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Between Nationalism, Modernism and Secularism: The Ambivalent Place of 'Alevi Identities'

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This study discusses the position of Alevi identity and the Alevi community with regard to the Kemalist national identity-building project. This well recognized project aimed to create an ethnically homogenous Turkish nation and religiously local and 'non-political' understanding and practice of a Turkish Islam that could be centrally controlled and monitored by the bureaucratic establishment. Popular Alevi narratives in early Republican history, including the period of the *Milli Mücadele* (National Struggle) (1919–46), have led to an unsettled debate about Alevi identity and its relationship with Kemalist nation-building. According to some popular narratives, Alevi citizens were an ideal fit for these projects. On the contrary, some other Alevi narratives portrayed a completely different and more controversial picture of the Alevis and their relationship with the Kemalist state establishment. It is vital to understand this relationship to see into the position of Alevi citizens *vis-à-vis* the Turkish state establishment and Sunni citizens in the contemporary context. This study takes this complicated relationship as its topic of discussion.

Alevi identity politics has attracted less attention in academic and policy circles in comparison to the Kurdish issue and the secular and conservative/pro-Islamist divide in Turkey. Alevi identity-based claims such as the status of Alevi religious places, *cemevis*,[1] or compulsory religious education and the burgeoning literature on Alevi culture and history do not necessarily serve the comprehension of the dynamics and the fragmented nature of the Alevi issue as an identity-based problem. Most importantly, the position and relations of the Alevi community with the Kemalist state establishment during the single-party era is virtually a mystery.

It would be misleading to characterize the pre-1990[2] period of Alevi identity politics as a history of complete peace and quiet marked by a lack of activism. Up until the late 1980s, Alevi identity politics were shaped in response to the major social and political processes of top-down nation building, laicization efforts of the Turkish state establishment, the processes of modernization, and urbanization and immigration starting from the late 1950s. The relatively stable political environment of the

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single-party era (1923–46) and the volatile social, economic and political environment of the late 1950s affected the organizational approaches and political language of Alevi activists.

Contrary to the commonly held belief, Alevis have not really enjoyed any specific social, economic and political privileges during the Republican era. Alevis were also the subjects of homogenization and assimilation policies during the Republican nation-building process. This situation concerning Alevis in the social, economic and political spheres continued during the Republican era as well. It would be perfectly accurate to claim that Alevi identity did not match the Republican notion of an 'ideal citizen', who can be depicted as ethnically Turkish (preferably from the Balkan peninsula); religiously Muslim, in terms of understanding and practising the Hanefi sect of Sunni Islam;[3] and secular and westernized[4] in terms of religious practice and worldview. The wide majority of Alevis were ethnically Turkish and their worldview and religious practices were close to the secular and non-political local Islam, yet they also 'strayed' from the 'imagined ideal Turk'. Alevis passively supported the Republican laicization reforms despite the closing of Bektaşi lodges (13 December 1925) along with other laicization reforms and the *Dersim* Events of 1937–38.[5]

The 'Alevi Issue' is one of Turkey's most contradictory and commonly misunderstood identity-based problems. Confusion about the features of Alevi identity politics is mainly due to two reasons. First, this confusion is related to the ambiguous nature and character of the Alevi identity. Whether the Alevi identity is an ethnic, sectarian, religious or political identity is a matter of debate within the Alevi community. Different Alevi groups prefer to define themselves in different terms ranging from 'a sectarian group', 'an ethnic group', 'true humanists' and 'a faith-based social movement' to 'enlightened Muslims' or 'true Muslims'.[6] The second confusion is related to the Alevis' complicated and unsteady relationship with the Kemalist nation-building project and the majority Sunni citizens in Turkey. Many people, including some members of the Alevi elite, consider the Alevi community's relationship with the Kemalist state establishment as stable, consistent and positive.[7] This relationship with Mustafa Kemal and the Kemalist establishment during the single-party era (1919–46) was even depicted as the golden age of convergence. There are popular discourses that characterize the Alevis as the 'watch-guards' or 'defenders' of the 'Kemalist Regime'.

There was a partial compatibility between the Kemalist objective of laicization and nation building and the Alevi practice and understanding of a 'local' and 'non-political' version of 'Turkish Islam'. The Kemalist project of laicism was not a non-religious or irreligious[8] project of broader secularism. The objective of Kemalist laicism was to place an institutionalized state control over religion.[9] The Kemalist project tried to reinstitute the 'high Islam'[10] under the tutelage of the state. In comparison to the 'folk Islam',[11] the notion of 'high Islam' was more compatible with the modernist premises of Kemalism. The institutions of control were shaped according to Orthodox Sunni tradition rather than the heterodox and non-scriptural Alevi tradition. Besides these incompatibilities, Alevis were also faced with the challenges of nation building and homogenization policies that involved homogenization in ethnic, religious and sectarian domains. Ethnically and linguistically, the majority of Alevis are Turkish speaking and of Turk/Turcoman origin[12] and therefore they have

not faced the challenges of ethnic homogenization as much as the *Kurmanji*- and *Zazaki*- (Kirmanjki/Dimilki-)[13] speaking Kurdish Alevis of Eastern Anatolia. Kurmanji- and Zazaki-speaking, ethnically Kurdish/Zaza Alevis of *Tunceli* (Dersim) and Eastern Anatolia had a completely different experience during the project of centralization and ethnic homogenization. The *Koçgiri* (1920–21) and Dersim rebellions (1937–38) were the consequences of serious ethnic/sectarian tensions that ended in violent confrontations. The Kurdish/Zaza Alevis of Eastern Anatolia also resisted the centralization efforts of the Republican establishment.

The idea of 'Alevism as local Islam' dates back to the late Ottoman era. The Young Turks era and CUP (Community of Union and Progress – 1908–18) administration led to a considerable easing of Alevi–state relations because of the secular nationalist orientations of their ideology. Some high-ranking members of the CUP, such as Enver and Talat Pasha, were said to be *Bektaşi*,[14] Shaykh al-Islam Musa Kazım, Kazım Karabekir, Kazım Özalp and Mehmet Ali Ayni were also connected to the Bektaşi order.[15]

The CUP had the aim of accelerating the process of the secularization of the state, thus limiting the influence of the orthodox Islamic establishment. It tried to gain the support of the groups that were marginalized by Abdulhamit II's (1876–1909) pan-Islamist policies.[16] The CUP idealized the Alevis as 'authentic Turks'. Preserving national Turkish culture and religion against foreign (Arabic) influences was one of the objectives of the CUP.[17] According to Kieser, 'for the first time since the *Kızılbaş* revolts in the sixteenth century the watershed of 1908 led the Alevis to an open and collective reaffirmation of their identity'.[18] Kieser defines this period as the 'Alevi renaissance';[19] Alevis had suddenly turned into actors in the politics of the late Ottoman period.

The loss of the Balkans and other Muslim provinces of the Ottoman Empire after the First World War and the emergence of nationalist movements such as Albanian and Arab nationalisms necessitated the emphasis on national symbols and ties. References to Central Asian culture and religions were important for the construction of the Turkish national identity and those references were more visible in the cultural practices of the Alevi community. Baha Sait, who started his research on the *Kızılbaş* and Alevis during the CUP period, had a positive perspective on Alevis.[20] Baha Sait's was from a nationalist point of view and he described Alevi–Bektaşi culture as the authentic Turkish culture, which remained unspoiled by cosmopolitan ideals and Arab culture.[21]

> The Turks that are devoted to their customs and their nation could not get used to a language that was complicated by mixed origins. The transnational ideals of the Arabs did not match with the national ideals of the Turks. Those ideals will never come together. For this reason, the purest of Turks, the Turcomans, Nomads and most intelligent and the brightest Turks, while looking for a place where they would feel freedom, decided to get into Alevi *tekkes*. They knew that there was national freedom in those places.[22]

Baha Sait's and the nationalist point of view became more relevant after the establishment of the Turkish Republic[23] and the abolition of the caliphate. However, the

search for authenticity in Central Asian Turkic culture did not work and was replaced by a new search based on the Anatolian cultures and civilizations. During the process of creating a Turkish nation in late Ottoman and early Republican Turkey, the Alevi Bektaşi understanding of Islam was highlighted: 'The customs and ways of life of this community are the same as the customs of the Oğuz (Turcomans), and the Shaman Turcoman canvas.'[24]

The ethnic origins of Alevi identity (Turkish) and the relationship of this identity to pre-Islamic Turkish culture were appreciated by the official identity because those sources contributed to the official Turkish historical narrative. However, the religious dimension of Alevi identity was not recognized by the official ideology. This paradoxical situation puts both the Turkish state and Alevi identity in an ambiguous relationship. As a result, one of the consistent features of the Alevi communities during the Ottoman and *Seljukid* empires was to resist the political centre throughout the centuries. The Turkish state had not trusted the Alevis as the constructive element of Turkish national identity, nor had the Alevis abandoned their ethnic and communal allegiances for the sake of the secular civic national identity.

During the early years of the Turkish Republic, some Kurdish and Zaza Alevi tribes had joined the Koçgiri (6 March–17 June 1921) and Dersim (1937–38) rebellions.[25] Although these uprisings were mainly linked with Kurdish ethno-nationalism, tribal ties and the Alevi connection were effective in the mobilization of the people.[26] There was a definite sense of discontentment in the entire Dersim region toward the nationalistic policies of the CUP, which was wary of a possible Kızılbaş–Armenian alliance and rebellion.[27] Mutual mistrust of the state and Kurdish-Zaza Alevis continued even after the establishment of the Turkish Republic.

The Alevi dimension of the argument by itself cannot fully explain the nature of the discontentment and the mobilization against the Republic.[28] It also cannot explain the allegiance and support for Republican values. Alevis had sympathized with some values, principles and laws, whereas they had been highly critical of others, as had the other identity groups in Turkey. Sometimes the values, principles and laws they had shared with the state contradicted those of other groups. For instance, the principle of secularism was not common ground between Kurdish Alevis and Islamist Kurds. Furthermore, the principle of nationalism was not common ground between Kurdish and Turkish Alevis. These overlapping, crosscutting and sometimes contradicting ideological and value-oriented preferences and priorities had also turned into constant tensions among the communities.

It is distinctive in the case of Kurmanji- and Zazaki-speaking Alevis in the Dersim region and the Islamist Kurds that they were much more distant and they felt much more marginalized and disenfranchised than any other groups among the Muslim populations of the Republic of Turkey. These groups had either been forced to integrate or had been subdued by force. Some of the tribes were also forced to migrate to other parts of Turkey, especially to western regions. Neither of these 'solutions' was helpful for creating a sense of belonging or any further commonality.

Kurmanji/Zaaki-speaking Alevis of Eastern Anatolia were torn between their religious and ethnic loyalties.[29] The question was whether to support the secular Turkish Republic or to initiate a struggle that would claim broader political autonomy. In the latter case they would not have been supported by the Sunni Kurdish groups which

were also requesting increased autonomy yet did not share the religious beliefs of Kurmanji- and Zazaki-speaking Alevis. They might not be supported by the Turkish Alevis as well because of the Bektaşi leaders' and Turcoman Alevis' support for the 'Milli Mücadele' and, later on, for Atatürk's project of the modern Turkish Republic. The second option was to support the Kurdish ethno-national/ethno-separatist movement. In that case there was a possibility that they might have been a minority within a broader Sunni-Kurdish entity due to their beliefs. A Kurdish nationalist entity might be more conservative in terms of its religious beliefs and values than a secular Republic. Sectarian ties together with the tribal ties were especially effective in the mobilization of the people of Dersim. The Sheyh Said rebellion (1925) had a Kurdish Islamic character and was not supported by Alevi groups. This manifested the religious and sectarian nature of these mass mobilizations.

During early 1920s the Alevi tribes of Zaza and those of Kurdish ethnicity were undecided whether to support Turkish or Kurdish ethno-nationalism.[30] Some of the groups decided to support Kurdish ethno-nationalism, whereas some other Alevi tribes decided to support the Turkish state that promised to create a modern secular nation. This was particularly due to the hostile feelings held by Alevi Kurds against Sunni Kurds whose views were considered to be fundamentalist, and who denied their Alevi identity.[31] During the *Sivas* Congress of 4–11September 1919 the leaders of the Kurdish Alevi Koçgiri tribe called for an autonomous government under the Ottoman Federation. The Alevi Kurdish tribes of Koçgiri had not recognized the authority of the leadership of Atatürk.[32] The Koçgiri revolts had not found enough support from the other Kurdish tribes because they were Alevis and the Alevi tribes had not supported them because they were rebelling in favour of the Kurdish cause. The Koçgiri revolt was suppressed without difficulty and the leader of the rebellion, Alişer Bey, was executed. It was a Kurdish Alevi revolt in which some Turkish Alevi villages and a few Armenians took part. Neither Kurdish nor Turkish Sunnis were involved in the Koçgiri revolts.[33] In his report, which is addressed to Minister of Foreign Affairs Lord Curzon, British High Commissioner Sir Horace Rumbold described the uprising as an 'anti-Kemalist uprising' which did not extend beyond the Alevi Kurds of the Dersim region.[34] Kieser argues that 'the Koçgiri movement displayed anything but cohesive Alevi support for the national war of independence', as emphasized by some Alevi authors particularly since the 1960s.[35]

The ethno-sectarian revolts of the early Republican era were serious threats to the young Turkish Republic, in particular to the Kurdish/Zaza Alevis' resistance to the Republican regime's central control attempts that had led to the Dersim Revolt. In the popular narratives of the ethnic Turkish Alevis, the Dersim rebellion is considered to be the struggle of the feudal lords of Dersim against the Turkish state; therefore the rebellion is not even partially supported.[36] The traumatic memory of the bloody repression of the Dersim Revolt still generates bitter feelings among Kurdish-Zaza Alevis.

The leader of the Dersim Revolt, Seyit Rıza, was a religious Kurdish leader as well as the chief of the *Abbasuşağı* tribe. Five other tribes of the region had joined the rebellion.[37] Seyit Rıza and his 50 men were caught, and Rıza was executed with 11 of his men.[38] Many of the accounts related to the Dersim events have been based on Nuri Dersimi's book. He was also involved in the early stages of the rebellion and escaped to Syria.[39] In these accounts the rebellion was presented as a heroic Kurdish

nationalist struggle. According to official records, 10 per cent of the entire popula-tion of Tunceli died.[40] Many of the rebellious tribes were later exiled to other parts of Turkey. The Dersim rebellion shows more of the signs of traditional tribal resis-tance to government interference than a modern struggle for a separate state.[41]

Seyit Rıza's last words before his execution have often been presented as proof of the sectarian nature of the rebellions. 'We are descendants of Karbala [symbolic reference to Shia and Alevi martyrdom]. We have nothing to be ashamed of. This is shameful. This is cruelty. This is murder' ('*Evladı Kerbalayıh. Bihatayıh. Ayıptır. Zulümdür. Cinayettir*').[42]

It is not clear whether these words were intended to make a sectarian statement based on Alevi identity, or to present the plight of Rıza and his people regarding the continuation of the Karbala Massacre of 680 AD. In any case, he draws parallels between the attacks of the Turkish military and *Yezit*'s armies,[43] which were suffered equally by both Alevi and Sunni communities in Turkey.

In the contemporary Alevi revival there are many references to the Dersim rebel-lions of 1937–38. While political activists and ex-socialist and Marxist Alevis under-line those rebellions as an example of the Turkish state's oppressive attitude and assimilationist policies towards Alevis, more pro-regime Alevis consider these rebel-lions to be tribal and ethnic rebellions that had nothing to do with the progressive and democratic ideals of the Alevi worldview.

Different Alevi groups, especially Kurmanji- and Zazaki-speaking Alevis of East Anatolian and the Turcoman origin (*Çepni*, *Tahtacı*, *Yörük*, *Sıraç*, etc.) have diverse views about Dersim. For some Alevis, Seyit Rıza is glorified as a heroic figure like Shah Ismail and Pîr Sultan Abdal, who were considered to be defenders of social jus-tice and the rights of the Alevi people. Some groups, on the other hand, consider him to be merely a tribal leader, yet they appreciate his courage and nobility. Though highly controversial, Seyit Rıza is an important figure in Alevi iconography.

It should be pointed out that the Koçgiri and Dersim rebellions took place during Atatürk's era.[44] Supporting them also meant supporting the rebellion against Atatürk and the Republican reforms. Especially in the post-1960 context, for many Alevis it is not acceptable to resist Atatürk's reforms, the most important being laicism. Historically, it may be correct to argue that some Alevis might sympathize with the Dersim and Koçgiri revolts, yet many Alevis do not want to be associated with it for the sake of contemporary Alevi identity politics. Atatürk is a more important constructive figure and hero for the contemporary Alevi identity than any other rebellious figures in the normative reading of Alevi history. Ethno-sectarian tensions and violent confrontations with the Kurdish/Zaza Alevis of the Dersim Region had led to wide-scale mandatory population transfers from that region to other parts of Turkey, further complicating the demographic structure of Alevi communities.

Rather than creating a completely 'non-religious' society and secularist state, the Republican model of laicism tried to redraw the boundaries of Islam and create a sterilized Turkish Islam with its own institutions and vision.[45] This vision had two main orientations. First and foremost, the Republican establishment tried to create a 'local' Turkish Islam that was completely 'apolitical' at the popular level. In addi-tion, this vision of Islam was meant to exclude the 'low Islam' or 'Sufi Islam'[46] and

to accommodate the *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı* (Administration of Religious Affairs –Diyanet) as the institution of Turkish 'high Islam'. Consistent with modernization and centralization policies, the Republican establishment tried to keep a firm grip on peripheral religious communities and networks. The Diyanet was designed to be the only central religious authority restricting communal-level religious networks. While the first of these orientations matched the Alevi worldview, the second orientation excluded Alevis as members of a heterodox community. This specific form of laicization made neither the Sunni *cemaats* and *tariqats* nor the Alevi communities happy. Conservative Sunni communities had managed to adjust themselves to the modern environment; they created new civic institutions and modern networks in urban contexts. Sunni citizens also benefited from the services of the Diyanet. On the other hand, having lost their fundamental institutions of Bektaşi lodges because of the Republican law that banned *tekke*s and *zaviye*s, Alevis felt more pressure to adapt themselves to the modern context. The heterodox and historically anti-establishment position of Alevi tradition was a major predicament for the maintenance of Alevi culture and identity in the modern context.

Alevis were at the margins of the 'ideal definition of Turkish citizen'. Like many other identity groups, they were also subject to homogenization and assimilation policies. On the other hand, the Alevi understanding and practice of Islam was more compatible with the Republican ideal of a 'secularized' and 'local' form of 'Turkish Folk Islam'. The Alevi way of life, with its emphasis on correct conduct, responsibility to the community, and the performance of collective music, poetry, dance and songs was compatible with the Kemalist Republican vision of secular/national morality.[47] To a certain extent, this compatibility created a form of mutual sympathy between Alevi citizens and the Kemalist bureaucratic establishment. The problem with the pragmatic references to Alevism was that, even though in terms of lifestyle, worldview and understanding of Islam, Alevism fits into the official project of secularization better than some of the politicized versions of Sunnism, 'the Turkish state establishment wants Alevis to become Sunnis; per contra, the establishment expects Sunnis to understand and practice Islam like Alevis'.[48] The famous Turkish journalist and novelist Ahmet Altan's depiction of the Turkish state's perception of Alevis and conservative Sunnis is quite informative about the paradoxes of Turkish secularism. The Turkish state establishment has never trusted Alevi communities in Anatolia because of the Anatolian folk rebellions, Ottoman–Safavid conflicts and leftist orientations of Alevis starting from 1960s.

Since the early days of the Turkish Republic, the state adopted the project of creating a homogeneous and centrally controlled understanding of Islam.[49] According to İsmail Kara, as an overall policy the Diyanet's attempts to restrict popular folk rituals and popular religious practices have been influenced from the nineteenth century by positivism, Protestantism and Salafism.[50] Concepts like '*irtica*' (retrogression) were created to deter Sunni religious groups from getting involved in politics.

The abolition of the caliphate, the Ministry of Islamic Law and Pious Foundations (*Şer'iye ve Evkaf Vekâleti*) and *madrasas*, and the creation of a unified education system (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat*) in the early years of the Turkish Republic did not completely clear Islam out of the public sphere. Instead, the regime 'created a new structure of control and oversight between the state and Islam in which the Republic's founders

sought to use the powers of the state to interpret, oversee, and administer (including financially) religious doctrine and practice'.[51] Most Alevis criticized the state-sponsored and -monitored administration of religious services; they consider this contradictory to the principle of '*laicism*' (laicite).

The Alevi understanding of Islam has been presented as more humane, democratic, egalitarian, humanist, secular and non-fundamentalist, as opposed to 'fundamentalist influenced Sunnism' or 'Islamism'. Both the worldviews and the social and political orientations of Alevis and the 'guardians of the Kemalist official ideology' converged in the early Republican era. However the political purposes of the 'Turkish Islam' or 'local Islam/ folk Islam' model do not match with the 'political Alevism', which is in the social and political domains; some of the narratives that had been popularized by the discourse of 'local Islam' or 'Turkish Islam' helped the legitimization and popularization of arguments Alevis use in their struggle for recognition.

In contrast to the Ottoman past, loyalties of Alevi citizens to the Republican regime increased with the reforms of secularization. The loyalties of diverse groups and the social control and oversight of them hung in a delicate balance for the Turkish state establishment. This delicate dynamic had a strong influence on the progression of Alevi identity politics. Thus, Alevi identity politics were caught between contradictory orientations. Because of their secular sensitivities, Alevis were considered the 'watch guards' of the regime against the Islamic-oriented social and political groups and communities. They were suspected by the bureaucratic establishment of being Soviet or Communist protégés during the 1960s and 1970s because of their leftist political orientations.[52]

The project of Turkish secularism failed to create a 'Turkish Islam' that would satisfy both Alevi and Sunni citizens. In reality, one of the essential pillars of Alevi identity politics was to challenge the religious establishment that is represented by the Diyanet, *Imam Hatip Schools* and compulsory religious courses. Despite its having many common features, the Alevi understanding of Islam was not the panacea for the Republican ambition of a centrally organized, officially controlled and monitored, apolitical, local Islam.

Mustafa Kemal's idea of Turkish nationalism was a mixture of ethnic and territorial nationalisms.[53] The territory was to be essentially Anatolia. However, the 'natural boundaries of the Turkish nation were to be equated roughly to the militarily defensible Anatolian heartland'.[54] The concept of 'Turkishness' according to Kemalist nationalism was based on the complex juxtaposition of territory, religion and ethnicity.[55] The territorial limits of the Turkish nation included Anatolia and Thrace.[56] Ethnic Turks of Central Asia and Turkish-speaking Shiite Muslims of Azerbaijan and Iran were not encouraged to immigrate to Anatolia.[57] Loyalty to the Anatolian homeland and the 'Turkish nation' that inhabits this homeland is one of the fundamental tenets of the Turkish national identity.[58] The narrative of a common homeland was a valuable asset for the Turkish bureaucracy in maintaining the loyalties of Alevi citizens, since many Alevis had strong emotional and cultural attachments to the Anatolian homeland. In addition to the notion of common homeland, the founding narrative of the Republic of Turkey, 'Milli Mücadele' (national struggle), portrayed the population features of the new Turkish Republic. The groups that

participated in the 'Milli Mücadele' were multi-ethnic (Turks, Kurds, Zaza, Laz, Azari, Tatar and Albanian) but mono-religious.[59] According to Aktürk, the 'milli' (national) of the 'Milli Mücadele' (national struggle) was based on religion, rather than being a nationality based on common ethnicity.[60] In the early periods of the Turkish Republic, the common bond of the Turkish nation was religion, which reformists were trying to transform dramatically to constitute a civic nation based on secular, western values.

> The unity we are determined to form does not include only the Turks or Circassian; it is a unity that comprises all the Islamic elements. I would request to emphasize this way of understanding and to prevent all other misunderstandings.[61]

The objective of the modern Republican nation-building project was broader than creating a territorial homeland; the project intended to create a new state within the 'militarily defensible territories', with its modern secular[62] institutions as well as a modern society.[63] Ethnic, sectarian and religiously oriented differences and affiliations would eventually become irrelevant if this enlightenment-guided top-down social and political master plan was successful. In this paradigm, traditional and ethnic loyalties and values of communal groups like Circassians, Kurds, Alevis, Tatars, tribes and conservative religious groups (tariqats) were impediments to the Kemalist modern enlightenment notion of the future. Alevis, who suffered social, economic and sectarian persecution and oppression during the last three centuries of the Ottoman era because of their syncretistic and heterodox belief system, were excited about this new modern, secular project. The Turkish Alevi community appeared to have been supportive of Kemalism mainly because of the secular nature of the new regime.[64] However, the traditional religious loyalties of Alevis were also a threat to the ideal vision of a modern Turkish national identity.

The Turkish nationalist movement starting from the late Ottoman period identified itself with Turkish-speaking Muslims, predominantly the 'secularist oriented Muslims of the Balkan peninsula'.[65] Nominally, they were the Sunni-Muslims of the Hanafi sect. Forcibly or voluntarily, many Turks and Muslims migrated to Turkey from the Balkans, from the Balkan Wars (1912) to the late 1920s.[66] Religion and language played important roles in the incorporation of the immigrants into the 'Turkish nation'.[67] Religion did not play a similar consolidative role in incorporating Alevis into the national identity of the Republic of Turkey. It was the Republican ideal and the promise of a secularized society, rather than the imagined religious common ground, which played a key role in incorporating Alevis into the Republican social and political order.

The ideal practical definition of Turkish citizenship was based on the implicit criteria of being 'Turkish speaking, preferably from the Balkans'. Kurds, Islamists and conservative Sunnis and Alevis, especially Kurdish and Zaza Alevis (*dimili*), remained at the margins of this ideal definition. On the other hand, the nominal definition of Islam was based on the Hanafi-Sunni[68] understanding of Islam, which was also represented in the Diyanet.

As the majority of the Kurdish population in Turkey follows the *Shafi* version of Sunni Islam, even the Shafis have felt marginalized by some of the practices of the

Diyanet until very recently. Regarding the Alevis, on the other hand, although the vast majority of the Alevi population does not have any problem with the Islamic roots of their identity, the Diyanet's attitude and policies towards them has not been embracing. Alevis do not want to be homogenized under the Sunni/Hanafi rubric of Islam. Therefore, the Alevis regard the '99 per cent Muslim' narrative as part of an assimilation project; they want their differences to be recognized.

With the intent to ethnically and religiously homogenize Turkish society, the meaning of 'Muslim' was stripped of its political and cultural connotations.[69] Traditional religious authorities and communal religious leaders were de-legitimized and a 'progressive' and individualist form of Islam was adopted. Thus, Islam turned into a nominal category of belonging within the context of the Kemalist identity-building project. In an attempt to distance itself from the Ottoman legacy, Kemalist discourse focused on 'Turkishness' rather than Islam as the core of Republican identity. However, Islam is considered to be an essential element of Turkish identity, which is also limited to the Anatolian region.

The broader common ground for the Republican identity was religion, rather than shared ethnicity. The contents of this new Turkish ethnicity had been reconfigured through new narratives on Turkish language and Turkish history.[70] An interpretation of Islam had not been granted to any groups by the Turkish state and the official hegemonic definition attempted to transform the other Sunni groups' understanding of Islam. Though Alevis had been supportive of the laicization policies of the Turkish Republic they also wanted to be recognized as a different yet equally legitimate Islamic group in Turkey. The hegemonic and culturally exclusionary definition of official Islam did not give such a privilege to any groups.[71]

A paradoxical situation for the creation of modern secular identity was that the state establishment wanted to exclude religion and other communal identities from politics, while it also tried to promote a particular religious identity as a means of promoting cultural and social solidarity. Cultural sources and ritual practices of Sunni Islam are important components of the Turkish national culture, that is why those practices and cultural sources had also been incorporated into secular Turkish culture. Many Alevis had felt that their cultural practices and way of interpreting Islam had been denied by the Diyanet,[72] which they considered the fundamental institution of Sunni understanding of Islam in Turkey. The content of the religion was restructured according to the needs of the Kemalist regime.

> Rather than excluding religion from society, we should let it live under the command of reforms. We cannot reach our objectives by demolishing or abandoning the mosques or building people's houses (*halkevleri*) in their place.[73]

By this means, the Turkish state facilitated, monitored and constrained certain religious activities. Despite the secularist political environment, the peripheral position of the Alevi understanding of Islam continued during the Republican era as well.[74] According to Parla and Davison, 'Kemalists not only subordinated religion to the state, they also used and manipulated religion in the correct Kemalist Sunni Orthodox version of Islam for their purposes'.[75] Thus the system of religious education and religious institutions is shaped along this manipulative perspective.

The position and experiences of Alevis with regard to the secularization reforms were diametrically opposite to those of conservative Sunnis and Kurdish citizens. As the Kemalist secularization reforms succeeded, Alevi citizens' attachment to the regime strengthened, whereas conservative Sunni citizens felt threatened by the reforms of top-down laicization. Rather than creating a homogeneous and well-integrated definition of 'us', or a 'Turkish nation', this policy ended up generating a divided society where the old and new identities saw each other in antagonistic and dialectic ways. The notions of a shared homeland, a common ethos and founding narratives were unable to create an overarching bond between 'marginalized' citizens, such as Kurds, Alevis, Islamists and conservative Islamic groups which made very little or no effort to empathize with each other's marginalization and sufferings. The Republican nation-building project had an implicit model of an ideal Turkish citizen, and Alevi identity was not a match to this model. Alevis neither actively resisted nor supported the homogenization policies of the Republican identity-building project, yet their traditional loyalties were considered as an impediment to the official identity-building process.

Atatürk's image is one of the fundamental pillars of the modern Alevi identity. At the present time, it is difficult to imagine an Alevi identity without the image of Atatürk because many Alevi citizens are culturally and emotionally attached to Atatürk's personality and his vision of a modern, secular Turkey. Atatürk photos and portraits can be seen in Alevi public spaces as well as in Alevi citizens' homes, together with photos of Ali ibn Abu-Talib and Hacı Bektaş Veli, the founder of the Bektaşi order. For many Alevis, Atatürk represents a leader who pledged to end the peripheral position of Alevis and to move Alevi culture and identity to the centre of the Turkish national identity. 'He was a secular, modernist leader with revolutionary social and economic views and he also challenged the Sunni religious orthodoxy.'[76] In other words, for many Alevis Atatürk represented the ideals and vision of the Alevi community.

During the Turkish War of Independence, Mustafa Kemal visited the *Hacı Bektaş Dergah* (convent). On 23 December 1919, Kemal met with two leaders of the order (*postnişin*) Cemalettin Efendi and (*post*) Salih Niyazi Baba.[77] The Bektaşi leaders promised to support Mustafa Kemal and the War of Independence,[78] and made significant contributions during the war. After the War of Independence, Alevi and Bektaşi leaders joined the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (TBMM/TGNP). When the TGNP was opened on 23 April 1920, Cemalettin Çelebi served as the Kırşehir representative and deputy president. This gave the second most important position to a Bektaşi leader. In the first TGNP after the War of Independence, there were 15 Alevi-Bektaşi representatives from different cities and regions, including the Dersim (Tunceli) deputies Diyab Ağa and Hasan Hayri Bey.[79] According to Yeşilyurt, there were 27 Alevi representatives in the first TGNP among 436 total representatives and six of the Alevi representatives were Alevi-Kurds from Dersim.[80]

Many Bektaşis also took elite bureaucratic posts in the early years of the Turkish Republic. This is another important reason why Alevi-Bektaşis embraced the new regime. However, it is also true that Alevi-Bektaşis could not manage to transform their peripheral position to become a more central element of the Turkish governing

elite and society. Integration with the nation state meant abandoning the blood- and tribe-oriented communal ties and religious-based organizations. On 20 November 1925, Law No. 677 was passed in the TGNP closing all *tekke*s (lodges) and *zaviye*s. It was forbidden to use titles such as *seyit*, *şeyh*, *baba*, *mürşit*, *dede*, *çelebi* and *halife*. The fundamental institution of the Bektaşi order was banned, a decision which resulted in significant frustration among the Bektaşis who had expected to be a central element in the social and religious life of the new Republic.[81]

According to the popular belief of Alevis, Atatürk's plans to build a secular nation were supported by Bektaşis.[82] Bektaşis hoped that they would be exempt from the prohibition of dervish orders. Some Bektaşis also expected that, far from abolishing the order, *Bektaşiism* should be the religion of the whole Turkish people.[83] This form of Turkish Islam was considered to be a 'better' alternative to the objectives of the Kemalist regime, but it was not a convincing alternative that might have been embraced by the majority Sunni population. For Alevis who are sympathetic to Atatürk and the Kemalist reforms, Atatürk's cooperation with the leading figures of the Bektaşi order during the Turkish War of Independence and the early years of the Republic was a 'glorious event'.[84] For some Alevis, this cooperation is considered to be similar to the Osman Gazi and Edebali synergy during the establishment of the Ottoman state. The former represented the 'sword', the latter the 'soul and the identity' of the Ottoman state. Many Alevis today claim possession to Atatürk's reforms and the main principles of the Turkish Republic, stating that these principles were already represented by the Alevi-Bektaşi principles and worldview.

According to popular Alevi narratives, Atatürk was influenced by Alevi-Bektaşi teachings because he was in touch with Bektaşi leaders when he was determining the founding principles of the Turkish Republic.[85]

> Alevis believe that Atatürk was also Bektashi. However the registers that prove Atatürk was a Bektashi are too limited. Atatürk was born in Selanik, which was among the places under the effect of Bektashi Tekkes. It is said that his father, Ali Rıza Bey, was Bektashi. . . . Whether Atatürk was a Bektashi or not, it is clear that he gained the support of Alevis with his thought on matters of freedom of religion and faith and his successive achievements.[86]

However, Mustafa Kemal's alliance with the Bektaşi fathers and the Alevi-Bektaşi community seems more likely to be a pragmatic than an ideological alliance. Atatürk did not refrain from closing the Bektaşi lodges within the general agenda of the secularization and centralization of the Republic of Turkey. As mentioned, on 20 November 1925, Law No. 677 was passed by the Turkish Grand National Assembly closing all *tekke*s (lodges) and *zaviye*s.[87] The Alevi-Bektaşis did not perceive this policy as a specific attack on their community and institutions. In fact, they argue that this policy was helpful in closing a dysfunctional institution that was already degenerated and had been administered by the *Nakshbendi* order after the closing of the Janissary Corps and banning of the Bektaşi order in 1826.[88]

The single-party period (1923–46) has often been referred to as the golden age of the Turkish Republic in the narratives of Alevis that feel loyalty to Kemalism.[89] Therefore, the Alevi groups that feel close to revolutionary Marxism, Kurdish

ethno-nationalism[90] and liberal democracy have a different and less sympathetic view of that same period than the majority of the Alevis. The Alevi appreciation of the single-party regime is not a well-established fact. This is rather a retrospective interpretation of early Republican history. Alevis only had instrumental values in a struggle to pacify or to contain Islamist and ultra-conservative groups in Turkey. The Kemalist repression of conservative Sunnis did not necessarily have any direct beneficial influence on the Alevis. Alevi author and politician Reha Çamuroğlu defines the period as a romantic appreciation of Alevis without much real substance.[91] Hamit Bozarslan also mentions that Kemalist anti-Sunnism was in no way synonymous with Alevi emancipation.[92] Alevis considered Kemalist ideology socially and politically on their side, yet the Kemalist transformation was unable to end the peripheral position of Alevis.

From the 1960s on, the alliance between Kemalism and Alevis was established against political Sunnism (or centre-right parties) and this alliance has been re-established and strengthened against a rising political Islam since the 1990s. The Kemalist–Alevi relationship and proximity was rather re-interpreted and even invented by the Turkish intelligentsia in the 1960s and 1970s.[93] As the Sunni communities (cemaats and tariqats) supported right-wing politics, Alevis and left-wing Kemalists started to get closer. Alevis interpreted Atatürk as a revolutionary leader who had resisted western imperialism and had won the struggle, whereas left-wing Kemalists discovered Alevi-Kızılbaş culture to be a local resource for resistance and revolution.[94]

The gradual concessions for Islamic activities in the public sphere, especially the emergence of Islamist-oriented political parties; the growing influence of the Diyanet in religious affairs; the spread of Imam Hatip Schools, which offer intensive religious training; and the strengthening of Islamic communities and civil society organizations have all led to deep disappointments for Alevis. These developments contradicted the 'tacit' social and political contract between Alevis and the Kemalist regime. Their contract was based on the ideal of a modern, secular and westernized Turkish nation. Many Alevi felt increasingly threatened as the Turkish state establishment loosened its tight control on the communal and political representations of Islam.

The mythic figure of Atatürk and narratives related to Atatürk's personality and social and political project are still the strongest ties that connect Alevi citizens to the Kemalist Republican establishment. As members of a 'minority sect', in comparison to Sunnis, many Alevis are aware of the fact that Kemalist laicization policies situated them in a relatively better position in comparison to their position during the Ottoman era, when they were completely marginalized and stigmatized as a heterodox community. Even this change maintained Alevi appreciation and support of the Kemalist reforms. Kemalist reforms are seen as barriers against the return to the Ottoman legacy, which is represented in the Alevi public memory as a period of marginalization, oppression and violence. Many Alevis often perceive Islamists and conservative Sunni citizens in Turkey as the descendants of the Ottoman legacy.

Alevis and Sunnis and Alevis and the Turkish bureaucratic establishment have a complicated relationship that cannot be understood through a single storyline. In

fact these relationships have been shaped in relation to the multiplicity of social and political cleavages in Turkey. The Alevi lifestyle and worldview had certain compatibilities with the Kemalist nation-building and laicization project. However, their heterodox religious rituals and practices, their marginalized social and economic status, and their distanced position *vis-à-vis* the political centre had fostered lasting scepticism against and by the Alevis. The Kemalist identity-building project seemed to embrace the local (Turkish) components of Alevi culture and the Alevi version of Islam. Nonetheless this project institutionalized its own version of 'high Islam' through the institution of Diyanet.

Kurmanji- and Zazaki-speaking Alevis have a much more cynical and, to certain extent, antagonistic vision of Republican Turkey in comparison to Turkish Alevis.[95] Neither nationalist nor the laicist principles and practices of Kemalism helped to create affinity between them and the new regime. These unresolved identity issues and social and political cleavages became more visible after the transition to multi-party politics. Kurmanji- and Zazaki-speaking Alevis of Eastern Anatolia were doubly stigmatized because of both their ethnic and sectarian orientations. Memories of the bloody suppression of the Koçgiri and Dersim rebellions had created an unrecoverable gap between these groups and the Republican establishment. This ethnic difference also created a gap between these two groups, which is still a source of separation and an unsettled debate within the post-1990 Alevi movement. While the public discourses of the former group are in general supportive of Atatürk and his reforms, those of the latter group are more critical and to a certain extent hostile.

Republican policies of ethnic homogenization and religious sterilization used religion as a glue to connect ethnically diverse groups in Turkey as part of a fabricated ethno-territorial identity, but the content and the form of the religion was re-shaped according to an individualist and centrally organized notion of 'official Islam'. The groups with communal ties such as the dervish orders and Alevi communities remained in the margins of this ideal definition of 'imagined Turk' as well as 'sterilized Turkish Islam'. While the ethnic background and cultural traditions of Alevi-Bektaşis are appreciated for being authentically Turkish, their communal ties and heterodox understanding of Islam were regarded as contradicting this modernist identity-building project.

The failure of the Kemalist project of creating a non-political Turkish Islam was an important turning point for Alevis' perception of the Republican regime. The Kemalist establishment decided to loosen its control on Islamic activities starting from the mid-1940s, ending a tacit contract between Alevis and the Republican regime after the 1950s. Alevis felt frustrated after the return of religion, mainly of Sunni Islam, to the political and public sphere. Starting from the 1960s, a more pragmatic relationship between Alevis and the Kemalist state establishment emerged against the rising political Islam and this pragmatic relationship was rejuvenated during the late 1990s. The creation of a group of loyal supporters among Alevi-Bektaşi communities can be considered as a success story for the Kemalist establishment; however, as emphasized in this study, this support was at best partial as well as conditional. The Alevi revival of the late 1980s also signified the failure of the project of creating a homogenous ethnicity and homogenous understanding of religion.

Notes

1. *Cemevi* means house of gathering, it is not a place of worship in the strict sense but Alevi citizens perform their communal and religious rituals in *cemevi*s.
2. The period starting from late 1980s has often been delineated as an 'Alevi revival', where Alevi citizens started to mobilize socially and politically as an identity movement to gain cultural and political rights. M. van Bruinessen, 'Kurds, Turks and the Alevi Revival in Turkey', *Middle East Report*, Vol.200 (1996), p.7.
3. Kemal Kirişçi, demonstrated that the 'Turkish immigration and refugee policies have been biased in favor of Turkish descent and culture and then only as long as such persons were of Sunni-Hanefi background'. K. Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.36, No.3 (2000), pp.1–22.
4. L. Neyzi, *Ben Kimim? Türkiye'de Sözlü Tarih, Kimlik Öznellik* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2004), pp.8–145.
5. The bloody suppression of the Dersim rebellion is one of the unsettled emotional issues in Alevi public memory. The rebellion was suppressed with the extensive use of military power. According to official records (13,160 people died and more than 10,000 people were exiled as a consequence of military operations to suppress the rebellion. M. Pervin, 'Dersim 1938 Gerçeği', *Sabah*, 19 Nov. 2009; M. Kalman, *Belge ve Tanıklarıyla Dersim Direnişleri* (İstanbul: Nujen Yayınları, 1995).
6. On the debates about definitions of Alevi identity and its social and policitcal implications, see T. Köse, 'Ideological or Religious? Contending Visions on the Future of Alevi Identity', *Identities: Global Studies on Culture and Power*, Vol.19, No.5 (2012), pp.576–96.
7. Examples of this narrative can be found in many of the popular books on Alevism, mostly written by Alevi authors. For a few examples, see B. Öz, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Alevi-Bektaşiler*, 10th ed. (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2003); C. Şener, *Alevilik Olayı: Toplumsal Bir Başkaldırının Kısa Tarihçesi*, 35th ed. (İstanbul: Etik Yayınları, 2004); C. Şener, *Atatürk ve Aleviler: Kurtuluş Savaşında Aleviler Bektaşiler*, 15th ed. (İstanbul: Etik Yayınları, 2006); R. Zelyut, *Öz Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik*, 11th ed. (İstanbul Karacaahmet Sultan Derneği Yayınları, 2005), pp.403–12.
8. T. Parla and A. Davison, 'Secularism and Laicism in Turkey', in J.R. Jakobsen and A. Pellegrini (eds.), *Secularisms* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008), pp.58–75; A. Davison, 'Turkey, a "Secular" State? The Challenges of Description', *The South Atlantic Quarterly*, Vol.102, No.2/3 (2003), pp.333–50.
9. Parla and Davison, 'Secularism and Laicism in Turkey', p.62.
10. Ernest Gellner defined 'high Islam' as a tradition based on unitarianism, scripturalism, individualism and puritanism. E. Gellner, 'The Turkish Option in Comparative Perspective', in S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997), pp.233–45.
11. According to Gellner, folk tradition is oriented towards saint cults, ecstatics, unpuritanical and have component of ethnic loyalty. Gellner, 'The Turkish Option in Comparative Perspective', 234
12. P.A. Andrews and R. Benninghaus (eds.), *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey* (Wiesbaden: Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag, 1989), pp.117–23; A. Gökalp, 'Alevisme Nomade: des Communautés de Statue a L'identité Communautaire', in Andrews and Benninghaus (eds.), *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*, pp.524–38; M. van Bruinessen, 'Aslını inkar eden haramzadedir! The Debate on the Ethnic Identity of the Kurdish Alevis', in K. Kehl-Bodrogi (ed.), *Syncretic Religious Communities in the Near East* (Leiden: Brill,1998), pp.1–25.
13. Kurmanji and Zazaki are the dialects of the Kurdish language that are popularly spoken in the east and south-east regions of Turkey.
14. H. Küçük, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), p.125.
15. Hülya Küçük argues that there is no concrete evidence of their being Bektaşi except for Talat Paşa's writings. Ibid., p.219.
16. Ibid., p.127.
17. É. Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p.57.
18. Hans L. Kieser, 'Alevis, Armenians and Kurds in Unionist-Kemalist Turkey (1908–1938)', in P.J. White and J. Jorgenden (eds.), *Turkey's Alevi Enigma: A Comprehensive Overview* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), p.178.

19. Ibid.
20. Baha Sait was appointed to investigate Alevis by the CUP central administration as a part of a broader research on ethnic and sectarian groups in the late Ottoman state. Baha Sait's research on the Alevi-Bektaşi groups of Turkey was published in *Türk Yurdu* after the establishment of the Republic of Turkey. Nejat Birdoğan compiled Baha Sait's work in N. Birdoğan, *İttihat-Terakki'nin Alevilik Bektaşilik Araştırması (Baha Sait Bey)* (İstanbul: Berfin Yayınları, 1994).
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., 20.
23. Sait's research was published in the journal 'Türk Yurdu', after the establishment of the Republic in 1926–27.
24. Ibid., 24.
25. H. Aygün, *Dersim 1938 ve Zorunlu İskan Telgraflar, Dilekçeler, Mektuplar, Fotoğraflar* (İstanbul: Dipnot Yayınları, 2009); M.N. Dersimi, *Dersim Tarihi* (İstanbul: Eylem Yayınları, 1979); M. van Bruinessen, 'Genocide in Kurdistan? The Suppression of the Dersim Rebellion in Turkey (1937–38) and the Chemical War Against the Iraqi Kurds (1988)', in G.J. Andreopoulos (ed.), *Genocide: Conceptual and Historical Dimensions* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), pp.141–70.
26. Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*.
27. Kieser, 'Alevis, Armenians and Kurds in Unionist-Kemalist Turkey (1908–1938)', 177; H.L. Kieser, 'Muslim Heterodoxy and Protestant Utopia: The Interactions Between Alevis and Missionaries in Ottoman Anatolia', *Die Welt des Islams*, Vol.41, No.1 (2001), pp.89–111. In order to get the support of the Dersim Alevis for the First World War, the Young Turks requested the help of the Bektaşi Baba of the Hacı Bektaş Dergah, Cemalettin Çelebi. According to Nuri Dersimi, Cemalettin Çelebi had a very limited influence over the Dersim Alevis (N. Dersimi, *Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim* (İstanbul: Doz Yayınları, 2004); M. van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik: Etnik ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000).
28. Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*, pp.50–52.
29. Van Bruinessen also discusses the paradoxes of the Alevi Kurds in the early years of the Turkish Republic in his essay with the provocative title 'Aslını İnkar Eden Haramzadedir'.
30. Van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevîlik*, p.77.
31. Ibid.
32. Küçük, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle*, pp.214–17.
33. Kieser, 'Alevis, Armenians and Kurds in Unionist-Kemalist Turkey (1908–1938)', p.184.
34. Küçük, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle*, p.217.
35. Kieser, 'Alevis, Armenians and Kurds in Unionist-Kemalist Turkey (1908–1938)', p.187.
36. Kemalist Alevi authors tend to adopt this storyline rather than interpreting the event as a sectarian confrontation that is related to Alevi identity. For example, see Şener, Öz and Zelyut's books that are mentioned above.
37. Kalman, *Belge ve Tanıklarıyla Dersim Direnişleri*, pp.164–8; B. Öz, *Dersim Olayı* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2004), p.135.
38. Dersimi, *'Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim'*.
39. Dersimi, *'Kürdistan Tarihinde Dersim'*.
40. In the 18th footnote of his study van Bruinessen gives some official sources he wished to keep anonymous. Many of the graphic accounts of violence related to the event were from Dersimi's book, which can be considered to be an exaggerated and ideologically Kurdish ethno-nationalistic account.
41. Dersimi, 'Kurdistan Tarihinde Dersim', p.4.
42. Fuat Bozkurt quotes from the memoirs of Minister of Foreign Affairs İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, F. Bozkurt, *Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinde Alevilik* (İstanbul: Kapı Yayınları, 2005), pp.73–6.
43. Yezit was the Umayyad caliph who sent forces against Husayin and his followers in Karbala, Iraq, in 680, resulting in their martyrdom.
44. Atatürk passed away on 10 November 1938.
45. In the second section of his book, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslâm*, 3rd ed. (İstanbul: Dergâh Yayınları, 2009), Ismail Kara elaborates on the complicated relationship of Islamic communities (*cemaat*s) and religious orders (*tariqat*s) within the Republican establishment. This relationship was more complicated than an interaction based on total denial or total submission (pp.179–346).

46.   U. Ulutaş, 'Religion and Secularism in Turkey: The Dilemma of the Directorate of Religious Affairs', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.46, No.3 (2010), p.391, Ulutaş also mentioned that since high Islam is characterized by uniformity, simplicity and scripturalism it was easier for the state to monitor it in comparison to folk Islam which was not canonized (p. 391).

47.   H. Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent: Turkish Nationalism and the Turkish Republic* (New York: New York University Press, 1997), p.126.

48.   A. Altan, 'Yalancı Laikler', *Taraf*, May 27, 2008.

49.   Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslâm*.

50.   Ibid., pp.79, 80.

51.   Davison, 'Turkey, a "Secular" State?', p.348.

52.   É. Massicard, 'Alevism in 1960s: Social Change and Mobilization', in H.I. Markussen (ed.), *Alevis and Alevism: Transformed Identities* (Istanbul: Isis Press, 2005), pp.109–35.

53.   For debates on Kemalist nationalism, see S. Bozdoğan and R. Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1997); B. Oran, *Atatürk Milliyetçiliği: Resmi İdeoloji Dışı Bir İnceleme* (Ankara: Bilgi Yayınevi, 1997); Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*.

54.   Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, p.96.

55.   S. Çağaptay. *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey: Who is a Turk?* (London: Routledge, 2006); S. Çağaptay, 'Citizenship Policies in Interwar Turkey', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.9, No.4 (2003), pp.601–19.

56.   Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices'; S. Çağaptay, 'Passage to Turkishness: Immigration and Religion in Modern Turkey', in H. Gülalp (ed.), *Citizenship and Ethnic Conflict: Challenging the Nation-State* (London: Routledge, 2006), pp.61–83; Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*; Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*.

57.   Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration Practices', pp.6, 16.

58.   D. Kushner. 'Self-Perception and Identity in Contemporary Turkey', *Journal of Contemporary History*, Vol.32, No.2 (1997), p.222.

59.   Ş. Aktürk, 'Türk Siyasetinde Etnik Hareketler: 1920–2007', *Doğu Batı*, Vol.44 (2008), pp.27–8.

60.   Ibid.; Ş. Aktürk, 'Persistence of the Islamic *Millet* as an Ottoman Legacy: Mono-Religious and Anti-Ethnic Definition of Turkish Nationhood', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.45 No.6 (2009), pp.893–909.

61.   TBMM Zabıt Ceridesi, Devre I, C.1, ictima senesi 1, 1, 5, 1336.

62.   Andrew Davison elaborates laic and secular concepts within the context of the Turkish experience. Laicization is the process of rendering something lay, or transferring it to lay control, whereas secular means the opposite of religious. Secularism tries to establish an autonomous socio-political sphere in which the sphere of religion and the sphere of state affairs are totally separate. Davison, 'Turkey, a "Secular" State?', pp.333–7. Secular Turkish citizens are expected to be detached from their religious loyalties at communal affairs, whereas Turkish laicism aims to have a lay control on the religious domain.

63.   R. Kasaba, 'Kemalist Certainties and Modern Ambiguities', in Bozdoğan and Kasaba (eds.), *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey*, pp.15–37.

64.   Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*, p.125.

65.   Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration'; S. Çağaptay, 'Citizenship Policies in Interwar Turkey', *Nations and Nationalism*, Vol.9, No.4 (2003), pp.601–19.

66.   Kirişçi, 'Disaggregating Turkish Citizenship and Immigration'; Çağaptay, *Islam, Secularism, and Nationalism in Modern Turkey*.

67.   Neyzi argues that the Turkish national identity was 'based on modernist values predicated on a rejection of tradition, yet the Turkishness continued to be defined vis-à-vis Sunni Muslim heritage identified with an imagined Turkish ethnicity'. L. Neyzi, 'Embodied Elders: Space and Subjectivity in the Music of Metin-Kemal Kahraman', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.38, No.1 (2002), p.138.

68.   Hanafites are the followers of a (Sunni) religious school named after the jurist Abu Hanifa, which grew out of the old Kufan and Basran law schools.

69.   Davison, 'Turkey, a "Secular" State?'

70.   Poulton, *Top Hat, Grey Wolf and Crescent*.

71.   G. Koçan and A. Öncü, 'Citizen Alevi in Turkey: Beyond Confirmation and Denial', *Journal of Historical Sociology*, Vol.17, No.4 (2004), p.472.

72.   There are critical studies on the position of the Diyanet in the laic Republic of Turkey. In general, many scholars agree that the function of the Diyanet in the Turkish social and political context is to

reorganize, regulate and control religious activities, while at the same time providing religious serv- ices, Kara, *Cumhuriyet Türkiye'sinde Bir Mesele Olarak İslâm*; İ. Gözaydın, *Diyanet: Türkiye Cum- huriyeti'nde Dinin Tanzimi* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2009); *Muslim World*'s special issue on the Diyanet includes analysis on social, political, religious, historical and practical aspects of Diyanet. G. Erdem (ed.), 'A Special Issue on the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey: DIYANET', *Muslim World*, Vol.98, No.2–3 (2008), pp.159–396; U. Ulutaş, 'Religion and Secularism in Turkey: The Dilemma of the Directorate of Religious Affairs', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol.46, No.3 (2010), pp.389–99.

73. M. Koraltürk (ed.), *Ahmet Hamdi Başar'ın Hatıraları- Cilt 1* (İstanbul: Bilgi Üniversitesi Yayınları, 2007), p.310.

74. A. Yalçınkaya, 'Siyaset, Din, Alevilik ve Özgürlük Hayaleti', in *Modern Türkiye'de Siyasi Düşünce Vol.9: Dönemler ve Zihniyetler* (İstanbul: İtetişim Yayınları, 2009), pp.785–805; K. Ateş, 'Ulusal Kimlik İçinde Alevi Yurttaş ve Merkez Çevre Eksenini Yeniden Düşünmek', *Toplum ve Bilim*, Vol.107 (2006), p.266.

75. Parla and Davison, 'Secularism and Laicism in Turkey', p.64.

76. The Author's interview with an Alevi association director, Istanbul April 21, 2008.

77. Şener, *Alevilik Olayı*, 119.

78. Küçük, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle*.

79. E.B. Şapolyo, *Mezhepler ve Tarikatler Tarihi* (İstanbul: Türkiye Yayınevi, 1964), p.311; Şener, *Alevilik Olayı*, p.120.

80. S. Yeşilyurt, *Ünlü Aleviler* (Ankara: Ankara Kültür Sanat Yayınları, 2007).

81. J.K. Birge, *Bektashi Order of Dervishes* (London: Luzac & Co., Ltd, 1965), p.84.

82. This assumption had been challenged in the study by Küçük, *The Role of the Bektashis in Turkey's National Struggle*; there were Alevi-Bektaşis that supported the Turkish Independence war but some other groups had neither supported the war nor the reforms. This generalization is not a right one.

83. Birge, *Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, p.84.

84. In her well-documented book, *The Role of the Bektaşis in Turkey's National Struggle*, Hülya Kücük brings strong criticisms against the pro-Kemalist Alevi historical narratives that misrepresent Alevi and Bektaşi roles in the National Struggle (pp.257–9). According to Küçük, no Sufi order fully supported or opposed the National Struggle or the reforms introduced after it. Among the Bektaşi leaders, while Velieddin Çelebi and Salih Niyazi Baba supported resistance movement, there were anti-nationalist Bektaşi leaders (pp.270–71).

85. Baki Öz and Cemal Şener and Ali Yaman's works that are previously mentioned in this study sup- port this position. On the other hand, these storylines are almost uncontested in popular Alevi narratives.

86. C. Şener, *Alevism with Questions* (İstanbul: Pozitif Publication, 2009), pp.131–2.

87. Birge, *The Bektashi Order of Dervishes*, p.84.

88. S. Faroqhi, *Anadolu'da Bektaşilik*, trans. N. Barın (İstanbul: Simurg, 2003), p.174.

89. Bozarslan brings serious criticisms to 'Alevi historiographical discourse' and challenges the basic postulates of pro--Kemalist Alevi historiography. H. Bozarslan, 'Alevism and the Myths of Research: The Need for a New Research Agenda', in White and Jorgenden (eds.), *Turkey's Alevi Enigma*, pp.3–17.

90. Dersim-origin Kurmanji- or Zazaki-speaking Alevis are overrepresented in this group.

91. R. Çamuroğlu, 'Resmî İdeoloji ve Aleviler', *Birikim*, No.105–6 (Ocak-Şubat 1998), p.114.

92. Bozarslan, 'Alevism and the Myths of Research', p.9.

93. Ibid.

94. Ibid., 7.

95. P.J. Bumke, 'The Kurdish Alevis-Boundaries and Perceptions', in Andrews and Benninghaus (eds.), *Ethnic Groups in the Republic of Turkey*, pp.510–18; van Bruinessen, 'Aslını İnkar Eden Haramzadedir!'