can be observed several Alevi associations’ insistent arguments about the annihilation of compulsory religion classes and its reorganization as an elective course was left out in Minister Çelik’s assessment as well as some Sunni participants’ remarks regarding their discontent with them. In the Preliminary Report it is also argued that to understand life, remove lack of morals, identity construction etc. religion played a significant

²³ Zafer Üskül is a member of the Parliament from the JDP since 2007, and is the President of the Human Rights Committee.

role and that is why “it can never be accepted for the state to be distanced from religion. Similarly, there is nothing that cannot be understood about a state which meets its citizen’s demands in the religious sphere” (Subaşı 2010a, 139). Although it is accepted that the ideal would be the annihilation of compulsory religion courses and reorganization of them as elective ones, he states that it does not seem possible in existing conditions (Subaşı 2010a, 159). In that case, his suggestion is shaped as “by taking into consideration that the term ‘compulsory’ which is emphasized in the Constitution leads to concern and hesitation among some Alevi groups, it should especially be emphasized that these courses share the same status with other courses and accordingly it should be perceived as one of the ordinary courses” (Subaşı 2010a, 159).

Although Minister Çelik states in March 2011 that the issue about the curriculum of the Religious Culture and Moral Knowledge course was solved with the cooperation of Alevi associations (Hürriyet 30.03.2011), interviews conducted with the representatives of Alevi associations revealed that the issue was not resolved from their point of view. Representative of *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği’s Yenimahalle Branch*, Onur Çağın states that

it is definitely not solved, what was done was a comedy. They developed an understanding of Alevilik according to their taste. I say that it would have been better, if they had not included them into the curriculum. Why? Because in Anatolia that course turned into a ritual of cursing Alevilik. They swear to Alevilik when they come to that topic in front of Alevi children. Headmen of our *Dernek* intervened into such things several times, and those are the ones we heard about. Most of the children get scared and do not say anything.^{xix}

Özsoy, General Secretary of *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* also argues that it was not their demand to include Alevilik in the compulsory religion classes and added that

they acted as if we did not say annihilate compulsory religion classes but said put Alevilik there also and impose it to the people. Even if we consider it for a moment that they act with good intentions, they are supposed to prepare the curricula with the addressees of the problem. .. There are unbelievable historical

mistakes in those books. .. If I return to the beginning, we said them to remove this book. They say no, we will not remove it. We defined an Alevilik, we get it written and we will impose it onto you.^{xx}

From a similar perspective Sungur argues that

From the beginning of democratic Alevi organizations for 25 years the same things have been said. This practice [compulsory religion classes] harms children's psychology, it violates parents' freedom to choose the religion of their children, it is against the convention on the rights of the children... The changes in the curriculum would not change these facts and it will not provide benefits for the Alevi community.^{xxi}

Yıldırım also states that the changes made into the curriculum were far from being sufficient even though he was representing *Cem Vakfi* which took an active role in the preparation of the new curriculum. Yıldırım states that

The new curriculum was prepared by *Cem Vakfi*. It consisted of two hundred headings as I know. They included a very small part of it. It is not sufficient. It was prepared in our central office with a high level of participation but the part included in the textbooks is not enough for Alevis. If they insist on giving religious education, they have to teach Alevi Islam also.^{xxii}

Although Minister Çelik openly expressed that Alevis' demands concerning compulsory religion classes were met and the problem was solved, during the interviews all participants expressed their dissatisfaction with the existing structure of religious education without an exception. As it can be understood from the statements made during the interviews, the most obvious objection to the new curriculum of the compulsory religion classes is its construction of an 'Alevilik according to its taste'. The state's insistence on giving compulsory religious education can be explained with what Foucault calls 'the politics of truth' (Foucault 2004, 17). This can be perceived as a struggle on the part of the state to have the authority to control and manipulate religious 'truth'. Foucault explains the importance of the power to control and disseminate truth by stating that

In this domain of the practice of truth, there is the problem of the public. That is to say, *raison d'état* must act on the consciousness of people, not just to impose

some true or false beliefs on them, as when, for example, sovereigns want to create belief in their own legitimacy or in the illegitimacy of their rival, but in such a way that their opinion is modified, of course, and along with their opinion their way of doing things, their way of acting, their behavior as economic subjects and as political subjects (Foucault 2004a, 237).

From this perspective, the importance of the compulsory religion classes on the part of the government can be explained through these classes' potential to disseminate the religious 'truth' to the entire society. It can be argued that the knowledge about both Sunnilik and Alevilik which is given to children in the compulsory religion classes can be taken as an important tool of governmentality which takes the population as its final objective.

3.2. A Discussion About The Outcome of the Alevi Workshops

The last Alevi Workshop was held on 28-29-30 January 2010 and the only input about the findings of the whole process on the part of the government, the Preliminary Report, was published in the same year. As the Preliminary Report's approach to the main demands of Alevi Associations' is included in each respective section, the Preliminary Report's final propositions for the government is included in this section along with the Alevi associations' assessments about the nature and outcome of the Alevi Initiative.

As it is detailed above demands of Alevi associations' were classified under 6 main headings during the Alevi Workshops which are: the status of Cemevis, status of Alevi Dedes, Hacı Bektaş Veli Lodge, the GDRA, compulsory religion classes, and Madımak Hotel. 'Constructing a new language' and 'defining Alevilik' was also among the main headings of discussion even though a considerable part of Alevi Associations expressed their conservations about these issues. In the conclusion chapter of the Preliminary Report, the writer lists his suggestions for the solution of issues: Cemevis, the GDRA, Compulsory Religion Classes and Madımak (Subaşı 2010a, 189-194). In addition to his suggestions for the solution of Alevis' problems, Subaşı puts great emphasis on the necessity for a uniform definition of Alevilik and a new language which would prevent identity differentiation of Alevis and any threat to the unity and solidarity of the Turkish society (Subaşı 2010a, 189, 194). It is stated

that “the core of all the regulations must be strengthening the idea of communal unity and solidarity and every step that would lead to division and hostility must be avoided” (Subaşı 2010a, 194). Even though it is not specified which steps would lead to societal division and hostility, his approach to Alevi associations’ main demands reveal that while the ‘statist’ camps’ demands are positively evaluated, ‘reformist camp’s demands which have been continually accused of being marginal, idealist and absurd are totally ignored.

In the final proposition regarding the definition of Alevilik it is stated that

Defining and framing Alevilik should be totally Alevis’ responsibility. For the state to perform his duties, Alevis must reach an agreement among themselves about the issues regarding their beliefs and most importantly about the definition and frame of Alevilik... These definitions should be drawn in a complete clarity and competence which does not leave any space for ambiguity (Subaşı 2010a, 189).

As it is explained in the regarding section, only ‘statist’ camp of Alevi associations are willing to put forward a definition of Alevilik and ‘reformist’ camp puts great emphasis on the undesirability and even impossibility of making such a definition. As the representative of PSAKD’s representative Çağın states in the interview, what the state should do is not to demand a definition of Alevilik but recognizing Alevi community in its current nature and structure.^{xxiii} Foucault states that “the government of men is a practice which is not imposed by those who govern on those who are governed, but a practice that fixes the definition and respective positions of the governed and governors” (Foucault 2004b, 12). Even though the state or the ‘governor’ itself does not attempt to make the definition of Alevilik in this case –still, it intervenes at certain points to signal what is acceptable and what is not- making a definition opens Alevi community as a new sphere of power-knowledge relation, Alevilik as a notion that can be defined, redefined, and governed by the state.

In regards to the GDRA, the writer states that

Alevis as a member of the Islamic world and a Muslim community should have the right to benefit from the GDRA as much as Sunni citizens... Demands of Alevi groups who do not wish to have any relationship with the GDRA should

also be taken into consideration, a new institution which respects the necessities of the society and secular values of the state should be allowed (Subaşı 2010a, 192).

Even though within the Preliminary Report, it is stated that it should totally be Alevis' responsibility to define Alevilik, he does not shy from stating that Alevis are "a member of the Islamic world and Muslim community" and he does so by completely ignoring a considerable segment of 'reformist' or in his terms 'marginal, idealist and absurd' Alevi associations who take Alevilik as a belief system which bears the traces of many religions including Islam. His desire to define Alevilik as a part of Islamic community signals the state's determination to control Alevilik and Alevi community via producing knowledge about 'what can be accepted as Alevilik' and thus marginalizing and excluding Alevis who do not comply with this definition.

Regarding the compulsory religion classes, the Preliminary Report states that a change in the constitution is necessary not to make these classes elective but to define compulsory religion classes in the same status with other classes (Subaşı 2010a, 192). In the conclusion chapter of the Preliminary Report, Alevi associations' demand for the cancelation of compulsory religion classes is not mentioned. Rather it is argued that "in its current form compulsory religion classes should be revised and the curriculum should be prepared with an equal distance to all beliefs" (Subaşı 2010a, 192). As it is stated earlier revising the curriculum does not comply with Alevi associations' demands. It was also stated during the interviews that introduction of elective 'Qor'an Courses' constituted another problem for the Alevi community. PSAKD's representative states that "they say religion classes are not compulsory anymore but it is a very big bluff. Instead today school managers force students to enter the course about the life of Hz. Mohammed even if there is no curriculum for that course". Emel Sungur, representative of PSAİTKEV also states that "there are very serious problems with children in the schools. If the Workshops had been sincere, they would not have added a second religion class when Alevis demanded the removal of the compulsory religion class"^{xxiv}. As Foucault argues 'the practice of truth' aims to shape not only what people's perception of what is true or false but also their very way of acting, therefore, state's insistence on giving religious

education as well as Alevi associations' insistence for the removal of religion classes can be better understood.

Concerning the restructuring of Madımak Hotel, Subaşı states that "a part of the hotel should be rearranged in the memory of those who lost their lives during the incident and at the entrance of the hotel a board which reprobates this incident should be hanged" (Subaşı 2010a, 194). According to the writer this board should state

Memorial of Mutual Sorrow

A very saddening incident which is one of many caused by lovelessness and lack of good sense happened here on July 2 1993.

We memorialize the names of victims of this incident along with all other victims of lovelessness with a mutual and deep sorrow and *rahmet* (Subaşı 2010a, 185).

As it is argued in the respective section, such a restructuring does not meet Alevis' demands regarding reorganization of Madımak Hotel as a museum in the memory of Sivas Massacre's victims and it is even taken as an insult by a considerable part of Alevi associations and relatives of the victims. Representative of PSAKD states

Making a cultural center in Sivas does not mean Alevis can enter that place easily. On the contrary it causes Alevis to burst into tears because... it is impossible for it to be Alevis' museum... Among the photographs of the victims, there are two of the demonstrators' photographs. There are photographs of two demonstrators who climbed to the hotel and tried to burn the hotel in a ravenous way. If you put their photographs there, you can also put Tansu Çiller's words "Thanks God, none of our citizens was injured during the incidents" on the wall. It would be complete then."

In the conclusion chapter of the Preliminary Report, the writer does not include propositions regarding the status of Alevi Dedes and Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Lodge and no statements are made regarding these issues. In the end the Preliminary Report encourages the government to take the propositions into consideration and in that way contribute to the social peace and welfare of the country (Subaşı 2010a, 189).

The interviews conducted with five Alevi Associations' representatives revealed that; the Alevi Initiative is taken as an inefficient step if not a completely malevolent. Yıldırım, Representative of *Cem Vakfı* whose ideas greatly coincides with the 'statist' stance and thus can be taken as one of the most moderate associations during the Alevi Workshops, states that

It is a good thing that people talked about Alevilik in the general assembly, in hotels and lobbies. It means that our state, our government remembered our people's problems and expressed them. It is better than nothing I think. And I believe this attempt will bear fruit tomorrow if not today. Because in a global world, it is impossible to ignore this problem anymore.^{xxv}

Other participants of the interviews were not as positive as Yıldırım. Emel Sungur, representative of PSAİTKEV, who argues that

Before the Alevi Initiative, people still had question marks about Alevilik, today people talk about Alevilik. But I am more considerate about this issue. Talking too much about Alevilik would rumple Alevilik's this beautiful and authentic side... Alevis have talked and expressed their demands. If this country is a democratic one, Alevis have only demands for equal citizenship. They do not have any other demand.^{xxvi}

Sadık Özsoy, representative of HBVAKV, also argues that Alevi Initiative was the first attempt on the part of the Turkish State to recognize Alevis and their demands and even though they were against the JDP, they had a hope for solution. Özsoy also states that the Workshop process revealed that Alevi Initiative was nothing more than a window dressing. Özsoy states that

Firstly we thought that the government wanted to solve this problem. We started our studies according to it. Later we saw that it was only window dressing. In reality the government never let go of the things in its mind, in its book, in its work... They made several workshops but no result was achieved... They only tried to show that the government was doing serious projects for democratization and human rights.^{xxvii}

Onur Çağın who represented the Yenimahalle Branch of PSAKD states that his association rejected to take part in the Alevi Workshops as they believed it was an attempt of the government to create its own Alevilik. Çağın argues that

We have been talking about physical massacres towards Alevi community. The most important threat to Alevi community is cultural massacre. Its name is assimilation. That is the aim of the Alevi Workshops certainly... It tries to break off Alevilik from its essence and articulate it into Sunnilik; they try to create an assimilated Alevilik... Alevi Workshops represent the idea that “okay, Alevis can continue to exist but in a way that its sharp edges must be filed, they should start to become a part of Sunnilik on the way of assimilation, they should leave their radical rhetoric behind” That is the aim.^{xxviii}

PSAKD’s head office representative also states that they did not take part in the Alevi Initiative from the start because it was impossible for them to attend the workshops which were organized by the JDP government. He also states that in their perspective the JDP government’s approach to Alevis is almost the same with the people who burnt the Madımak Hotel in Sivas. According to PSAKD’s representative the content of Alevi Initiative was almost empty. He argues that the perspective of the government was “if you come to us to become the state’s Alevi, we will continue in this Initiative” but due to the Alevi associations basic prospect especially after Sivas Massacre, it was impossible for Alevi associations to approach the JDP or similar political parties. The ‘statist’ camp of Alevi Associations also supports the notion of being included into the state with a certain definition and frame of Alevilik and thus producing a novel power-knowledge sphere for the state and “a science that is in the hands of a few” (Foucault 2003, 31) theologians. Alevi associations except the ‘statist’ camp which is mostly represented by *Cem Vakfi*, resists any regulation which would enable the state to claim that they include and thus entitled to produce ‘objective’ and ‘legitimate’ knowledge about Alevilik. Alevi associations’ considerable reservations about being included into the state via the GDRA, compulsory religion classes or official education and employment should be interpreted as their determination not to become a part of the state’s power-knowledge domain and thus being under the control and supervision of the Turkish State. When the transcripts and the Preliminary Report of the Alevi Workshops is

considered, the difference between the state's interpretation of Alevilik and Alevi community's interpretation of their own belief system and practices become obvious. From this perspective, 'reformist' Alevi associations' insistence not to become a subject of 'the politics of truth' turns out to be a vital necessity for the Alevi community to continue to practice their beliefs and rituals without the 'scientific' intervention of the state and its religious institutions.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The roots of Alevi associations' demands in contemporary Turkey can be traced back to the history of the Turkish State. As the existence of Alevilik and Alevi community within Turkey was rejected and ignored in the institutions and laws regarding religious life, Alevis' beliefs and rituals as a whole were excluded from the public sphere (Koçan and Öncü 2004, 472). The General Directorate of Religious Affairs which was founded in 1924 only represented a certain interpretation of orthodox Sunni Islam and Law 677 which was passed in 1925 closed all dervish lodges and religious covenants including the Alevi and Bektaşî ones (Ulaş Tol 2009, 58). The same law banned the usage of certain religious titles such as *dervişlik*, *müridlik*, *dedelik*, *seyitlik*, *babalık*, *çelebilik*, *naiblik* which constitutes an important aspect of Alevi and Bektaşî belief (Şahhüseyinoğlu 2001, 42). Starting with 1950s, religion classes became *de facto* compulsory in public schools and the 1982 Constitution made the courses compulsory for all the students (Kaplan 2002, 120). It is also possible to find numerous examples of laws and cabinet degrees, such as *Köy Kanunu* of 1924, which presuppose that Mosques are the only places of prayer for the Muslim community of Turkey. Physical assaults towards Alevi communities especially during 1970s –Dersim is also included among these assaults by some of the Alevi associations – also revealed the extent of Alevi identity's stigmatization in the Turkish society.

Due to several aforementioned political and sociological reasons, 1980s witnessed the 'Alevi Revival', a common expression used to specify flourishing numbers of Alevi associations, publications, media channels as well as formulation of Alevis' demands, some of which persist to this day. Due to the increasing voice of the Alevi community, state organs gradually acknowledged the existence of Alevis in the

Turkish society via some gestures such as participation of ministers in the Hacı Bektaş-i Veli Festival of Alevi community or airing documentaries about Alevi belief in the state television during the *Muharrem* month (Ateş 2011, 343, 355). Even though these attempts signified the state's recognition of Alevilik and Alevi community, no clear steps were taken in order to meet Alevis' main demands from the state.

As the Alevi Associations' voices elevated through 1990s and 2000s, and "at an European Union level, Alevi advocacy groups have helped insert the Alevi question into Turkey's EU accession process and encourage their host countries' governments to exert pressure on Turkey to recognize Alevi identity" (Soner and Toktaş 2011, 422), the JDP government announced its intention to launch an Alevi Initiative after the 2007 elections. Contrary to the government's claims that the Alevi Workshops, which constituted the core of the JDP's Alevi Initiative, "would be very helpful in terms of listening to the respective parties' views on Alevi citizens' problems, to take steps based on knowledge for their solutions and to enable the problem to be discussed fully", the Alevi Workshops and their resulting document the Preliminary Report proved that it is impossible for the government to solve Alevi citizens' problems from such a perspective.

During his interview, Eren Aksoyoğlu, representative of PSAKD, stated that the JDP government aimed to widen its front line and used the Alevi Initiative for this purpose. According to Aksoyoğlu

Today, the Prime Minister observes a completely different reality. He has an idea such as "I have implemented an Alevi Initiative but Alevis did not accept it. That is why I know it very well that I will not get votes from Alevis and I think it is not wrong to exclude Alevis" which completely overturns the Alevi Initiative.^{xxix}

The relation between the Alevi community and the state, especially after the conclusion of Alevi Initiatives, greatly coincides with Aksoyoğlu's assessment. In a speech during his campaigns for the 2010 Referendum, Erdoğan stated that with the reforms made in the judiciary system "the era of appointing judges and prosecutors according to the directives of Dedes is at an end" (Hürriyet August 30, 2010). It is

commonly accepted that with this statement Erdoğan implied the arrestment of Seyfi Oktay, former minister of Justice and an Alevi Dede, and by doing so aimed to gain the support of conservative Sunnis, which was met with a significant reaction from the Alevi community (Hürriyet June 2, 2010). In August 2012, Prime Minister Erdoğan participated in a panel discussion of a TV channel and reproduced the state's discourse regarding Alevilik and Alevi Issue. Erdoğan stated that "I know that Alevis are those who love Ali. When I look at the people who claim to be Alevi today, I am more Alevi than every one of them. They do not try to live like Hz. Ali; I try to live like him" (Hürriyet August 5, 2012). He also repeated the accusations towards 'reformist' Alevi associations by saying "those boisterous people, they do not have anything to do with Mosque or Cemevi" (Hürriyet August 5, 2012). Even more controversial than his previous statements, in the same panel, Erdoğan stated that the Cemevi next to the Karacaahmet Shrine is an aberration (Hürriyet August 5, 2012). His statement about the Cemevi provoked great anger among the Alevi community as what the Prime Minister called an aberration is a place of worship for the Alevis and Karaca Ahmet Sultan after which the respective shrine is named is accepted as an central religious figure by the Alevi community (Karacaahmet.com, 2011). His speech was in concord with the state's truth about Alevilik, which tends to reduce Alevilik as a basic deviation from Sunni Islam which emphasized love of Hz. Ali and do not accept Cemevis as legitimate places of worship.

In parallel to the political pressures stated above, the physical assault to a Kurdish Alevi family which took place in Malatya in July 2012 revealed that social discrimination against Alevis is also prevalent (Hürriyet July 29, 2012). According to the statements of the family, as they were not fasting, they asked the Ramadan drummer not to wake them up for sahur. When the incident was heard by the village people, approximately fifty to sixty inhabitants gathered in front of the Alevi family's house, putting afire the family's stable and throwing rocks at the windows of the house while the family turned off the lights and hid (Hürriyet July 29, 2012). The official statement about the incident was made by the Governor of Malatya, who stated that "the incident developed after an argument that took place between two parties and only one family was targeted; it does not present a collective situation that can be defined as an Alevi-Sunni clash" (Hürriyet July 31, 2012). The

incident can be interpreted as a sign that Alevi community is still vulnerable to physical attacks when they reveal their difference from the Sunni majority. The unchanging stance of the state officials in defining the incident as an isolated case – like the Sivas Massacre- that is not aimed at Alevilik or Alevis directly, but at the specific individual or individuals that were attacked is also extremely significant and telling.

Even though the JDP government presented the Alevi Initiative as a novel approach on the part of the state to understand and solve Alevi community's problems, the outcome of the process seems far from being satisfactory for the Alevi representatives. The results of the interviews reveal the dissatisfaction of the Alevi associations with the Alevi Initiative process itself as well as the 'knowledge' it attempted to produce about Alevilik and the Alevi community. As a considerable part of Alevi associations do not recognize the state's truths of Alevilik which were supported by the resulting document of the Alevi Workshops, if not created by it, they continue to voice their demands in relation with their own interpretations of Alevilik. Despite the fact that the Alevi Initiative was defined as a long-term project which would go beyond the Alevi Workshops, their failure to satisfy the demands raised by the Alevi Associations as well as the shift in the JDP government's approach to the Alevi community, especially after 2010, casts significant doubts about the prospects of the process and its future success.

Alevi Associations' concerns about the 'sincerety' and 'objectivity' of the Alevi Workshops are mainly based on the very structure of the Alevi Workshops as well as the ratio of Alevi and Sunni participants. It is necessary to question that why Sunni intellectuals and theologians are accepted to be among the 'respective parties' who would solve Alevis' problems. Secondly, the language adopted by the responsible minister and moderator for the Alevi Initiative reveals the hierarchical relation between the state and Alevi participants of the workshops, which eliminates the possibility for objective discussion. Subaşı's words "what should I do? Why should I show mercy to you? Why should I look after you? Why should I feel a desire to be equal with you? I do not know you. But when I desire to know you, a very strong fragment rejects it" (Workshop 1 2009, 204-205) represents the common

official approach throughout the Alevi Workshops. Especially Subaşı uses an accusing language towards the Alevi associations which do not comply with his ‘demands’ for the solution such as defining Alevilik, including Alevilik within the GDRA, and compulsory religion classes etc. and thus aimed to delegitimize these groups’ ideas and suggestions regarding the ‘Alevi Issue’. It can be argued that the existence of a ‘statist camp’ of Alevi associations, mostly represented by the *Cem Vakfı*, made it quite easier for the representatives of the state to delegitimize ‘reformist’ Alevi associations’ demands, as ‘statist’ associations were mostly represented as the ‘real’ representatives of Alevi community while arguing that ‘reformist’ or ‘political groups with the potential of politicizing the issue’ silences these ‘real’ representatives of Alevis (Subaşı 2010a, 49). This categorization and classification of Alevi associations according to the acceptability of their views and demands presents a rather clear example of ‘politics of truth’ in a Foucauldian sense. In *Society Must Be Defended* (2003), Foucault asks “what is the right that power implements to produce discourses of truth? Or: What type of power is it that is capable of producing discourses of power that have, in a society like ours, such powerful effects?” (24). His answer to this question is that

In a society such as ours -or in any society, come to that- multiple relations of power traverse, characterize, and constitute the social body; they are indissociable from a discourse of truth, and they can neither be established nor function unless a true discourse is produced, accumulated, put into circulation, and set to work. Power cannot be exercised unless a certain economy of discourses of truth functions in, on the basis of, and thanks to, that power (Foucault 2003, 24).

His conceptualization of the relation between power and truth as well as power and knowledge corresponds significantly to the government’s attitude towards the Alevi community. The Alevi Workshops were claimed to be organized on an objective base in order to find acceptable solutions for Alevis’ problems and in that sense to produce legitimate knowledge through participation of all the ‘parties’ of the problem in the process. Even though a certain set of knowledge presented by the ‘statist’ Alevi associations and Sunni participants –as well as the moderator and the Minister responsible for the whole process- of the Alevi Workshops was suitable to

become the ‘truth’ about the ‘Alevi Issue’, reformist Alevi associations strongly rejected to accept such an approach. As it can be seen from the statements of Alevi associations’ representatives during the interviews, Alevi Initiative of the JDP government is mostly evaluated as an attempt to transform and control Alevilik and Alevi community through including a certain form of Alevilik into the state apparatus. From this perspective most of the Alevi Association representatives that were interviewed during this study expressed their concerns about the possible interventions of the state to Alevilik itself mostly in relation with the issue of defining Alevilik. Özsoy, HBVAKV’s representative argued for instance that “the state created its own Sunni Islam. Now the state tries to create its own Alevilik with these workshops. It rejects our definition and redefines Alevilik”^{xxx}. Similarly Sungur, representative of the PSAİTKEV stated that “Alevi Workshops were out of the reach of Alevis. We did not expect an outcome which would relieve Alevis and it turned out to be that way. It had nothing to do with Alevis and Alevis’ demands.”^{xxxı} Çağın, representative of PSAKV, Yenimahalle Branch also argued that Alevi Workshops do not mean anything for them because

They try to guide and shape Alevi community. We will not be deceived. They come to us with plots such as Alevi Workshops but Alevi community has the necessary accumulation and consciousness about this issue. We will stand against their politics of assimilation and exploitation.^{xxxii}

The reciprocal relation between power and knowledge is evident in the state’s approach to the Alevi Issue. The knowledge that is produced or claimed to be produced through Alevi Workshops would enable the state – as in the case of the GDRA - to have the power to manage Alevilik and govern the Alevi community by including them within the state dispositif. Such an inclusion would in turn enable the state to have the power to make statements about Alevilik, define Alevilik, designate how an Alevi should think, behave, and believe, and produce further ‘truth’ about Alevilik and thus alienate the unwanted interpretations of Alevilik. In turn, a vicious cycle is established in which knowledge produced by the state becomes the ‘truth’ and thus increases the state’s power upon the Alevi community. From such a perspective, ‘reformist’ Alevi associations’ resistance to accept the knowledge about

Alevilik that is produced by the religious institutions of state such as the GDRA or Divinity Schools as well as the Alevi Workshops and the Preliminary Report would prevent this discourse from becoming the ‘truth’ and thus restricts the state’s power upon Alevilik and the Alevi community. The general approach of the government through the Alevi Initiative can be summarized with a quote from Foucault:

Power constantly asks questions and questions us; it constantly investigates and records it; it institutionalizes the search for the truth, professionalizes it, and rewards it... In a different sense, we are also subject to the truth in the sense that truth lays down the law; it is the discourse of truth that decides, at least in part; it conveys and propels truth-effects. After all, we are judged, condemned, forced to perform tasks, and destined to live and die in certain ways by discourses that are true, and which bring with them specific power-effects (Foucault 1997, 25).

For the legitimacy of the knowledge produced through the Alevi Workshops, ‘reformist’ Alevi associations were accused of being too marginal, absurd, idealist, and their supposedly Marxist inclinations were constantly problematized. It is quite significant that what enables the moderator of the Alevi workshops and writer of the Preliminary Report Necdet Subaşı to control and classify the ‘acceptable’ and ‘unacceptable’ understandings of Alevilik, even if he is not an Alevi, is the power he derives from his title as a social scientist –a representative of true body of knowledge- and his political position as the representative of the state and the government during the Alevi Workshops. It can be argued that as long as ‘reformist’ Alevi associations challenge the ‘Alevi truth’ of the state, Alevilik and Alevi community would not completely be engulfed by the state’s knowledge-power sphere, even though it would prevent the realization of their demands. But as the consisting ‘truth discourse’ of the state does not acknowledge these demands as necessary, acceptable, or legitimate, ‘reformist’ Alevi associations’ inclusion would also not lead the state to meet their main demands.

Even though the reformist Alevi associations positions were defined as marginal and idealistic during the Alevi Workshops and were mostly ignored in the end, their

position during the JDP government's Alevi Initiative corresponds to what Foucault defines as 'critique'. In *The Politics of Truth*, Foucault asks

How can the indivisibility of knowledge and power in the context of interactions and multiple strategies induce both singularities, fixed according to their conditions of acceptability, and a field of possibles, of openings, indecisions, reversals and possible dislocations which make them fragile, temporary, and which turn these effects into events... In what way can the effects of coercion characteristic of these positivities not be dissipated by a return to the legitimate destination of knowledge and by a reflection on the transcendental or semi-transcendental that fixes knowledge, but how can they instead be reversed or released from within a concrete strategic field, this concrete strategic field that induced them, starting with this decision not to be governed? (Foucault 1997, 60)

According to Foucault the 'critical attitude' does not necessitate that "governmentalization would be opposed in a kind of face-off by the opposite affirmation, 'we do not want to be governed, and we do not want to be governed *at all*'" (Foucault 1997, 28). Rather it signifies

Facing them head on and as compensation, or rather, as both partner and adversary to the arts of governing, as an act of defiance, as a challenge, as a way of limiting these arts of governing and sizing them up, transforming them, of finding a way to escape from them, or in any case, a way to displace them, with a basic distrust, but also and by the same token, as a line of development of the arts of the governing (Foucault 1997, 28).

In that sense as all the Alevi associations that were interviewed described their mission as a democratic struggle to acquire their rights by not adapting to the state's understanding of Alevilik but sticking to their own values, Alevi associations' stance can be seen as a 'critical attitude'. In that sense Alevi associations which expressed their discontent with the JDP government's Alevi Initiative do not necessarily reject to be governed *at all*, but express their determination "not to be governed thusly, like that, by these people, at this price" (Foucault 1997, 72). For instance Çağın, representative of the PSAKD, Yenimahalle Branch rejects the JDP government's Alevi Initiative on the grounds that it is not a sincere attempt to meet Alevis'

demands but also argues that “PSADK’s main mission is to cooperate with democratic people, foundations and political parties, and to give the struggle for the democratization of Turkey.”^{xxxiii} Similarly Sungur, representative of PSAİTKEV expressed her concerns about the sincerity of the Alevi Initiative and pointed out that the whole process was an unsuccessful attempt in terms of designating and solving Alevi’s problems, but also stated that Alevi Associations “will continue their struggle both for their democratic demands and in the faith dimension.”^{xxxiv} As interviews revealed the Alevi Associations determinacy to be ‘accounted for’ within the political system which also necessitates to be ‘governed’ in a sense, it can be argued that the manner in which the JDP government’s Alevi Initiative aimed to ‘govern’ Alevi community was rejected by a considerable part of the Alevi Associations but these associations continue to try “limiting these arts of governing and sizing them up, transforming them, of finding a way to escape them... with a basic distrust” (Foucault 1997, 28).

The JDP government’s Alevi Initiative is perceived as an unsuccessful and even insincere and assimilative attempt of the government by the Alevi associations, and the ‘reformist’ Alevi Associations’ continuous criticisms towards the government and the Alevi Initiative process in a way restricted the effect of power-knowledge relation that was tried to be established during and after the Alevi Workshops. Foucault states that “power relations have been progressively governmentalized, that is to say, elaborated, rationalized, and centralized in the form of, or under the auspices of, state institutions” which can be applied to the case of the JDP government’s Alevi Initiative (Foucault 1982, 793) . But it is also necessary to point out that

if it is true that at the heart of power relations and as a permanent condition of their existence there is an insubordination and a certain essential obstinacy on the part of the principles of freedom, then there is no relationship of power without the means of escape or possible flight (Foucault 1982, 794).

Even though the state can be seen as a side of the power-relation which was established through the Alevi Initiative, the means of the Alevi Associations to ‘escape’, or in this case not to acknowledge the outcome of the Alevi Initiative as

their own, limited the appeal of the knowledge that was produced through Alevi Workshops and in turn the state's power to control and manipulate Alevilik and Alevi community. This limitation in the exercise of power of the state on the Alevi community, in away enables Alevi Associations' representatives to continue their democratic struggle for the fulfillment of their demands and, in other words to be governed in a different manner. This demand for a different way to be governed can clearly be seen in Aksoyoğlu's words

What did they expect? Were we to gather in one place, say these are our demands and, the issue would be solved? It will not happen that way... Things may work out that way within the JDP, well excuse me, but things do not work out that way within the Alevi movement. They need to know that.^{xxxv}

This open statement about the Alevi Association's main stance which requires the state and the government to take into consideration Alevi associations' structure, sensibilities, priorities and, demands for a possible solution represents the common will of the Alevi Associations that were interviewed within this research, for a different way to be governed.

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ENDNOTES

ⁱ Ya şimdi devletin Alevilere bakışı ta Osmanlıdan bu yana hiç değişmedi. Geçmiş yıllarda da tarihte de Aleviler hep sorun yaşıyorlardı, cumhuriyette de sorun yaşamaya devam ettiler. İşte bir ulusal kurtuluş savaşı yaşandı, Tabi ki o dönemlerde sanırım bu tarz sorunlar, kendi içinde bulunduğu konum, durum itibariyle çok görmezden gelinmiş olabilir.

ⁱⁱ Çok bir şey değişmedi. Tabi Osmanlı döneminde farklı inançlar, farklı diller, farklı ırklar vardı. Daha karma bir toplumdur. Ancak cumhuriyet döneminden sonra ancak ilk anda işte Atatürk ile bir özgürleşme havası esmiş olmasına rağmen cumhuriyetin geldiği bu süreç içinde Aleviler adına çeşitli katliamlar yaşanmıştır ki Aleviler bu aslında Cumhuriyet sürecinin en önemli taşlarından biridir... Yani devletin bakışı bellidir. Devlet tek inanç ve tek dilden oluşan bir devletin savunucusudur. Hatta tek cinsi de ilave edebiliriz. O nedenle çok ciddi anlamda Alevilerin işte yaşam standartları olarak yaşamlarının değiştiği özgürleştiği bir dönemden söz etmek çok mümkün değil açıkçası.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cumhuriyet kurulduğu zaman Mustafa Kemal Atatürk ilk yaptığı ziyaret Hacı Bektaş türbesidir, yanına da Alevi inanç önderlerini alarak parlemontusunu kurmuştur ve bizim özgürlüğümüz o zaman başlamıştır. Cumhuriyet döneminde hükümet eliyle Alevilerin kırımını yapılmamıştır ama bazı kurumlar, bazı istihbarat birimleri, bazı örgütlenmeler tarafından yakılmış yıkılmış ama cumhuriyet döneminde resmen devlet eliyle kırım öyle duymadık biz... Eksiklerine rağmen cumhuriyet döneminde ne Alevi islamı özgürce yaşayabilmiş ne Alevilerin cem evlerini özgürce kabul etmişler Tekke ve Zaviyeler kanunu nedeniyle ne de bizim seçmeli derlerimizi koymuşlar ama en azından özgürce yaşamışız.

^{iv} Oradaki, raporlara dikkat edin bakın Subaşı diye bir adam hazırlamıştı yardımcı doçent, orada baktığımız zaman kullanılan dil bile bizi tiksindiriyor yani... Şöyle bir dil söz konusu orada; efendim her zaman eksik, aleviler kendi kültüründen habersiz, ama Sünniler, nasıl söyleyeyim, daha böyle ılımlı, daha böyle hoşgörüle yaklaşan bir topluluk olarak lanse ediliyor. Bunun böyle bir gerçekliği yoktur... Bizim yani Sünnilerle tabi herhangi bir problemimiz yok, bizim buradaki temel ayrımımız ilerici demokrat insanlarla ilerici demokrat olmayan yani başka kültürleri başka kimlikleri yok sayan gerici akımlardır. Bizim derdimiz şeriatçılıklardır, faşizmdir.

^v Aslında bir şey söyleyim mi, bence biraz fazla, yani herhalde devletin parası da fazla diye düşünmeye başladım. Şurada sıra sıra cilt cilt kitaplar raporu görmüşsündür. Koca koca ciltler. İçini açtığında önemli olan şudur, siz kendinizi görebiliyor musunuz? Ben kendimi göremiyorum. O zaman o benim raporum değil zaten. E bir başkasının raporuna benim adım verilirse de bu gerçekten bir

riyakârlıktır yani. Ben hem bu işin koordinatörü Subaşı ile de bir takım toplantılarda birlikte olduk, yani niyet çok önemli.

^{vi} Bizce Alevilik insan odaklı özgürce inancı yaşayabilen, özgürce birilerinin baskısıyla, hacının hocanın değil özgürce. Böyle özgürce Alevi İslam inancını yaşayan, Musahip kardeşi bulabilen, musahibi olan bir canımız Aleviliği yaşıyor anlamına gelir. Cem evlerine yılda bir kere de gidebilir, Perşembelere de katılabilir. Önemli olan cem ibadetlerinin ne olduğunu öğrenmesi lazım. Dolayısıyla ceme katılan bir candan 12 hizmetleri de bilir, musahiplik nedir onu da bilir. Yani musahiplik dediğim yol kardeşliği.

^{vii} Bu ne bakanın haddine ne biz Alevi örgütleri yöneticilerinin haddine, ne de Alevi inancını yürüten dedelerin haddine. Sonuçta insanlar o inancı nasıl yaşamak istiyorlarsa öyle yaşıyorlar. Yani kendilerine ait öznel bir Aleviliği var herkesin.

^{viii} Aleviliği tek bir kalıpta tanımlamak mümkün değil zaten. Herkez iç dünyasında nasıl bir Alevlik tanımlıyorsa ona inansın ve onu yaşasın diyoruz sadece ve yaşatsın aynı zamanda.. Alevilik kültürel boyutu olan ama inançsal boyutu da çok derinlerde olduğu böyle bir yaşam biçimi. Aleviliği yalnız dediğim gibi benim tanımlamam ötekinin tanımlaması, herkes kendine göre bir Alevilik yorumluyor ve içinde yaşadığı bir Alevilik kavramı var... Kaldı ki Alevi geleneği demin de söyledim “yol bir, sürek binbir” dediği. Farklı bakışlarımız olacak, farklı ocaklar var, ocakların farklı semahları var, farklı cemler var. Böyle farklılığı olan bir inancı tek kalıba sokup, öyle bir şey söz konusu olamaz.

^{ix} Yani devlet diyor ki mesela İslam’ın içinde misin, dışında mısın? Hadi bakalım. Ya İslam’ın içinde olan da dışında olan da kendini o şekilde tanımlayan da aynı cemi yapıyor mu yapıyor. Aynı şekilde ritüellerini uyguluyor mu uyguluyor. Bir fark yok arada. Yani İslam’ın içinde olsa ne dışında olsa ne? Ama devlet bilerek bir bomba atıyor içeri. Bu üretilen ayırım yapay bir ayırım.

^x Bu zihniyete sahip bir partinin düzenlemiş olduğu çalıştayda ne kadar samimi olduğunu hani biz değerlendirmeyelim, hani biz ne olduğunu biliyoruz. Halk değerlendirsin. Bu kadar mı zor Cemevini ibadethane olarak tanımlamak. Bu kadar mı zor? Yani neyinden korkuyorlar.

^{xi} Dedelerimizin eğitimiyle ilgili bir üniversite, semavi dinlerle olsun bir üniversite ya da okullarda bir eğitim birimi oluşturularak bizim dedelerimiz, dede çocuklarımız hem eğitim alsın, eğitim verenler de bizim dedelerimiz olsun. E dedelerimizin evlerinde ibadet yaptırıyor, sabahlara kadar 7 saat ibadet yaptırıyor. E dedelerimiz burada emekli maaşıyla geçiniyor hadi o da olmayanlar da var. E nasıl bunlar bize ibadet için inanç önderleri bize hizmet edecek. Yani bugün camideki, cami hocaları devletten maaş alıyor. Bizim paralarımızı alıyorlar onlara veriyorlar. Bu Allahtan revamı canım. Bu büyük bir haksızlık. Türkiyede 20-25 milyon Alevi yaşıyor, bir tane dedemizin devletten maaş aldığını hatırlamıyoruz.

^{xii} Aleviliğin ya da Alevilerin sorunu yok asıl sorun Sünni kardeşlerimizin yaşadığı sıkıntı. Çünkü onlara bir din dayatılıyor. Bu ülkede Alevi açılımına bu yüzden ihtiyaç da yok. Aleviler ne istediğini biliyor, nasıl ibadet ettiğini de biliyor, nasıl ritüellerini yerine getirdiğini de biliyor ama Sünni toplumuna karşı bir diyanet dayatması var. Bu camide şu şekilde namazını kılacaksın, şu duaları okuyacaksın, şu hutbeleri dinleyeceksin, şu şekilde ibadet edeceksin diye bir dayatma var. Aslında bir Sünni çalıştayına ihtiyaç vardır dedik. Bu tam da Sünni kardeşlerimizin ibadetlerini daha rahat, daha özgürce yapabilmeleri adınaydı. Burada sorun aslında devletten kaynaklı bir dayatma var.

^{xiii} Diyanet de bir gün öyle olacak ki her kesimin tepki gösterdiği bir kuruluş haline gelecek. Çünkü kime hizmet ettiği belli değil. 3-4 milyar dolar bütçesi olan, 200 bine yakın kadrosu olan bir kurum. Neye hizmet ediyor bu kurum, ben memnun değil isem, bazı kesimler memnun değil ise, Nuseyriiler hiç değil, Alevisi hiç değil, Caferisi hiç değil, Sünniler de memnun değil. Daha düne kadar bugün bizim hükümetimizin üyelerinin çoğu Diyanetten memnun değil idi... E o zaman ne olacak bu kurum, kime hizmet ediyor bu?

^{xiv} Bir başbakan Sivas olayları davası zaman aşımına uğradığında, sanıklar yönünden hayırlı uğurlu olsun diyorsa zaten çalıştayın samimiyetini o noktada görmek lazım. İşte bu başbakanın iktidar olduğu, genel başkanı olduğu partinin bir milletvekili daha 2 gün önce mecliste bir konuşma yaptı. İzmir milletvekili. İsmi Ali idi, soyismini hatırlamıyorum. Madımak otelinde yananlar kadar içeride yatan masum insanlar var, en az onlar kadar masumdur deme cüretini gösterdi.

^{xv} Başbakanın açıklamalarını duyduk. Başbakan bu konuda hayırlı olsun diyor. Bi de bu hani dil sürçmesi falan da değil, bunu sahipleniyor. Diyor ki “evet diyor, ben bunu oradaki insanlarda mağdur olmuştur diyor”. En son bir AKP milletvekili çıkmış diyor ki “orada yakanlarda masumdur” diyor. Madımakta bir müze yapmışlar iki tane katillerden ikisi de orada öldü, boğularak... Onların ismini de oraya koymuşlar.

^{xvi} Madımak olayı günümüzün büyük bir ayıbıdır. Devletin ayıbıdır, Alevilerin ayıbı değil. Orayı bir an önce müze haline getirilerek oranın bir yasallaşmasını istiyoruz. Bitsin artık orada ki eziyet, çile diye. Her 2 temmuzda oraya binlerce insanımız toplanıyor, gidiyor aykırıyor. 35 tane canımız orada yanmış, o canlarımızın hepsi Alevi değil, o canlarımız Türkiye Cumhuriyetinin yurttaşları. Sünnisiyle falan orada aydınlar o gün orada diri diri yakıldı. Sürekli sürekli biz bunlarla uğraşmak, bunlarla mücadele etmek istemiyoruz. Bugün dünyada yaşayan Sünni kardeşlerimizin ondan haberi bile yok, yeni çıkan, yeni doğan çocukların. Niye bunları düşman haline getirelim. Devletimiz bunları bir an önce sonuçlandırsın sonraki dünyaya gelen kardeşlerimiz de kardeşçe yaşasın.

^{xvii} Bir kere Hacı Bektaş Alevilerin ikametgah adresidir. Hacı Bektaştaki şu anda Cami diktikleri yer, şu anda müze olarak gezdikleri yer, aslında Alevilerin inanç yerleridir. Yani bir kere bunun Alevilere, asıl sahiplerine verilmesi gerekmektedir. Bunu da yapmayacaklar, o da görünüyor. Yani ortada.

^{xviii} Yani bir insan için ne kadar da ağır bir şey biliyor musunuz? İnanç yerine giderken, binlerce camiye de sen para veriyorsun, seninle verginle orası yapılıyor. Senin kendi inanç yerinde, sayılıdır yani, burada da müzeye girer gibi seyirlik giriyorsun oraya.

^{xix} kesinlikle çözülmemiştir artı burada da yine bir komedi oynanmıştır. Yani nedir olay kendince bir Alevi anlayışı geliştirmiş onu da din dersine koymuş. Artı bir de şu var yani ben şunu söylerim koymasa daha iyiydi. Niye daha iyiydi? Çünkü Anadolu'da Aleviliğe küfür ritüellerine dönüştü o ders. Alevi çocuklarının gözünün içine baka baka, Alevilik konusu var, Aleviliğe küfrediyorlar, hakaret ediyorlar. Ve kaç tane Pir Sultan Derneği yöneticileri müdahale etmiştir ki yüzde biri bile değildir yani o da duyulanlardır. Çoğu çocuk da siniyor, sesini çıkarmıyor.

^{xx} Biz dedik ki zorunlu din derslerini kaldırın. Ama bunlar zorunlu din derslerini biz kaldırın dememişiz, Aleviliği de koyun millete dayatın bildiğinizi, onlar bildiğini dayatıyor. Kaldı ki bu müfredatı hazırlarken hem tamam orasını da geçtik, kaldırmıyorlar ama iyi niyetle bir şey yapacaklar diye algılayalım. Bu sorunun muhatapları olan siz bu müfredatı hazırlarsınız... İnanılmaz tarihsel hatalar var orada... Tamamen yalan yanlış bilgiler bir de tekrar başa döneyim. Biz sorunu tespit ederken demiştik bu kitabı buradan kaldırın. Onlar yine diyor ki yok olmaz kaldırmıyoruz. Biz kendimizce bir Alevilik tanımladık, yazdırıyoruz bu kitapları da bunu size dayatacaz.

^{xxi} Başından beri 25 yıla yaklaşık demokratik Alevi örgütlenmesi sürecinde söylenen hep aynıdır. Zorunlu din eğitimi kaldırılmalı. Bu şimdi bu yapılan şey çocukların ruh sağlığını, çocuk hakları sözleşmesini, anne babanın çocuklarına istediği inancı seçme özgürlüğünü her şeyi engelleyen bir şey. Ayrıca bir sınıfta farklılıkları olan çocukların birbirlerine karşı belki düşmanlık belki farklı duygular taşımaya neden olacaktır. Yani o kadar tehlikeli bir şey ki bu. Ayrıca o müfredat dediğini de kimlerin okutacağı, yani yazılsa bile, kimler öğretecek, kimler o dersi verecek, kimler yazacak, kimler kaleme alacak hep bir muammadır. Yani Alevilik açısından bir yararı sağlamayacağı kesindir.

^{xxii} Onu Cem Vakfı hazırlamıştı. 200 maddelik bildiğim kadarıyla. Çok az bir şeyini koydular. Yeterli değil o. Evet bizim genel merkezde hazırlandı o büyük bir katılımı ama çok az bir şey koydular ama o bizim Aleviler için yeterli değil. Madem din dersi ise benim Alevi inancım, Alevi İslam'ını anlatsınlar orda. Doğrular anlatılsın yani.

^{xxiii} Ben kendi inancımı kendim tanımlarım. Farklılıklar da olabilir. Senin devlet olarak görevin bunu tanımaktır. Ama bizim üzerimizdeki bu tarz bir baskı, hükmeden bir dil, yok sayma bunlar kesinlikle samimi davranışlar değil.

^{xxiv} Okullarda özellikle, çocuklarla ilgili çok ciddi sorunlar var, şimdi mesela eğer samimi bir çalıştay süreci olsaydı, zorunlu din derslerinin talep eden, kaldırılmasını talep eden Alevilere, bir ikinci din dersi ilave etmezlerdi yani en azından.

^{xxv} Alevilik konuşuldu, konuşulması da iyidir. Yani mecliste, otellerde, kulislerde Alevi insanın sorunları dile getirildi. Bu da güzel bir şeydir. Bu demektir ki hükümetimiz, devletimiz bu canlarımızı ee hatırlamış ve bunların sorunlarını dile getirmek istemiş. Güzel bir şeydir bence, hiç yoktan iyidir. Sonucunu da bugün olmazsa yarın, yarın olmazsa öbür gün alcaz. Çünkü görünmemezlikten gelinmez artık bu küresel dünyada, teknolojik bir dünyada.

^{xxvi} O ortada ama bir yararı oldu dediğim gibi çok şey olarak işte Alevilik çok insanların belleğinde soru işaretleri ile doluyken artık konuşuluyor. Bu bir yarardır ama ben şey noktasında daha temkinliyim. Yani çok konuşmanın da Aleviliği örseleyebileceğini de düşünüyorum. O güzel yanını, o özgün yanını çok konuşa konuşa insanları şey yapacak, rahatsız edecek bir noktaya da gelebilir... Alevilik konuşulacaksa Aleviler konuşacak bu ülkede. Onlar da konuşmuştur, talepleri ortadadır. Eğer bu ülke demokratik bir ülke ise sadece anayasal düzenlemede eşit yurttaşlık talepleri vardır. Onun dışında başka talepleri yoktur.

^{xxvii} Bunu ilk duyduğumuzda her ne kadar AKP karşıtı da olsak biz de bir nebze de olsa bir umut oluştu. O zaman biz bu işe galiba dedik bir şeylerin yoluna girmesi isteniyor. Yani biz de çalışmamızı ona göre yapalım dedik. Sonrasında gördük ki sadece göz boyamaymış. Aslında hükümet kendi aklında, kendi çalışmasında, kendi kitabında ne varsa aslında onlardan hiç vazgeçmemiş. Sadece şirin gözükmek adına Kürt çalıştayını, Alevi çalıştayını, Roman çalıştayını, Aydınlar sanatçılar çalıştayını, o çalıştayını, bu çalıştayını. Zaten hiçbirinden sonuç da elde edilemedi. Sadece belli bir kesimlerin, belirli yerlerin, bakın bu hükümet de sadece kendisini düşünmüyor, algılandığı gibi bir görüntüsü yok, demokratikleşme adına, insan hakları adına vesaire adına çok ciddi çalışmalar da yapıyor görüntüsü verilmişti.

^{xxviii} Şimdi bizim üzerimizdeki bu şeylerden, fiziksel katliamlardan bahsediyoruz ya, Alevi toplumu için en büyük tehlike kültürel katliamdır. Bunun adı asimilasyondur. Burada devletin amacı Alevi toplumunu güzellikle veya güzellikle olmazsa zorla asimile etmektir. Kesinlikle amacı budur. Alevi çalıştayları ne yapmaya çalışıyor? Aleviliği kendi özünden kendi içeriğinden kopararak Sünniliğe eklenmiş bir Alevilik, asimile olmuş bir Alevilik yaratmaya çalışıyor... O yüzden de yani baktığımız zaman Alevi çalıştayları temel olarak bu ülkede Alevi toplumları "tamam varlığını devam ettirsin ama böyle keskin yönleri törpülenmiş, böyle nasıl diyelim Sünniliğin içine dahil olmaya başlamış, asimilasyon yoluna girmiş daha böyle radikal söylemlerinden kopmuş bir Alevilik. Amaç odur.

^{xxix} Ama mesela örneğin, bugün başbakanın gördüğü başka bir gerçeklik var. Ben Alevi açılımı yaptım ama Aleviler buna icabet etmediler dolayısıyla ben Alevilerden oy alamayacağımı çok iyi biliyorum ve Alevileri dışlamanın da yanlış bir şey olmadığını düşünüyorum gibi Alevi açılımını tamamen tersine çeviren bir bakış açısı oldu.

^{xxx} Devlet diyanet eliyle kendi Sünni İslamını yarattı. Şimdi devlet bu çalıştaylarla kendi Alevilik inancını yaratmaya çalışıyor. Yani sizin dediğiniz olmaz, ben bunu bu şekilde tanımlıyorum. Benim dediğim şekliyle yapacaksınız noktasında davrandığı için böyle.

^{xxxı} Burada Alevisiz bir Alevi çalıştay söz konusuydu. O nedenle şeyde de çok bizi ilgilendiren, içimizi rahatlatacak bir sonuç çıkmayacak zaten, beklediğimiz oydu. Öyle de oldu.

^{xxxii} Alevi toplumunu yönlendirmeye çalışıyor, biçimlendirmeye çalışıyor. Biz kesinlikle bu oyunların içine gelmicez. Alevi toplumunun genelinin duruşu da bellidir. Bunların karşısında duracağız yani karşımıza böyle Alevi çalıştaydır şudur budur bir sürü oyunla geliyorlar ama Alevi toplumu bu konuda yeterli birikime sahiptir, yeterli bilince sahiptir. Biz sonuna kadar bu asimilasyon politikalarının da onların sömürü politikalarının da karşısında duracağız.

^{xxxiii} O yüzden buradaki çözüm için Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneğinin tüzüğünde şu var: yani ilerici demokrat kişi kurum parti ve örgütlerle iş birliği yapmak yan yana gelmek ve bu konuda Türkiyenin demokratikleştirilmesi mücadelesini vermektir. Yani işte mağdur olan, mazlum olan herkesin bir araya gelmesi ve genel bir demokratikleşme mücadelesini yürütme, bu işin siyasi ayağı oluyor.

^{xxxiv} Ama şöyle bir şey bu Dergahta Birlik demokratik Alevi örgütleriyle birleşmeyi sağlayacaktır. Ona inanıyorum, yani bir çok belki Alevi nüfusunun yüzde yüzüne hitap edecek bir örgütlü yapı diyemeyiz ama ikisi bir araya gelince infsanların taleplerini daha fazla dile getireceğini düşünüyorum. Ben oranın başarılı olacağını görüyorum. Yani hem yola çıkan efendiye çok şeyim var, güvenim var, hem de bir ihtiyaç vardır. İhtiyacı yerine getireceğini düşünüyorum. Tabi bu noktada işte, biri inançsal boyutunu yürütürken bu işin, birisi de demokratik boyutu ile ilgili mücadelesini sürdürecektir.

^{xxxv} nasıl olması gerekiyordu, hepimiz bir arada toplanıcaz, taleplerimiz bunlar dices, ve bütün mevzu bitecek miydi? Bu şekilde olmayacak... Eğer AKP'nin içinde bu işler böyle yürüyorsa, kusura bakmasın, Alevi hareketi içerisinde bu işler böyle yürümez. Onu bilmeleri gerekiyor.

APPENDIX A

IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Aleviliği nasıl tanımlıyorsunuz?
- Türkiye Cumhuriyeti tarihinde Alevilerin temel sorunları sizce nelerdir?
- Bu sorunların temelinde sizce ne gibi sebepler vardır?
- Sizce Cumhuriyet tarihinde Alevilerin görece daha rahat olduğu veya ayrımcılığa uğramadığı bir dönem var mıdır?
- Türkiye Cumhuriyeti ile Osmanlı İmparatorluğunun Alevilik algıları ve Alevilere yaklaşımları sizce farklılık gösterir mi? Eğer gösteriyorsa bu farklılıklar nelerdir?
- Cumhuriyet tarihi süresince sizce Alevi toplumu için önemli dönüm noktaları var mıdır? Varsa nelerdir?
- Devlet Aleviliği nasıl tanımlamaktadır?
- Sizce Devletin Alevilik algısı değişimlerden geçmiş midir?
- Alevi açılımı ve bu bağlamda Alevi Çalıştayları devletin Alevilik algısında bir değişime işaret etmekte midir?
- Sizce Alevi Açılımının temel amacı nedir?
- Derneğiniz Alevi Çalıştaylarının birine veya bir kaçına katıldı mı?
- Çalıştaylar öncesinde veya çalıştay sürecinde derneğiniz hükümet temsilcilerine herhangi bir şekilde temel sorunlarını ve taleplerini ilettiler mi?
- Eğer ilettiler ise bu talepler sizce ne ölçüde dikkate alındı ve değerlendirildi?
- Derneğinizin talepleri nelerdir ve bu talepler Alevilerin hangi sorunlarını çözmeye yöneliktir?
- Sizce Alevi açılımı taleplerinizin gerçekleştirilmesini sağlamış mıdır ya da sağlayacak mıdır?
- Sizce Alevi Açılımının en önemli etkisi ne olmuştur?
- İktidar partisinin ve muhalefet partilerinin Alevi Açılımı ile ilgili söylem ve tavırlarını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?

- Alevi Çalıştaylarına paralel olarak düzenlenen Alevi iftarlarını nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Alevi açılımı sürecinde diğer Alevi dernekleri ile fikir alışverişinde buldunuz mu?
- Diğer dernekler ile aranızda fikir ayrılıkları var mıydı? Eğer var idiyse bu ayrılıklar nelerdi ve çalıştayları nasıl etkiledi?
- Alevi Çalıştayları sonucunda hazırlanan rapor ile ilgili fikirleriniz nelerdir?
- Sizce bu rapor Alevilerin sorunlarını doğru analiz edebilmiş midir?
- Bu sorunlara sunduğu çözümler sizce Alevi toplumunu tatmin edebilecek nitelikte midir?
- Alevi Açılımı sonrası yapılan değişiklikleri –örneğin zorunlu din dersi müfredatına Aleviliğin dahil edilmesini- nasıl değerlendiriyorsunuz?
- Sizce Alevi Açılımı başarıya ulaşmış mıdır?
- Alevi Açılımı sonrasında Sivas Katliamı sanıklarının zaman aşımından beraat etmeleri sizce süreçle bir çelişki oluşturmuş mudur?
- Sizce günümüzde toplum içinde Alevi düşmanlığı var mıdır ve var ise sebepleri nelerdir?
- Bugün Aleviler Sunni toplum ve/veya devlet tarafından dışlanıyor mudur?
- Alevi Açılımı Alevi toplumunun temel problemlerine çözüm oluşturabilmiş midir?

APPENDIX B

LIST OF THE INTERVIEWEES

Institution	Participant	Interview Date	Interview Length
Pir Sultan Abdal Kùltür Derneđi Yenimahalle Őubesi (PSAKD Yenimahalle Branch)	Onur ađın	11.07.2012	32 minutes
Pir Sultan Abdal Kùltür Derneđi Genel Merkezi (PSAKD)	Eren Aksoyođlu	10.08.2012	25 minutes
Pir Sultan Abdal İki Temmuz Kùltür ve Eđitim Vakfı (PSAİTKEV)	Emel Sungur	13.07.2012	29 minutes
Cem Vakfı Ankara Őubesi (Cem Vakfı)	Faruk Ali Yıldırım	06.07.2012	24 minutes
Hacı BektaŐ Veli Anadolu Kùltür Vakfı (HBVAKV)	Sadık Őzsoy	08.07.2012	25 minutes

APPENDIX C

LIST OF ALEVI WORKSHOPS

1. Workshop 1: Alevilik and Alevis' Problems from the Perspective of Alevi Organizations and Dedes
2. Workshop 2: Alevilik in Social Sciences
3. Workshop 3: Alevilik and Alevis' Problems from the Perspective of Theologians
4. Workshop 4: Alevilik and Alevis' Problems from the Perspective of Non-Governmental Organizations
5. Workshop 5: Alevilik and Alevis' Problems in the Media
6. Workshop 6: Alevilik and Alevis' Problems from the Perspective of Politicians
7. Workshop 7: Discussing Alevilik and Alevis' Problems with a mixed group of former workshops' participants.

APPENDIX D

LISTS OF ALEVI WORKSHOPS' PARTICIPANTS

WORKSHOP 1

1. Ali Balkız (Alevi Bektaşî Federasyonu Başkanı-Ankara)
2. Ali Kenanođlu (Hubyar Sultan Alevi Kùltür Derneđi- İstanbul)
3. Ali Rıza Selmanpakođlu (Hacıbektaş Bel. Bşk.-Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş)
4. Ali Rıza Uđurlu (Cem Vakfı-Alevi Din Hizmetleri Başkanı-İstanbul)
5. Binali Dođan (Erikli Baba Dergâhı-İstanbul)
6. Cafer Solgun (Yüzleşme Derneđi Başkanı-İstanbul)
7. Dođan Bermek (Cem Vakfı-İstanbul)
8. Dođan Kaplan (Yrd. Doç. Dr. Selçuk Üniversitesi Öğretim Üyesi-Konya)
9. Dursun Gümüšođlu (Yazar-İstanbul)
10. Ercan Geçmez (Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kùltür Vakfı Genel Başkanı-Ankara)
11. Ertuđrul Aslan (Abdal Musa Vakfı-Sivas)
12. Fermani Altun (Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı-İstanbul)
13. Fevzi Gümüş (Pir Sultan Abdal Kùltür Derneđi Başkanı-Ankara)
14. Hasan Meşeli (Malatya Hacı Bektaş Veli Kùltür Merk. Vakfı Genel Bşk.)
15. Haydar Kaya (Cem Vakfı-Aydın)
16. Hıdır Temel (İstanbul)
17. Hüsniye Takmaz (Alevi Bektaşî Eğitim ve Kùltür Vakfı Başkanı-İstanbul)
18. İrfan Çetinkaya (Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli Vakfı Başkanı-Eskişehir)
19. İzzettin Dođan (Prof. Dr. Cem Vakfı Başkanı-İstanbul)
20. Kelime Ata (Pir Sultan Abdal Derneđi-Ankara)
21. Kurtcebe Noyan (İzmir)
22. Mehmet Çamur (Şahkulu Dergâhı-İstanbul)
23. 24. Metin Tarhan (Alevi Dernekler Federasyonu Genel Başkanı-İstanbul)
25. Muharrem Ercan (Karacaahmet Sultan Dergâhı-İstanbul)
26. Murtaza Demir (Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kùltür ve Eğitim Vakfı-Ankara)

27. Naki Selman Pakođlu- (Ankara Hacı Bektaş Kùltür ve Eđitim Derneđi)
28. Necdet Saraç (Yol Tv-İstanbul)
29. Osman Eğri (Prof. Dr. Hitit Üniversitesi Öğretim Üyesi-Çorum)
30. Remzi Özbalı (Atayolu Derneđi Başkanı-Ankara)
31. Şakir Keçeli (Babagan Kolu-Ankara)
32. Tekin Özdil (Hacı Bektaş Veli Kùltür ve Tanıtma Der. Genel Merkezi-Ankara)
33. Veli Güler (Samed Dede Külliyesi Yaptırma Yaşatma ve Cemevi Derneđi Bşk.)
34. Veli Gülsoy- (Gazi Mahallesi Cemevi-İstanbul)
35. Veliyettin Ulusoy (Hacıbektaş-Nevşehir)
36. Yalçın Özdemir (Su Tv-Ankara) Mehmet Yaman (Araştırmacı yazar-İstanbul)

WORKSHOP 2

1. Ahmet Yaşar Ocak (Prof. Dr. Hacettepe Üniversitesi-Ankara)
2. Ali Murat Irat (Dr. Ankara)
3. Ali Yaman (Yrd. Doç. Dr. Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi-Bolu)
4. Atilla Erden (Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emekli Öğretim Üyesi- Ankara)
5. Aykan Erdemir (Yrd. Doç. Dr. ODTÜ-Ankara)
6. Bekir Berat Özipek (Doç. Dr. Gaziosmanpaşa Üniversitesi-Tokat)
7. Binnaz Toprak (Prof. Dr. Bahçeşehir Üni. Siyaset Bil. ve Uluslar. İliş. Böl.-İst.)
8. Erol Göka (Doç. Dr. Numune Hastanesi, Ankara)
9. Ferhat Kentel (Prof. Dr. Bilgi Üniversitesi-İstanbul)
10. Fuad Bozkurt (Prof. Dr. Akdeniz Üniversitesi-Antalya)
11. Hüseyin Bal (Prof. Dr. Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi)
12. Hüseyin Özcan (Doç. Dr. Fatih Üniversitesi-İstanbul)
13. İbrahim Arslanođlu (Prof. Dr. Gazi Üniversitesi-Ankara)
14. İlyas Üzüm (Doç. Dr. Diyanet İşleri Bşk. Din İşleri Yüksek Kurul Üyesi Ankara)
15. İştär Gözaydın (Prof. Dr. İTÜ-İstanbul)
16. Kadir Canatan (Doç. Dr. Balıkesir Üniversitesi-Balıkesir)
17. Levent Köker (Prof. Dr. Anayasa Komisyonu Üyesi-Ankara)
18. Mustafa Aydın (Doç. Dr. Selçuk Üniversitesi-Konya)
19. Mustafa Erdoğan (Prof. Dr. Hacettepe Üniversitesi-Ankara)
20. Mustafa Şen (Doç. Dr. ODTÜ-Ankara)

21. Mustafa Şentop (Prof. Dr. İstanbul Hukuk Fakültesi-İstanbul)
- 22 . Mümtaz' er Türköne (Prof. Dr. Emekli Öğretim Üyesi-İstanbul)
23. Nevzat Tarhan (Prof. Dr. Memory Center-İstanbul)
24. Niyazi Öktem (Prof. Dr. Galatasaray Üniversitesi-İstanbul)
25. Nühket Sirman (Prof. Dr. Boğaziçi Üniversitesi-İstanbul)
26. Recep Kaymakcan (Prof. Dr. Sakarya Üniversitesi-Sakarya)
27. Tahire Erman (Doç. Dr. Bilkent Üniversitesi-Ankara)
28. Talip Küçükcan (Prof. Dr. Marmara Üniversitesi-Ankara)
29. Tarhan Erdem (Prof. Dr. KONDA-İstanbul)
30. Yasin Aktay (Prof. Dr. Selçuk Üniversitesi-Konya). Mümtaz' er Türköne (Prof. Dr. Emekli Öğretim Üyesi-İstanbul)

WORKSHOP 3

1. Ahmet Taşgın (Doç. Dr. Dicle Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Diyarbakır)
2. Aliye Çınar (Doç. Dr. Uludağ Üniversitesi- İlahiyat Fakültesi Bursa)
3. Arslan Türk (Tunceli Müftüsü-Tunceli)
4. Asım Yapıcı (Doç. Dr. Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Adana)
5. Cenksu Üçer (Dr. Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı-Ankara)
6. Ejder Okumuş (Prof. Dr. Osman Gazi Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Eskişehir)
7. Erdal Baykan (Yrd. Doç. Dr. Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Van)
8. Ethem Ruhi Fıglalı (Prof. Dr. Muğla Üniversitesi Eski Rektörü-Muğla)
9. Hamdi Mert (Emekli Diyanet İşleri Başkan Yardımcısı-Ankara)
10. Hamza Aktan (Prof. Dr. Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu Başkanı-Ankara)
11. Hasan Onat (Prof. Dr. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Ankara)
12. Hayri Kırbaşoğlu (Prof. Dr. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi –Ankara)
13. Hüseyin Algül (Prof. Dr. Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Bursa)
14. Hüseyin Yılmaz (Doç. Dr. Yüzüncü Yıl Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Van)
15. İlhami Güler (Prof. Dr. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi – Ankara)
16. İrfan Aycan (Prof. Dr. Din Öğretimi Genel Müdürü-Ankara)
17. İsmail Kara (Prof. Dr. Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-İstanbul)
18. İzzet Er (Prof. Dr. Diyanet İşleri Başkan Yardımcısı-Ankara)
19. M. Akif Aydın (Prof. Dr. İSAM Başkanı-İstanbul)

20. M. Saim Yeprem (Prof. Dr. TDV-İLKSAY Başkanı-Ankara)
21. Mahmut Aydın (Prof. Dr. 19 Mayıs Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Samsun)
22. M. Ali Büyükkara (Prof. Dr. 18 Mart Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Çanakkale)
23. Mehmet Çelenk (Dr. Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Bursa)
24. Mehmet Erdoğan (Prof. Dr. Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-İstanbul)
25. Mustafa Öztürk (Doç. Dr. Çukurova Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Adana)
26. Ömer Özsoy (Prof. Dr. Goethe Üniversitesi- Frankfurt)
27. Saffet Sarıkaya (Prof. Dr. S. Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-İsparta)
28. Salim Ögüt (Prof. Dr. Hitit Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Çorum)
29. Selim Eren (Doç. Dr. Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Sivas)
30. Sönmez Kutlu (Prof. Dr. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Ankara)
31. Süleyman Uludağ (Prof. Dr. Uludağ Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Bursa)
32. Şinasi Gündüz (Prof. Dr. İstanbul Üni. İlahiyat Fak. Dekanı-İstanbul)
33. Vecdi Akyüz (Prof. Dr. Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-İstanbul)
34. Yaşar Nuri Öztürk (Prof. Dr. Emekli Öğretim Üyesi - İstanbul)
36. Y. Mustafa Keskin (Doç. Dr. Fırat Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-Elazığ)
37. Yılmaz Soygyer (Yrd. Doç. Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fak.-İsparta)
38. Zeki Aslantürk (Prof. Dr. Marmara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi-İstanbul)

WORKSHOP 4

1. Ahmet Faruk Ünsal (Mazlum-Der Genel Başkanı-Ankara)
2. Ahmet Gündoğdu (Memur-Sen - Ankara)
3. Ahmet Şişman (Ensar Vakfı Başkanı-İstanbul)
4. Ali Çolak (Mülkiyeliler Birliği Genel Başkanı-Ankara)
5. Arif Ersoy (Prof. Dr., Esam Genel Sekreteri-Ankara)
6. Bejan Matur (Diyarbakır Kültür Sanat Vakfı-İstanbul)
7. Bekir Günay (Bilge Adamlar Stratejik Araştırmalar Merkezi-Ankara)
8. Bircan Akyıldız (Kamu-Sen Başkanı-Ankara)
9. Cem Somel (Prof. Dr. Doğu Konferansı-Ankara)
10. Cemal Uşşak (Kültürler Arası Diyalog Platformu-İstanbul)
11. Dilek Kurban (TESEV -İstanbul)
12. Fehmi Bülent Yıldırım (İHH İnsani Yardım Vakfı Başkanı-İstanbul)

13. Hasan Ekşi (Türkiye Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları Platformu Genel Başkanı-İstanbul)
14. Hayri İnce (Genç Siviller-İstanbul)
15. Mehmet Alacacı (Birlik Vakfı Başkanı- İstanbul)
16. Mehmet Doğan (Yazarlar Birliği-Ankara)
17. Mehmet Emin Çağırın (Prof. Dr. SDE-Ankara)
18. Necati Ceylan (Türkiye Gönüllü Teşekküller Vakfı Genel Başkanı-- İstanbul)
19. Nuri Gürgür (Türk Ocakları Genel Başkanı-Ankara)
20. Ömer Cihad Vardan (Müsiad Başkanı-İstanbul)
21. Özkan Tacer (Tunceli Dernekleri Federasyonu TUDEF Başkanı-İstanbul)
22. Öztürk Türkdoğan (İnsan Hakları Derneği Başkanı-Ankara)
23. Sabahat Akkiraz (Sanatçı-İstanbul)
24. Salih Yaylacı (Gazeteciler ve Yazarlar Vakfı-İstanbul)
25. Salim Uslu (Hak-İş Başkanı-Ankara)
26. Sami Evren (Kesk Başkanı-Ankara)
27. Sedat Laçiner (Doç. Dr. USAK Araştırma Merkezleri Başkanı-Ankara)
28. Sırrı Süreyya Önder (Türkiye Sinema Emekçileri Sendikası SineSen-İstanbul)
29. Süleyman Çelebi (Disk Başkanı-İstanbul)
30. Şenol Kaluç (Liberal Düşünce Topluluğu-Ankara)
31. Tayyar Altıkulaç (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Mütvevelli Heyet Üyesi-Ankara)
32. Ümit Fırat (İnsan Hakları Ortak Platformu Dönem Başkanı-Ankara)
33. Yılmaz Ensaroğlu (SETAV-Ankara)

WORKSHOP 5

1. Abdurrahman Dilipak (Vakit - İstanbul)
2. Ahmet Dinç (Aksiyon Dergisi - Ankara)
3. Ali Bayramoğlu (Yeni Şafak - İstanbul)
4. Ali Bulaç (Zaman - İstanbul)
5. Ali Kırca (Show Tv - İstanbul)
6. Alper Tan (Kanal A - Ankara)
7. Cemal Şener (İstanbul)
8. Ekrem Kızıltaş (Milli Gazete - İstanbul)

9. Etyen Mahcupyan (Taraf - İstanbul)
10. Fehmi Kuru (Yeni Şafak - İstanbul)
11. Hüseyin Hatemi (Prof. Dr. Emekli Öğretim Üyesi - İstanbul)
12. İbrahim Çelik (Hece Dergisi - Ankara)
13. İrfan Bozan (NTV - İstanbul)
14. Lale Şıvgın (Tercüman - Ankara)
15. M. Ali Birand (Kanal D - İstanbul)
16. Mehmet Metiner (Star - İstanbul)
17. Miyase İlknur (Cumhuriyet - İstanbul)
18. Murat Aksoy (Yeni Şafak - İstanbul)
19. Musa Özüğurlu (Cem Tv-İstanbul)
20. Oral Çalışlar (Radikal - İstanbul)
21. Ömer Laçiner (Birikim Dergisi - İstanbul)
22. Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı (Taraf Gazetesi - İstanbul)
23. Rasim Özdenören (Yeni Şafak - Ankara)
24. Rıdvan Kaya (Hak Söz Dergisi - İstanbul)
25. Sadık Yalnızcanlar (Yeni Dergi Ankara)
26. Sevilay Yükselir (Sabah - İstanbul)
27. Taha Akyol (Milliyet - İstanbul)

WORKSHOP 6

1. Abbas BOZYEL (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
2. Abdulkaki ERDOĞMUŞ (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
3. Ağâh KAFKAS (AK Parti Çorum Milletvekili)
4. Ali Rıza GÜLÇİÇEK (XXII. Dönem Milletvekili)
5. Arif SAĞ (XVIII. Dönem Milletvekili)
6. Ayşe GÜROCAK (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
7. Bayram MERAL (CHP Ankara Milletvekili)
8. Cengiz GÜLEÇ Prof. Dr. (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
9. Emre KOCAOĞLU (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
10. Ercan KARAKAŞ (XIX. ve XX. Dönem Milletvekili)
11. Ethem CANKURTARAN (XVIII. Dönem Milletvekili)

12. Fikri SAĞLAR (Kültür Eski Bakanı)
13. Hasan ERÇELEBİ (DSP Denizli Milletvekili)
14. Hasan MACİT (DSP İstanbul Milletvekili)
15. Haşim HAŞİMİ (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
16. Hüseyin DOĞAN (XIII. - XVI. Dönem Milletvekili)
17. Hüseyin TUĞCU (AK Parti Kütahya Milletvekili)
18. İbrahim YİĞİT (AK Parti İstanbul Milletvekili)
19. İlhami BİNİCİ (XVIII. Dönem Milletvekili)
20. Mahmut KOÇAK (XXII. Dönem Milletvekili)
21. Malik Ejder ÖZDEMİR (CHP Sivas Milletvekili)
22. Mehmet BEKAROĞLU (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
23. Mehmet MOĞULTAY (Adalet Eski Bakanı)
24. Mukadder BAŞEĞMEZ (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
25. Musa ATEŞ (XVII. Dönem Milletvekili)
26. Mustafa TİMİSİ (XIVXV. Dönem Milletvekili)
27. Mustafa YILDIZ (XX. Dönem Milletvekili)
28. Namık Kemal ZEYBEK (Kültür Eski Bakanı)
29. Nazif OKUMUŞ (XXI. Dönem Milletvekili)
30. Nevzat YANMAZ (XX. Dönem Milletvekili)
31. Nurettin KARSU (XV. XVI. Dönem Milletvekili)
32. Seyfi OKTAY (Adalet Eski Bakanı)
33. Şinasi ÖKTEM (CHP İstanbul Milletvekili)
34. Zafer ÜSKÜL (AK Parti Mersin Milletvekili)
35. Zeynep DAĞI (AK Parti Ankara Milletvekili)
36. Ziya HALİS (Çalışma ve Sosyal Güvenlik Eski Bakanı)

WORKSHOP 7

- 1- Ahmet Yaşar OCAK (Prof. Dr. Hacettepe Üniversitesi-Ankara)
- 2- Ali BULAÇ (Zaman-İstanbul)
- 3- Ali Rıza GÜLÇİÇEK (XXII. Dönem Milletvekili)
- 4- Ali YAMAN (Yrd. Doç. Dr. Abant İzzet Baysal Üniversitesi-Bolu)
- 5- Alper TAN (Kanal A-Ankara)

- 6- Arif SAĞ (XVIII. Dönem Milletvekili)
- 7- Cafer SOLGUN (Yüzleşme Derneği Başkanı-İstanbul)
- 8- Doğan BERMEK (Cem Vakfı-İstanbul)
- 9- Ercan GEÇMEZ (Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı Genel Başkanı-Ankara)
- 10- Ethem CANKURTARAN (XVIII. Dönem Milletvekili-Ankara)
- 11- Fermani ALTUN (Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı Başkanı-İstanbul)
- 12- Fuat BOZKURT (Prof. Dr. Akdeniz Üniversitesi-Antalya)
- 13- Hamza AKTAN (Prof. Dr. Din İşleri Yüksek Kurulu Başkanı-Ankara)
- 14- Hasan ATICI (AKAD-Adana)
- 15- Hüseyin HATEMİ –(Prof. Dr. Emekli Öğretim Üyesi-İstanbul)
- 16- İbrahim KALIN (Dr. Başbakanlık Başmüşaviri-Ankara)
- 17- İbrahim YİĞİT (AKP Milletvekili-İstanbul)
- 18- İlyas ÜZÜM (Doç. Dr. Diyanet İşleri Bşk. Din İşleri Yüksek Kurul Üyesi Ankara)
- 19- İrfan AYCAN (Prof. Dr. Din Öğretimi Genel Müdürü-Ankara)
- 20- İzzettin DOĞAN (Cem Vakfı Genel Başkanı-İstanbul)
- 21- Kurtcebe NOYAN (İzmir)
- 22- M. Saim YEPREM (Prof. Dr. TDV-İLKSAY Başkanı-Ankara)
- 23- Mehmet MOĞOLTAY (XVIII., XIX.XX. Dönem Milletvekili-Ankara)
- 24- Mehmet YAMAN (Araştırmacı Yazar-İstanbul)
- 25- Metin TARHAN (Alevi Dernekler Federasyonu Genel Başkanı-İstanbul)
- 26- Muharrem ERCAN (Karacaahmet Sultan Dergâhı-İstanbul)
- 27- Murtaza DEMİR (Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı-Ankara)
- 28- Mustafa TİMİSİ (XIVXXV. Dönem Milletvekili)
- 29- Müfit YÜKSEL (Yazar-İstanbul)
- 30- Nafiz ÜNLÜYURT (Hacı Bektaş Derneği Başkanı, Hacıbektaş-Nevşehir)
- 31- Oral ÇALIŞLAR (Radikal-İstanbul)
- 32- Salih YAYLACI (Abant Platformu Genel Sekreteri-İstanbul)
- 33- Sönmez KUTLU (Prof. Dr. Ankara Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi -Ankara)
- 34- Tayyar ALTIKULAÇ (Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı Mütvevelli Heyet Üyesi-Ankara)
- 35- Veli GÜLSOY- (Gazi Mahallesi-İstanbul)
- 36- Yalçın ÖZDEMİR (Su Tv-Ankara)

- 37- Yasin AKTAY (Prof. Dr. Selçuk Üniversitesi-Ankara)
- 38- Yılmaz ENSAROĞLU (SETAV-Ankara)
- 39- Zafer ÜSKÜL (AKP Milletvekili-Mersin)

APPENDIX E

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEM VAKFI	Cumhuriyetçi Eğitim ve Kültür Merkezi Vakfı
DİSK	Devrimci İşçi Sendikaları Konfederasyonu
GDRA	General Directorate of Religious Affairs
HBVAKV	Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı
KAMU-SEN	Türkiye Kamu Çalışanları Sendikaları Konfederasyonu
KESK	Kamu Emekçileri Sendikaları Konfederasyonu
MAZLUM-DER	İnsan Hakları ve Mazlumlar İçin Dayanışma Derneği
PSAİTKEV	Pir Sultan Abdal İki Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı
PSAKD	Pir Sultan Abdal Anadolu Kültür Derneği
SETAV	Siyaset, Ekonomi ve Toplum Araştırmaları Vakfı
TESEV	Türkiye Ekonomik ve Sosyal Etüdler Vakfı

APPENDIX F



TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

Enformatik Enstitüsü

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Kaymaz

Adı : Nazlı Pınar

Bölümü : Siyaset Bilimi ve Kamu Yönetimi

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce): A CRITICAL ASSESSMENT OF THE JUSTICE AND DEVELOPMENT PARTY GOVERNMENT'S ALEVI INITIATIVE FROM THE PERSPECTIVES OF ALEVI ORGANIZATIONS

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

Doktora

1. Tezimin tamamı dünya çapında erişime açılsın ve kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla tezimin bir kısmı veya tamamının fotokopisi alınsın.
2. Tezimin tamamı yalnızca Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi kullanıcılarının erişimine açılsın. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)
3. Tezim bir (1) yıl süreyle erişime kapalı olsun. (Bu seçenekle tezinizin fotokopisi ya da elektronik kopyası Kütüphane aracılığı ile ODTÜ dışına dağıtılmayacaktır.)

Yazarın imzası

Tarih

10/10/2012