Religious Minorities
in Turkey

**Alevi, Armenians, and Syriacs
and the Struggle to Desecuritize
Religious Freedom**

**Mehmet Bardakci, Annette Freyberg-Inan,
Christoph Giesel and Olaf Leisse**

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"This is a timely book looking at the complex issues of religious minorities and their security problems in Turkey. It provides a much needed analysis in an area previously understudied and addresses a gap in the literature."

—Professor Meltem Müftüler-Baç, *Sabancı University, Turkey*

"Turkey has made temporary, partial political and social progress which has made life a little easier for minorities, before taking alarming steps backwards recently. This book will be able to contribute to a better understanding of the social and political prospects of the country and gives scientific insights into the difficult situation of religious minorities."

—Professor Thede Kahl, *Friedrich-Schiller-Universität Jena, Germany*

Mehmet Bardakci • Annette Freyberg-Inan • Christoph Giesel • Olaf Leisse

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Preface and Acknowledgments

When we applied for a European Commission enlargement grant "PRINCE 2009—EU27" in 2009 as a consortium of three universities—Izmir Gediz University, University of Amsterdam, and Friedrich Schiller University of Jena—we included a research project on minorities in Turkey as part of the overall project, which also included a broad range of outreach activities to familiarize the public with Turkey's accession process. This was because "respect for and protection of minorities" was one of the Copenhagen criteria that were laid down at the June 1993 European Council and that EU candidates had to fulfill in order to become members. Moreover, in view of the EU progress reports, minority rights was one of the fields in which Turkey had to undertake far-reaching reforms in order to align its legislation with that of the EU. This stems from the fact that the very existence of minorities has historically been highly securitized in the Turkish nation-building process, which has stood in the way of strengthening minority rights. Thus, we wanted to find out to what extent Turkey has indeed met the EU demands and improved the lives of its minorities. To what extent and how have minorities been desecuritized in the context of Turkey's EU candidacy, and how do the minorities in Turkey themselves evaluate this process and its results? We chose a focus on religious minorities and in particular on the Alevi, Armenians, and Syriacs (Assyrians). For each of these groups, we collected extensive new primary data by means of surveys as well as in-depth interviews and relied on a broad range of other sources. We analyzed our data using both qualitative and quantitative methods.

Each chapter in this book on a respective minority group (4–6) can be read individually for detailed information about the respective

group. They are written in such a way that they are comprehensible as freestanding texts. Chapters 2 and 3 provide the necessary background for understanding why and how religious minority rights are an issue for Turkey and for its European integration process. They also clarify our theoretical vocabulary of securitization and desecuritization. Chapter 7 allows the reader to compare the situations, perceptions, and characteristics of the examined groups and draw important general conclusions. Our volume thereby provides a very rare opportunity to explore the situation of the covered minorities in comparative perspective. The book should be of interest to scholars, practitioners, and interested citizens curious about minority rights, religious minorities more particularly, Europeanization processes, Turkey, or any of the specific groups analyzed in depth here.

This book has been prepared by four authors, and it seems useful to indicate our respective responsibilities. The project was developed, discussed, and planned by all four authors. The interview questions for civil society representatives and experts were designed by Mehmet Bardakci. The survey for ordinary citizens was co-designed, tested, and re-designed by Christoph Giesel with the support of Olaf Leisse. All field research was conducted by Mehmet Bardakci and Christoph Giesel. The Alevi were interviewed and surveyed by Mehmet Bardakci (with some support from Christoph Giesel); the Armenians and Syriacs were interviewed and surveyed by Christoph Giesel. Mehmet Bardakci authored Chap. 4 and Sects. 2.2. and 3.3. Christoph Giesel authored Chaps. 5 and 6 and Sects. 3.2. and 3.4. Olaf Leisse conducted the statistical analysis: (with some support from Christoph Giesel) and authored Chap. 7 as well as Sect. 2.1. Annette Freyberg-Inan authored Chap. 1, Sect. 3.1., and Chap. 8 and reworked and edited the entire manuscript.

Christoph Giesel in particular gives his heartfelt thanks to all Syriacs and Armenians as well as all Turks and Kurds of both Alevi and Sunni background who offered him their kind support throughout years of extensive fieldwork. He thanks those many persons who, with their helpfulness, selflessness, kindness, and patience, added to the successful execution of this study and without whom this book would not have been possible. For reasons of personal security, given the circumstances then and now in Turkey, these people have chosen to remain anonymous. Christoph further thanks the persons surrounding him at home for their patience, helpfulness, and emotional support during the tough stages of research, evaluation, and writing, especially Dr. Karolin Weigel and Paul-Anton Giesel as well as Dr. Katja Richters and Stephanie Luther. He dedicates his work and his part in the book to all members of minorities and ethnic groups in Turkey who are facing an adverse political, legal, and social situation. The country has made temporary, partial political and social progress, which has made life a little easier for those concerned, before taking alarming steps backward recently. He wishes that, in future, all persons concerned will have better existential, social, and political prospects and hopes that the knowledge and insights this book can provide will at least make a small contribution to better their difficult situation and heighten the understanding of its background. Christoph dedicates his work most particularly to the Syriac people, whose religious, cultural, and even physical existence is seriously threatened not only in Turkey but in all countries of the Near East, even as they have a particularly long history within this area and been a strong influence on regional cultures and societies.

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Introduction

1.1 Turkey-EU Relations and Turkish Politics Since the Helsinki Summit[1]

The long story of relations between Turkey and the European Union (EU) can be read as one of gradual assimilation by Turkey to many expectations and standards formulated by European counterparts. But it is hardly a straightforward story of Europeanization. It displays leaps and bounds of reform in line with EU demands, but also loops and detours, standstills, and reversals, varied dynamics and varied outcomes across different issue areas and different historical periods—in short, it is a multifaceted and anything but uniform or linear process. This introductory chapter will first provide a general overview of relations between Turkey and the European Union and of Turkish politics in this context, before zooming in on the specific focus of this book: the evolution of the rights of religious minorities in Turkey. In the second section we explain the contribution made by this volume to understanding the changing situations of religious minorities in Turkey before the backdrop of European integration and AKP government, and outline our approach, methodology, and data. The third section provides an overview of the book's contents.

The time-line of relations between Turkey and what is now the European Union began with Turkey's application for associate membership of the European Economic Community (EEC) in September 1959.

A form of association agreement, the Ankara Agreement, was signed soon after in September 1963, to lay the foundations for the later customs union with the EEC; it envisioned eventual full EEC membership. In January 1973 an Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement entered into force, which laid out the concrete steps for establishing the customs union. Following the failure of diplomatic efforts to resolve conflicts between Turkish and Greek Cypriots, in July 1974 Turkey invaded Cyprus. This came in response to a coup d'état orchestrated by the Greek junta which ousted Archbishop Makarios III, the Greek Cypriot President of Cyprus, and installed in his place the pro-Enosis nationalist politician and journalist Nikos Sampson.[2] After gaining control over 40 % of the island, Turkey unilaterally declared a ceasefire, and Turkish Cypriots established their own state in the north of the island, which to this day Turkey alone recognizes as a sovereign state.

In June 1980 the EU-Turkey Association Council moved to decrease customs duties on almost all agricultural products to zero by 1987, but after the military coup d'état in Turkey of September 1980, relations with the EEC stagnated for about four years. On 14 April 1987, Turkey then applied for full EEC membership. In December 1989 the Commission confirmed Turkey's eligibility for membership but deferred the assessment of its application. In March 1995 the Association Council finalized the agreement on the customs union, which entered into force on 1 January 1996. However, in what was a major blow to the Turkish side, at the Luxembourg summit in December 1997 EU leaders declined to grant candidate status to Turkey. Turkish elites reacted with evident anger, temporarily freezing relations and contacts. Candidate status was finally granted at the December 1999 Helsinki summit, Turkey accepted the associated conditions with some reluctance, and a new period in Turkish-EU relations began. Turkey was now engaged in an accession process and met the full force of the EU's external governance through conditionality, including in the field of minority rights. The period since then is the one on which we focus in this book.

In March 2001 the EU Council of Ministers adopted the EU-Turkey Accession Partnership (revised in 2003, 2006, and 2008), and the Turkish government adopted its first National Program for the Adoption of the *Acquis*. On 13 December 2002 the Copenhagen summit decided that the EU would open accession negotiations with Turkey if the European Council were to conclude in December 2004, on the basis of a report and recommendation from the Commission, that Turkey fulfills the

Copenhagen political criteria for membership: democracy, the rule of law, human rights, and respect for and protection of minorities. In the meantime, EU leaders agreed to provide Turkey with increased pre-accession financial assistance. A massive reform process was set in motion in Turkey, which was referred to by many as a "silent revolution". In autumn 2001 the Turkish parliament adopted over 30 amendments to the constitution to meet the Copenhagen political criteria. In August 2002 it passed further sweeping reforms to meet EU human rights criteria, including the abolition of the death penalty except in times of war and the lifting of bans on Kurdish-language education and broadcasting.

On 3 November 2002, the conservative Justice and Development party (AKP, *Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi*) won a landslide victory in the general elections. An Islamic party, it had nonetheless run on pledges both to stick to the secularist principles of the constitution and to keep pursuing Turkey's EU accession. And it did continue the associated reform process, especially in its first years in power. In December 2002 the Turkish parliament overwhelmingly approved a package of human rights reforms, including sanctions against torture. In June and July 2003 it passed further legal changes easing restrictions on freedom of speech, expanding Kurdish-language rights, and reducing the political role of the military. In January a protocol was signed and strongly welcomed by the EU which banned the death penalty in all circumstances. In September 2004 the Turkish parliament adopted a revised penal code, improving media freedom and introducing tougher measures to prevent torture and violence against women (in force since 1 June 2005).[3] A controversial proposal on criminalizing adultery was dropped. The 17 December 2004 European Council then decided to open accession negotiations with Turkey. Ironically, for a number of reasons it was precisely around the time that accession negotiations officially started that the reform process in Turkey would slow down.

In the meantime, relations between the EU and Turkey had been significantly strained by the fact that the EU had accepted Cyprus as a member even though the Greek Cypriots had rejected the Annan Plan for a settlement to the division of the island.[4] Much disinformation has been in circulation regarding what happened at that time. In fact, the EU had agreed on the accession of the Republic of Cyprus even without unification before the referendum on the Annan Plan even took place. Days before the referendum, the Greek Cypriot President Papadopoulos went on TV and tearfully urged his people to vote against the Plan (which he

had negotiated), openly admitting that he had lied to the EU. On 21 April 2004 EU Enlargement Commissioner Günter Verheugen addressed the European Parliament and recalled angrily that in 1999 the Greek Cypriot government of the time had promised to do everything in its power to secure a settlement. In return the EU had agreed not to make a solution to the Cyprus conflict a prerequisite for accession. Verheugen's anger, however, had no consequences. Cyprus became a member, and the Greek Cypriot government promptly undermined the Council decision of 26 April 2004 to lift the sanctions on Northern Cyprus. The EU's acceptance of such maneuvering on the part of Greek Cyprus created impressions of dishonesty and favoritism on the Turkish side and fed emotions of humiliation and distrust. In this context, Turkey was pushed hard to sign the Additional Protocol to the Ankara Agreement, which extended the customs union to the ten new member states, including Cyprus. It eventually did on 29 July 2005, but simultaneously issued a declaration on nonrecognition of Cyprus and continued to refuse to apply the Additional Protocol to Cyprus, which would have required it to open its ports and airports to Cypriot traffic. Actors on the EU side displayed little understanding for just how difficult it was at that moment for Turkey to continue on its track of European integration.

Aside from the issue of Cyprus, the cool-down in EU-Turkey relations at the time was further reinforced by critical voices regarding Turkey's accession raised by leading EU powers, such as France and Germany; by the EU constitutional crisis triggered by the rejection of the EU constitutional treaty by France and the Netherlands in separate referenda in 2005; and by the announcement on the EU side of additional conditions to be placed on Turkey's accession, such as a permanent ban on Turkish workforce even after Turkey's full membership. This helped render EU accession increasingly unattractive for Turks, contributing significantly to the rise of Euroskepticism in the country (Dikici Bilgin 2016).

Accession talks with Turkey were symbolically opened on 3 October 2005 after months of intense bargaining, and began de facto on 12 June 2006. The negotiating framework specifies 35 chapters, each of which needs to be unanimously opened and closed by the Council. The Council agreed to open and close the chapter on science and research immediately. However, a new period of difficulty in EU-Turkey relations was just around the corner. In the same month of June 2006 the Turkish parliament reacted to a series of terrorist attacks by passing a new antiterror law, which was criticized by human rights groups as an invitation to

torture and also drew criticism from the EU. In July 2006 a court ruling against the journalist and Armenian community leader Hrant Dink for "insulting Turkishness"[5] raised concerns over freedom of expression in Turkey; observers also worried about the appointment of the hard-line general Yaşar Büyükanıt as chief of the Turkish military. Partly in response to these developments, a September 2006 European Parliament report on Turkey's progress in preparing for membership complained that the country had made insufficient progress in the areas of freedom of expression, minority rights, corruption, and violence against women. The November 2006 Commission progress report was similarly critical on Turkey's accession progress, complaining also about Ankara's failure to open its ports and airports to Cypriot traffic. The Commission recommended partial suspension of membership negotiations. In December 2006 the EU foreign ministers followed these recommendations and suspended talks with Turkey on eight of the 35 negotiation chapters. Accession negotiations have proceeded very slowly ever since then.

On 22 July 2007 the ruling AKP government was re-elected. In July 2008 the Turkish Constitutional Court narrowly rejected allegations that the party was undermining the secular constitution and trying to establish an Islamist state. Had the court ruled differently, this would have led to the closure of the party and banning of 71 leading party members from politics for five years—and thereby to a fundamental restructuring of the Turkish political landscape. With the beginning of the AKP government's second term in office, various developments instead began to point toward an increasing entrenchment of AKP power structures and attempts to clear the political landscape of opponents which could be seen to challenge its rule. October 2008 saw the beginning of the Ergenekon trials, in which initially 86 members of the military and security establishment stood accused of plotting a series of attacks and provoking a military coup against the government. Several additional rounds of indictments followed. In September 2009 the government-controlled tax authorities raised tax fraud charges to the tune of $2.5 billion against the Doğan Media Holding, which had taken a critical stance against the government. In February 2010 nearly 70 members of the military were arrested over the alleged "Sledgehammer" plot to destabilize the country and justify a military coup. While Chief of General Staff İlker Başbuğ insisted that coups were a thing of the past, 33 officers were charged with conspiring to overthrow the government.[6]

The EU expressed concern, yet the Europeanization process also continued at the same time. The AKP government at the time was able to instrumentalize the reform pressure associated with EU accession to adjust the domestic playing field in ways which would benefit its own power against the secularist and military groups which have traditionally been opposed to Islamic parties (Akşit and Şenyuva 2016). This could be seen, e.g. in July 2009, when a law was passed meeting EU criteria to limit the power of military courts, despite warnings from the army that this might escalate tensions between the government and the military. New legislation proposed by the AKP gave civilian courts the power to try military personnel for threatening national security or involvement in organized crime. Since then, further reforms to civil-military relations have served to radically reduce the power in Turkish politics of the military—the traditional guardian of secularism in the country.

In 2009 as well, again in line with EU demands and beginning with a meeting between Erdoğan and the leader of the pro-Kurdish Democratic Society Party (DTP, *Demokratik Toplum Partisi*), Ahmet Türk, the government launched its Kurdish initiative, announcing an extension of cultural and linguistic rights to the Kurdish minority. In December it introduced measures in parliament to increase Kurdish-language rights and reduce the military presence in the mainly Kurdish southeast. In the field of foreign policy, rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia was seen as a precondition for Turkish accession. In October 2009 the two countries signed a peace accord in Zurich aimed at opening the borders between them. However, on the Turkish side the border opening has been made conditional on progress in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan (Akin and Khorguashvili 2016).

On 12 September 2010, on the 30th anniversary of the coup of 1980, the AKP won a landmark referendum on constitutional reform bringing about major constitutional changes to increase parliamentary control over the army and judiciary. These changes contributed to a normalization of civil-military relations, modifying them from a model in which the armed forces acted as guardians of the regime to one approximating liberal-western standards, by which the military is subordinated to civilian authority. However, they also served to further strengthen the hold of the AKP over Turkish politics, given its parliamentary majority, which was resoundingly confirmed in the June 2011 general elections. Prime Minister Erdoğan embarked on a third term in office. In August 2011 President Gül appointed top military leaders after their predecessors had resigned en masse. This became the first time a Turkish civilian government decided who commands the armed forces.

On 17 May 2012 a so-called Positive Agenda was launched by the EU and Turkey to bring fresh dynamism into EU-Turkey relations, but the 2012 Commission report on Ankara's progress toward membership still highlighted numerous concerns about democracy and human rights. Then came the Gezi protests. Originally sparked by plans to develop one of Istanbul's few green spaces, in May and June 2013 mass anti-government protests spread to 72 of Turkey's 82 provinces, leaving six dead and more than 8000 injured. While both President Gül and Deputy Prime Minister Arinç apologized for the excessive violence used by the police to suppress the demonstrations, Prime Minister Erdoğan remained defiant and displayed increasingly autocratic reflexes. In June 2013, at Germany's instigation, the EU put membership talks with Turkey on hold until November.

In September 2013 court proceedings began against former senior military officers accused of plotting to overthrow an earlier pro-Islamic government led by Necmettin Erbakan in 1997. In November 2013 Chap. 22 (Regional policy & coordination of structural instruments) of the accession negotiations was opened. This brought the number of chapters opened so far to 14; 17 chapters still remain blocked at the time of writing. In December 2013 and January 2014 police detained dozens of persons, including the sons of three ministers, as part of an investigation into corruption allegations. The government responded by sacking numerous police chiefs. Prime Minister Erdoğan denounced the inquiry as a "dirty operation" and a "coup plot" by political rivals, confirming speculation about a feud between him and former AKP ally and influential US-based Muslim cleric Fethullah Gülen, who had maintained influence in the police and judiciary. A new internet law passed by the Turkish parliament in February 2014, which allowed the telecommunications authority (TIB) to block any website within four hours without first seeking a court ruling, raised concerns about government-imposed censorship in Turkey. In March 2014 the Turkish parliament passed a bill to shut down private preparatory schools, many of which were run by Gülen's Hizmet ("Service") movement. In August 2014 Erdoğan won the first direct popular election for president. Former foreign minister Ahmet Davutoğlu succeeded Erdoğan as prime minister. In December 2014 police raided media outlets close to Gülen and arrested 24 journalists on suspicion of plotting to seize power. In March 2015 parliament approved a controversial security bill giving the police sweeping new powers. The AKP government under Erdoğan continued to consolidate its hold on power, while unrest continued to simmer among both progressive and secular-nationalist groups.

With the 7 June 2015 parliamentary elections, Erdoğan and his AKP suffered a temporary set-back. Not only did the AKP fail to win the two-thirds, or 367-seat, majority required to carry out its plans to rewrite the constitution to change Turkey from a parliamentary into a presidential system tailored to entrench Erdoğan's personal power. It also failed to obtain an outright parliamentary majority for the first time since coming to power in 2002. The blame was placed on the entry into parliament of the pro-Kurdish HDP. In response, Erdoğan dropped the peace process with the PKK; fighting resumed in the Turkish southeast. Coalition negotiations failed as Erdoğan campaiged with the idea that only a strong single-party government of the AKP could re-establish security in the country. New elections in November 2015 then handed governmental power back to the AKP. In June 2016 the government employed a temporary lifting of constitutional protections to lift the parliamentary immunity of 138 parliamentarians. This measure, directed in particular against the HDP, exposed the parliamentarians to persecution while freeing their seats for new elections, to the benefit of further consolidating AKP power. After a falling out with Erdoğan, prime minuister Davutoğlu resigned. The new prime minister and loyal Erdoğan-supporter Binali Yildirim announced that Turkey is de facto already a presidential system. A constitutional change should be quickly pushed through to legitimize this fact. As further priorities he announced a fight against "terrorist organizations", the IS, the PKK, and supporters of the Gülen movement.[7] As we put the finishing touches on this manuscript in July 2016, a massive crack-down is underway in Turkey against a great many persons in various positions accused of supporting a coup attempt on July 15th. It is too early to tell what really happened, and where the currently unfolding, deeply disturbing events will lead. What seems clear is that they are not good news for Turkey's religious minorities, nor for the country's relations with the European Union.

Looking back in time, we can see the period 2001–2005 as the "golden age" of Turkey-EU relations. It saw a massive amount of domestic political reform, as EU accession still enjoyed high credibility in Turkey. But in the post-2005 period, precisely when accession talks actually started, Turkey's EU drive lost momentum. Between 2010 and 2013 it then stagnated, before gradually succumbing to a slide toward increasing authoritarianism and shifted priorities on the part of the Turkish government as well as the EU. The initial period of Turkey's EU accession process, which was marked by significant democratization reforms, high economic growth rates, close relations with the EU, and a soft power approach in

external relations, was replaced by a new era that might even be called one of "de-Europeanization", which is characterized by regression in reforms, declining economic growth rates, deterioration of Turkey's relations with some of its neighbors, and reorientation in Turkish foreign policy away from Europe and toward the Middle East and Eurasia.

On the EU side, not enough attention has been paid to the fact that pro-EU Turks have become increasingly and bitterly disappointed with EU leadership, especially since June 2013. This is also clearly visible in our own survey results. There is a feeling of great disillusionment among Turkish pro-EU groups (comprising mostly the educated, urban, Europeanized elite) that they and the country have been let down and abandoned by the EU, as EU leaders have stood aside doing nothing while watching Erdoğan's increasingly autocratic policies and efforts to erode the rule of law and impartiality of the legal system, while turning the police and secret service into power tools to serve a regime facing massive corruption allegations. In good part due to Turkey's role as a migration buffer for EU member states, only a few critical words have been uttered against these developments, with no real consequences. In this context, freezing the already frozen accession talks has not helped democracy in Turkey or its further Europeanization, but only added to the disappointment of those who would otherwise carry the Europeanization process forward.

From the point of view of the disappointed pro-EU Turks, the passivity the EU and its leading members have shown in relation to developments in Turkey stands in strange contrast to the past, in which every move of a Turkish government was scrutinized and every small diversion from EU norms magnified and criticized by EU institutions. It raises suspicions that anti-Turkish membership elites within the EU might have been secretly rejoicing in Erdoğan's anti-democratic moves, as these have provided legitimation for them to present Turkey as "unfit for membership". Such suspicions are after all consistent with a track record of EU actors being less interested in democracy or secularism than in stability and business—not only in Turkey but more generally in their near abroad—and with expressions by some western European leaders who evidently see a secular and modern Turkey as a historical aberration and the move toward a corrupt authoritarian regime with an Islamist ideology as a return to what they expect as normal for a majority-Muslim country. While one might argue in the EU's defense that it has been preoccupied with its internal problems as of late, Turks have also watched EU reactions to events in Ukraine and the support it has given to the Russia-critical opposition there. In contrast,

the Turkish demonstrators in Gezi Park and its aftermath were left alone to be beaten, even killed, and cowed back into silence. The reasons for the different levels of engagement by the EU in these two processes have not been clear, which has fed distrust. Moreover, the EU has been signing visa waivers for the Schengen area for citizens of many other countries, big or small, from the Balkans to South America, but not for Turkey, which has had an association agreement for over 50 years (and some visa-free travel rights which have been ignored). This is experienced in Turkey as gross discrimination, even as denigrating. In short, many Turks who have been supporters of closer relations with the EU are increasingly feeling betrayed and losing faith in the good will of EU actors.

This overview of the evolution of relations between Turkey and the EU reveals a number of basic facts, which must be understood as a backdrop for any analysis of Turkish politics in relation to the EU. First, Turkey is no push-over. Domestic factors and developments play an absolutely vital role for understanding where and when Europeanization processes, including EU-inspired reforms of minority rights, succeed, and where and when they do not. Second, the impact of EU conditionality in this candidate country is not necessarily only beneficial, but can also be deeply problematic. With their use of conditionality EU actors have not only aided in the partial desecuritization of minority rights (see below), they have also, if inadvertently, aided in the consolidation of AKP rule. This has had some positive consequences for the accession process, but can also be viewed critically, as is becoming increasingly obvious. Third, the continuation of Europeanization and accession in Turkey, and of the associated reform processes, cannot be taken for granted. The EU has massively disappointed those groups in Turkey which have always supported accession. We have come to a point where there really is no telling what the future will bring.

Eleven years after the beginning of accession negotiations, conditions on both sides, in the EU and in Turkey, as well as the relationship between the two have changed in ways which call into question the teleology of this accession process. The EU today, reeling from financial and migration crisis and Brexit and struggling to maintain integration momentum with its current members, neither displays a drive to continue enlargement nor projects a particularly attractive future for Turkey. On the Turkish side, the increasing authoritarianism under Erdoğan and the AKP government, arguable macroeconomic success on its own, and foreign policy reorientation all serve to undermine a strong focus on fulfilling accession criteria to please the European Union. Public and elite opinions on both sides

are at best mildly supportive of accession to begin with (Freyberg-Inan et al. 2016), and mutual perceptions are not improving. In this context, the accession process is stalled and increasingly seems open-ended. This has consequences for everyone on both sides, including the struggling religious minorities in Turkey, on whom we focus in this book.

1.2   The Evolution of Minority Rights in Turkey Since the Helsinki Summit: Contributions of this Book, Approach, Methodology, and Data

This book focuses on one specific issue area which has been a key part of the Copenhagen criteria and therefore of Turkey' EU accession process. This is the issue of minority rights. As we will see, the EU, alongside the European Court of Human Rights,[8] has been instrumental in stimulating changes in this policy area in Turkey. We focus on the situations of three main religious minority groups in Turkey—Alevi, Armenians, and Syriacs—as they have evolved over the past 17 years, since the beginning of Turkish EU candidacy. We pay special attention to the impact of the European integration process on the lived situation of minority members and their organizations as well as to the impact of AKP rule (i.e. government by an Islamic party) since 2002.

The Armenians, Syriacs, and Alevi were chosen for our in-depth empirical analysis because they can plausibly represent also other religious minority communities in Turkey. First, the Armenians are a non-Muslim minority community officially recognized in the Treaty of Lausanne (1923), and thus a group which has enjoyed official minority status throughout the history of the Turkish Republic. In this sense, the Armenians can represent also other officially recognized non-Muslim minority communities, such as the Greek and Jewish minorities.[9] Second, the Syriacs are an officially unacknowledged non-Muslim minority community and thus a non-Muslim group which has been deprived of minority status. Both the Armenians and the Syriacs follow versions of the Christian faith. Third, the Alevi also lack official minority status, while, like the Sunni majority of Turkey, they are Muslim. They follow a different version of Islam. As we will see, this poses unique problems for this sizable group.

Minorities in Turkey are an under-researched topic, in part because in Turkey calls for minority rights have long been regarded as threatening the unity and integrity of the Turkish state and nation. Also, until the 1990s, the Cold War stand-off, in which Turkey was a strategic player, eclipsed

the relevance of identity politics in the region. Since the end of the Cold War, however, human and minority rights have moved up the agenda of Turkish politics as well (Giesel 2016b; Giesel 2016c: 80–99). Turkey's EU candidacy has given further impetus to the promotion of the rights of minorities—and thereby their so-called "desecuritization"—their being moved away from being considered and addressed primarily in relation to national security concerns. To characterize this broad trend we draw on the vocabulary of securitization theory, which will be explained in Sect. 3.1. Since the obstacles to improving minority rights in Turkey originate in good part from such rights being tied to security concerns, this vocabulary is useful for explaining the recent relative opening-up and democratization concerning the rights of minorities in the country in the context of European integration, as well as the precariousness of this process.

Traditionally, minority rights were highly securitized in Turkey, in short because minorities were widely viewed as the fifth column of foreign powers seeking to destroy the Turkish state. Thus, owing to the historical experiences of Turkey, which included the destruction of the Ottoman Empire at the hands of Western powers and its partitioning among them, the Turkish ruling elite kept the issue of minority rights out of the realm of "normal politics" and firmly connected to national security concerns. However, boosted by the country's EU candidacy granted at the Helsinki Summit in 1999, the security-first approach of the Turkish state concerning minorities (at least temporarily) weakened and a new trend toward desecuritization (and democratization) of minority rights began, albeit slowly, incompletely, and not irreversibly.

Because of the recent rise in interest in the issue, international NGOs such as Minority Rights Groups International have published short reports on the rights of minorities in Turkey (Kaya and Baldwin 2004; Kurban 2007; Kaya 2009). While these reports are indeed valuable sources of insight into developments since 2000, they are aimed at practitioners in the field and lack socio-cultural, historical, and political framing as well as theoretical analysis. More scholarly works on the minorities in Turkey either focus on a single minority group (Poyraz 2005; Toktaş 2005, 2006b, 2008) or take the form of journal articles, which leads to a narrow focus and precludes in-depth analysis (Toktaş 2006a; Toktaş and Aras 2009/10; Grigoriadis 2007; Soner 2010).[10]

Despite the increasing interest shown in the minorities in Turkey in the democratizing and more open political context of the 2000s, there are thus still no empirically and theoretically anchored studies dealing

with the issue of minorities in Turkey in a comprehensive manner. This study fills this gap. This is the first book taking up the issue of minority rights in Turkey in a broad comparative way and employing the conceptual apparatus of securitization theory. Moreover, it presents entirely new and comprehensive data on three very different religious minority groups (in addition to synthesizing the existing state of knowledge about them).

Our research objectives are

- to describe the current political and daily life situations of the selected religious minorities in Turkey, as viewed from the perspective of civil society-based advocacy organizations (NGOs, foundations, monasteries), key experts, and ordinary minority citizens
- to describe the evolution since the 1999 Helsinki Summit of the political and daily life situations of the selected religious minorities in Turkey, as viewed from the perspective of civil society-based advocacy organizations, key experts, and ordinary citizens
- to link the observed changes in the political and daily life situations of the selected religious minorities to the dynamics of the EU accession process
- to assess the impact of AKP government on the lives of religious minorities in Turkey.

Our research questions are: How have the political and daily life situations of the analyzed groups evolved since the beginning of Turkey's EU candidacy? What has been the impact of the European integration process on this evolution? By the "political situations" of religious minorities we understand the extent to which they enjoy human, minority, and political rights, such as the right to assemble for worship under the same conditions as the majority religion, to serve in public office, or to access state-provided benefits available to members of other religious groups. To assess these situations (and their evolution over time) we employed (a) analysis of relevant legal documents; (b) interviews with the most important NGOs and experts working on the rights of these groups; (c) interviews and surveys of non-organized members of each group;[11] (d) analysis of relevant governmental and non-governmental reports and secondary literature. By the "daily life situations" of religious minorities we understand their perceptions of their societal status and image and the extent to which they experience repression, restrictions, ostracism, or hostility not only from agents of the state but also

from fellow-citizens. To assess these situations we rely first and foremost on our in-depth interviews and observations as well as on our question-naires (see appendix).

The impact of the EU integration process is of course impossible to assess directly. We focus on the impact of the attempts to influence Turkish policy-making which are evident from the statements and actions of the key actors in EU enlargement policy: primarily the European Commission and secondarily the European Council, its members, and the European Parliament Committee on Foreign Affairs. We employ methodological tri-angulation to strengthen the validity of any claims we make regarding the causal impact of activities by these actors on changes in the situation of religious minorities in Turkey by combining three methods:

Method 1: Policy Comparison (Matching)

EU actors, first and foremost the Commission, formulate particular demands toward candidate countries. If the candidate country makes an adjustment (through legal changes or novel policies) that brings it closer to fulfilling these demands, this is the first indication of EU influence. The relevant data is contained in EU and Turkish public documents and legal texts. Media and analytical reports and secondary literature are also consulted.

Method 2: Process Tracing (Mapping)

This method tries to get as close as possible to the policy process to see whether the measures for change taken by Turkish authorities are actually responses to contacts with EU actors. Since large-scale interviews with Turkish government (or EU) officials were not feasible in the context of this project, this method relies (besides on secondary data) on a close examination of relevant media reports as well as publicly available state-ments by elites involved in the process.

Method 3: Discourse Analysis (Reporting)

By this method we analyze published statements by the relevant EU actors as well as Turkish authorities regarding the relationship between EU involvement and adaptations in Turkey. For example, evidence for EU impact exists if the EC observes that Turkey has made changes it has asked for, or if Turkish authorities declare having made a change to satisfy EU

demands. The analysis of public reports and speeches is triangulated with media and expert analysis. Importantly, we also questioned our interview partners and survey respondents on this point, i.e. whether they observe any impact of EU involvement on the political and daily life situations of the selected religious minorities. However, since most of them are not experts on the technicalities of the pre-accession process, we supplement the interview and survey data with the three other methods mentioned here in order to improve the validity of our conclusions regarding the causal impact of EU accession.

Our empirical analysis is based on extensive fieldwork conducted since 2011 and partly financed by the European Commission's PRINCE 2009 grant program. Fieldwork focused on both organized representatives (NGOs, foundations, monasteries) and on "ordinary" members of the minority groups. Both qualitative and quantitative data were created and both qualitative and quantitative methods of analysis were used. Regarding the qualitative aspects of the study, the method of in-depth, semi-structured interviewing in the context of ethnographic field study was chosen, since it is particularly suitable for research on "vulnerable" people, who with this method gain an opportunity to express their experiences and feelings in their own words (Liamputtong 2007). Interviews were held in Turkish, either by a native speaker or with the help of an interpreter.[12] They were held with representatives of NGOs, other civil society organizations and foundations of minority communities, as well as with ordinary citizens belonging to these communities.

Next to the interviews, a questionnaire (in Turkish language) with closed-ended questions was used to enlarge the database and enable comparative and quantitative analysis (see appendix). Our original data thus encompasses a large-scale survey of 708 members of the minorities (401 Alevi, 242 Syriacs, and 65 Armenians) as well as a large range of in-depth interviews and observations in rural locations as well as Turkey's major cities; moreover, it includes in-depth interviews with all significant representative organizations of the minority groups (see appendix).[13] We analyze this data and connect it with other available data to trace the evolution of religious minority rights in Turkey, analyze the impact of European integration and AKP government, and assess the extent to which minority rights in Turkey have been desecuritized (and democratized) in recent years.

In addition to providing an in-depth analysis using our original and a great deal of second-hand data for the three separate minority groups, a key contribution of our book is that it also allows us to compare experiences, grievances,

opinions, and developments across the groups. All members of religious minority groups and all representatives of organizations of religious minority groups were asked the same questions in the questionnaires and interviews. This allows us to compare groups on the following key dimensions:

- how religious minority members and organizations perceive their standing and status in Turkish society (incl. politics and economics) today
- what the main problems and complaints are which they experience as members of their minority group
- how they perceive their standing, status, problems, and complaints to have changed, esp. since the beginning of Turkey's candidate status with the EU
- how they judge the impact of European integration on their situations as minorities in Turkey

The first three dimensions in part assess the extent to which and the manner in which the issue of religious minorities in Turkey is securitized/desecuritized in the perceptions and experiences of religious minority members. The fourth dimension then serves to link the notions of securitization/desecuritization with that of Europeanization (the impact of the European Union on the above processes). Since this impact is difficult to judge for our respondents, as we have explained, document analysis of legal texts and the broader political discourse in Turkey as well as secondary data analysis is used to triangulate our findings regarding the impact of European integration on the lives of religious minorities.

To sum up, the distinctive aspects of the contribution made by this book are that:

- it is based on up-to-date and thorough empirical research on the minorities in question; a great amount of original data has been collected for each community across various parts of Turkey;
- it is the first comparative study undertaken across religious minorities in Turkey on the basis of comparable questionnaires; this comparative aspect of the research helps us discover and understand variation among different minority groups in terms of their perceptions and experiences;
- it evaluates the reforms and progress made with respect to the rights of minorities in Turkey from a clear and general theoretical perspective by applying the concepts of securitization theory;

- it is the first book focusing on the religious minorities in Turkey in the contemporary political context of European integration and AKP government.

1.3   Overview of the Book's Contents

Chapter 2 first provides the necessary background on European-level governance of minority rights and the use of accession conditionality by the EU for advancing minority rights in candidate countries like Turkey. The purpose is to establish why and how minority rights in Turkey are a European issue, and not merely a Turkish one. This is also why the relevant changes in Turkey must be analyzed before the broad backdrop of Europeanization, even as they are of course shaped (also) by a variety of important domestic factors. The chapter reveals, inter alia, that although the EU has made the protection of minorities an explicit criterion for accession, it has not provided an unequivocal definition of minority rights. This ambiguity has supported diverse conceptualizations and differences in policy and implementation across candidate (and member) countries. The second part of the chapter then provides an overview of how the EU has evaluated Turkey's progress in the field of minority rights by analyzing the Commission's annual regular reports from 1998 to 2015.[14] This gives us a first sense of the problems faced by Turkey's minorities, which will be analyzed in detail in the remaining chapters of this book.

Chapter 3 first lays out our theoretical vocabulary by explaining what we mean by the "securitization" and "desecuritization" of minority rights. In a nutshell, where changes to minority rights are primarily framed as having strong implications for (majority) societal or state security, they are securitized. When they are instead increasingly discussed in reference to other than security values (such as in connection with improvements to democracy or human rights), and when societal actors representing other than security interests become increasingly involved in their contestation, they are desecuritized. The second section of the chapter traces the securitization of minority rights back to Ottoman times, through the establishment of the Turkish Republic, into the 1990s. Its third section examines the partial and precarious trend of desecuritization of minority rights since the 1999 Helsinki Summit and the coming to power of the AKP. Arguably, the most important contribution of the EU to this trend has been that it has enhanced the domestic credibility and clout of the pro-EU, reformist segments of the Turkish society and elite, helping to create

an environment conducive to democratization more broadly and the desecuritization of minority rights more specifically. Secondly, the coming into power of the Islamic yet (at least initially) pro-EU AKP government also supported this trend. However, more recently both the declining EU membership prospects and shifting priorities of the AKP are threatening the desecuritization of minority rights.

The following three chapters (4–6) treat our three minority groups. Chapter 4 focuses on the Alevi. It discusses the paradoxical relationship of the Alevi community with the Turkish state and covers the awakening among the Alevi community during the 1990s and the impact of the recent EU-supported democratization reforms on the Alevi community. Having suffered as a heretical sect and been alienated from the center under the Sunni-dominated Ottoman rule, the Alevi welcomed the establishment of the Turkish Republic in the hope that the new state with its explicitly secularist vision would put an end to their persecution and marginalization. However, although their status was relatively improved in this period, the Republican state did not extend any official recognition to heterodox Muslims. In the Republican era Muslim subjects were totalized under the all-inclusive category of the *millet-i Muslime*. Prioritizing the "one and indivisible" unity of the Turkish nation and state, free expression and legal accommodation of diversity within Islam were prohibited. When the Soviet Union collapsed and the Communist threat disappeared in 1989, identity politics resurged and *Alevilik* as a religious identity gained importance. Furthermore, the upsurge of Islamist movements during the 1990s (temporarily) boosted the Alevi's reputation as moderate representatives of Islamic belief in the eyes of the Turkish state. Furthermore, the EU accession process, which started in 1999, led to the removal of some restrictions on Alevi political participation and an expansion of human rights and freedoms. The Alevi community became more vocal in the expression of their demands and grievances. However, the chapter will show that, while the recent Alevi opening of the Turkish government has satisfied some demands to some extent, still many steps need to be taken to achieve full reconciliation with the Alevi community. We argue that the limited progress achieved by the Alevi opening is a result of a number of factors including the mutual mistrust between the Alevi community and the Sunni Islamic AKP government, the entrenched dispute between the two sides as to whether *Alevilik* is a sect of Islam or a cultural community, as well as deeply rooted social prejudices.

In Chap. 5 we present our findings on the Armenians who, unlike the other two groups studied in this book, have official minority status according to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). The relations between the Turkish state and majority society, on the one side, and the Turkish-Armenian community, on the other, have been affected by the historical controversies over the incidents of persecution of Armenians at the hands of Turks and Kurds during WWI. The fact that Armenian militant groups carried out assaults on Turkish diplomatic representations abroad from 1975 to the 1980s as well as the Azeri-Armenian conflict further contributed to the securitization of policy toward Turkish-Armenians. The chapter shows, however, that due to the trend toward democratization and improvement of minority rights stimulated by the EU accession process, and the corresponding rise in pluralism and empowerment of NGOs, the visibility of the Armenian community has lately been enhanced. It has become easier for the Armenian community to have their voices heard by the Turkish state and society at large. This, in turn, has enhanced the perceived legitimacy of the Armenian minority's grievances and demands. The difference between the 1990s, when Armenians were often targeted by Islamist groups and militant nationalists, and the present time, when even the Nationalist Action Party (MHP) considered nominating a member of the Armenian community in the parliamentary elections in June 2011, is striking. The murder of the Turkish-Armenian journalist Hrant Dink in 2007 by a member of an extreme right-wing group was widely condemned and actually aided the Armenian cause. Yet, this incident is also a telling indication of the fact that changing prejudices takes time and is more difficult than changing laws. Despite the recent encouraging reforms aiming to overhaul the shortcomings in the legal system concerning the rights of minorities, such as the new Foundations Law in 2008, which enables (some) minorities to reacquire their previously confiscated properties, there are still many unresolved problems facing the Armenian community, such as lack of restitution of confiscated properties sold to third parties, shortage of priests, limitations to self-government in schools and churches, lack of education for and lack of teachers in Armenian schools, lack of education in native language at schools, discrimination regarding employment in the civil service and the right to hold political office, anti-minority rhetoric in textbooks in Turkish schools, negative framing of minority issues in the media, and difficulties with the restoration and protection of Armenian churches and historical sites.

Chapter 6 presents our findings on the Syriacs. The lack of legal minority status according to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) has put the Syriac community in a disadvantaged position as compared to the other, officially recognized minority groups. They have been banned from using their languages in schools and media, and from exercising their religious rights to the full extent. The issue of recognition not only has legal implications but also leads to ramifications for the survival and development of the identities of minority communities. Various studies have shown that minority groups whose identities are not officially recognized are more prone to assimilate into the larger society, since they might wish to put an end to the difficulties resulting from their ambiguous status by means of such assimilation (e.g. Taylor 1994). Another important point rendering the case of the Syriacs distinct from those of the other non-Muslim minorities is that they suffered most from the violence in the southeastern part of Turkey between the state security forces and the Kurdish secessionist groups as well as Islamist actors during the second half of the 1980s and 1990s. Due to these conflicts, many members of the Syriac community emigrated from their ancestral lands in the Turabdin region (the Eastern part of Mardin) to Istanbul, other European cities, and other parts of the world. When many of them sought to return to their homes during the 2000s, following the (temporary) end of the conflicts in the area, they had to struggle against a number of problems to reacquire their lands and properties, which had in the meantime been occupied by others. Other problems the Syriacs struggle with today include registering ancient land holdings of the Mor Gabriel Monastery, recognition of the legal status for their historical and religious sites, return of the properties and lands belonging to their churches and monasteries, recognition of Syriac clergymen, opening of Syriac teaching schools, and acceptance of the usage of names and surnames in the Syriac language.

Chapter 7 compares our findings on the three religious minority groups on the basis of the outcomes of the closed-ended questionnaires and interviews with representatives and members-at-large of the minority communities. It analyzes and explains a wide range of similarities and differences between the perceptions and experiences of the different minority groups. First we examine how strongly the members of minorities identify with their group and which factors are seen as salient for constituting their groups' collective identities. For this purpose we study the perceived relevance of the classic elements of minority group identity—language, culture, history, ethnicity, and religion—but also the perceived relevance of origin and marriage within the group as well as social connections with

other groups. Second, we examine the minority members' relationships with the state and their judgments of the governance of religion in Turkey. Third, we look at their relationships with society and experiences of discrimination. Fourth, we study how they perceive the role played for their situations by the European Union. This analysis allows us not only to compare experiences and perceptions across the three groups and over time but also to draw general conclusions regarding the effects of the EU accession process as well as AKP government on the rights of religious minorities in Turkey, as perceived by our respondents.

The final chapter concisely summarizes some key conclusions to be drawn from our research and briefly elaborates on their relevance, including policy implications for the EU and other promoters of religious minority rights.

Notes

1. This section of the chapter is based on part of the introductory chapter of Freyberg-Inan et al. (2016) by the same authors.
2. Enosis, meaning "union", is an umbrella term for the movements of various Greek communities that live outside Greece and strive for the incorporation of the regions they inhabit into the Greek state.
3. In May 2005 the Turkish parliament approved amendments to the new penal code after EU complaints that the previous version still restricted media freedom. The EU welcomed the move but maintained that the code still failed to meet all its human rights concerns.
4. EU legislation is suspended in the territory occupied by Turkey until a final settlement of the Cyprus conflict.
5. This was not the first time Hrant Dink had been accused in this manner. In January 2007, he was assassinated. The murder provoked outrage in both Turkey and Armenia and was instrumentalized by the Erdoğan government to present its nationalist-secularist enemies as threats to freedom of expression and democracy.
6. In September 2012 a court would jail three generals for 20 years for plotting the alleged Operation Sledgehammer coup. Another 330 officers received lesser sentences. All maintained their innocence. In August 2013 Başbuğ and several other generals received life sentences for plotting to overthrow the government in the culmination of the trials of the government's secularist opponents. On June 19 2014 all the accused were ordered released from prison, pending a retrial, after a finding by the Constitutional Court that their rights had been violated. On March 31 2015 all 236 suspects were finally acquitted after the case's prosecutor had established that important evidence submitted in the case was fake.

7. Cited in "Designierter Premier der Türkei: Yildirim erklärt Verfassungsänderung zur Priorität", *Der Spiegel* 22 May 2016, http://www.spiegel.de/politik/ausland/tuerkei-binali-yildirim-erklaert-verfassungsaenderung-zur-prioritaet-a-1093526.html.

8. There are of course many other external actors which also push for an improvement of minority rights in Turkey. However, this book focuses on the EU, while given its high relevance the impact of the European Court of Human Rights will also become evident.

9. We have not included the Greek minority in our primary data analysis because the number of members of the Greek minority living in Turkey, mostly concentrated in Istanbul, is by now very small. There are only around 3,000 Greeks in Turkey (in comparison, the number of Armenians is between 20 and 25 times higher). This would make it difficult to survey a sufficiently large sample to include this group in our quantitative analysis. Our focus on the Armenians as opposed to the Greeks is also justified by their currently (although not historically) greater importance for the theoretical aims of the book. Turkish responses to the Armenian genocide debate and Turkish-Armenian relations have great international repercussions, reveal deeper national-ideological paradigms and strategies of Turkish foreign and domestic policy, and have feedback effects on the situation of the Armenian minority living in Turkey. In comparison, international relations between Greece and Turkey have in the period under investigation been relatively unproblematic, of less symbolic importance, and less connected to the situation of the Greeks in Turkey. For this reason, the case of the Armenians is more revealing of the international dimension of Turkish religious minority policy, of limits and difficulties to the desecuritization of minority rights, and of the role of European integration in desecuritization processes.

10. One of the very few monographs taking up the issue is Baum (2006). While Baum provides a thorough historical analysis of the status of the Christians in Turkey, his book does not provide much information about developments since 1999 (i.e. during Turkish EU candidacy). A significant part of the book is dedicated to the Christian minorities under Ottoman rule.

11. Official representatives of a group may exaggerate problems for personal or political reasons or trivialize problems or keep secrets because they are afraid of potential problems with state officials. So the analysis of perceptions among "ordinary" group members is not only interesting in its own right but also serves as a "control group" that can confirm or call into question the results of elite interviews or provide new and important perspectives on the groups' problems.

12. All translations from Turkish of interview material are our own.

13. We honor the request by the majority of the interviewed Syriacs and Armenians not to provide any personal or place names for the interviews we conducted with them. We also refrain from providing detailed descriptions of particular incidents and their circumstances—thus reducing the risk of informants being identified on basis of particular details. Some of the Alevi respondents did agree to be identified, in which cases we do provide the relevant information.

14. These reports also refer to non-EU documents, such as the European Convention on Human Rights, the major OSCE documents of the early 1990s, and UN Declarations, when evaluating laws and practices in the candidate states.

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European Integration and Minority Rights

2.1   EU Enlargement and the Evolution of Minority Rights Governance

After the end of the Cold War, the situation of minorities returned to the political agenda of Europe. Before, the bipolar system and the rivalry between the two political blocs had frozen many conflicts that had prevailed within Europe until the Second World War. With the fall of Communism, the breakup of its sealed world, and the foundation of new states in Central and Eastern Europe, the autochthonous ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities could raise their voices again. This chapter will first provide an overview of the evolution of minority rights governance in Europe and then turn to how Turkey's performance in this policy area has been judged by the European Commission over the course of its accession negotiations. The purpose is to make clear why and how minority rights in general, and religious minority rights in particular, are an issue for European governance, EU enlargement, and Turkey-EU relations in particular.

Europe is a multiform continent. With the exception of Iceland, all European territorial states possess national minorities (Cordell and Wolff 2004). The size of these groups varies from larger ones, like the 7 million Catalans, to smaller ones, like the Sorbs in Eastern Germany. Some of these peoples are currently undergoing a revival, like the Scots and Welsh, while others seem to be dying, like the Italian Arbëreshe and the scattered Aromanians on the Balkan Peninsula (Gauß 2001). The European Union

of 15 members contained 73 minorities. After the 2004 enlargement, there were already 156, and since the enlargement of 2007 the EU comprises 187 minorities. Roughly 42 million EU citizens, or 8.8 % of the EU population, belong to an autochthonous minority. In all of Europe there are 338 minorities with ca. 103 million members (Pan 2003: 3–9).

Before the end of the Cold War, only 90 ethnic minority groups with 38 million members had been officially counted in Europe. Due to the introduction of democracy, human rights, and the rule of law, however, many members of minorities could redefine and express their minority identities. Moreover, the number of states has risen considerably since the decline of the Eastern bloc. Fourteen of the currently 46 states in Europe emerged during the post-Cold War years. Although these states only account for approximately one-third of the European states, more than half of the European minorities, that is, 142 ethnic groups, live in these states.

Minority languages range from recently rediscovered idioms to dying languages that are not expected to have a future. There are linguistic islands, cross-border languages, and connections between related but far-off cultural and linguistic groups. Basically, languages can be systematized as follows (Trifunovska 2001; Schröder 1995): First of all, there are languages that only exist in one EU member state, like Breton in France, Welsh in the United Kingdom, and Sardinian and Friulian in Italy. Secondly, languages may exist in several member states, like Basque in France and Spain or Lapp in Finland and Sweden. Thirdly, there are languages that are spoken by a minority in one state but are official language in another state, like Danish in Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark, German in South Tyrol and Austria, or Hungarian in Romania and Hungary. Lastly, a language may be not be bound to a certain geographical region, like Yiddish, Aromanian, or the languages of the Sinti and Roma. In some regions, minority languages are spoken by a majority of the population, like Russian in some areas of the Baltic. Catalan underwent an unexpected renaissance after the end of the repression by Franco's Spain. Even smaller languages, like Ladin, whose extinction had already been predicted, enjoy more and more attention.

Acceptance, promotion, and status of minority languages differ from member state to member state. In 1972, the former French president Georges Pompidou still stated: "Il n'y a pas de place pour les langues minoritaires dans une France destinée à marquer l'Europe de son sceau" (There is no room for minority languages in France, which is destined to create Europe in its own likeness). The Greek constitution acknowledges

no minority languages, and the Romanian constitution defines Romanian as the only language although minority languages are recognized. In contrast, multilingualism is constitutionally honored in Spain, Finland, and Belgium. Minorities and minority languages are politicized and respected to different extents.

Since the European Union enlarged in 2004, 2007, and 2013 toward Central and Eastern European states, the minority issue plays a more important role (Stroschein 2012; Weller 2008). While the situation of minorities in Western Europe seemed to have been settled by liberalization, integration, and legalization of minority rights supported by a long period of economic prosperity, the Union now expanded across areas that have distinctive, historically shaped minority traditions. As the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia showed, this can hold considerable potential for conflicts. The different answers by the EU member states to the declaration of independence of Kosovo show the difficulties they have in reacting adequately to secessions based on minority conflicts. Until now, the Union has not been able to find a common position with regard to Kosovo and to accept its independence. Some member states with large minorities fear a precedent. Moreover, during the last years, some member states have tried to use the existence of a minority within their own borders, or nationals outside their borders, to push their political interests. For instance, since 2002 Hungary has granted special rights to citizens living abroad with the help of the "Hungarian ID card" (Kántor 2004; Gál 2002). This "ID card" facilitates work permits, free medical care, free study in Hungary, and help in promoting the Hungarian language abroad. The affected countries have rejected such activities as interference with their domestic affairs and efforts to contest the results of the Treaty of Trianon.

It has become more and more apparent that the EU has imported instability by its Eastern enlargements (Palermo and Woelk 2003; Riedel 2006). In western states, too, minority parties have gained new support, for example, in Catalonia, the Basque region, Northern Italy, Flanders, Scotland, and Wales. Their radicalization might threaten further integration. The political controversies concerning this topic between some states, but also the silence of other states, indicate an unresolved legacy of European history. The treatment of minorities puts a country's sensitivities and political culture into sharp relief.

The growing integration of the European Union members in the past seems not to have led to an easing of the minority problem. On the contrary, many languages and other identity distinctions have undergone a

"revival" in the age of information and communication. However, with the important exception of Yugoslavia, the conjured up armed nationalist or ethnic conflicts did not appear after the political change in the east of the continent within the territory of the expanding EU. The situation could be pacified in most Central and East European countries during the process that finally led to European Union membership and, although these states treat their minorities differently, the rights of minorities could be codified (Stoel 2001; Blumenwitz and Gornig 1993; Gogolin 1991). In doing so, the Union could also rely on previous and parallel work done by other European and global institutions.

In spite of manifold efforts of international institutions to protect minorities, there is no common consent upon a definition of minority. The concept is interpreted differently in different states and societies. Some contemporary scholars are reluctant to use the word "minority", claiming that it is closely connected with the system of nation states. They prefer the terms "communities", "communalities", "social groups", or "peoples" (Lerner 1991). The most widely recognized definition comes from Francesco Capotorti, Special Rapporteur of the UN Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, who indicated in accordance with Article 27 of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that a minority is "a group which is numerically inferior to the rest of the population of a State and in a non-dominant position, whose members possess ethnic, religious or linguistic characteristics which differ from those of the rest of the population and who, if only implicitly, maintain a sense of solidarity, directed towards preserving their culture, traditions, religion or language" (Capotorti 1979; see also Capotorti 1997). Other legal definitions differ from Capotorti's in minor respects, considering other elements like residence in the territory of a majority-dominated state, granted minority status, non-dominant position, or sense of solidarity among minority members who want to preserve their distinguishing characteristics like religion, language, and ethnicity (Thornberry 1991).

It is a well-known legal problem that in western constitutions only individuals are the objects of protective rights. The constitutions do not comprise group-related rights since groups are no legal entities. In order to still concede a certain level of legal protection to minority groups, relevant legal documents assume that, although individuals are the objects of protection, this protection can be related to their membership in a certain definable group. This idea is based on the consideration that certain rights, like the use of one's own language, can only be realized within a certain

group. Minority rights can thus not be understood as group-related but as rights that may refer to individuals as members of groups. Hornburg (2009: 24) describes this as an "individual-rights-related approach with reference to a collective".

By now, a certain minimum standard of minority rights which states are expected to abide by has emerged from numerous agreements (Hofmann 2002: 563):

1. The right to belong to a national minority. This right is primarily based on the independent decision of the concerned person from which disadvantages must not arise.
2. The right to keep and develop the independent identity of the respective minority, and especially the prohibition of any assimilation policy based on coercion.
3. The right of freedom from discriminatory measures. However, these European minimum standards comprise no right to government measures of positive discrimination in favor of members of national minorities.
4. The right to use the native language in private and in public.
5. The right to learn the native language.
6. The right to found organizations of national minorities, especially for educational, cultural, and social purposes.
7. The right to in principle unrestricted cross-border contacts including the right to receive and spread information freely.
8. The right to participate in principle in political decision processes related to minority issues.

The protection of minorities in Europe is regulated by several bodies of international law. The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) of 1950 already included a prohibition of discrimination which also applies to minorities. Art. 14 ECHR states: "The enjoyment of the rights and freedoms set forth in this Convention shall be secured without discrimination on any ground such as [...] national origin, [...] association with a national minority." However, due to its general nature, the Convention on Human Rights cannot provide full protection of minorities since this must always be connected with special rights named by the Convention, such as the right to non-discrimination (Medda-Windischer 2003; Hillgruber 1993). No right to special promotion of culture or language, for example, can thus be derived from the Convention. However,

there have been legal cases in the past where signatories were forced not to restrict the political and cultural life of their minorities. For example, the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) repeatedly decided in favor of the Kurdish minority in Turkey that freedom of opinion, association, and assembly according to Art. 10 and 11 ECHR apply for all groups. With regard to the legal action "Sejdi-Finci vs. Bosnia-Herzegovina" the judges agreed with the claimants that the Dayton agreement discriminated against them—as members of a minority (Jewish and Roma)—by excluding them from civil service. As a result, a reform of the constitution of the deeply divided country became necessary.

The Council of Europe's Cultural Convention, signed on 19 December 1954 in Paris, for the first time explicitly speaks about the cultural diversity in Europe and its contribution to a common European heritage. However, minorities are not explicitly named. The participating states only commit themselves to promoting the study of the languages, history, and civilizations of the other contracting parties.

The United Nations' International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights of 19 December 1966 assures minorities of the fostering of their languages, religions, and cultures. Members of minorities must not be discriminated against in political and social life und must not be forced to assimilate. Article 27 states: "In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall not be denied the right, in community with the other members of their group, to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language." This article is phrased so that states have to protect their minorities actively and to ensure that their independent identity is stabilized by language courses, financial support of cultural activities, and participation in economic life. The article was seen as a compromise between the stress on individual and that on collective rights. "In its literal wording, the article appears to confer rights only on individuals, but in fact it allows the exercise of collective rights" (Benoit-Rohmer 1996: 23). However, minorities cannot derive a right to autonomy or secession from it. This Covenant was joined by Turkey on 23 September 2003. It has been supplemented by the "Declaration on the Rights of Persons Belonging to National or Ethnic, Religious and Linguistic Minorities" adopted by the UN's General Assembly on 18 December 1992.

In 1982, the then European Community founded the European Bureau for Lesser-Used Languages (EBLUL) seated in Dublin. Its aim was to retain the diversity of languages in Western Europe and to

promote minority languages. This means retaining regional languages as well as promoting languages by legislation on European, national, and regional levels. According to information from the bureau itself, its tasks are providing "EU institutions with any information, documentation or draft documents to develop activities for the defence and promotion of regional and minority languages [...]; disseminating information to the linguistic minority communities about policies and activities carried out by the European Commission, the European Parliament, the EU Council of Ministers; providing expertise to linguistic minorities on particular problems and servicing the communities' needs, particularly in seeking partners, contacting the European institutions and providing adequate information on EU programmes, specifically on examples of good practice" (http://eblul.eurolang.net).

These actions are supplemented by activities of the European Parliament to promote minority languages. On 16 October 1981, the so-called Arfé-resolution was adopted, named after the leading Italian member of parliament (MEP) Gaetano Arfé. This resolution demands a community charter of regional languages and cultures as well as a charter of the rights of ethnic minorities. Two years later, the second Arfé-resolution asked the European Commission and the Council of the EU to intensify their measures for linguistic minorities. In 1993 the European Parliament for the first time approved financial support for regional languages. The Kuijpers-resolution of 30 October 1987, named after a Flemish MEP, calls upon the European institutions and member states to establish measures to acknowledge linguistic rights in education, media, judiciary, administration, and the economy.

The primary law of the old European Community contained no explicit regulations concerning minorities. With regard to the European institutions this time period has therefore been labeled "blind to minorities" (Arnold 2001: 237). Until the 1990s, the protection of minorities was exclusively managed on the national level. Not until the changing situation in Central and Eastern Europe did awareness of the claims of minorities and of the political importance of the minority issue increase. Minority policy was now increasingly perceived as part of the comprehensive transformation the states of Central and Eastern Europe had to embark on. The conflicts in CEE which had before been frozen by Soviet hegemony and the Cold War threatened to break out again. The best example for this is the split-up of the Soviet Union itself into new sovereign nation states. But the manifold entanglements of the peoples of Central and Eastern

Europe as well, a legacy of these multiethnic states, added significant explosiveness to the post-communist transformations. Over centuries, the peoples of Central and Eastern Europe have lived together and against each other. Now, old conflicts threatened to turn the region into a powder keg (Van Evera 1990–91). However, with the exception of Yugoslavia, within the region encompassed by the enlarging European Union the situation stayed peaceful, in good part due to the protection of minority rights by international agreements and institutions (Arp 2008; Bloed 1999; Lantschner and Medda 2002; de Witte 1993).

The Copenhagen document of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) concerning the "human dimension", signed on 29 June 1990 in the early days of the post-Cold War era, includes most fundamental minority rights listed above (Bloed 1996). It explicitly mentions the right to teach a minority language in public educational institutions, respectively, to use it as language of instruction. Moreover, members of a minority must be allowed to maintain own cultural institutions. Based on this agreement, the High Commissioner on National Minorities, whose task was to mitigate minority conflicts by diplomatic means, was introduced early in 1993 (Heintze 2000; Kemp 2001). For the first time, there was a transnational institution in Europe dealing with minorities. The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) from now on engaged the minority issue as well by declarations and actions, especially in Southeastern Europe. The OSCE report of 1999 concerning the linguistic rights of members of national minorities, which compared international standards of minority rights, is another important document in this context.

The Council of Europe began to act in the field of minority protection, too. The European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (ECRML), signed on 5 November 1992 and in force since 1 March 1998, emphasizes the importance of nations for a Europe built on the principles of democracy and cultural diversity (Hofmann 2005; Pfeil 2000; idem 2003). However, it stresses the national sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as the absolute discretion of national states in promoting minority languages. The Charter thus contributes little to the standardization of minority rights. Furthermore, Art. 3 §1 allows each state to define in its ratification or adoption document the regional and minority languages to which the Charter shall apply. By this means, member states can grant their minorities different rights or even exclude particular minorities. The Charter's value is that it elaborates a list of measures legitimized by the

European international community. Immediate rights cannot be derived from it since it sets up no sanctions if its rules are not followed. Moreover, Art. 22 allows every state to resign from the Charter with six months' notice. By its Killilea-resolution of 9 February 1994 concerning linguistic and cultural minorities within the European Community, proposed by the Irishman Mark Killilea, the MEPs supported the ECRML as an "effective but still flexible instrument for the protection and promotion of minority languages" and requested the member states to ratify. However, many EU member states have not yet done so; neither has Turkey.[1]

The Charter was amended and elaborated by the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities signed on 1 February 1995. This was the first pan-European multilateral treaty which explicitly deals with minorities and their rights. In the preamble, the members of the Council of Europe explained their motivation as "being resolved to protect within their respective territories the existence of national minorities, and considering that the upheavals of European history have shown that the protection of national minorities is essential to stability, democratic security and peace in European continent". Due to its nature as a framework, the Convention is no law immediately exercised in the contracting states. The states are nevertheless bound to implement it within their national legislative processes. The Convention encompasses a long list of minority rights. Some of the basic rights are the principle of non-discrimination and the promotion of equality (Art. 4). Culture, religion, language, and traditions of minorities shall be promoted in particular (Art. 5 and 6). More generally, freedom of assembly, association, thought, conscience, and faith shall be granted to minorities (Art. 7 and 8). Particular rights regarding languages concern the use of minority languages in private and public (Art. 10), the right to have a name in one's own language (Art. 11), learning and teaching by using the own language (Art. 12, 13 and 14), as well as the prohibition of forced assimilation (Art. 5 and 16). The right to establish peaceful cross-border contacts to members of the same ethnic, cultural, linguistic, or religious group without hindrance (Art. 17) is its politically most sensitive component (Weller 2005).

Though the Framework Convention contains general aims rather than compulsory normative requirements, the reporting system it includes forces the signatory states to regularly disclose their measures—or the lack thereof—to the critical eyes of a European institutional public. States are thus forced to justify their minority policies. The decisive institution assessing the member states' efforts is the ministerial committee, which

relies in its conclusions and recommendations on reports from the concerned state and consults with it about common measures to implement the Charter. The Framework Convention has so far been ratified by all EU member states with the exception of France and Greece. Turkey has also not yet acceded to the agreement.

The last resolution up to now was adopted by the European Parliament on 13 December 2001 and goes back to the initiative of the Welsh MEP Eluned Morgan. The Morgan-resolution requests the Commission and the Council to ensure with regard to the EU's enlargement that the joining countries respect the regions' and minorities' languages and cultures as well as Art. 22 of the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union.

A final element of standardization of minority policy in Europe, pursued by different parties after the political turn in Central and Eastern Europe, has not yet been achieved. The framework agreements assure basic rights at least, and the upcoming accession of the Central and East European countries revealed that the European Union had to demand minority rights actively (Toggenburg 2006). For the first time, the European Council of Copenhagen 1993 explicitly defined the protection of minorities as an inseparable part of the democracy and rule of law accession criteria. This turned out to be a motivation for the countries of CEE to act in this long neglected policy area. All states in this region have minorities; they can be rather small, as in Hungary, or so big that they can hardly be perceived as a minority, like the Russian citizens in the Baltic States. Some countries only have few minorities, like the Czech and Slovak Republics; others, like Romania, have many. Minority issues are politically explosive if a neighboring country wants to protect or otherwise interfere with members of its own ethnic group, like Russia in the Baltic or Hungary in Romania (Huber and Mickey 1999). Recently, in March 2014, the existence and assumed threat to the Russian population on Crimea served the Russian president Putin as pretext to occupy the peninsula and annex it to Russia.

The Copenhagen criteria served the joining countries of Central and Eastern Europe as a political guideline for their transformation toward democracy and market economy. Although they were not legally binding, their impact was substantial, as they comprised the conditions for the much-coveted EU accession. The Commission's "conditionality regime" (Schimmelfennig 2005; Grabbe 2006; Sedelmeier 2011) noted progress in the process of Europeanization of national policies, granted financial rewards but also imposed sanctions for failure to perform (Vachudova 2005; Pridham 2005; Papadimitriou and Phinnemore 2004). The settlement of the minority issue thus became part of the convergence

process of the states of Central and Eastern Europe with the European Union (Schwellnus 2005; Hughes and Sasse 2003). Progress occurred, even as political elites and populations did not always seem convinced of its intrinsic value. The states of the region drew up bilateral treaties, the Baltic States sought for ways to naturalize the Russian minority.

With regard to the incorporation of minority protection in the *acquis communautaire*, however, the European Union has proceeded with considerable hesitation (Henrard 2002; Toggenburg 2012). Some member states, notably France and Greece, to date do not acknowledge minorities on their territory. Others, like Spain, do not want to set a judicial precedent regarding their minorities on the European level. With the coming into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam in 1999, the EU nevertheless succeeded in incorporating issues of minority rights into its primary law (Bell 1999). Article 13 of the Treaty establishing the European Community (TEC) states: "Without prejudice to the other provisions of this Treaty and within the limits of the powers conferred by it upon the Community, the Council, acting unanimously on a proposal from the Commission and after consulting the European Parliament, may take appropriate action to combat discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation."

A legal quarrel arose about the provision's efficacy. Cautious readers advanced the view that the Treaty of the European Union did not incorporate a passage which explicitly refers to minorities. The European Commission's (2003: 12, fn. 2) opinion is different:

> In the meantime, through the entry into force of the Treaty of Amsterdam in May 1999, the political criteria defined at Copenhagen have been essentially enshrined as a constitutional principle in the Treaty on European Union. Article 6 (1) of the consolidated Treaty on European Union reads: 'The Union is founded on the principles of liberty, democracy, respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.' Accordingly, Article 49 of the consolidated Treaty stipulates that 'Any European State which respects the principles set out in Article 6 (1) may apply to become a member of the Union.' These principles were emphasized in the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, which was proclaimed at the Nice European Council in December 2000.

To this day, this policy area remains a domain where the member states tread very carefully. But despite the absence of a phrase explicitly referring to minorities in the respective primary law, the European Union can be

perceived as having a minority regime. The Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, incorporated in the Treaty of Lisbon, also does contain a provision to respect the diversity of cultures, religions, and languages (Art. 22 of the Charter) which mentions minorities explicitly. Art. 21 (1) stipulates: "Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited." Art. 21 (2) adds: "Within the scope of application of the Treaty establishing the European Community and of the Treaty on European Union, and without prejudice to the special provisions of those Treaties, any discrimination on grounds of nationality shall be prohibited." Similar phrases can be found in the anti-racism guideline of 29 June 2000 (Bell 2002).[2] This guideline banned discrimination based on ethnic or racial origin and allowed measures to promote disadvantaged groups. During the last years there have been no profound changes in primary law, although the motto of the constitutional treaty elaborated by the Convent on the Future of the European Union in 2003 was "United in diversity", although the preamble of the European Union explicitly speaks about an integration of the states and peoples, and although many concepts of European identity refer to a special experience and valuation of diversity. The provisions of the Amsterdam Treaty found their way, nearly word by word, into the Treaty of Lisbon (Art. 19).

The outlined development of minority rights governance in Europe shows that during the last years the European Union has sought to strengthen the rights of minorities and promote their existence. However, the adopted norms cannot crucially change or improve the situation of some linguistic and other minorities, since national legal systems determine norm implementation and not all member states are willing to accept restrictions to their sovereignty in this sensitive area (Arntz 1998: 59). No resolution or decision restricts the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the member states, and they are not obliged to implement the demanded measures.

While the European Union's internal law is only very mildly interventionist, with regard to the accession of the states of Central and Eastern Europe the EU places stronger emphasis on legal commitment. The protection of minorities was incorporated in several accession treaties and was increasingly perceived as binding. In general, this also applies for the trading partners of the ACP states. A provision was, e.g. included in the agreement of Cotonou in 2000 which states that financial support and trade facilitation must not

be granted in the presence of discrimination due to race, ethnic origin, or religion. But especially regarding Central and Eastern Europe, compliance with minority protection and anti-discrimination norms became a treaty norm and was thus painstakingly controlled. Violation of this norm was from now on considered a treaty violation. Negative sanctions, so-called suspensive provisions, were particularly integrated into the last accession treaties with Bulgaria, Romania, and Croatia.

Financial support for the Balkan states was granted dependent upon the protection of minority rights and explicitly served "the creation of an institutional and legislative framework to underpin democracy, the rule of law and human and minority rights, reconciliation and the consolidation of civil society".[3] This provision also applies in the current accession process with Turkey. Financial support and the strengthening of the rights of minorities are perceived as connected in an unambiguous relationship of conditionality: "The projects and programmes financed with this support must further Turkey's economic and social development, help to promote the defence of human rights and respect for, and the protection of, the country's minorities, and contribute to the reform of its development policies and the restructuring of its institutional and legal framework in order to ensure compliance with these principles."[4] Provisions for minority protection were also included in accession partnerships between the Union and states moving toward membership (Saatçioğlu 2009).[5] Turkey is thus bound to this norm as elaborated above, and the protection of minorities has become a building block of a possible accession to the European Union (Saatçioğlu 2011). Differently put, the development of minority protection has become an element of Turkey's Europeanization and its European integration process. This has pushed the transformation of legal, political, and social conditions in this policy area toward European norms. However, this process has clearly not been completed, as we will see in the following section.

2.2   The EU's Evaluation of Turkey's Progress in the Field of Minority Rights from 1998 to 2015

The European Union plays an important role for the political, economic, and social changes in Turkey, especially since the beginning of the accession process. A first approach was made by the government of Tansu Ciller, who signed a customs union agreement with the EU in March 1995. In 1999, Turkey officially received the long-desired candidate status by the

EU's Helsinki summit, which accelerated domestic political reforms. On 8 March 2001 the European Council adopted an Accession Partnership (AP) with Turkey with the goal of setting out in a single framework the priority areas which need to be focused on in order to facilitate accession. In turn, Turkey adopted its National Program for the Adoption of the Acquis (NPAA) on 19 March 2001. The AP was revised in 2003, 2006, and 2008, updating the priorities that Turkey should fulfill in the short- and medium-term. In response, Turkey adopted two more NPAAs in 2003 and 2008.

Between 2001 and 2004 far-reaching constitutional changes and other reforms were passed—some of them also affecting minorities. After his coming into power, Prime Minister Erdoğan continued to pursue these reforms, so that the European Commission, in its progress report of 2004, confirmed that Turkey had sufficiently met the Copenhagen political criteria. The Commission thus recommended starting direct negotiations for membership, which finally began on 3 October 2005. After a short and intensive episode of Europeanization, the pace of reforms then lessened, for different reasons. Especially some member states' reservations nearly stopped the dialogue. Still, before the end of our research period, Commissioner for Enlargement Štefan Füle and Turkish Minister for EU Affairs Egemen Bağış moved to continue the process from May 2012 onward within the framework of the "Positive Agenda", which was also supported by the member states. This persistence was rewarded, as in November 2013 a new negotiation chapter (on regional policy) was opened and the accession negotiations continued.

The annual progress reports prepared by the European Commission on EU candidate countries are the main source of information for EU institutions and member states on the extent to which the candidate countries comply with the Copenhagen criteria. The reports also serve the candidate countries to indicate their shortcomings and the areas in which improvement is needed. From 1998 to 2015 the European Commission drafted 18 progress reports on Turkey. Below we provide a summary of the sections of these reports dealing with the protection of minorities, with a particular focus on religious minorities. The aim is to reveal which, from the point of view of the Commission, are the challenges and shortcomings with respect to (religious) minority rights in Turkey. In addition to the European Commission progress reports, the issue of Turkey's minorities was also taken up in the European Parliament by way of written and oral questions. The EU-Turkey Joint Parliamentary

Committee meetings have been another occasion at which the situations of minorities have been discussed frequently. Information on the evaluations provided there is added below where appropriate.

The first regular report by the European Commission on Turkey's progress toward accession was drafted at the end of 1998 in response to the request of the Cardiff European Council of June 1998. Since Turkey was not categorized as an EU candidate yet at that time, the 1998 regular report on Turkey was the shortest among all the progress reports. While it touches upon the non-Muslim minorities very briefly, it allocates the bulk of the heading "minority rights and protection of minorities" to the Kurdish issue.[6] The report also draws attention to the difficulties faced by the Syriac community due to not being recognized by the Lausanne Treaty and mentions the situation of the Alevi very briefly. The 1999 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress toward Accession was prepared prior to the Helsinki European Council meeting in December 1999. The report mentions the Kurdish issue very briefly.[7] Apart from pointing to the difference of treatment between those religious minorities acknowledged by the Lausanne Treaty and other religious minorities, the report is silent on the case of the non-Muslim minorities.

The 2000 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession is the first full-fledged report for Turkey and was drafted after the Helsinki European Council meeting of December 1999, where Turkey was granted the status of official candidate for accession to the EU. The report highlights international instruments adopted by Turkey in the field of human rights in 2000. In the 2000 regular report, too, the case of religious minorities occupies little space.[8] While the report acknowledges increased tolerance toward non-Muslim religious minorities, it stresses the importance of expanding this positive approach to include the minorities not covered by the Lausanne Treaty and draws attention to continuing closure of the Khalki Seminary. This had been the main school of theology of the Eastern Orthodox Church's Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople until the Turkish parliament enacted a law banning private higher education institutions in 1971. Ever since then, efforts to have the seminary reopened have met with no success. The report also covers the Alevi complaints regarding compulsory Sunni religious education in schools and school books as well as availability of financial aid only for the construction of Sunni mosques and religious foundations.

The 2001 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession highlights the fact that the Turkish government issued a circular in June 2001 to local authorities on the return of Syriacs to their villages in

Southeastern Turkey, which they had had to evacuate in the preceding years.[9] It mentions the permission given by President Ahmet Sezer for the opening of a new Syrian Orthodox church in Istanbul. While the report praises the fact that churches and other buildings owned by minority foundations no longer need to acquire official permission for restoration, it, however, emphasizes hardships confronted by Christian churches, in particular with respect to ownership of property. The report points to the unchanged status of the Khalki Seminary and the lack of recognition of the legal status of various churches. The section regarding the Alevi in this year's report is almost the same as in previous report. Additionally, the 2001 report points out that Alevi complaints have not been dealt with by the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*).[10]

The 2002 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession is the last regular report published during the Motherland Party (ANAP)-Nationalist Action Party (MHP)-Democratic Left Party (DSP) coalition government era and comments on some significant changes adopted by that government regarding the non-Muslim minorities, in particular an amendment to the Law of Foundations.[11] Thanks to an amendment made to the Law on Foundations under the so-called "third reform package", "community foundations" were allowed, as of August 2002, to acquire and dispose of property, irrespective of whether or not they own the statute of foundations. The report, however, points out that the Law on Foundations has a number of shortcomings when it comes to its implementation, such as the necessity of obtaining permission from the Council of Ministers for the purpose of acquisition and disposal of new property and the impossibility of the return of confiscated property. The report praises Turkey's ratification of the 1969 UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination. Furthermore, it takes up the difficulties of the training of clergy for religious minorities as well as the lack of autonomy at the schools of the religious communities that are supervised by Turkish deputy heads, who have greater authority than the heads represented by the religious communities themselves. The report draws particular attention to the difficulties faced by the Syriac community in teaching its liturgical language to the new generations, since it lacks the right to establish schools. It also reiterates the subjective and inaccurate content of compulsory religion courses in schools concerning descriptions of other religions.

The 2003 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession is the first regular report that was issued during the tenure of the AKP.[12] It welcomes the ratification of the UN International Covenant on Civil

and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the UN International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) in June 2003 by the Turkish Parliament. Yet, Turkey had made reservations to the former international regulation regarding the rights of national minorities. As a result of the amendment to the Law on Foundations as part of the "fourth reform package" and a regulation issued in January 2003, foundations no longer need permission from the Council of Ministers in order to acquire, dispose of, and register properties. Also, under the "sixth reform package", the deadline for the registration of minority foundations' properties was extended from six to 18 months. Following the amendment to the Law on Public Works in 2003, the word "mosque" was replaced with the phrase "places of worship", covering churches and synagogues and facilitating construction of places of worship other than mosques. When it comes to the situation of the Alevi, the previously banned Union of Alevi and Bektaşi Associations obtained legal status in April 2003. In January 2003 Turkish authorities for the first time allowed the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities to visit Turkey with a view to launching a dialogue on the situation of national minorities.

The 2004 Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession constituted the basis on which the European Commission formulated its recommendation as to whether Turkey meets the Copenhagen political criteria prior to the European Council meeting in Brussels in 2004.[13] Therefore, the report not only provides an assessment of the developments in 2004, but also includes a broader evaluation of Turkey's progress concerning the political criteria since the Helsinki European Council meeting in December 1999. It also evaluates the extent to which Turkey has fulfilled the Accession Partnership priorities. A Regulation on the Methods and Principles of the Boards of Non-Muslim Religious Foundations adopted in June 2004 aims to tackle the difficulties concerning the elections to the boards of foundations, which is a legal requirement in order to prevent the confiscation of their properties. The new regulation helps enlarge the geographical area within which elections may be held to the adjacent province. The report criticizes that efforts to restore churches must undergo a slow and cumbersome authorization procedure. As regards the status of the Alevi, no improvement was reported. A significant development on the minorities is the abolition in January 2004 of the "Secondary Committee for Minorities", which became operational with a secret decree in 1962 with the aim of conducting surveillance on minorities. This body was replaced by another called the "Minority Issues Assessment Board", now

tasked with tackling the difficulties faced by non-Muslim minorities. The report states that the Greek minority on the island Gökçeada (*Imvros*) has faced problems when it came to the reopening of their schools and the current land registry. It also underlines that very few Syriacs were able to return from abroad, in particular because of the harassment they face when doing so.

From 2005 onwards, after the start of accession talks, regular reports on Turkey are labeled "progress reports". According to the 2005 Progress Report, Turkey had made limited progress in the area of freedom of religion since October 2004 in terms of both legislation and practice.[14] In spite of improvements in the legislation on associations, the religious communities still do not have the right to establish associations with legal personality for the promotion and protection of their religions. In June 2005, the Council of State's ruling overturned the decision of the Directorate General of Foundations to take over the management of the Büyükada Greek Girls' and Boys' Orphanage Foundation in 1997 on the grounds that it was no longer in a position to carry out charitable services. As in the preceding year, no change was reported with respect to the rights of the Alevi. The report also raises concern over the reservation made by Turkey to the ICCPR concerning the rights of minorities and its reservation to the ICESCR with respect to the right of education.

While the 2006 Progress Report on Turkey acknowledges that freedom of worship is generally respected, it also points to the difficulties experienced by non-Muslim religious communities on the ground.[15] The report underlines the difficulties faced by the Syriac community with respect to property, pointing out that those who have lost their Turkish nationality are not able to register their property in the land registry. As in the previous reports, it is stressed that Turkey has not signed the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities or the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. No progress was reported on the status of the Alevi.

The 2007 Progress Report on Turkey draws attention to the ongoing dialogue between the government and the non-Muslim communities.[16] It laments an increase in attacks carried out on non-Muslim communities, and cautions that missionaries have been portrayed in the media or by the authorities as a threat to the integrity of the country. The report highlights a circular issued by the Ministry of Interior in June 2007, asking the governors of all provinces to take the necessary precautions in order to prevent the recurrence of attacks on non-Muslim citizens. According to the regulation

implementing the Law on Demographic Services, which took effect in November 2006, a written statement by citizens would be necessary for the entry, amendment, or deletion of the information requested on religion in the family registries. With respect to compulsory religious classes, which Alevi pupils also had to attend, it is reported that the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) took a unanimous decision in October 2007 that with this practice Turkey had violated Article 2 of Protocol No. 1 (right to education) to the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR). The report also complains that the Ecumenical Patriarch is not allowed to use the ecclesiastical title Ecumenical on all occasions.

The 2008 Progress Report on Turkey welcomes the government's initiative aimed at addressing the grievances of the Alevi community.[17] It also notes that for the first time a municipal council recognized a *cem* house as a place of worship and received the same water charges from it as it did from a mosque. The report states that in March 2008, in two separate cases, the Council of State ruled that children of Alevi families were exempted from attending compulsory religious culture and ethics classes. Furthermore, the new Law on Foundations adopted in February 2008 brought some improvements to the rights on foundations belonging to the non-Muslim minorities, such as in the rights to own and manage property without prior permission, set up firms and commercial bodies, transfer properties to another foundation, and register in the Land Registry immovable property which was either entered in their 1936 declarations or owned by community foundations after their 1936 declarations but not registered under their names. Despite these significant changes to the Law on Foundations, it still does not tackle the issue of properties seized and sold to third parties, nor that of properties of foundations that were fused before the new legislation was adopted. Another development concerning the properties belonging to non-Muslim communities was that on 8 July 2008, the ECtHR ruled that Turkey was not entitled to deprive the Ecumenical Patriarchate of its property acquired in 1902 without providing for appropriate compensation, and that Turkish authorities had violated the ECHR.

The 2009 Progress Report on Turkey reports that the Turkish authorities answered the Ecumenical Patriarchate's applications for work permits positively in December 2008.[18] Dialogue between the Turkish authorities and representatives of non-Muslim communities continued. With respect to the situation of the Alevi community, significant developments took place. In December 2008, on the occasion of the inauguration ceremony of the first Alevi Institute, the Minister of Culture apologized to the Alevi

community for the wrongdoings committed by the state. Workshops were held by the government to address the problems of the Alevi. In an important gesture, state television TRT broadcast programs concerning the Alevi Muharram celebrations. *Cem* houses were granted recognition as places of worship by three municipal councils and were given the same financial advantages as mosques. Administrative courts in Antalya, Ankara, and Istanbul decided that Alevi students should be exempted from attending the compulsory religious culture and ethics course. In March 2009, the ECtHR decided that Turkey was in violation of the property rights of a Greek Orthodox church on the island of Bozcaada (*Tenedos*). Similarly, the ECtHR held Turkey responsible for violating property rights of two Armenian foundations.

The 2010 Progress Report on Turkey states that the Turkish authorities allowed Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholomew to celebrate on 15 August 2010, after a hiatus of nine decades, the Divine Liturgy of the Dormition of Theotokos at the Soumela Monastery in the Black Sea province of Trabzon.[19] In a similar vein, 19 September 2010 witnessed the first religious service held since 1915 at the Armenian Holy Cross church on the Akhdamar Island in Lake Van. The fact that the 14 members of the Greek Orthodox clergy obtained Turkish citizenship eased the work of the Patriarchate and of the Holy Synod. In May 2010, the first circular was issued by the Prime Ministry to all relevant authorities with a view to protecting the rights of non-Muslim Turkish minorities. In the framework of the government's Alevi initiative, seven workshops were held with the participation of various occupational categories. On 15 June 2010, the ECtHR ruled that Turkey had to re-register in the land register, in the applicant's name, the property of the Ecumenical Patriarchate that had been expropriated in 1902 and dedicated to a specific use in 1903 via the Foundation of the Büyükada Greek Orphanage for Boys. The report draws attention to the fact that anti-Semitism is an important problem, in particular in the pro-Islamist and ultra-nationalist media.

The 2011 Progress Report on Turkey again draws attention to the ongoing dialogue between the representatives of non-Muslim communities and the Turkish authorities, including a visit by a deputy prime minister to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, the first visit by a high-ranking official to the Patriarchate since the 1950s.[20] Concerning the Alevi, after seven workshops were held during 2009, a final report was drafted in March 2011. New religious education textbooks were prepared which contained information on the Alevi faith. Madımak Hotel in Sivas, where on 2 July 1993

37 Alevi had died in an arson attack, was nationalized and converted into a Science and Culture Center. But the report reiterates that missionaries are often portrayed as a threat to the integrity of the country and to the Muslim religion. As for the property rights of non-Muslim communities, the Law on Foundations was amended for the fourth time since 2002. The new legislation allowed non-Muslim community foundations to register in the Land Registry, under their names, immovable property entered in their 1936 declarations for which either the owner entry was left blank, or which are registered in the name of the Treasury, the Directorate General for Foundations, municipalities and special provincial administrations, or cemeteries and fountains registered in the name of public institutions. A major shortcoming in the previous legislation was overhauled by providing compensation at market values for foundation properties currently registered with third parties, i.e. properties seized and sold to third parties, and which cannot be returned to the foundations. In March 2011, Turkey transferred the property titles for the Kimisis Theotokou Greek Orthodox church on the island of Bozcaada to the Bishop of *Imvros* and *Tenedos* on the basis of the ECtHR judgment of March 2009. The Ministry of National Education helped minority schools by providing support for the translation into Armenian of mathematics and introduction to science textbooks and distributing them free of charge for the 2010–2011 academic year.

The 2012 Progress Report on Turkey complains that concrete follow-up on the Alevi initiative of 2009 was lacking.[21] Despite the so-called Alevi opening which had been visible for a few years, *cem* houses still lack official recognition. The report underlined that missionary activities continue to be perceived as a threat. For instance, a *Diyanet* five-year strategy includes objectives to monitor and evaluate missionaries in Turkey and abroad. Concerning property rights, following the publication of the implementing regulation for the Foundations Law in October 2011, the Foundations Council approved the return of 58 properties and the payment of compensation for 8 properties as of 18 September 2012. Nevertheless, a great number of properties belonging to the Latin Catholic Church remain confiscated by the state. Furthermore, improvements concerning the Law on Foundations do not cover fused foundations and properties confiscated from Alevi foundations. An important development with respect to minority rights was that for the first time representatives of officially non-recognized minorities were invited to parliament to express their opinions on a new constitution. However, the report finds that Turkey's overall stance on minorities continues to be restrictive.

The 2013 Progress Report on Turkey confirms once more that Turkey generally respects freedom of worship.[22] However, the report stresses that non-Muslim groups continue to face difficulties because of the problems in connection with acquiring legal personality. These problems include difficulties regarding property rights, access to justice, fundraising, and the ability of foreign clergy to obtain residence and work permits. Regarding property rights, by August 2013, while the return of 253 properties and the payment of compensation for 18 properties were approved by the Foundations Council, 878 applications were not found eligible. No progress was made with respect to the Alevi initiative of the AKP government. Dialogue between the government and the representatives of minorities continued. As a good will gesture, a Turkish minister called on minorities who had been forced to leave Turkey to return. As a result of a Court decision in August 2013, Syriacs became able to open their own schools.

The 2014 Progress Report on Turkey reiterates that the Alevi issue has not been settled yet, stressing the importance of recognizing the *cem* houses and of introducing a system whereby school children could be exempted from compulsory religious culture and ethics courses without their parents having to disclose their religious beliefs.[23] While it points out that the Foundations Council approved the return of 318 properties and the payment of compensation for 21 properties by April 2014, it stresses the importance of proper and swift implementation of the 2011 legislation regarding the Law on Foundations. The report acknowledges the return of 12 parcels of land to Mor Gabriel monastery in October 2014 and the fact that Mor Gabriel monastery received the title deeds in February. However, the report highlights the fact that Syriacs still confront a number of problems regarding property and land registration.

The 2015 Progress Report on Turkey stresses the importance for Turkey to harmonize its legislation with ECtHR rulings, drawing particular attention to the implementation of rulings on exemption from compulsory religious classes, indication of religious convictions on identity cards, legal personality of religious bodies and institutions, regulations regarding participation in religious elections, places of worship, and work and residence permits for foreign clergy.[24] The report asks Turkey to implement the recent Court of Cassation judgment on the recognition of *cem* houses. The report also draws attention to the fact that the authorities have not yet granted official permission to the Ecumenical Patriarchate that it may use the "ecumenical" title freely; the restrictions on the training of clergy continue; the Armenian Patriarchate's demand to open a university department for the Armenian

language and Armenian clergy has still not been met; the Syriac Orthodox community is not able to provide training at official schools; problems continue for Greek nationals in inheriting and registering property.

In conclusion, it is clear that progress in the area of the rights of religious minorities in Turkey has, from the point of view of the European Commission, been uneven and mixed. When we look across time at how Turkey has responded to the criticisms and comments by the EU as laid out above, in the form of accession partnership documents (ACPs), reforms delivered, and actual practice, we can see that it has displayed a tendency to interpret European standards on minority rights in a narrow and restrictive manner, emphasizing individual human rights and democratic stability rather than prioritizing minority rights. While the Foundations Law has been repeatedly amended, granting minority communities important practical benefits, an opening toward the Alevi community in particular was clearly visible for a few years, and some progress has also been made in allowing for minority religious education and language use, many problems remain, and in the past few years there have been no significant further improvements. The following chapter will explain why and how these difficulties have come about and are so difficult to address, by taking us through a detailed history of Turkey's religious minority history. It will argue that progress in the field of minority rights has been slow due to minority rights being viewed in the context of a political culture giving primacy to national unity and security. Yet, despite its restrictive interpretation of minority rights, Turkey's progress since the 1990s shows a marked contrast to the Cold War past. These trends are explained using the concepts of securitization and desecuritization, which will be laid out on the following pages.

Notes

1. EU members who have not ratified are Belgium, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, and Portugal.
2. Council directive 2000/43/EC of 29 June 2000 implementing the principle of equal treatment between persons irrespective of racial or ethnic origin.
3. Council regulation (EC) No 2666/2000 of 5 December 2000 on assistance for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, repealing Regulation (EC) No 1628/96 and amending Regulations (EEC) No 3906/89 and (EEC) No 1360/90 and Decisions 97/256/EC and 1999/311/EC, Art. 2, No. 2, b.

4. Regulation (EC) No 257/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 January 2001 regarding the implementation of measures to promote economic and social development in Turkey, No. 12 and Art. 4, 1, h.

5. Council decision of 23 January 2006 on the principles, priorities and conditions contained in the Accession Partnership with Turkey, 2006/35/EC.

6. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 1998, COM(1998) 771.

7. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 1999, COM(1999) 513.

8. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 8.11.2000, COM(2000) 713.

9. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 13.11.2001, SEC(2001) 1756.

10. The Presidency of Religious Affairs (Turkish: *Diyanet İşleri Başkanlığı*) was established in 1924 after the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the Grand National Assembly as a successor to the previous religious authority Sheikh ul-Islam. According to its statute, the duties of the Diyanet are "to execute the works concerning the beliefs, worship, and ethics of Islam, enlighten the public about their religion, and administer the sacred worshiping places"

11. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 9.10.2002, SEC(2002) 1412.

12. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 2003, (no document classification).

13. European Commission Regular Report on Turkey's Progress Towards Accession, Brussels, 6.10.2004, SEC(2004) 1201.

14. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 9.11.2005, SEC(2005) 1426.

15. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 8.11.2006, SEC(2006) 1390.

16. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 6.11.2007, SEC(2007) 1436.

17. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 5.11.2008, SEC(2008) 2699.

18. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 14.10.2009, SEC(2009) 1334.

19. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 9.11.2010, SEC(2010) 1327.

20. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 12.10.2011, SEC(2011) 1201 final.

21. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 10.10.2012, SWD(2012) 336 final.

22. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 16.10.2013, SWD(2013) 417 final.
23. European Commission Turkey Progress Report, Brussels, 8.10.2014, SWD(2014) 307 final.
24. European Commission Turkey Report, Brussels, 10.11.2015, SWD(2015) 216 final.

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Securitization and Desecuritization of Minority Rights

3.1 Minority Rights in Political Context: The Vocabulary of "Securitization" and "Desecuritization"

To make sense of the results of our empirical analysis of the evolution and experience of minority rights in Turkey before and since the Helsinki Summit of 1999, we employ the vocabulary of "securitization" and "desecuritization". This theoretical vocabulary has been developed by the Securitization Theory school of thought within Critical Security Studies. The relevant theoretical literature is large and encompasses many debates regarding the proper interpretation and usage of the concepts. We do not enter these debates here, nor do we attempt to do justice to this large and complex body of thought. Instead, this section will briefly develop the concepts of "securitization" and "desecuritization" as they are used in this book and establish their usefulness for thinking about our questions: how minority rights have been dealt with (or neglected) in Turkish politics, and the role the EU has played in this process.

Securitization Theory (e.g. Buzan et al. 1998; Buzan 2006; Waever 2000, 1995; Bagge Lautsen and Waever 2000; Balzacq 2009; Bigo 2006a, b, c, 2005, 2002, 1996; Bigo et al. 2009; Guild 2009; Guild and Carrera 2009; Guild et al. 2009; Huysmans 2006, 2000; de Wilde 2008) draws attention to the politics of how security agendas are formed and

how political issues that do not necessarily have to be viewed in relation to security concerns, come to be so viewed. Buzan et al. (1998: 25), representatives of the so-called Copenhagen School of Securitization Theory, define securitization as the "intersubjective establishment of an existential threat with a saliency sufficient to have substantial political effects". If an issue is securitized, it "is presented as an existential threat, requiring emergency measures and justifying actions outside the normal bounds of political procedure" (Buzan et al. 1998: 24). By successfully evoking security concerns, a state of exception is constructed in which extraordinary measures appear justified as a response to the perceived threat, even as "securitisation does not *necessarily* lead to the adoption of exceptional measures" (Balzacq 2009: 18, emphasis in original). The solutions to the perceived security threat put forward by securitizing actors can be coercive not only by virtue of expanding opportunities for applying coercive means to deal with the supposed threat (e.g. supposed threats posed by minorities), but more generally by virtue of being predominantly control-oriented as opposed to rights-based (see e.g. Bigo et al. 2009; Guild 2009; Guild and Carrera 2009; Guild et al. 2009).

Securitization stands in contrast to "normal politics" in liberal democracies, where issues are dealt with in the context of adherence to liberal political values and an open political process (Buzan 2006). Securitization "lifts" an issue above normal politics "with an urgency and 'necessity' that often has anti-democratic effects" (Bagge Lautsen and Waever 2000: 708). A logic akin to that of war emerges, as the sources of the constructed threat are identified as (potential) enemies of society (Waever 1995: 55). As Schmitt (1996 [1932]) pointed out already in the 1930s, the perception of an enemy has the unique capacity to unite the functionally fragmented society of the liberal state (and in this sense provide a willing audience for securitization) (cf. Huysmans 2006). Securitization can therefore be seen as a political technique that relies on an invocation of threat to create political power that is otherwise unachievable in liberal society (Schmitt 1996[1932]), while simultaneously threatening that society's liberal order (or preventing its liberal reordering). Desecuritzation, as the opposite process, moves an issue "out of emergency mode and into the normal bargaining process of the political sphere" (Buzan et al. 1998: 4). It represents a normalization toward liberal-democratic politics.

The second section of this chapter will explain that and how minority rights, even the very existence of minorities in Turkey, have historically been securitized within Turkish politics (Karakya Polat 2009, 2008; Soner

2010). This has stood in the way of developing and implementing liberal democratic policies with respect to minority rights. The third section of this chapter will explain, and the remainder of this book will illustrate, that partly as a consequence of the EU accession process and associated conditionalities, minority rights in Turkey have been partially desecuritized, with mixed consequences (cf. Karakaya Polat 2009, 2008; Soner 2010; Onar and Özgüneş 2010; Grigoriades 2008; Erdogan 2006).

The Copenhagen School has studied securitization as predominantly a discursive process (Buzan et al. 1998; Waever 2000: 251). Securitizing agents use dramatic invocation to declare an issue to be an existential threat to a referent object (traditionally the state), citing exceptional urgency and the need to move beyond normal politics. This can make restrictive policies which can interfere with liberal values politically feasible. This approach is, however, usefully complemented by a focus on the bureaucratic elements of securitizing regimes and the role of securitizing agents as political actors. According to the Paris School of Securitization Theory (cf. Bigo 2005; Huysmans 2006), securitization relies on routines wherein the existence of a bureaucratic field of security-relevant knowledge is crucial. Political actors maneuver themselves into and employ such positions of perceived expertise as "protectors" of society. This allows us to more clearly see securitization as a political intervention: It tangibly reflects securitizing agents' identities and interests. Securitization and desecuritization are political and politically embattled processes, because the construction and deconstruction of critical threats serves to legitimize and empower actors above one another and transforms the governance of an issue area and even the polity itself (de Wilde 2008: 597). In the case of the securitization of minority rights in Turkey, state and military actors for many decades colluded as a securitizing bureaucracy, as will be further explained in section two below (see also Karakaya Polat 2008). The process of partial desecuritization since the 1990s has gone hand in hand with the relative disempowerment of those actors and the empowerment of another composite elite, headed by the AKP government, as we will discuss in section three (see also Grigoriades 2008; Cebeci 2007).

Since the securitization of minority rights in Turkey is a long-term historical process with roots dating back to the late Ottoman Empire, it fits the vision of securitization advanced by Jef Huysmans (2006), who argues that securitization should be seen as a sustained, historically informed, and longer term move away from (what could have been) normal liberal to exceptional politics. We follow Huysmans (2006: 61) in conceptualizing

securitization as "characterised by a circular logic of defining and modulating hostile factors for the purpose of countering them politically and administratively". Complementary to Huysmans' (2000, 2006) approach and also inspirational for our work is Didier Bigo's (2002, 2006a, b, c) conceptualization of securitization as "governmentality of unease", a developing process of bureaucratic routines involving a wide range of techniques and technologies for control. Bigo (1996) has coined the term "security continuum" to describe a situation in which different policy areas are linked together under the banner of security. Such a "security continuum" has been evident in Turkey with respect to the linked policy fields of human and minority rights and governance of religion, as nationalism and secularism in conjunction have been intrinsically tied to the security of the state in the Kemalist Republic. While these structures and routines have shifted in the past decades, and partial desecuritization of minority rights is in evidence, they have been so deeply embedded in the Turkish society and state that they are not easily dislodged. Moreover, desecuritization of minority rights is not necessarily all good news for minorities, as we will see throughout this book. Both the extent of the challenge facing this desecuritization process and its potential negative externalities have been underestimated by the European Union as an external agent for domestic change in Turkey.

As has been shown in the previous chapter, the issue of minority rights rose high on the EU's agenda after the end of the Cold War as a response to the threats of multiple conflicts emerging, especially in Central and Eastern Europe, once the relations between minorities and majorities there had become "unfrozen". In this sense the reasons for which minority rights rose to prominence in European governance had a great deal to do with security concerns. Among other, perhaps more altruistic reasons, European governments sought to alleviate minority grievances to minimize security challenges to them that might otherwise arise due to instability and war in Europe. Still, it is fair to say that the EU's intervention in this issue area in the form of accession conditionality, as overviewed in Chap. 2 and further elaborated throughout this book, aimed to provide a desecuritizing impulse for minority rights in candidate countries. Perhaps counterintuitively, the very fact that EU members have security interests in stability in Turkey and the surrounding region provides an impetus for the desecuritization of religious minority rights there. It does so through the various components of enlargement policy and the broader Europeanization process in which it is embedded, which support

a "normalization" of religious minority politics according to liberal-democratic values. Arguably, the most important contribution of the EU to the desecuritization of minority rights in Turkey is its *enabling* impact (other possible types of impact being compulsory, connective, and constructive; Diez et al. 2006). This is because desecuritizing actors in Turkish politics can use the legal and normative framework of the EU to justify their complaints and delegitimize previously dominant securitizing stances. In other words, without the enabling impact of the EU, which legitimizes the desecuritizing moves of critical actors in Turkish politics, a change of discourse and policy and democratization concerning the rights of minorities would likely have been and be more difficult.

However, EU actors have shown little comprehension of or understanding for the fact that minority rights have been heavily securitized domestically for Turkey's entire Republican history, and to some extent even before. They have in this sense underestimated both the challenge facing the struggle for improved minority rights in Turkey and their own relevance for this struggle. The next section of the chapter will reveal the deep roots and long history of the securitization of minority rights in Turkey, while the third and final part will examine the slow and incomplete desecuritization of minority rights which we have seen since 1999, at least in part as a result of EU influence.

3.2   The History of Securitization of Minority Rights in Turkey: Ethnic and Religious Diversity and the Political Perception of the Minority Question

Multi-ethnicity and Multi-religiousness in Turkey: An Overview

Turkey's multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature is characterized by various interethnic, interreligious and confessional links and multi-lateral relationships. This makes this topic very varied, complicated, and complex. Already at the time when Ottoman rule was established, the Anatolian space was characterized by the co-existence of different ethnicities and religions. This diversity increased over the course of the following centuries due to the Empire's gradual expansion into parts of Southeast Europe, Asia Minor, North Africa, and the Caucasus. The heyday of ethnic diversity was reached in the nineteenth century, as the Empire's gradual loss

of the non-Anatolian regions and the resulting consequences led to the migration of numerous members of Muslim, non-Turkish ethnic groups to Anatolia (especially from the Caucasus and Balkan regions). This increased not only the region's diversity, but also the relative proportion of Muslims in the population. This process continued in the twentieth century, but was accompanied by a relative loss of ethnic diversity due to persecution, murder, emigration, and expulsion of a large part of the non-Muslim resp. Christian population (see Giesel 2013: 321–344).

From the foundation of the Turkish Republic until the end of the twentieth century, the policies toward ethnic and national groups or minorities pursued in the Anatolian and West Thracian heartland of the former Ottoman Empire, which was destroyed in the 1920s, were shaped to a significant extent by rigid ethnic homogenization or Turkification attempts. Their main features were forced assimilation and measures aimed directly or indirectly at the expulsion of certain groups (see below). While this has reduced the country's diversity both qualitatively and quantitatively, Turkey has remained home to a multi-ethnic and multi-religious society until today. Since the 1990s non-Turkish ethnic identities have, however, been partially strengthened as a result of socio-political liberalization and processes of ethnic revival. In this context, it is important to recognize that ethnicity is a flexible social category within multi-ethnic societies which is shaped by decades, even centuries-long assimilation and amalgamation processes. These often produce a variety of dual, multiple, hybrid, partial, and mixed ethnic as well as sub- or quasi-ethnic identities. It is therefore difficult to draw clear ethnic boundaries between Turks and many members of certain ethnically non-Turkish groups (Ibid.: 348–350 and 358–362 (Giesel 2015a: 4ff)).

Due to this complexity, the lack of information on the numbers and strength of ethnic and religious groups in the last censuses, but also due to manipulations based on political interests and lack of reliability of census data in general, it is difficult to obtain precise figures regarding ethnic and religious groups in contemporary Turkey. The available statistics rely on estimates which can vary greatly and which are difficult to verify. Today, the Turks as the titular nation represent the country's largest ethnic group. Most of them adhere to Sunni Islam. The majority of the other ethnic groups are also of Sunni background (see below). The different groups can be subdivided or categorized in various ways. The different categories might overlap or be related to each other. One way of categorizing the groups in question is according to the length of time

they have lived on the territory which today makes up the Turkish state. This can be problematic, as some ethnic groups' presence in the area is highly controversial or generally difficult to determine. If one was to divide the groups purely according to classical ethnographic criteria, one obtains the following result (the classification of the groups in brackets is based on contested aspects regarding their origin and is therefore preliminary):[1] *Turkic group:* Turks, Azer(baijan)i, Balkars, Gagauz, Karachay, Kasakhs, Kyrgyz, Kumuks, Meskhetians, Nogais, Tatars, Turkmens, Uygurs, Uzbeks, (Yörüks), and others; *Iranian group:* Kurmanji resp. Kurds, Ossetians, Zaza; *North Caucasian group:* Abkhazians, Abazins, Avars, Dargins, Ingush, Kaytaks, Laki, Lesgians Circassians, Chechens; *Kartvelian group*: Georgians, Adjarians, Laz; *Semitic group:* Arabs, Syriacs resp. Assyrians/Arameans, Jews, (Mhallami); *Slavic group*: Bosniacs, Bulgarians, Muslim Macedonians resp. Torbesh, Poles, Pomaks, Russians: Molokans (and Kuban Cossacks), Serbs; *Armenian group:* Western Armenians (and Hemshinli); and *other ethnic groups with Indo-European origin:* Albanians, Aromanians resp. Vlachs, Greeks, Roma (Gypsies), and so on. Furthermore, it has recently been revealed that a very limited number of Germans, Estonians, Levantines, and Sudanese exist in Turkey who migrated there during Ottoman times. Their current numbers are, however, very low or uncertain due to processes of assimilation and migration (see Andrews and Benninghaus 1989; Giesel 2013; Şener 2004 and ZfT 1998).

Membership size varies greatly between the different groups. Some of them count no more than several hundred or thousand persons, whereas others have a membership exceeding ten million. These figures must be seen against the background of a total population in Turkey of approximately 75 million. In the last decades, a significant number of Turkish citizens of different ethnic and religious backgrounds has emigrated and settled abroad for economic, but also political and religious reasons. In some cases, this has resulted in the number of people belonging to an ethnic or religious group in Turkey living abroad significantly exceeding that of those who have remained in Turkey (e.g. the Syriacs and Yezidi).

Turkey's religious diversity is shaped by the world religions of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism as well as Yezidism, which is only represented locally. Among Turkey's small religious groups, the "Dönme" who are crypto-Jews but outwardly practice Sunni Islam, are unique. An uncertain but significant number of the Turkish population identify themselves as atheists, while a very small percentage belongs to religious sects. Both

Islam and Christianity in Turkey are subdivided into several branches or denominations. Muslims can be divided into Sunnis (mainly Hanafi, but also Shafi'i and rarely also Hanbali), Shiites, Alevi, and Alawites (Nusayris). Another Turkish particularity in the Muslim world is the different mythical Sufi orders which, depending on their origin and history, might display Sunni, Shiite, or Alevi and mixed Shiite-Sunni elements as well as influences from other religions.

Each of the main branches of Christianity, i.e. Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism, are divided into different subgroups. Different confessional groups can be represented among single ethnic groups in a variety of forms or denominations. Similarly, single confessional groups can be spread across different ethnic groups, so that a number of denominations or autocephalous churches with variable national terms or characters co-exist, for example, *Armenian* Orthodox/Catholic/Protestant Church, *Syriac* Orthodox/Catholic/Protestant Church, *Greek* Orthodox/Catholic/Protestant Church, *Arabic* Orthodox/Catholic Church, *Bulgarian* Orthodox/Catholic, and others. Catholicism is represented in Turkey both in its Roman and its Eastern variety, e.g. in the form of the (Syriac) Chaldean and (Arab) Melkite Christians. Generally speaking, if a church has a national or ethnic element in its name, this rarely indicates that it only accepts members from this nation or ethnic group. The national or ethnic elements mostly refer to either its region of origin or the language or rite in which the liturgy is celebrated. But in Turkey we can observe the tendency that many confessions resp. churches with ethnic/national terms aim to include only members with this referred to ethnicity. Exceptions to those practices are, among others, the Orthodox, Greek Apostolic Church as well as different Protestant and free church organizations. A very small number of Turks and Kurds have converted from Islam to Christianity and joined these Protestant and free churches. The majority of Christians in Turkey belong to the Orthodox branch.

While some ethnic groups are almost exclusively characterized by their religious background (i.e. the migrant groups from the Caucasus and Southeast Europe which adhere to Sunni-Hanafi Islam), the members of most other ethnic groups are divided between two or more religions or denominations. For example, Kurds traditionally adhere to Sunni-Hanafi and Sunni-Shafi'i Islam, Alevism and Yezidism, but some of them also identify as Christians or Jews. Most of the Arab population professes Sunni-Shafi'i Islam, but some also adhere to the Alevi resp. Nusayris, Orthodox Christianity (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch) or Catholic Christianity (Melkite or Syrian-Catholic Patriarchate of Antioch).

The dominant denomination among those ethnic groups which predominantly adhere to Islam is Sunnism. Among ethnic Turks and Kurds the Hanafi school prevails, whereas Arabs tend to follow the Shafi'i school and some Azeris the Hanbali one. Nevertheless, those ethnic groups which predominantly belong to Sunnism also tend to have strong non-Sunni Muslim minorities. These are, for example, the Alevi among the Turks and Kurds, the Alevi (Nusayris) among the Arabs and the Shiites (Ja'fari jurisprudence) among the Azeris. On the other hand, however, Yezidism is only represented among one ethnic group, the Kurds. This is in stark contrast to Sunnism, which is followed by the majority of the members of more than 30 ethnic groups in Turkey (see above). Alevism is adhered to by parts of the Turkish, Kurdish, Zaza, Turkmen, and Yörük communities and also a very limited number of Azeris (see Ibid.).

Research has shown on more than one occasion that the different groups must not be regarded as homogenous entities and that the boundaries between them can be fluid and diffuse. Many groups are characterized by multi-layered distinctions and different points of view which vary depending on the members' socio-economic status, personal, political, and social experiences and attitudes as well as on the degree of their assimilation or absorption of the socio-political premises held by mainstream society. They also tend to vary over time. This results in a great variety of individual and collective attitudes held within ethnic and religious groups. These political and social beliefs and experiences also play a role in the stance which the group as a whole or individual members take toward the Turkish discourse on minorities (see Giesel 2013: 360–62; Giesel 2015a: 4ff. Giesel 2014b: 10,21; Giesel 2015b: 39ff.; Giesel 2016b: 24–27, 58–60).

The Phenomenon "Minority" as a Social Category in the Turkish Context

Basically, the identifier "minority" is a politico-sociological term which refers to the relationships between the different parts of a whole resp. a collective. In other words, it hints at the relationship between "all", "many", and "few" members of this collective. At a very general level, this term pertains to all groups within a social structure that can be distinguished on the basis of different criteria or features which do not characterize the majority. In a territorial-political or national context, one normally speaks about a minority if a group makes up less than half of the population of a

given state and if it is seen to be distinct or sees itself as distinct from the rest of the population or the majority of a given society due to certain social or economic differences, political convictions, or ethnic, national, religious, cultural, and/or linguistic features. Members of these groups which are perceived as minorities are often discriminated against on a social, political, cultural, and economic level. The commonly identified minority forms are: (a) ethnic minorities (i.e. groups that live in the territory of a state in which a different group is the titular one), (b) national minorities (i.e. ethnic minorities whose kin-state does not correspond to the state within which they live, (c) linguistic minorities (these usually do not represent an ethnic or national minority, but have a different mother tongue than the majority of a state's population), and (d) religious minorities (these usually do not represent an ethnic or national minority, but profess a different religion than the majority of a given state's population). Often, more than one of these characteristics applies to any one group (see Scherrer 1997).

Social psychologists basically distinguish between two types of minorities, i.e. between numeric or statistical ones and social ones. The latter refers to a minority which differs from the rest of society in cultural and/ or psychological ways and which is regarded as inferior by the majority population and is treated accordingly. Based on these considerations it can be noted that in a multi-ethnic society, which is dominated by a majority group or mainstream, the status of an ethnic group as a social minority is not only derived from ethnic characteristics and the identities associated with this. When determining whether or not a numeric minority group represents a social minority, it is crucial to consider the degree of its members' economic, social, and political integration into the mainstream and the resulting social status which is given to them by the majority group and which is accepted as such by the given ethnic group. In other words, the quality of the relations between the members of the different ethnic groups and the (nation-)state as well as the dominant or titular ethnicity influence to a significant extent the social status which members of these ethnic groups or the group as a whole have within the state. A group's collective memory is heavily influenced by past and current conditions and threats, which can have problematic consequences and facilitate the emergence of new social minority groups as a result of past experiences (see Ibid. and Tajfel 1982: 143–46). On the other hand, positive social experiences (made by distinct ethnic groups dominated by a majority) can prevent the emergence of social minority groups. In such a context, "ethnic groups" cannot automatically be equated with "social minority groups".

This is shown clearly by the example of Turkey. Kemalist nationalism aimed at Turkifying ethnically non-Turkish groups and regarded adherence to Sunni Islam as a key component of Turkishness despite the state's official secularism. In this context, only three groups that differed from the Turkish nation in an ethno-religious way were officially recognized as minorities (see below for a discussion of the legal implications of an officially recognized minority status). Nevertheless, it seems problematic from today's perspective to automatically classify ethnically non-Turkish groups or ethnically Turkish but non-Sunni groups as social minorities— as Tuncay (1983: 1563ff) and Rumpf (1993: 173) do, for example. This applies especially to members of ethnically non-Turkish Sunni groups. Although they have characteristics which distinguish them from ethnic Turks, most of them have integrated into the Turkish mainstream on economic, political, social, and (partly) national-ideological levels to such an extent that they no longer perceive themselves as a minority. Ethnic Turks usually do not regard them as members of a minority either, although most of them are conscious of certain differences. In this regard, different perceptions within a group might develop. Also, certain groups might display features of a minority only in specific socio-cultural areas. Diverging political and social attitudes and experiences within an ethnic and/or religious group can have the effect, due to various reasons, that a fraction of this group no longer regards itself or does not want to be regarded from outside as a minority, whereas another part of the same group continues to do so (see Giesel 2013: 362; 2014a: 17, 258, 311ff, 351ff and 384; 2016a: 122; 2016b: 27–32; 2016d; 2016e: 656ff. 2017; Kaya 2004).

The latter is due to the fact that "minority" as a term has strong negative connotations in Turkish society and politics (as well as in many other states). Against the background of ethno-national conflicts which have taken place in Anatolia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as nationalist propaganda, minorities are generally regarded as enemies of the state, agents of foreign powers, people harmful to society, traitors, and an imminent danger for Turkey's territorial integrity. They are characterized accordingly, for example, in state school books, media, and public speeches. Generally speaking, not only non-Muslim groups with a recognized minority status (like the Armenians, Greeks, and Jews) or groups without a recognized minority status (Nusayri, Yezidi, Syriacs, etc.), but also Muslim groups of non-Turkish ethnicity that have a pronounced ethnic identity or a strong sense of distinctiveness (foremost the Kurds, but also partially Arabs and Circassians, etc) are stigmatized as minorities by Turkish mainstream soci-

ety. Today, Turkey is home to a sizeable number of people of Kurdish origin who have been assimilated into mainstream Turkish society and who value their Turkish citizenship and membership in the Sunni community more than their Kurdish heritage. In contrast to many members of their own ethnic group and to persons belonging to most other Sunni, non-Turkish ethnic groups, these people tend to see themselves no longer as a minority, but as an integral part of mainstream Turkish society. Due to the influence of the Turkish national ideology, members of both Sunni groups that are loyal to the state live with the latent fear that certain circumstances might lead to their being identified as persons belonging to ethnically non-Turkish communities and being consequently regarded as a member of a minority, which would result in their being politically and socially stigmatized. They therefore try to distance themselves from recognized minorities and tend to stigmatize their members, although they themselves have features that distinguish them from ethnic Turks (Giesel 2013: 349, 362; Giesel 2014b: 10, 21; Giesel 2015a: 13–15; Giesel 2015b: 24–26, 58–60; Giesel 2016b: 24–27; Giesel 2016c: 90ff.).

A considerable number of non-Turkish, non-Muslim groups or Turkish groups of non-Sunni background are also divided among themselves in regard to their minority status. Due to their embeddedness in Turkish mainstream society, they often tend not to consider themselves as a minority, although their members experience stigmatization and discrimination in certain social contexts. This can apply to Turkish Alevi or highly assimilated Turkish Jews who tend not to consider themselves members of an ethnic or national minority, but maybe as adherents to a minority faith. It can also apply to successful Armenians who live in the metropolitan area of Istanbul and who support secularism while paying little attention to the Christian religion of their ancestors. In the case of the Alevi, the ethnonational differences inside this group lead to disagreements about their self-perception as a minority. In contrast to the Turkish (and the Turkmen and Yörük) Alevi, the Alevi Kurmanji or Kurds and the Zaza see themselves as a minority both in the ethno-national and the religious sense. This occasionally leads to severe national-ideological disputes within the Alevi religious community. The example of the Kurds shows that also within an ethnic group which does not belong to the titular ethnicity and which is widely perceived as an ethno-national minority, religious and/or political reasons can lead to different minority forms and problems within the group. The double stigma as a religious and ethnic minority is attached not only to Kurdish Alevi and Yezidis, but also to (parts of) groups including

the Christian Syriacs, Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Arabs, and Arabic Nusayri (see below as well as Giesel 2013: 362; 2014a: 91, 187, 194, 378; 2014b: 10, 21; 2015a: 4ff.; 2015b: 24–26, 58–60, 2016a: 140ff., 147; 2016b: 27–32).

Due to the abovementioned social conditions, ethnic, religious or ethno-religious groups should only be referred to as social minorities if the context clearly warrants this. Nevertheless, there is a general consensus that the Armenians and Syriacs and non-Turkish Alevi represent ethno-religious minorities and that the Turkish Alevi are a religious minority. It is also commonly agreed that, from a socio-psychological perspective, the majority of these groups' members can be considered part of a minority in a social sense.

The History of Securitization of Minority Rights in Turkey

In the Ottoman state system it was the subjects' religious rather than their ethnic affiliation which played an important role. Based on the Koran, Muslims were granted considerably more privileges than non-Muslims. Under Ottoman rule, the treatment and social status of non-Muslims differed according to their religious affiliation, was not always consistent, and changed over time. Adherents to monotheistic religions with clearly defined texts were given a protected status as "Dhimmi", which was linked to the payment of a special tax and the granting of certain limited rights. Adherents to most pagan and/or polytheistic religions (as well as those Muslim groups which were considered heretics) remained without rights, but there were a few exceptions to this rule (for Hindus, for example). A large group of followers of Abrahamitic faith resp. the members of the Greek Orthodox Church, the Armenian Orthodox Church, and Judaism were subdivided into three different "millets" or "faith nations". The millet system can be understood as a specific political and legal system as well as a social order. Other Christian communities (for example, the Chaldeans, Catholics, and others) were not integrated into the millet system and were often regarded as sects. For a long time, they only had a general Dhimmi status, which was accompanied by fewer rights than the millet status. Ultimately, the situation of the non-Muslim millet groups was characterized by a mixture of self-determination, wide-ranging religious freedom, and opportunities for political, economic, and cultural development or participation in the Ottoman state and society, on the one hand, and by discrimination, lack of privileges, limiting rules, and

occasional persecution, on the other hand. Nevertheless, a fragile, but generally functioning social and political balance between widespread tolerance and open inequalities was found in the Ottoman Empire for several centuries. However, this balance was more and more disturbed by the extensive economic, social, and political transformation processes and their consequences which spread from Europe to the Ottoman Empire from the eighteenth century onwards. In certain areas, it was lost completely by the end of the nineteenth century due to historical developments (see Giesel 2013: 328–333).

The violent confrontations with the western powers, especially with Russia, affected the attitude of the Ottomans toward the minorities. Areas in the Balkans and the Caucasus came under the control of Christian great power states or national movements, most of which were dominated by Orthodox Christians. As a result, the Ottomans suffered massive territorial and human losses. In this context, diplomatic and political experiences that Ottoman and Turkish statesmen have lived through since the mid-nineteenth century have affected their understanding of democracy and pluralism, state and minority rights, as well as their perception of the West. "To save the state" from domestic as well as foreign threats became a major preoccupation driving their policies. This is the deeper historical context before which we must also understand the securitization of minority policy.

As a reaction to the Ottoman Empire's increasing economic, military, and territorial decline, the Ottoman rulers initiated liberalizing and modernizing policies during the so-called Tanzimat-period, which lasted from 1839 to 1876. These reforms were also designed to secure equality and guarantees of life, liberty, and estate to the Christian communities of the Ottoman Empire. They aimed at politically counteracting the ethno-nationalistically motivated uprisings of several ethnic groups and to ensure stability and security in the Empire. The way in which these so-called "Tanzimat" reforms were designed and implemented was influenced by both domestic impulses and external pressure exercised by the European great powers that wanted the Ottomans to reform. On the one hand, the European powers were driven by the intention to improve the socio-political situation for their respective non-Muslim kin groups, which they sought to protect. On the other hand, however, they also intended to further weaken the Ottoman Empire by instrumentalizing the local ethno-religious minorities with the aim of expanding their own power and influence. This was important because it first supported the percep-

tion among the Ottomans of concepts like human rights, democracy, and reforms as instruments of foreign intervention in Turkish politics.

The intended improvements in civic rights also brought about positive changes in the formal status of the non-Muslim minorities. The reform edict of 1856 (Islahat Fermanı), which abolished the "Dhimmi status" and the "millet system"[2] at least theoretically and officially granted subject rights to members of all faith-based groups, left certain religious immunities and privileges untouched, but nevertheless created normative and civic equality for all residents irrespective of their religious affiliation (see Koutcharian 1989: 42–44). The rules formulated in 1856 were elaborated when the first Ottoman constitution, which was based on French constitutional laws, was drawn up in 1876. It, nevertheless, emerged that the expansion of freedom and liberties during the second half of the nineteenth century facilitated independence movements among the Christian subjects of the Ottoman State, rather than making them more loyal to it. The Sultan suspended this constitution as early as 1878 due to anti-Ottoman uprisings and wars led by several Southern Slavic, Christian Orthodox people in the Balkans in 1875–1876 and due to the Turkish-Russian war of 1877–1878 and the results of the negotiations at the Berlin Congress in 1878 (see Matuz 1996: 224–41).

At the same time, gradually, a pro-Turkish, Islamic-oriented nation-building process emerged to avoid the Empire's further segregation or to even reverse the result of previous segregation. Among the Young Turks, who were the main carriers of this national movement, different national-political conceptions developed. This led to the emergence of several trends. The common political denominator was pro-Islamic and pro-Turkic attitudes, which were shaped by a diffuse conceptual equation of Ottomanness and Turkishness. Thus, the basis was created for the development of the political movement concerned with the creation of a homogeneous nation-state (see Giesel 2013: 337f.). The intensification of interethnic and interreligious tensions, conflicts of interest and escalations, and more serious and occasionally existentially threatening territorial losses, e.g. as a result of the first Balkan War, World War One, and the Turkish wars of independence, led to an increase in Turkish nationalism and its radicalization during the last decades of the Ottoman Empire's existence. During this period, the idea developed that the profession of Islam was a necessary prerequisite for membership in the Turkish nation. Therefore, nationalist activities mainly targeted the country's non-Muslim, Christian residents. After the Young Turkish Revolution of 1908,

which was carried out under a Turkish-nationalist and modernizing banner, there were hints at the resolution of the problems faced by minorities. *Due to this, Christians (including Armenians) and Jews were amongst those who initially supported the Young Turks.* It, however, did not take long for the Young Turkish movement, which was split into several fractions, to experience the marginalization of its liberal members and to become dominated by fervently pro-Islamic, Turkish-nationalist, and Turanist[3] representatives who acted against non-Muslim and non-Turkish groups (cf. Akçam 1996: 30–39; Giesel 2013: 330–324; Kreiser and Neumann 2003: 358–63; Matuz 1996: 253ff; Ternon 1996: 141ff).

The loss of territory and population continued during the First World War (WWI), when the Arab subjects of the Empire were split from it with the support of the British. Now, Anatolia was Turkey's only homeland. The worst was yet to come for the Turkish national movement: The Treaty of Sèvres, signed by the Ottoman Sultan on 10 August 1920 following the defeat in WWI, ensured the partition of Anatolia among the Western powers, Greeks, Kurds, and Armenians. The Treaty of Sèvres became the most important symbol of Turkish distrust of the West as well as of the minorities, becoming part and parcel of Turkish national identity and turning into a form of collective paranoia in the course of time (see Sect. 3.3).

After the Turkish Republic was established in 1923 following the war of independence, Turkish society still was multi-ethnic and socially very heterogeneous. This made it difficult for Mustafa Kemal to promote a clearly defined nationalist concept, and it took until the 1930s for such a concept to truly emerge. The main audience for his nation-building concept were the members of the numerous, mostly pro-Ottoman inclined ethnic groups from Muslim backgrounds that represented a cohesive factor for Turkish nationalism. Within this context, most non-Muslim or non-Sunni groups and especially Christians were perceived as dangerous alien elements and played the role of outsiders, a role which was accepted by society and promoted by the state. This perception would later have serious consequences for them. Due to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) and the "Greek-Turkish population transfer" codified in it, in a further, far-reaching step, the remaining Turkish-Ottoman territory was mostly cleansed from Christian inhabitants. These transfers afflicted between 1 and 1.5 million Anatolian Greeks. Taking into account historical experiences from intervention efforts by the European superpowers, which had used non-Muslims from Ottoman territory for their purposes, the remaining members of these groups were considered to be a potential threat to

public security in the new Turkish Republic, and thus their right to remain on Turkish territory was questioned. Nonetheless, due to political pressure from the superpowers, they had to be given minority rights; these, however, only followed from the Treaty of Lausanne and were not made part of the Turkish constitution or any other body of Turkish laws (see Rumpf 1993: 175, 182, 208ff. and below).

Even though the political leaders were striving for a shift of paradigms from a religious to an (ethno-)national state, the Turkish delegation in Lausanne chose to define their "nation" and its minorities alongside the Islamic notion of "millet". A security-based approach also affected the way the Lausanne Treaty was drafted. Despite the fact that some of these groups were not specifically named in the Treaty of Lausanne, the Turkish government only accepted Greeks, Armenians, and Jews—those being former so-called "millet"-nations. Other non-Muslim groups such as the Syriacs were not granted this status. Among other political and social conditions which reigned during these decision processes, especially crucial factors were the organizational group size, the international importance of and support for the respective group, as well as the strength of national and international lobbies.[4] Although the Kurds were ascribed with ethnic idiosyncrasies by the Turkish delegation, they and other Muslim, non-Turkish ethnic groups were not taken into account in the definition of minorities (despite the efforts by some European superpowers). This was mostly due to the official intention to assimilate the Muslim non-Turkish groups into an ethnically and nationally homogenized "Turkishness". To reach this aim, the common fight of Kurds and Turks during the war of independence was stressed (see Giesel 2015a: 9–15; Rumpf 1993: 179ff., 207). It cannot be ignored, however, that another intention clearly was to prevent future interventions from international forces on Turkish territory, the protection of minorities to some extent being a Potemkin village.

Thus, not only the non-recognized, non-Muslim groups found themselves in a legal and social vacuum as minorities. Also certain Muslim groups with a strong consciousness of their ethnic idiosyncrasies entered a legal gray zone. The importance which the Kemalist vision of ethnicity and nationality attached to Islam as a key component of Turkishness contradicted the basic principles of secularism as it prevented the state from maintaining an equal distance from all religious groups.

The Republican elite continued policies aiming at the homogenization of the population, an attempt that had already been started by their predecessors, the Young Turks. Accordingly, they sought to achieve

Turkification almost in any field, including education, law, language, and economic life.[5] The distinction between being "Turk" and a "Turkish citizen" in Article 88 of the 1924 Constitution was reflected in all the laws adopted during this period. On the basis of this distinction, non-Muslim communities were viewed as "Turkish citizens" but not as "Turks".

At the same time, Muslim and ethnically non-Turkish parts of society and their leaders put up increasing resistance to the implementation of secularist policies, which contradicted deeply rooted social norms and Islamic-religious structures, as well as the increasingly Turkish-centric orientation of the new state. This applied, for example, to groups of migrants (muhacir) like the Circassians and Pomaks and especially to those groups that perceive themselves as ethnic Kurds. The latter organized a violent revolt against the Turkish state as early as spring 1925 (Şeyh Sait rebellion). The state reacted by passing the Takrir-i Sükun Law, which outlawed all existing opposition parties and led to the closure of all non-Turkish ethno-political and ethno-cultural organizations, associations, and parties. It also prevented their inception or activity and suppressed the (mostly left-wing and liberal) press (see Andrews and Benninghaus 1989: 36, 102, 171ff; Giesel 2015a: 9–15; Çağlar 2000: 108, 508–519; ZfT 1998: 27–29, 106–108). This was followed by a ban on virtually all Islamic Sufi or Dervish orders in autumn 1925.[6] Thus, the basis was created for the development of the political concept concerned with the transformation of the multi-ethnic and multi-religious Ottoman Empire into a homogeneous nation-state. These measures, which were justified with the alleged need to modernize society and politics, represented a significant turning point toward an open and rigid homogenization or assimilation drive, which partially contradicted secularist, Republican, and constitutional premises as well as concepts of minority rights. During the following years and decades, a number of other measures of a persecutory, repressive, and marginalizing nature were introduced and gradually increased.

When it comes to legally recognized minorities, according to Article 37 the minority rights codified in the Treaty of Lausanne take precedence over the Turkish body of laws. However, in accordance with international law, Turkey is only obligated toward those signatories of the treaty who are not the respective minority in question itself. Within Turkey, again, only the regulations by the constituent power or general Turkish constitutional law apply. According to constitutional law, international treaties are of the same value as Turkish laws. Thus the legislator is given the power to revise or undermine particular regulations codified in the Lausanne Treaty

by additional laws and regulations—even though this entails a violation of international law (cf. Rumpf 1993: 186).

The Kurdish revolts in the eastern parts of the country from the 1920s to the 1930s, following the inception of the Republic, provided further confirmation of the deep fears of disintegration. Once the Republic was established, the Turkish state elite sought to put efforts into liberalizing the political system, albeit with little success. Thus, according to a modern Turkish scholar (Aydinli 2004: 116), the Turkish elite's failed attempts at liberalization "not only […] consolidated their perceptions of a zero-sum gain between political liberalization and security, but also […] turned the dichotomy into a national/regime security syndrome". This paved the way for the permanent securitization of non-security issues like democratic and minority rights. Those political reactions were highly influenced by the negative political experiences in the late phase of the Ottoman Empire at the end of the nineteenth/beginning of the twentieth century (see above).

The single-party era during the 1940s saw the deterioration of conditions for the non-Muslim minorities. Undoubtedly, it was the Wealth Tax (*Varlık Vergisi*) imposed in 1942 that had some of the most devastating impacts on the existence of the non-Muslim minorities in Turkey. Officially, the objectives of the Wealth Tax were to tax the speculative profits obtained as a result of the lack of goods supplied in the market during the Second World War and to reduce the currency in circulation. Yet, in the phase of implementation, the wealth tax turned into an instrument to eliminate the non-Muslim minorities from the market. Those who could not pay their taxes were sent to labor camps in Aşkale, a town in the Erzurum province of Eastern Turkey. A significant impact of the Wealth Tax (as well as the experience of the anti-Jewish "Thrace progrom" in 1934) was that after the foundation of Israel, 30,000 Jews left for Israel in a matter of two years between 1948 and 1949 (see Giesel 2014b: 10ff.; Giesel 2015b: 40–42; Ökte, n.d.: 38, 207).

Securitization of minority rights continued in the multi-party era. With the end of the one-party system of the Republican People's Party (CHP) in 1946 and as a consequence of considerations concerning both foreign affairs and campaign strategies, the CHP and Democrat Party (DP) for a short time slightly liberalized policies toward the recognized minorities. Apart from the political orientation toward the West following from the new world order, they also recognized the electoral potential of the non-Muslim groups (which could, in some cases, even be decisive). At this

time, approximately one-third of the eligible voters in Istanbul were non-Muslim, and non-Muslims still dominated the economic sector—despite far-reaching Turkification efforts. Yet, party-internal strategy documents and non-official directives especially from within the CHP prove that opinion mostly stood against non-Muslims. They were still not accepted as full members of the Turkish nation and often considered disloyal traitors and threats to the Turkish state, who could by no means be integrated—which gradually led to their marginalization both economically and socially. In general, the policy pursued by the CHP was felt to be merely a continuation of the Kemalist nationalism that had reigned in the totalitarian period. This, however, proved beneficial for the also nationalistic and more pro-Islamic DP, which was considered to be the more reliable alternative for minorities because of its program of general democratization and liberalization as well as its efforts and pledges in favor of the minorities (e.g. to pay back the extraordinary property tax certain members of minorities had had to pay between 1942 and 1944). Eventually, the support for DP by non-Muslim minorities played an important role in its election victories of 1950 and 1954. However, as the minority policy pursued by the DP was motivated by the wish to gain the voters' support and accompanied by a nationally engrained mistrust toward those minorities, many important pledges were not kept (e.g. paying back the property tax) and several liberal and tolerant regulations were replaced again with more rigid measures. Thus the political and social situation of non-Muslims already deteriorated again after 1953 and got even worse as the Cyprus conflict grew more acute in 1954 (see Giesel 2015a: 22–25; Güven 2012: 118–135).

From the 1950s onwards, the fortunes of the Greek minority diverged significantly from those of the other minority groups in Turkey, due to the conflict over Cyprus. Both Ankara and Athens used their respective minorities, i.e. the Turkish minority in Western Thrace and the Greek community in Istanbul, against each other as trump cards to enhance their positions in the Cyprus dispute. The Greek-Turkish rivalry contributed significantly to the 6–7 September 1955 events, which would deal a severe blow to the existence of the minorities in Turkey. On 6–7 September 1955 pogroms occurred in the context of the ongoing conflicts between the Turkish and Greek Cypriot communities in Cyprus. In reaction to a false report that Atatürk's house in Thessaloniki had been bombed, thousands of people gathered in Istanbul to protest the incident. The protesters soon directed their anger against real estate owned by the Greeks and other

minorities. After the 6–7 September incidents, emigration of especially the members of the Greek community in Turkey gained momentum.

As a result of the escalating tension between Turkey and Greece because of the Cyprus crisis, during 1964 all the *établi* Greeks, who numbered 12,562, were expelled on the ground of posing a security threat to the country. The increasing tension also led Ankara to impose a series of restrictions in the fields of economy and education on the Greek minority and other minority groups. 1971 saw the shutting down by Ankara of all private universities, including the Khalki Seminary, which was attached to the Patriarchate and educated clergy for it.

Moreover, Ankara imposed restrictions on the properties belonging to the minority foundations. At the zenith of the Cyprus crisis, on 8 May 1974 the Turkish Supreme Court issued a controversial verdict. This verdict considered the minority institutions as "foreign" and found their property ownership to be dangerous.[7] From 1972 onwards, the General Directorate of Foundations asked for the charters (*vakıfname*) from the minority foundations proving their establishment. The minority foundations originally have no charters and were established in the Ottoman era by the order of the sultans (*ferman*). The Turkish officials had back in 1936 asked for the declarations of ownership of their properties from all the foundations. In the absence of a charter, the General Directorate of Foundations considered the 1936 declarations of the foundations as a charter and stated that it would seize all the properties obtained by the foundations after 1936. These properties were then confiscated, one by one, through cases filed by the Directorate General of Foundations and the Treasury.

In the following decades two main factors strengthened the desire for stronger and more comprehensive social, civil society, and democratic development and liberalization among many political groupings (including left-wing radical, left-wing liberal, neo-liberal, neo-conservative, Kemalist, and conservative-Islamic circles) as well as among many rather apolitical Turkish citizens. These factors were (a) developments in domestic politics (e.g. the consequences of the authoritarian policies pursued by the right-wing nationalist military junta after the military putsch of 1980 and the wave of violent Kurdish nationalism) and (b) the new political, social, and economic conditions and challenges on the global level, especially the collapse of communism and the bipolar world and the partial democratization and social liberalization processes in Central and Eastern Europe that resulted from this. These changes increasingly led to public

debates that had an effect on state policies and that, from the mid-1980s onwards, gave social and political impulses for liberalization processes that were initially slow and modest, but that gathered pace during the 1990s. The same can be said about the easing of ethno-political policies as the conflict with the Kurds resulted in more public attention being paid to the existence of non-Turkish ethnic groups that were perceived as a part of Turkey's social reality by the majority of Turkish society despite the restrictions imposed on them (see Andrews and Benninghaus 1989: 18; Giesel 2016b: 8–27, 41; Giesel 2016c). Within this context, also the Alevi became increasingly self-confident and started to fight for public recognition of their identity and religion.

Turgut Özal, the controversial former military advisor and prime minister in office from 1983 to 1991, advocated, for example, a political solution to the conflict with the Kurds, modest democratization, and Turkey's membership in what was the EC at the time. On the basis of his economically neo-liberal, neo-conservative and simultaneously pro-Islamic orientation, Özal held the view that the ailing Turkish economy could only be revived by democratic reforms and integration into global processes. In this context, the idea that Turkey's economic and political expansion on the global level required a fundamental openness toward non-Turkish and non-Muslim groups played a very important role. These thoughts led to criticism of the Kemalist principles of statism, secularism, and at times also nationalism that were considered obstacles to Turkey's economic, social, and political progress (see Çağlar 2000: 61–63, 106, 109–117; Giesel 2013: 355ff; 2014a: 91ff.; 2016b: 11–17; 2016c: 80–91; Göle 1993; ZfT 1998: 73).

Initially, it was mainly ethnically non-Turkish Sunni groups (e.g. the many émigré groups from Southeast Europe, the Caucasus, Crimea, and Central Asia) that benefited from the easing of the ethno-political homogenization principle. These groups were already partially Turkified and were generally considered loyal to the state. The same can be said about the religiously heterogeneous Kurds that were nevertheless confronted with greater difficulties than other groups. The ban on the Kurdish language was lifted in 1991. Except for the partial improvements experienced by the Kurds, these developments did not make life much easier for most other ethnic and religious groups of non-Turkish and non-Sunni heritage (e.g. Armenians, Greeks, Syriacs, Muslim and Christian Arabs, Yezidis, etc.), as they continued to be viewed through the established prism of Kemalist nationalism, which stigmatized most of them as enemies of the state or as a threat to Turkishness and the country's territorial integrity (see Giesel 2013: 358; 2014a: 91–93; 2016b: 18, 41–48; 2016c: 89–96; ZfT 1998: 73–76).

3.3   DESECURITIZATION OF MINORITY RIGHTS SINCE THE 1999 HELSINKI SUMMIT

It was not until Turkey became a candidate for EU membership that the human and minority rights situation improved considerably and a shift became visible in Turkey's traditional understanding of citizenship based on Kemalist premises. These improvements built on the developments of the 1980s and 1990s which provided a basis for further improvements. The EU candidacy of Turkey obtained at the European Union Helsinki Summit on 10–11 December 1999 represents not only a turning point in Turkey-EU relations but also in Turkey's conceptualization of minority rights. Through annual progress reports published by the European Commission, as surveyed in Chap. 2, the EU asked Turkey not only to improve the conditions of the minorities officially recognized in the Lausanne Treaty, such as the Armenians, Greeks, and Jews, but also to extend its minority regime to include officially non-recognized communities, including the Kurds, the Alevi, and the Syriacs. As a candidate to the EU, the Turkish state has progressively come to extend recognition of cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and heterogeneity in the country.

The EU has supported a transformation in Turkish state identity by creating a new opportunity structure. The accession process changed the domestic opportunity structure by enhancing the role of the political elite and societal actors vis-à-vis the Kemalist-dominated civilian-military bureaucracy. The EU became a major ally of the political elite represented by the AKP (Justice and Development Party). Furthermore, civil society was also strengthened through a series of EU-stimulated democratization reforms that expanded freedom of expression. In turn, empowered civilian input into politics helped push previously securitized issues such as minority rights into the realm of normal politics, while limiting the discretion of securitizing actors. In this process, actors other than military, such as journalists, academics, and politicians, have shown an increasing interest in national security issues (Cizre 2003). As a consequence of their being wrestled away from security-focused bureaucracies, these issues were slowly moved off the security agenda and back into the realm of public political discourse and "normal" political dispute and accommodation (Williams 2003). Once the taboo regarding the minorities was broken, the number of academic and literary books and films focusing on minorities also rose dramatically.

In the post-Helsinki era, democratization reforms in general and reforms focusing on minorities in particular can be divided into five distinct periods in terms of their pace, scope, and substance: the era between 1999 and 2002, the period between 2002 and 2005, the period between 2005 and 2008, the time between 2008 and 2011, and the post-2011 era. In the following pages we will look at each phase in turn.

The first reform period came during the tenure of the DSP (Democratic Left Party)-MHP (Nationalist Action Party)-ANAP (Motherland Party) coalition government between 1999 and 2002. Taking the first step and passing legislation in such a sensitive issue area as minority rights was not easy in this period. During the coalition government era, the pace of the reforms improving minority rights was relatively slow due to the strong resistance coming from the nationalist MHP, a junior partner in the coalition government, as well as the military to the use of Kurdish in education and television broadcasting on the grounds that this would help separatism (Avcı 2003). Therefore, the *National Programme for the Adoption of the Acquis* (NPAA) of 2001 came in well short of the EU demand to permit broadcasting in languages other than Turkish and did not envisage TV/radio broadcasting in minority languages. Yet, the reforms that would be adopted by the coalition government turned out to be beyond what was promised in the NPAA (Kirişçi 2011: 339).

In the second reform package, which entered into force on 9 April 2002, an amendment to Article 5 of the Law on Associations removed the clause banning the establishment of associations to protect languages or cultures other than Turkish and the prohibition on the "claim that there are minorities based on racial, religious, sectarian, cultural or linguistic differences". Through the adoption of the third reform package in August 2002, the public use of Kurdish was liberalized substantially. Through an amendment to Article 4 of the Law on the Establishment of Radio and Television Enterprises, the restrictions on broadcasting in different languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives, such as Kurdish, were removed. An amendment to the Law on Foreign Language Teaching and Education lifted the restrictions on the learning of different languages and dialects used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives. Like the previous reform step allowing broadcasting in any language, this measure also specifically aimed at teaching and learning Kurdish. The third reform package also included significant improvements concerning the property rights of non-Muslim minority foundations. Law no. 4771 made it possible for non-Muslim foundations to acquire and dispose immovables and

to register them in their name irrespective of whether they had any statute or not.[8] The underlying objective of this law was to end the confiscation by the state of the real estate owned by the non-Muslim minority foundations since the 1974 Supreme Court ruling on the basis of the 1936 declaration that they did not have a legal status. However, because of the opposition of the MHP, the nationalist wing of the coalition, to the reforms, in particular to the third reform package, the coalition government broke down and early elections were held in November 2002.

The second period in reforms began after the AKP took office following the 3 November 2002 elections and lasted until 2005. Having been underdogs of authoritarian secularism of the Kemalist Republic in the past, it was not a surprise that the AKP adopted liberal rhetoric as one of its guiding principles. The AKP's emphasis on democracy and human rights also gained them the support of liberal-democratic groups both inside Turkey and abroad. Having won a sweeping victory in the elections with 34.3 % of the vote, the AKP pursued an ambitious reform agenda and initially made significant headway toward turning Turkey into a multicultural, plural, and democratic polity. In the sixth reform package that went into effect on 19 July 2003, through an amendment to Article 4 of the Law on the Establishment and Broadcasts of Radio and Television Stations, private as well as public radio and television corporations were allowed to broadcast in different languages and dialects traditionally used by Turkish citizens in their daily lives. The AKP government followed up this reform by the offer to broadcast programs on the state channel TRT in different minority languages such as Kurdish, Arabic, Albanian Bosniac, Zaza, and Circassian on 7 June 2004. This offer was, however, taken up only by some of the addressed groups, so that until now TV programs exist only in Kurdish, Zaza, and Arabic. Representatives of official associations of other Sunni groups of ethnically non-Turkish heritage (e.g. Bosniaks) even criticized this offer, which had not been previously agreed upon with them, and expressed the fear that these kinds of measures might threaten Turkey's territorial integrity. A part of the Kurdish political elite also rejected this policy as it was feared that the state would influence program content and thus instrumentalize public Kurdish activities for its own purposes (see Aktaş 2004; Giesel 2014a: 96, 120f; 2016d; 2016e: 576, 2017; Saymaz 2004).

As for the non-Muslim minorities, the AKP government introduced a second amendment (Law no. 4778) to the Law on Foundations in January 2003 that moved the authority to give permission to enjoy the property

rights obtained through Law no. 4771 from the Council of Ministers to the Directorate General of Foundations (DGF).[9] The third amendment to the Law on Foundations that came with the adoption of Law no. 4928 increased the time given to apply for the registration of the immovables of non-Muslim foundations from 6 months to 18 months.[10] A regulation took effect on 24 January 2003 to put Law no. 4778 into practice. According to this regulation, the DGF is able to seek the opinion of the relevant Ministry, public institutions, and organizations in the evaluation process of the applications, if necessary.[11] Foundations can acquire property only with the aim of meeting their religious, charitable, social, educational, health-related, and cultural needs. A significant limitation to the regulation was that only 160 foundations listed in the attachment of the regulation as active non-Muslim foundations were given the right to register their immovables in their names.

An important symbolic indication of the desecuritization of minority rights in Turkey was the dissolution of the Sub-Commission on Minorities (SCM) and its replacement with the Council for the Evaluation of Minority Issues (CEMI) in January 2004 (Küçükşahin 2004). Having been established in 1962 with a secret memorandum, the SCM aimed at monitoring the activities of the minorities deemed detrimental to state security. The National Security Council, the Office of the Chief of Staff, and the National Intelligence Organization had been represented in the SCM. Reflecting its civilianized nature, its replacement, the CEMI, in contrast includes representatives from the Ministries of Internal Affairs, Foreign Affairs, and National Education, as well as the Ministry charged with the Foundations. The new body, in accordance with EU norms, was charged with helping to *address the problems* of minorities rather than *monitoring* their activities.

The third period in reforms came between 2005 and 2008. Ironically, this period in the aftermath of the start of the formal accession talks with the EU in October 2005 witnessed a considerable slow-down in terms of the democratic reforms adopted in general and minority rights in particular, as well as setbacks in terms of their implementation. This can be explained by three major developments: weakening of the EU anchorage and thus the EU's transformative capacity in Turkey because of the deterioration of Turkey's prospects of joining the EU; a rise in nationalism in Turkey; and finally, the tug-of-war between the Kemalists and the AKP government. We look more closely at each factor in turn.

First, ironically, just as Turkey began accession talks with the EU in October 2005, Turkey's aspiration to actually be included in the EU

became increasingly elusive. This significantly weakened the conditions conducive to reform in Turkey. The more likely the prospect of Turkish membership became, it seemed, the stronger the European reluctance to the idea of Turkish accession became as well. Unlike in the previous enlargements, the European Council's decision in December 2004 to open accession negotiations with Turkey in October 2005 included a strong emphasis on the open-ended nature of the accession process and the possibility of permanent safeguards in areas such as freedom of movement.[12] This reinforced the perception among the Turkish public that the EU applied double standards to Turkey. Furthermore, Austria, France, and Germany vocally expressed their opposition to Turkey's EU accession. Then, the negotiations were effectively brought to an impasse, when the EU froze talks on eight chapters of the negotiations concerning customs union issues, such as transportation, customs union, and fisheries in December 2006 in reaction to Turkey's refusing to open its harbors and airports to Greek Cypriot traffic. Under these circumstances, the reform drive of the AKP government subsided.

Secondly, a rise in nationalistic sentiments impacted the reform environment negatively. The rise in nationalism originated from the resumption of the PKK (Kurdish Workers' Party) attacks in 2005 as well as growing anti-EU and anti-Western attitudes. The fact that the PKK launched incursions into Turkey from the Kurdish-dominated northern Iraq, a protégé of the USA, aggravated Turkish public resentment toward both the Iraqi Kurds and Americans. The outrage of the public targeted the European states as well, since despite democratic reforms demanded by the EU, which granted a set of cultural rights to the Kurdish community, PKK terrorism did not subside. These circumstances helped revive the *Sèvres Paranoia,* the belief that the West continually seeks to undermine Turkey's unity. *Sèvres Paranoia,* which was quickly exploited by ultra-radical groups, occasionally led to physical attacks on and killings of members of non-Muslim communities. Father Andrea Santoro, a Roman Catholic priest in Northern city of Trabzon, Hrant Dink, a journalist belonging to the Turkish-Armenian community, and three Protestant missionaries were killed during the 2006–2007 period.

Finally, the tug-of-war between the Kemalists and the AKP over the nature of the regime during 2007 became a source of political instability and delayed reforms. The growing power of the AKP and its perceived hidden agenda to Islamize the country were causes for concern for the CHP and the Kemalists, who dominated the military, the judiciary, and

the higher education institutions in the state.[13] Events such as the huge public rallies held by the Kemalists prior to the Presidential election and cancelation of the election of Abdullah Gül, former prime minister and AKP member, as president by the AKP-dominated parliament by a controversial verdict of the Kemalist-dominated Constitutional Court epitomized the Kemalist-AKP struggle for power. The tension peaked following the so-called e-coup launched by the General Staff on its website, containing an implicit warning that it might intervene in the political process. The battle between the two camps was decided in favor of the AKP, when it was granted a strong mandate by the public with a 12 % increase of its vote to 46.6. Under these circumstances, Abdullah Gül was smoothly elected as president. The Kemalists made a further attempt to oust the AKP government from power, as it was indicted on the grounds of having become the center of anti-secular activities in Turkey. Yet, its boosted international and domestic legitimacy helped the AKP to avoid being banned by the Constitutional Court with a slight margin.

The fourth period in reforms came between 2008 and 2011. The domestic political turmoil began to subside, after the tug-of-war between the Kemalists and the AKP government had been decided with the second election to office of the AKP government and appointment of its candidate Abdullah Gül as president in the summer of 2007. The AKP government returned to the reform agenda, albeit timidly, in 2008. The controversial Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code, which made it a crime to "insult Turkishness" was amended in order to thwart its misuse (Radikal 2008b). Ultra-radical groups had used it as an instrument to punish liberal intellectuals for expressing their views on the Kurdish and Armenian issues. In its new form, denigration of "Turkishness" was replaced with the phrase "the Turkish nation". The maximum penalty was reduced from three years to two. Permission of the Ministry of Justice is required to file a case.

Concerning the non-Muslim minorities, the AKP government took a further step to deal with the grievances in relation to the property ownership rights of the non-Muslim foundations through an amendment to the Law on Foundations (Law no. 5555). Following the election of Abdullah Gül as president in August 2007, it enacted further amendments (Law no. 5737) to the Law on Foundations without making any changes to the nine articles vetoed by the previous President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, known for his Kemalist outlook.[14] The Law on Foundations no. 5737 improved the property ownership rights of the non-Muslim community foundations significantly. Accordingly, the non-Muslim foundations could

acquire new property, dispose of existing properties, and replace existing properties and rights with more useful ones under certain conditions. Another foundation of the same community could take over the real estate not used for charitable purposes, or such immovable properties could be turned into rent-yielding ones. Non-Muslim foundations would be able to receive donations from domestic as well as foreign institutions. They could earn revenues by establishing firms. Most significantly, the law ensured the return of some of the seized properties of the non-Muslim foundations. While the law thus brought substantial improvements to the governance of properties owned by non-Muslim foundations, a major flaw in it was the lack of any kind of indemnification for immovables that had passed on to third parties.[15]

In spite of the amendments undertaken to the Law on Foundations, it remained far from meeting the demands of the non-Muslim minority foundations. In turn, the foundations took their cases to the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) and won. In the face of the increasing number of European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) verdicts that sentenced Turkey to pay compensation to the applicants for the immovables confiscated by the state, the AKP government issued a regulation that entered into force on 1 October 2011.[16] This regulation enabled the minority foundations to reclaim the immovables that they had declared back in 1936, provided that they apply for registration within 12 months after the regulation took effect. It also ensured compensation for the immovable properties sold to third parties. Nevertheless, the rate of return of the properties during the permitted time was quite low. Only 51 immovable properties out of 430 applications filed were returned as of August 2012 (Bianet 2012).

In 2009 minority rights reforms gained pace. The AKP government initiated so-called openings toward the Alevi and Kurdish communities. It aspired to put an end to the burning issue of PKK (Kurdistan Workers Party) violence by expanding the rights of the Kurdish community further and encouraging the insurgent PKK members to lay down their arms.[17] With this objective in mind, the AKP government initiated a process of "Kurdish opening". As part of this initiative, TRT Şeş (six) channel began broadcasting programs in Kurdish language on a 24-hour basis on 1 January 2009. The time limit that private TV channels were subjected to in broadcasting in minority languages including Kurdish was removed. The AKP government started to restore the names of Kurdish villages which had been Turkified in the past. The state-owned Martin Artuklu

University set up an Institute of Living Languages, where Kurdish, Persian, Arabic, and Aramaic could be taught, but most private or religious schools for Aramaic language that are aimed at Aramaic children were unable to obtain an official permit for their activities. A more courageous part of the opening was the amnesty given to the PKK members in return for laying down arms. However, the occasion at which a group of PKK militants entered Turkey from Northern Iraq in October 2009 turned into a show of victory and support for PKK head Öcalan, provoking nationalist reactions across the country. In turn, the Kurdish opening was quickly shelved. Thereafter, the Kurdish issue was rapidly re-securitized, with the PKK attacking a military vehicle and killing all the soldiers on board in December 2009. Nevertheless, after security discourse dominated the agenda on the Kurdish issue for three years following the first attempt of a Kurdish opening in 2009, 2013 began with a promising step toward the settlement of the Kurdish issue. The AKP government launched an open dialogue with Abdullah Öcalan, the imprisoned PKK head, which was expected to lead to a negotiated resolution of the Kurdish issue. Concerning the Alevi community, the AKP government held seven workshops between 2009 and 2010 with a view to meeting the identity-related demands of the Alevi. However, these workshops did not generate an actual settlement to Alevi concerns.

The final period regarding democratization and progress in minority rights began in 2011. The AKP's reformist drive, which had already been undermined by the declining importance of EU anchorage and the dissolution of the coalition between the liberals and the AKP, took a back seat after the 2011 elections, in which the AKP increased its share of the vote to 50 % and achieved its third consecutive electoral victory. Further, the Ergenekon investigation, whereby groups within the military were allegedly implicated in illegal activities to overthrow the AKP government, swept the military out of politics by delegitimizing the political role of the armed forces. Moreover, the constitutional changes accepted through a constitutional referendum on 12 September 2010 helped diversify the composition of the higher judiciary, hitherto a major bastion of the Kemalist establishment. In this new environment the AKP leaned toward conservative politics, rather than opting for democratic reforms. For instance, teaching the Quran was introduced as an elective course in public schools. Defining abortion as murder, Prime Minister Erdoğan demanded the preparation of a law to restrict abortion practices. The events related to Gezi Park in the summer of 2013, which began as

a small-scale protest to save a park on the iconic Taksim Square in the heart of Istanbul from demolition, soon led to massive anti-AKP government demonstrations across the country, which were brutally repressed. Following this, a corruption scandal surfaced in December 2013 that was exposed through illegal recordings of conversations between high-level government officials. These were milestones in the public perception of the increasingly authoritarian drive of the AKP government. These developments have without doubt put the AKP government on the defensive and affected its reformist drive negatively.

On the other hand, a government initiative in October 2011 led to the creation of a constitutional assembly, comprising all parliamentary parties, which has been working on a new constitution or (liberalizing) reforms to the 1982 constitution which was put in place after the military coup in 1980 and heavily influenced by the authoritarian military junta. This process was catalyzed by the pressure the EU was exerting on the country. Within this context, it was intended to considerably strengthen minority rights and protective measures. However, standstill set in when the constitutional assembly could only agree on 60 of approximately 120 articles. The AKP government consequently dissolved the constitutional assembly in November 2013 and thereby put a preliminary stop to the constitutional reform process. The main bones of contention were minority rights, greater political freedom, and the independence of the judiciary. While the AKP insisted on a presidential system in which the constitution granted extensive rights to the head of state, the opposition parties preferred a system in which the parliament had more power.

Owing to the Gezi protests, growing societal opposition against the AKP government, the deadlocked negotiations with the Kurds, and the increasing resentment among the Alevi against the AKP, the AKP government unveiled a new democratization package at the end of October 2013. The proposal of this package should be seen as compensation from the government for the disappointment caused by the failure to carry out constitutional reforms (see above) which were intended to give religious and ethnic minorities in particular more fundamental rights and official recognition to different groups. The package particularly targeted the Kurdish community to break the deadlock in the ongoing negotiations with the Kurds aimed at a settlement of the Kurdish issue. As part of the package, the 10 % threshold for parliamentary representation was opened up to debate and it was proposed that it could be reduced up to 5 %. The Kurdish political parties, above all the BDP (Peace and Democracy

Party), would benefit most from a lowering of the electoral threshold. They would not need to enter the parliamentary elections as independent candidates to bypass the high electoral barrier any longer.

With an amendment to the first additional article of the Law on Political Parties (LPP), the threshold to receive state aid was reduced from 7 to 3 % for political parties. This change, too, favors the BDP. With a change to Article 20 of the LPP, political parties no longer need to have local (*belde*) branches. Inclusion of a change to Article 15 of the Election Law legalized co-chairmanship in political parties. This was a practice already observed by the Kurdish BDP. Obstacles to political party membership were removed. All persons who are entitled to vote can now also register as political party members. This change also favors the BDP, since a significant number of Kurdish politicians were either imprisoned or convicted of violating Anti-Terror Law. This change would pave the way for their re-entry into politics. Amendments to the LPP would also allow for political propaganda in languages and dialects other than Turkish. This amendment as well would benefit the Kurdish political parties, since it legalizes the use of Kurdish in political activity. Articles which ban the use of w, x, and q, which exist in the Kurdish alphabet and not in the Turkish one, would be removed from the Turkish Penal Code. Instruction in different languages and dialects other than Turkish was allowed in private schools. This amendment has made possible the opening of Kurdish-instructed private schools, if not state ones. With new regulation, villages whose names were changed to Turkish ones before 1980 in accordance with Turkification policies, would be able to use their former names. These regulations regarding non-Turkish mother tongues in private schools and name changes of villages applied not only to the Kurds, but also to other ethnic groups or minorities (see Chap. 6 on the Syriacs).

The democratization package has also for the first time criminalized hate crimes and crimes resulting from discrimination. Furthermore, a board for equality and struggle against discrimination was to be set up. The package has also expanded the right to demonstration. As a gesture to the Alevi community, the University of Nevşehir in central Anatolia would be renamed Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli University, honoring a historically significant Alevi figure. A Roma Institute for Language and Culture subordinated to a university would be established with a view to conduct research on Roma culture and language and on the problems they encounter and to make proposals for their settlement. The democratization package contained other positive points that mean an improvement of the Syriacs' situation,

including e.g. regulations regarding the expropriation and return of church properties. Nevertheless, the Syrian Orthodox church has so far only been able to achieve a partial legal victory over the state and the neighboring Kurdish villages in the numerous proceedings regarding the ownership of the Mor Gabriel monastery and its real estate, which were initiated in 2008 and which have attracted considerable international attention (see Stieger 2009; Villelabeitia 2009; and Chap. 6 on the Syriacs).

On the negative side, however, the package did not meet the expectation of the Alevi community regarding the recognition of *cem* houses as places of worship. Contrary to expectations, the Khalki Seminary was not reopened either. Moreover, the package did not amend the articles in the Anti-Terror Law which make no distinction between violence and freedom of thought and thus facilitate the criminalization of struggles for minority rights. No regulations were enacted for the local administration of the newly proposed legal provisions either. In the opinion of an observer of Turkish politics, the democratization package was a masterfully designed one, which would not stir up the nationalist electorate before the local elections in March 2014 and would yet create the sense among the Kurds that some progress was being made (İnsel 2013).

3.4   Conclusion

Turkey is a country with a deep-seated political tradition associating minority rights with a security threat, which is supported by a strong nationalistic ideological paradigm of national homogeneity. Nevertheless, as a result of an EU-induced desecuritization and democratization process, minority issues that used to be viewed through the lens of security previously have more and more come to be seen as normal political issues. As part of its liberalization policy in the early years of its reign, the AKP sought to reverse the homogenizing policies of the Kemalist Republic and did some work to recognize ethno-cultural distinctions of minorities and other ethnic groups of non-Turkish origin.

However, the policies pursued by the AKP and the living conditions experienced by Turkey's minorities have remained ambivalent until today and are characterized by a constant mixture of improvements and measures against the minorities. Despite the obvious partial successes, their situation still does not meet the lowest international standards for human and minority rights in some areas. The scope and effects of the reforms and associated political cultural changes remain limited, many important problems remain unresolved,

and new regulations are often implemented very slowly or counteracted in practice (see, for example, Chap. 6 on the Syriacs.) With a few exceptions, it is mainly the numerous ethnically non-Turkish groups with a Sunni background which do not have an interest in having a social and legal status as a(n ethnic, not religious!) minority that benefit from the ethno-political liberalization (see Giesel 2013: 357–362; 2014a: 91, 96–98; 2014b: 27f; 2015b: 72f; 2016b: 2–5, 43–49; 2016c: 90ff.; 2016a, d, e, f; Kaya 2004).

The contradictory situation and the approach taken by the government can be explained by the dilemma experienced by the AKP in which it is performing a delicate balancing act between keeping its promises to the EU, realizing its own political interests (both on the regional and on the national level), and consideration for its politically very heterogeneous electorate. The latter consists of rather liberal and pro-EU circles as well as conservative or Islamist and nationalistic ones. In order to maintain its power and to create a balance of interests, the AKP's policies need to further the constant and flexible preservation of a socio-political balance (see Giesel 2014b: 27f; 2015b: 72f). When considering the policy changes made so far, one occasionally gets the impression that the government's advances in regard to improving minority rights are nothing more than strategic acts aimed at proving critics on the national and international levels wrong and at preventing a further worsening of Turkey's relationship with the EU, which has deteriorated in recent years. The promise and partial implementation of general improvements, which coincide with a denial of genuine equality for non-Muslims by the AKP government, can be seen as an indicator for the party's orientation toward Ottoman political premises, which granted non-Muslims generous rights in some areas as part of the millet system, but nevertheless placed them on a legally lower status than Muslims (see Giesel 2013: 357; 2016b: 47ff). In this context, the Islamic-conservative government's affinity with the adherents of non-Muslim, Abrahamic religions of the book like Christians and Jews is probably greater than with the secularist and atheist parts of the population that tend to demand generally greater political freedoms and improvements in the human rights situation. Especially in recent years, developments in the country are viewed with increasing concern by parts of Turkey's ethnic and religious (as well as other social and political) groups. This is caused by the increase of Islamist (strategically placed) nationalist and authoritarian policies that coincide with the government's vehement attempts at counteracting secularization and at placing further public, political, and social spheres under its direct control or making

them dependent on the government (see Giesel 2013: 359; 2014b: 28; 2015b: 73f.; 2016b: 47ff). In line with the generally ambivalent situation for minorities in Turkey, the people affected by these developments are wavering between hope and resignation.

Despite the successes of the assimilation policies and the adoption of national-ideological premises, through which non-Turkish groups have been suppressed for decades and the members of many ethnic groups have been partially assimilated to a greater or lesser extent, Turkey's ethnic and religious diversity has recently become very visible again. Members of ethnically non-Turkish and/or religiously non-Muslim (or non-Sunni) groups are no longer so clearly considered a threat to the security and territorial integrity of the Turkish state as long as they primarily identify with Turkishness in a civic sense and give a secondary or peripheral place to their (sub-) ethnic identities. Due to the cultural and social fusion processes between Sunni Turks as the titular nation and other groups, we are dealing with a two-partite, hierarchized identity concept which now almost dominates Turkish mainstream society and which is more or less widely accepted (see Giesel 2013: 360; 2014a: 200; 2015a: 4ff; 2016b: 24–32, 38–42). Finally, it can be noted that the political liberalization processes which gradually set in during the 1980s, gathered pace in the 1990s, and reached their peak in the 2000s due to the catalytic role played by the EU have produced a tangible partial desecuritization of the rights enjoyed by Turkey's ethnic and religious groups and minorities, although this process is far from complete (see Giesel 2013: 357–359; 2016b, c).

In the final analysis, EU pressure on Turkey to improve its minority rights provisions will not be sufficient to eliminate the still widely held view that Jews and members of other ethno-religious groups or minorities are foreign elements in the country's society and politics, who should be treated accordingly. It is important in this regard to bring about a general change in social attitudes and to further strengthen civil society values and activism. Dedicated and responsible governmental policies, geared toward achieving these aims, should play an important role in this context (see Giesel 2014b: 28f.; 2015b: 74; 2016b: 43ff., 47–49).

After this general introduction into the issue of (religious) minority rights in Turkey in historical and contemporary context and the role of the EU in supporting changes in minority rights governance toward desecuritization, the following three chapters will zoom in on our three specific minority groups. We begin with the Alevi as a large, for the most part ethnically Turkish, and Muslim though not Sunni minority group.

Notes

1. This applies to the *Yörüks* (of Turkish origin, a group of quasi-ethnic character with historically shaped, socio-cultural idiosyncrasies that usually displays a strong consciousness of its distinctiveness and practices endogamy, but has a diffuse ethnic self-consciousness), the *Mhallami* (there are alternative theories regarding their Syriac or Kurdish origin), *Kuban Cossacks* (Orthodox old believers with partial Turkic heritage, subject to strong Russification), and *Hemshinli* (who speak a tongue related to Armenian, but vehemently refuse to be considered Armenians). Among the Turkic people, the Turkmens, Tatars, and Azeris and among the Caucasians, the Circassians are divided into several subgroups. All of them have a strong sense of their distinctive identity and some of them, depending on the group, context, and circumstances, can be considered separate (quasi-) ethnic groups.
2. Despite this reform, the Ottoman Empire continued to recognize a further 17 religious groups until the beginning of World War One. Among them were many Protestant and Catholic groups (the Caldeans who accept the Pope as the highest authority and the Arab Melkiten) as well as the Syrian Orthodox Church, which was granted millet status in 1882 (see Koutcharian 1989: 42–44).
3. Turanism, Pan-Turanianism or Pan-Turanism is a nationalist political and cultural movement which proclaims ethnic and cultural unity for disparate people with a supposed common ancestral origin in Central Asia. The Iranian term *Turan* is used as the name for this region.
4. For the case of the Jews see Giesel (2014b: 9ff., 2015b: 37–40); for the Armenians and Syriacs see the respective chapters in this book.
5. For a detailed account of Turkification policies, see, for instance, Aktar (2000).
6. This primarily affected the non-Sunni Alevites or Bektashi, whose membership comes from various ethnic groups of Turkish, Turkic, and non-Turkish (including Kurdish) background.
7. Decision of the General Assembly for Civil Matters, substance no: 1971/2–820, numbered 1974/505, dated 08.05.1974.
8. Article 4, Law No. 4771 Amending Various Laws, 3 August 2002, Official Gazette No. 24841, 9 August 2002.
9. Law No. 4778 Amending Various Laws, 2 January 2003, Official Gazette No. 24990, 11 January 2003.
10. Law Amending Various Laws, No: 4928, 15 July 2003, Official Gazette No: 25173, 19 July 2003.
11. Regulation on Acquisition and Disposal of Immovables by Non-Muslim Foundations and Registration of Immovables in their Possession to their Names, Official Gazette No. 25003, 24 January 2003.

12. The Presidency Conclusions of the European Council meeting on 16–17 December 2004, available at http://www.consilium.europa.eu/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressData/en/ec/83201.pdf.

13. For a detailed review of the events regarding the struggle between the Kemalists and the AKP government, see, for instance, Özel (2008).

14. Law on Foundations, No. 5737, 20 February 2008, Official Gazette No. 26800, 27 February 2008.

15. For an elaboration of the shortcomings of Law no. 5737, see Kurban and Hatemi (2009: 28–31).

16. Regulation on the Implementation of Article 11 of the Law on Foundations No. 5737, Official Gazette No. 28071, 1 October 2011.

17. The PKK is a Kurdish secessionist organization that has been carrying out an armed struggle against the Turkish state since 1984 for the autonomy of the Kurdish-populated areas in eastern and southeastern Turkey. Its leader Abdullah Öcalan has been held in prison in Turkey since he was captured in 1999.

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The Alevi, the AKP Government and the Alevi Initiative

4.1 INTRODUCTION

During the 1980s, the rise of Kurdish nationalism, which was followed by calls from the Alevi community for recognition of their identity, posed significant challenges to the Kemalist paradigm of nationhood. As a result, the challenge of Kurdish nationalism was a contributing factor in the gradual acceptance of a more liberal understanding of citizenship among the state elite in Turkey in its approach to the Kurdish issue and minorities more generally. However, Turkey's EU candidacy also clearly had a significant impact on changes to Turkey's traditional understanding of citizenship as based on Kemalist premises.

Since becoming a candidate for EU accession at the European Union Helsinki Summit in December 1999, the Turkish state has continued to extend its recognition of the cultural, ethnic, and religious diversity and heterogeneity in the country. With the entry into political office of the AKP in 2002, reform efforts were accelerated, including those targeting the minorities in the country. Undoubtedly, one of the most challenging minority issues faced by the AKP government was the Alevi community's identity demands, which were daunting for the AKP government for two reasons: First, some of the Alevi demands, such as the recognition of *cem* houses (Alevi places of worship), changes to the compulsory religious education classes in schools, and changes to the status of *Diyanet* (Presidency

of Religious Affairs) required a re-definition of the state's identity, which hitherto had been based on the dominant form of Sunni-Hanefi Islam. Second, they also posed a challenge to the AKP's own conservative identity, which is based on Sunni-Hanefi Islam. As a conservative party, the AKP had to walk a tightrope between not offending the Sunni-Hanefi segments of its electorate and causing alienation within its party ranks, on the one side, and tackling the grievances of the Alevi community, on the other.

The objective of this chapter is to unravel the demands and grievances of the Alevi community as well as the AKP government's attempts to address them. It proceeds in eight sections. In the next section, the genesis of the Alevi issue and trajectory of development of the Alevi identity in Turkey are mapped, while the following section deals with the identity-based problems and demands of the Alevi community. The fourth section draws attention to the two groupings within the Alevi community which have divergent interpretations of Alevism and thus different proposals for the settlement of some of the Alevi-related problems. Section 5 evaluates the so-called Alevi opening of the AKP government, drawing attention to the identity dilemma and other difficulties facing the government when attempting to meet the Alevi demands. Section 6 deals with the so-called Alevi workshops, highlighting the mistakes the AKP government made in their organization, which exacerbated the already existing mistrust between the parties. The seventh section throws light on the factors that contributed to the deterioration of the relationship between the AKP government and the Alevi community in the aftermath of the Alevi workshops. Section 8 elucidates efforts of the AKP government under Prime Minister Davutoğlu to mend fences with the Alevi community. Finally, the ninth section concludes the chapter, emphasizing that Turkey needs to adopt a more liberal understanding of the definition of the nation in order to tackle the Alevi issue.

The chapter heavily draws upon field research conducted during December 2011 and January 2012 in Istanbul, Ankara, and Izmir and its surroundings, where Alevi are especially numerous, with the people in leadership positions in Alevi organizations. During the field research, 23 Alevi organizations were visited and 21 in-depth interviews with Alevi NGO leaders were held (see Appendix). The semi-structured interviews enabled us to see the Alevi issues from the perspective of the Alevi themselves. Ten of the interviews were held in Izmir; four in Istanbul; four in Ankara; one each in Aydin, Kusadasi, and Selçuk. The interviews with Alevi civil society organizations not only included the officials in their headquarters

in Istanbul and Ankara but also representatives in local organizations in Izmir and Aydin as well as in smaller cities such as Kusadasi and Selçuk. This enabled us to paint a fuller and more diverse picture of the Alevi issue, increasing the reliability and accuracy of the data collected. The representatives of the Alevi organizations with whom the interviews were held have been involved in the Alevi movement for years and are therefore closely acquainted with the problems and difficulties of the Alevi community. Compared to the cases of the Armenians and Syriacs, getting in touch with the Alevi community was easier; the members of the Alevi community were generally open and ready to answer our interview questions. This primarily stems from the fact that despite having faced religious discrimination, the Alevi community view themselves as part of the Turkish nation and founders of the Turkish Republic through their close association with Kemalism. Moreover, since the end of the Cold War the Alevi issue has come into the public realm and the Alevi community has been more visible than ever. As a result, the Alevi's minority rights have been less securitized than those of the non-Muslim minorities.

4.2   The Development of Alevi Identity in Turkey

The Alevi are a heterodox Islamic community that can be found mostly in central-eastern Anatolia, in the larger Turkish cities, and in small pockets in the rural areas along the southern and western coasts. They are said to constitute between 10 and 14 % of the total population (Erdogan 2006). Despite similarities with the Shiite in Iran and the Alewite (Nusayri) in Syria, Alevism in Turkey has evolved in the Turkish Islamic context under Turkish spiritual leaders.[1] Most of the Alevi are Turkish-speaking, while 15–20 % are Kurdish-speaking. There are notable differences between the Alevi's interpretation of Islam and that of the Sunni. The Alevi revere Ali, the fourth caliph and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad, and unlike the Sunni, instead of frequenting mosques and conducting the ritual prayer five times a day, the Alevi hold *cem* gatherings in *cem* houses (*cem evi*), where they play the lute (*saz*), recite, sing religious poems (*deyiş or nefes*), and perform ritual dances (*semah*).

Being a heterodox and non-conformist Islamic community and having supported the rival Shiite Turco-Persian Safavid state, the Alevi were subject to persecution under Sunni Ottoman rule. Thus, it is not surprising that they extended their support to Mustafa Kemal during the War of Independence and welcomed the establishment of the secular Republic in the hope that

the new state would be at an equal distance from all belief systems and would bring Sunnism under control. The secularizing reforms of Mustafa Kemal indeed eased the plight of the Alevi to a significant extent, since they brought an end to the (Sunni) Islamic political domination witnessed during the Ottoman era (Koçan and Öncü 2004: 472). That said, the Republic adopted an uncompromising approach to all sub-identities including religious ones, in an effort to create a modern, civilized, and homogeneous nation state. Under the repressive policies of the state during the single-party era, the Alevi went underground and followed their beliefs in secret. The relatively more liberal and democratic political context brought about by the 1961 constitution then helped the Alevi issue surface in public space for the first time. The annual Alevi festival in Hacıbektaş, a major Alevi cult center in central Anatolia, started in 1964. First Alevi newspapers and magazines were published. The first Alevi-oriented party, Birlik Partisi (Party of Union), was established in 1965.

Beginning in the 1960s, the Alevi began to associate themselves with leftist ideology and Marxism. In an environment of increasing political instability and economic crisis during the 1970s, society became polarized between the left and the right. In this period of polarization, the Alevi came to be considered an internal threat due to their close affinity with the leftist movements by some factions in the state, ultra-nationalists, and radical Islamists; they became the target of a series of massacres in the southeastern Turkish city of Maraş and the central and eastern Turkish cities of Malatya, Sivas, and Çorum during the 1978–1980 period. In the bloodiest attack, 110 people of Alevi origin were killed in Maraş, according to official figures (Massicard 2007: 63).

The Alevi and the leftist groups also suffered the most severe persecution under the military regime following the coup on 12 September 1980. Through the so-called Turkish-Islamic synthesis (an ideology combining Turkish nationalism and Sunni Islam), the military regime leaned toward the state-controlled Islamization (Sunnification) of society in an attempt to counterbalance the socialist currents that were seen as a major threat to Turkish unity and integrity. The military-drafted 1982 constitution made lessons on religious culture and ethics compulsory in primary and secondary school, which had been optional under the 1961 constitution. These courses were based on the Sunni-Hanefi denomination of Islam and excluded Alevi teaching. In the same vein, the role of the *Diyanet* in the educational system and society was expanded, and the state sped up efforts to construct mosques across the country, even in Alevi-dominated villages (Ibid.: 72).

Toward the end of the 1980s, the Alevi community started to rediscover Alevism, owing to the fact that leftist ideology fell from favor and increasingly lost its appeal following the demise of the Soviet Union and under the pressure of the state's anti-leftist attitude. Given that religion became a major point of reference for political identity formations in the post-1980 era, the traditional-religious dimension of Alevi identity also gained importance for many Alevi (Dressler 2008: 286). The relatively liberal environment in the post-1983 period paved the way for a revitalization of minority identities, which came to raise their voices in the public sphere more strongly and openly. In 1989 the Alevi in Germany published a manifesto which called for the recognition of Alevism in Turkey as well as in Germany. In this period, the first Alevi associations started to be established. Publications on Alevism began to appear. In the meantime, as a result of the educational and economic opportunities provided by urbanization, the Alevi started to form an intelligentsia and middle class, helping them to express their identity demands more forcefully.

Undoubtedly, the 1993 Sivas incident, in which 37 participants at a leftist-cum-Alevi cultural festival were killed in a hotel fire by Sunni fanatics, became a milestone in the growth of the Alevi movement. The fact that the left-wing SHP (Social Democratic People's Party) in the coalition government, which had enjoyed the support of the Alevi community, had been unable to protect those killed in the incident further convinced Alevi society that it could not rely on anybody but themselves for protection.[2] Consequently, it came as no surprise that following the Sivas massacre a number of Alevi leaders decided to unite under a single party, the Peace Party (*Barış Partisi*), which was founded in 1996. Only two years later, the 1995 Gazi incident, in which more than two dozen people were killed by security forces in the predominantly Alevi Istanbul neighborhood of Gazi, served as a further catalyst for the flourishing of the Alevi movement (Van Bruinessen 1996), and numerous new Alevi organizations were established to give the Alevi a stronger voice in expressing their identity demands.

Moreover, the rise in political Islam during the 1990s enhanced the perceived legitimacy of the Alevi in the eyes of the Kemalists in the state apparatus and in the population at large, who came to consider the Alevi as a form of insurance for the secular Republic, as they are liberal representatives of Islamic belief (Erman and Göker 2000: 100). In parallel to the creeping Islamization in politics, the ongoing war in the southeast against the Kurdish secessionist forces further led the state to welcome the Alevi and emphasize the Turkish nature of their identity as loyal citizens of the state (Van Bruinessen 1996).

As a result of Turkey's EU candidacy during the 2000s, the EU became an important external actor helping to legitimize the Alevi demands by raising the problems faced by the Alevi community in its annual progress reports on Turkey (see Chap. 2). Furthermore, EU-inspired democratic reforms have expanded the legal space of the Alevi, who have come to win cases in the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), further boosting the legitimacy of their claims for recognition. We will now take a closer look at what these demands and claims entail.

4.3   Alevi Demands and Grievances

The Alevi believe that the crux of the Alevi issue lies in the fact that the state is organized on the basis of the Sunni-Hanefi version of Islam. This is in contrast to the equal-citizenship understanding of Article 10 of the Constitution, which prohibits any kind of discrimination by the state toward its citizens. They also point out that in this sense, the *Diyanet* is in violation of Article 136 of the Constitution, which requires the *Diyanet* "to exercise its duties prescribed in its particular law in accordance with the principles of *secularism* (emphasis added), removed from all political views and ideas". Furthermore, they find the inclusion of a religious body like the *Diyanet* in the Constitution to be problematic, claiming that since the start of the multi-party era, the problem has become aggravated, since governments have made concessions in order to win the support of the Sunni electorate, expanding the role of Sunnism in the state and society. Most Alevi NGO leaders believe that a major step in the resolution of their problems and grievances would be an assurance of their rights through the adoption of a new democratic Constitution and its full implementation by state officials, and demand that the new constitution grant them the status of equal citizenship.

In addition to the status of the *Diyanet* and the lack of recognition for *cem* houses, the Sunni-biased compulsory religious instruction at schools stands out as a major issue for the Alevi community. In addition, the Alevi community is also calling for the settlement of issues related to the education and status of Alevi religious leaders, such as *dede* and *zakir*, an end to discrimination in public employment and public tenders, a change in the status of the Madımak Hotel to stress the commemoration of the massacre that occurred there, the removal of religious affiliation from identity cards, the eradication of anti-discriminatory elements from the school curriculum, an apology from the state for the wrong-doings committed in the

past, acknowledgment of the Dersim massacre, and the return to the Alevi community of religious shrines confiscated by the state.

Depending on their ideological preferences and their views of Alevism, that is, as a separate culture or as a belief system within Islam, there is disagreement within the Alevi community in some respects regarding how these problems may be resolved. There are two Alevi NGO groupings: the *Cem Vakfı*, the AVF (Federation of Alevi Foundations) and affiliated organizations; and the ABF (Alevi-Bektaşi Federation) and the NGOs associated with it. These two groupings have made different proposals for the settlement of the Alevi grievances, as will be further explained in Sect. 4.4. First, we will look at the three most frequently mentioned grievances in turn: the status of *cem* houses, Alevi access to public offices and tenders, and the role of the *Diyanet*.

Recognition of Cem Houses (Alevi Places of Worship)

The acknowledgment of *cem* houses as places of worship has significant implications for the Alevi community, because unlike the mosques of Sunni Muslims, *cem* houses serve not only for *cem* ceremonies, which are communal gatherings led by a *dede*, but also as important facilities in catering for the socio-cultural needs of the Alevi community. They play a very important role in the lives of the Alevi community. If recognized by the state, they would be eligible to receive water and electricity free of charge, as is the case with mosques. Deprived of official recognition by the state, the Alevi community sought to surpass the hurdle of recognition at the local level. In 2008, the Kuşadası, Didim, and Tunceli municipal councils and in 2009 the municipal council of Antalya exempted *cem* houses from utility costs by granting them official recognition as places of worship (Çarkoğlu and Bilgili 2011: 357). However, these were exceptions. Similar decisions taken by other municipal councils were reversed by the province governors. The biggest problem regarding the recognition of *cem* houses, however, is that since they are not granted official recognition by the state, the Alevi cannot obtain construction permits to build *cem* houses in areas that are designated for places of worship in the municipal construction plan. That is, they are not allocated lands owned by the state. Therefore, they have to construct *cem* houses on private lands. They initiate donation campaigns among the congregation members to raise the money in order to purchase the land.

An Alevi NGO manager explained the situation as follows:[3]

> Since you pay for the land on which *cem* house will be built from your own pocket, no money remains for the expenses to construct the *cem* house building. You start the construction, but you cannot complete it. Therefore, for instance, there are some halfway built *cem* houses, whose construction work could not be finished for 25 years. You turn to the local administration for help. If you have close relations with the officials, then they help you. If not, then you have to rely on your own resources for *cem* house construction.

As another Alevi NGO official confirmed, some municipalities seek to take care of the demands of the Alevi concerning *cem* houses for reasons of political expediency, providing services to *cem* houses in various forms ranging from allocation of land to cleaning services; such support is, however, neither systematic nor permanent.[4]

Recruitment in the State and Public Tenders

Another of the difficulties faced by the Alevi is the issue of employment in the state. Since each ruling party chooses to appoint officials close to it to higher ranking bureaucratic posts, the Alevi maintain that they are discriminated against and are disproportionally under-represented in the state. They perceive that in order to come to higher posts in the state one must be Sunni-Hanefi and Turk. They point out that it is not possible to see people of Alevi faith in the bureaucratic posts, underlining that, until today, one can hardly find any Alevi as director-general, under-secretary, province governor in the civilian bureaucracy, or general in the army. They also complain that one can rarely find school directors, chiefs of police, or district governors of Alevi origin.

Besides, as an Alevi NGO leader in Istanbul maintained, the Alevi have been one of the most impoverished social groups in Turkey as a result of the years of neglect and marginalization on the part of the state and society.[5] He pointed out that in the last ten years, the Alevi have benefited less from state resources, and Alevi businessmen have won very few public tenders. Therefore, he added, the Alevi community has continued to be relatively poor and to suffer from high unemployment.

Diyanet (The Presidency of Religious Affairs)

Without a doubt, a major issue which needs to be settled for the Alevi community is the role of the *Diyanet* in the state and society and the issue

of representation of the Alevi community in it. Established in 1924, the *Diyanet* was designed by the secular Republic to "put orthodox Islam (Sunnism) under the state control" and "to nationalize it" (Gözaydin 2008: 217). While the *Diyanet*'s duty is officially, among other tasks, to illuminate society about religion, it is widely seen by the Alevi community as a stronghold of Sunni-Hanefi Islam. This is because despite its professed secularism, the Republic paradoxically promoted Sunni Islam for the sake of solidarity among the citizens, while excluding the Alevi and other religious categories from the *Diyanet* (Koçan and Öncü 2004: 472). After the inception of the multi-party era in 1950, political parties have shown sensitivity to the demands of the large Sunni constituency because of electoral competition. Thus, the role of religion in politics and alongside it the *Diyanet*'s role in the state have expanded (Güler 2008: 59–60).

After the 1980 coup, the *Diyanet* turned into a constitutional institution in the military-drafted 1982 constitution (Article 136). Alongside Prayer Leader and Preacher schools (*imam-hatip okullari*), faculties of divinity, compulsory religious lessons, and mosques, it became an instrument of social engineering by the Kemalist establishment. On the basis of a Turkish-Islamic synthesis, the state aimed not to leave the teaching of Islam to uncontrolled Islamist groupings as well as to counterbalance communist currents in society, which were seen as a major threat to the unity and integrity of the country. Following this logic, the same article of the constitution assigned the *Diyanet* the duty to "promote and consolidate national solidarity and unity". Because of the important role that the *Diyanet* plays in shaping societal attitudes, Article 89 of the Turkish law on political parties, which was also drafted under the military regime, makes it an offense to question the status of the *Diyanet* and calls for the closure of political parties which demand its abolition (Yıldırım 2011). After the coup, staff membership in the *Diyanet* grew significantly, which turned it into a huge bureaucratic body over the years. The *Diyanet*'s budget is larger than those of 11 ministries combined (Taraf 2015). Its 2016 budget amounts to 6 billion 400 million Turkish Lira (ca. 2 billion Euro) (Hürriyet 2015). The *Diyanet*'s role becomes problematic when it comes to services to be offered to Muslim groups other than the Sunni-Hanefi sect. Demands of the Alevi community concerning the status of the *Diyanet* in the state and society vary significantly, depending on their interpretations of Alevism and their ideological stances, as we will now explain.

4.4   DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS OF ALEVISM AND DIVERGENT DEMANDS

There are two major Alevi NGO groupings, which differ in some respects in their views on how the Alevi issue should be settled. These are the ABF (Alevi-Bektaşi Federation), on the one side, and *Cem Vafkı* (the Republican Education and Culture Centre Foundation) and the AVF (Federation of Alevi Foundations), on the other. The ABF is an umbrella organization, which brings around 200 Alevi NGOs together under its roof. It acts together with the HBVAKV (Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian Culture Foundation) and the AABK (Confederation of European Alevi Unions). The ABF and its affiliated organizations consider Alevism as a form of "societal opposition and resistance" and as "a socialist liberation theology" (Erman and Göker 2000: 110), using leftist discourse when advocating the Alevi concerns. Deemphasizing its religious nature, they define Alevism as a cultural formation and a way of life that embraces various religious influences, including Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Islam (Bilici 1998: 52). The ABF believes that the current role of religion in the state should be changed radically, since the state is not sufficiently secular in the true sense of the word, and suggests that the state should adopt a neutral stance with respect to all religious categories. They suggest that the *Diyanet* has been used as an instrument by the state to monopolize Islam and Sunnify the Alevi, and consider this institution to be the major impediment to the settlement of the Alevi issue. They are against the representation of the Alevi within the *Diyanet*, believing that it would harm the pluralism within Alevism, and believe that the state should not interfere with the institution of *dede*, fearing that doing so could pave the way for the creation of a new form of Alevism. The payment of state salaries to *dede* would be, in their view, a violation of the "civil religiosity" of Alevism, which is meant to be free from the influence of the state. Each religious community, they believe, should instead fund its own religious services. Since the state should not finance religious beliefs in a truly secular system, Prayer Leader and Preacher schools and faculties of divinity as well as Quran courses providing religious education should be shut down. They are also against the compulsory Sunni-oriented religious classes at schools. In short, they believe that the state should stay out of religion, including Alevism.

The *Cem Vafkı* (the Republican Education and Culture Centre Foundation) is, economically, a more powerful group, and is a staunch

supporter of Kemalism and the Republican regime. Along with Alevi NGOs with similar ideological stances, it is organized under the AVF. In contrast to the ABF's claim that Alevism is a syncretic cultural formation that is influenced by various belief systems and cultures, *Cem Vafkı* maintains that Alevism falls under Islam and the Turkish interpretation of Islam, while Sunnism is its Arab understanding. The *Cem Vakfi* seeks to institutionalize and pay attention to the education of *dede* in order to spread "true" Alevism and overcome misrepresentations which interpret Alevism as a "culture" rather than as a religion (Cem Vakfi, "Alevilik Nedir?"). Having close connections with the Alevi *dede* and the Bektasi *baba* in the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Middle East, they set up Alevi Religious Services (DAIRS) in 2003, bringing together 2700 Alevi representatives (*dede and baba*) from all over the world in order to upgrade the organizational structure of Alevism-Bektaşism to an equal status as that found in Sunni-Hanefism. They hope that the DAIRS could be integrated into the *Diyanet* in future, representing all the Alevi.

This group as well emphasizes that the state should be at an equal distance to all religious groups. While they are not against the *Diyanet* in principle, they demand its reorganization to allow for the representation of all religious categories, including non-Muslim communities, in proportion to their percentage in the total population. They point out that abolishing the *Diyanet* is difficult for political parties for electoral reasons. Further, they find the *Diyanet* necessary in order for the state to control anti-secular tendencies. In a restructured *Diyanet* all faith groups should have an autonomous status and should stand in a non-hierarchical relationship with each other. The state should allocate these groups financial aid from the state budget in a just manner (Cem Vakfi web page: http://www.cemvakfi.org.tr/).

Unlike the ABF, the *Cem Vakfi* does not call for drastic changes to the role of religion in the state; instead it supports the integration of the Alevi faith into the *Diyanet* and the state. Accordingly, it requires Alevi *dede* and Bektaşi *baba* to be paid salaries and granted other personal benefits (national insurance, pension) in order for them to be able to conduct religious services properly. For the education of religious leaders for the Alevi community, they believe that departments of religion (*tasavvuf*) should be established in universities in the faculties of divinity. They propose that regardless of whether or not religious instruction is compulsory, all belief categories, including Alevism, should be treated impartially in schools (Cem Vakfi 2010). Besides, as part of their efforts to ensure recognition of

Alevism by the state and the Sunni majority and to achieve reconciliation between Sunnism and Alevism, they tend to deemphasize the conflictual past between the Alevi and the Sunni, in stark contrast to the rhetoric of the ABF.

4.5   THE ALEVI INITIATIVE OF THE AKP GOVERNMENT

After the Islamists had faced suppression under the staunchly secular Kemalist regime, the Islamic AKP embraced the EU, adopting a pro-democratic and human rights line of rhetoric and practice, undertaking a number of significant EU-inspired democratization reforms. An important reason why the AKP government initiated attempts to appease the Alevi community was, without a doubt, their liberal and democratic discourse and self-positioning. Moreover, the AKP government claims to be a party of Turkey, implying that they are keen to resolve the problems of all the Turkish people, irrespective of whether they support the AKP or not. The struggles for recognition by Alevi organizations through such instruments as protest rallies, court cases, and lobbying in the EU, as well as EU pressure in the form of European Commission progress reports, have also played a part in the AKP's Alevi initiative. It can be said that the timing of the Alevi initiative was shaped by the increasing number of court cases won by members of the Alevi community against the Turkish state in the ECtHR. Furthermore, Islamist intellectuals have played a significant role by encouraging the AKP government to launch the Alevi initiative. As Soner and Toktaş put it, "Islamist intellectuals, instead of debating Alevism as a religious issue, adopted a libertarian discourse and formulated it as a socio-political question embedded in the authoritarian practices of Republican secularism" (Soner and Toktaş 2011: 427).

Nevertheless, relations between the Alevi community and the AKP government were problematic from the outset. There was already an ideological mismatch between the AKP and the Alevi community, as in contrast to the Muslim conservative ideology of the AKP, most Alevi retain secularist, pro-Republican, and social democratic tendencies. In addition, due to the Islamic heritage of the AKP, the Alevi have frequently harbored qualms about its true intentions, and have questioned its sincerity in its moves to settle the Alevi issue. Alevi and Alevi organizations could be found among the most enthusiastic participants of the so-called "Republic rallies" that were organized to keep an AKP MP, Abdullah Gül, from being elected president in 2007. Similarly, in the constitutional referendum in

September 2010, many Alevi organizations called upon their membership to vote against the constitutional amendments proposed by the AKP government, and supported the opposition secular-left CHP, which campaigned against the constitutional changes. Moreover, the rhetoric used by AKP officials with respect to the Alevi issue was a cause of resentment in the Alevi community. For instance, PM Erdoğan said: "If Alevism is loving Ali and following in his footsteps, I am more Alevi" (Radikal 2004). Such criticism, targeting the left-wing segments of the Alevi community, has further galvanized the Alevi in opposing the AKP.

In view of the mistrust between the parties, the AKP government should have adopted a more prudent approach to the Alevi initiative in order to mend fences; yet it failed to gain the trust of the Alevi community for a number of reasons. Above all, the strategy adopted by the AKP government was not well-suited to tackle the Alevi issue. Its clientelistic policy, which excluded well-known Alevi NGOs from the process, helped to perpetuate mistrust between the larger Alevi community and the AKP government. The AKP government forged close ties with one group of Alevi NGOs, the *Cem Vakfı*, leaving out the left-leaning ABF and its affiliated organizations. This was based on the fact that the demands of the *Cem Vakfı* are less radical, as unlike the left-wing Alevi organizations, the *Cem Vakfı* aims for the integration of Alevism into the *Diyanet* rather than targeting its dissolution. Moreover, although interpreting Islam differently from the Sunni-Halefi understanding, the *Cem Vakfı* still views Alevism as being a part of Islam.

As a first step to tackling the Alevi issue, the AKP government nominated and ensured the election of three Alevi representatives as MPs in the 22 July 2007 parliamentary elections, who were then given the responsibility of preparing a package for the settlement of the Alevi issue. The AKP initiated a three-stage Alevi plan that foresaw the provision of financial assistance to *cem* houses in the short term, extend them legal recognition in the medium term, and set up an institution for the representation of Alevi beliefs in the long term (Milliyet 2007). PM Erdoğan then went on to appoint MP Reha Çamuroğlu, an Alevi from the *Cem Vakfı* wing of the Alevi community, as his advisor on the Alevi issue. As part of Erdoğan's efforts to resolve the Alevi issue, Çamuroğlu organized a breaking-the-fast *(iftar)* dinner on 11 January 2008 in the holy month of *Muharram*. Erdoğan attended the dinner, during which the Alevi mourn the assassination of the sons of Hüseyin and Hasan, the sons of Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. During the dinner, Erdoğan stated that he

shared their grief and underlined the necessity of ensuring freedom of conscience for all categories of faith (CNN Turk 2008). All these moves were aimed at winning the hearts and minds of the Alevi community.

The dinner, however, did not generate the expected result. The fact that the dinner was hosted by Abdal Musa Vakfı, a not-so-active Alevi organization with a small following, led the Alevi community to the conclusion that the AKP government was seeking to create its own Alevi organizations, so-called *Ak-Alevi*. The fast-breaking dinner sparked anger among the Alevi NGOs, with the ABF protesting the dinner, criticizing the Alevi initiative of the government as "an operation to *AKP-ize* the Alevi". They maintained that the *iftar* dinner had been organized with the aim of appeasing the EU after it had called for the democratization of minority rights (Öktem 2008). Because of this protest, attendance at the dinner was quite low, with only eight of the 298 Alevi NGOs taking part. It is likely that the AKP could have gained broader trust in the Alevi community by embracing all the Alevi NGOs, so as not to alienate any of them from the Alevi initiative.

Another important mistake made by the AKP government concerned the importance of symbols in religion. In fact, the *iftar* dinner does not exist as a practice in the Alevi belief, but is rather a practice that is undertaken by the Sunni during the month of Ramadan. The Alevi call it fast-breaking ceremony (*oruç açma*). The AKP could have taken a more cautious approach toward such small but important symbols, as rather than achieving the desired effect the dinner contributed to the sense among the Alevi community that the AKP was aiming to "Sunnify" the Alevi (Özyürek 2009: 246). Arguably, if PM Erdoğan had visited a *cem house,* which are unique to the Alevi, he would have sent a stronger signal to them in terms of their recognition, and could have broken the ice with them more easily.

Despite these symbolic gestures, there was no tangible progress in the three-stage Alevi reform, leading MP Çamuroğlu to step down as advisor to the prime minister with the claim that the promises given on the Alevi issue had not been fulfilled. He claimed that discrimination against the Alevi was continuing, and that there was uneasiness within the AKP concerning the Alevi initiative (Milliyet 2008). Owing to the ongoing atmosphere of mistrust, many Alevi NGOs maintained that the AKP's Alevi initiative was motivated by its desire to appease the EU, rather than being a sincere effort to resolve the Alevi issue. One of the Izmir-based Alevi NGO leaders emphasized the issue of trust:

> If the Alevi community had trusted the AKP government and had believed that the AKP government would meet the Alevi demands, then they would have extended their support en masse to it, as they supported the centre-right DP in the 1950s.

Another Alevi NGO representative in Izmir, like many others, underlined the fact that the Alevi community does not find the AKP government sincere:

> On the one hand, there were efforts on the part of the AKP government to settle the Alevi issue, which culminated in the organization of the Alevi workshops; while on the other, for instance, when we sought to commemorate those killed in Sivas, Çorum, Maras, and in other places, we were obstructed by the state.

The AKP government held seven workshops from 3 June 2009 to 30 January 2010 to address the Alevi issue, which will be further analyzed below. However, the end result was a widening of the gap between the Alevi community and the AKP. The rhetoric used by the AKP during the campaign for a constitutional referendum in 2010 and the 2011 election campaign was perceived to be discriminatory by the Alevi. For instance, some Alevi NGO leaders pointed out that in the rallies held in the run-up to the referendum on the constitutional change on 12 September 2010, PM Erdoğan underlined many times the Alevi origin of the opposition party CHP's leader Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu when addressing the Sunni electorate. After the 2011 elections, the Alevi issue was dropped from the agenda of the AKP government. In the previous Parliament there had been three parliamentarians of Alevi origin; however, in the Parliament formed following the 2011 elections there was only one. Faruk Çelik, the state minister in charge of the government's Alevi agenda, was appointed as Minister of Labor and Social Security in the cabinet reshuffle of May 2009, after being in charge of the *Diyanet* in the previous cabinet. Bekir Bozdağ took over the position in the newly formed cabinet, while no minister was assigned the task of the Alevi initiative. Moreover, the new government program contained no reference to the Alevi issue, and, as an Alevi civil society organization has pointed out, since the appointment of Bozdağ as state minister the AKP government has been remarkably indifferent to the Alevi issue.

Despite the initial courageous steps, therefore, the AKP government's Alevi initiative fell short of resolving the Alevi issue, and the AKP's ideology can be held responsible to some extent for its failure to satisfy all the demands of the Alevi. Despite its pro-democracy and human rights credentials, the AKP is at the same time a conservative party, although in the matter of religious freedom it has taken a liberal approach. The party documents make clear references to religious freedom, with different beliefs recognized as part of the birth rights of all people in the AKP's Constitution, as well as an emphasis on secularism and the need for the state to take an impartial attitude to beliefs to preserve its secularist nature (AK Parti Tüzüğü 2002: Article 4). Nevertheless, the conservative aspect of its ideology shapes the boundaries of the AKP's liberal attitude to religious freedom. As a result of its Sunnite reflex, the AKP government has failed to view the Alevi issue from the perspective of human rights, taking it rather in the light of the Sunni-Hanefi understanding of Islam. This approach led the AKP government to remain silent on the more serious problems of the Alevi, such as the recognition of *cem* houses. The AKP evinced a similar conservative attitude concerning the removal of compulsory religious instruction, with AKP officials maintaining that it was not possible to remove them from the curriculum because they were under constitutional protection. Subsequently, their position concerning the issue became much clearer, and they expressed explicit opposition to the removal of the lessons. MP Faruk Çelik, who was responsible for the coordination of the Alevi initiative said (Milliyet 2010b):

> There are demands for the removal of religion instruction. What problem do you have with religion? Why should it be removed? This nation has no problem with religion. I would like to make it clear that our government does not consider such an approach to be right.

This statement exposed clearly the dilemma between the liberal discourse of the AKP government related to religious freedom and its conservative identity.

The AKP exhibited a similar stance with respect to the issue of adultery back in 2004, when PM Erdoğan attempted to make adultery illegal. Following the reaction both from within the country and from the EU, he was forced to give up the issue. This shows the tension in the party between liberal democratization and conservatism. As Yavuz explains (Yavuz 2009: 169):

> Its identity (conservative) does not always facilitate its democratizing policies. The EU requirements are in conflict with the conservative value structure of the AKP. The grass roots of the party are less likely to support full-scale EU-guided democratization in Turkey.

Whenever an issue lies at the very heart of these conservative values, as is the case for compulsory religion instruction and the recognition of *cem* houses, this tension becomes more apparent.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the AKP government more generally lost its reformist zeal in the post-2005 era, when the accession negotiations with the EU started. As a result, the steps taken by the AKP government in the areas that need to be reformed, such as the Alevi issue, have remained limited. When the accession talks with the EU began in 2005, Turcoskeptic voices, particularly in Germany and France, became more vocal. Further, Turkey's EU accession negotiations were draped with many "ifs and buts", opening the door to a privileged partnership status rather than full membership. Countries such as France, Germany, Greece, and the Republic of Cyprus have blocked many of the negotiation chapters, and in December 2006 negotiations were suspended, partially on the grounds that Turkey had not kept up its side of the bargain to open its harbors and airports to Greek Cypriot traffic. In an environment of decreasing likelihood of EU membership, the AKP government has adopted a "passive activism" (Avci 2011: 419) approach to its relations with Brussels, with the result that the reform process at home has slowed down.

Besides, after the constitutional referendum in 2010 and the Ergenekon trials, the conservative aspect of the AKP took on increased importance. The breakdown of the coalition that the AKP had forged with liberal-democratic groups in Turkey, in tandem with the declining importance of the EU anchorage in the post-2005 era, had already hamstrung its reformism. This served to shift the balance within the party between conservatism and liberal democratization in favor of the former. The conservative nature of the AKP government became even more pronounced after the June 2011 elections, in which it increased its share of the vote to 50 % and won the elections for the third consecutive time. The weakening of the military's guardianship role for secularism as a result of the Ergenekon investigation, in which groups within the military were implicated in activities to overthrow the AKP government, has also surely strengthened the AKP's self-confidence. Furthermore, the constitutional

changes accepted through a constitutional referendum on 12 September 2010 helped diversify the composition of what had hitherto been a major bastion of the Kemalist establishment: the higher judiciary. No longer subjected to checks by the traditional guardians of the secular regime, the AKP government has increasingly prioritized its conservative agenda. For instance, teaching of the Quran has been introduced as an elective course in public schools. Defining abortion as murder, PM Erdoğan demanded the preparation of a law to restrict abortion practices. As part of this initiative, a doctor's prescription was made compulsory for the morning-after pill, which prevents pregnancy. As noted by a Turkish scholar (Keyman 2010: 325):

> Despite its reformist politics, the AKP experience has been unable to establish a balance between its conservatism and its commitment to democratic consolidation. In fact, there has been a disconnection between conservatism and democracy in the conservative democratic political identity of the party. It has been conservative, for sure, but, the extent to which it has a political will to democratic consolidation has remained doubtful.

Last but not least, the AKP government, which achieved numerous democratization reforms up until 2006, became reform-fatigued thereafter. The longer it has stayed in power, the more it has become part of the state. As a result, the political conservatism of the Republic has influenced the attitude of the AKP government, with an adverse impact on its reformist nature.

When it comes to the role of the EU for the promotion of the status of the Alevi in Turkey, a significant majority of the Alevi NGO leaders interviewed consider the EU involvement in the Alevi issue to be positive and necessary, given that the EU promoted the legitimacy of the Alevi demands and provided some leverage for the Alevi community over the Turkish state. At the same time, a minority of Alevi NGO leaders express skeptical attitudes toward the EU, seeing it as an imperialistic power. After all, the Alevi movement has a strong leftist and anti-imperialistic background, and a significant number of the Alevi have Kemalist-nationalist inclinations, perceiving the West and Europe as a source of threat for Turkish unity and integrity. Alevi NGO leaders point to the fact that Turkey's EU candidacy was not a strong enough instrument to put pressure on the state to satisfy the major demands of the Alevi community, such as the reorganization or dismantlement of *Diyanet,* the recognition of *cem* houses as places of

worship, and removal of the compulsory religious courses at schools. They stress that, although they have won cases at the ECtHR regarding the removal of compulsory religious courses at schools and removal of the section revealing religious identity in identity cards, the EU governments could not push the AKP government to go along with the rulings of the ECtHR. Some Alevi NGO leaders argued that limited influence of the EU on the Turkish government was a result of the EU prioritizing its relationship with the government over the Alevi community.

Despite the increasing importance of the EU for the Alevi community, its involvement as an outside actor in the Alevi issue was not without problems. Definition of the Alevi as a "non-Sunni Muslim minority" in the 2004 European Commission progress report on Turkey sparked off heated debates in Turkey, with nationalist circles accusing the EU and the Alevi of seeking to dismember the country. According to the Turkish minority understanding, only non-Muslim minorities such as the Jews, Greeks, and Armenians, which were enumerated in the 1923 Lausanne Treaty, are recognized as official minorities. Moreover, the minority concept has a negative connotation in Turkey and invoking it conjures up nightmares of the disintegration of the country, raising memories of the collaboration of minority communities with the occupying powers after WWI. Because of the pejorative meaning associated with being a minority, the Alevi NGOs interviewed strongly rejected being categorized as a minority.

4.6   The Alevi Workshops and Their Outcomes

From 3 June 2009 to 30 January 2010, seven workshops, hosted by the AKP government under the auspices of the Ministry of State, brought together 304 participants with the aim of tackling the Alevi issue. Those taking part included not only members of the Alevi community, but also people chosen from a wide spectrum of society, from Alevi civil society representatives, academicians, labor union representatives, via the media and political parties, to experts on religion from the Faculties of Divinity and representatives from the *Diyanet*.

All of the prominent Alevi organizations were represented at the first workshop, held in June 2009, including the ABF, AVF, *Cem Vakfı*, *Pir Sultan Abdal Vakfı* and *Alevi Kültür Dernekleri*, as well as many smaller Alevi NGOs, such as *Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı*. The Alevi workshops were significant in the sense that they were the first time that the state had given a

serious ear to the demands and grievances of the Alevi, but also in that they brought together representatives of all the Alevi organizations around the same table, which had previously not been possible. The ABF and affiliated organizations, however, withdrew from the seventh and final workshop, entitled "Alevism: Framing Issues", claiming that the workshop was aimed at defining the Alevi (Radikal 2010a).

The final report on the Alevi Workshops was released on 31 March 2011 (Alevi Çalıştayları Nihai Rapor 2010), drawing attention to the perils of the emergence of Alevism as a differentiating identity, and underlining the importance of tackling the issue in such a way that the sensitivities of the nation state would be respected. The report made a number of recommendations for the settling of the Alevi issue. According to the report, in the new Constitution, the law related to religious covenants and dervish lodges (*Tekke ve Zaviyeler Kanunu*) and the law on unification of education (*Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu*), which were significant legal obstacles to the recognition of the Alevi identity, should be re-considered. The Alevi should have the right to use the services provided by the *Diyanet*, which requires a restructuring of the organization. The report also stressed the necessity of an amendment to the Constitution concerning compulsory religious classes, and proposed that in addition to the current compulsory *religious culture* and *ethics* lessons, optional religious education could be provided. Current religious classes should be reviewed to ensure that their content is at equal distance to all belief categories. It was further suggested that a corner in the recently nationalized Madımak Hotel in Sivas should be dedicated to the commemoration of those who had lost their lives in the fire of 2 July 1993. *Cem* houses should be granted legal status, and their utility requirements, such as electricity and water, should be provided by the state. Other recommendations in the report included recognition of *Ashura* day in the holy month of *Muharram* as an official holiday for the Alevi; a revival of the Alevi pilgrimage site of the town of Hacıbektaş and the opening of a university there carrying the name of the town; and the removal of the insulting names that had been given to some Alevi villages. Although the report in this way made significant recommendations for the settlement of Alevi grievances, the AKP government opted rather to make only symbolic gestures as a response, rather than putting them all into practice. As pointed out by an observer, one of the most significant shortfalls of the report was that it over-emphasized the modernization process as the main cause of the plight of the Alevi community; the political dimension of their problems and state's discriminatory practices were largely overlooked (Ulusoy 2013: 306).

The day after the report was made public, the oppositional Alevi NGOs affiliated with the ABF voiced their criticism, and stated that the document far from met the expectations of the Alevi community (Radikal 2011a). They maintained that the recommendations made in the report helped serve the assimilation of the Alevi, and were a product of the perspective of the Sunni theologians. They pointed out that the rights and demands of the Alevi were taken up from a "security" angle in the report, since the Alevi were depicted as a community that could be easily exploited by foreign powers. Here we see quite clearly how the securitization of minority rights continued to played a role in blocking progress. The proposed solutions suggested in the report to the issue of compulsory religion classes at schools called for the introduction of optional religion classes in addition to the existing ones, but the Alevi NGOs argued that this would further increase the assimilation of Alevi children in school. They bemoaned the proposal in the report related to turning Madımak Hotel into a museum, and expressed their disagreement with the recommendation of paying a salary to *dede* (Alevi religious leaders), as this would clear a path for bringing them under state control. They also stated that the AKP government was in no position to define *cem* houses, saying that regardless of the AKP government's efforts to define them, *cem* houses were Alevi places of worship.

Although the workshops did not live up to the expectations of the Alevi community, some symbolic and less costly steps were taken by the AKP government. Following the conclusion of the Alevi workshops in January 2010, the AKP government prepared a new curriculum that introduced Alevism into the *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* classes that would be given from the 4th to 12th grades in schools from September 2011. This further expanded the place allocated to Alevism in compulsory religious education in school that the AKP government had initially granted in 2008, following a ruling of the ECtHR on the application of Hasan Zengin, a Turkish citizen of Alevi faith. Zengin had asked the Istanbul National Education Directorate to exempt his seventh-grade daughter from compulsory *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* lessons. After the directorate refused, he took the case to the ECtHR on 2 January 2004, after exhausting all domestic legal options. In the Zengin/Turkey case, the ECtHR ruled unanimously that *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* lessons in Turkey did not meet necessary objectivity and pluralism criteria for students, since their content was based on the Sunni-Hanefi denomination of Islam.[6] Furthermore, the Court found that the Turkish educational

system did not provide a suitable means of respecting the beliefs of the parents, and found that religious classes in Turkey were in violation of Article 9 of the European Convention of Human Rights (ECHR), related to freedom of conscience, and Article 2 of Protocol No. 1, which ensures the right to education. The Court also found the status of *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* classes in Turkey to be in violation of Article 24 of the Turkish Constitution, which stipulates that no-one should be forced to disclose his or her religious beliefs or orientation. The ECtHR imposed a fine on the Turkish state for the violation and asked it to revise the status of its *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* lessons on the basis of the points raised in the ruling.

In response, the AKP government argued that the *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* lessons being given in the schools were indeed balanced, and that the decision of the ECtHR was not binding for Turkey on the grounds of the reservation it had made, referring to the *Tevhid-i Tedrisat Kanunu* of 1924 (law of unification of education) (Kotan 2007), which is one of the "laws of revolution" under constitutional protection according to the 1982 Constitution. The AKP government preferred to revise the content of the *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* lessons in the 12th year of high school in 2008 by dedicating five pages to the Alevi faith rather than removing compulsory religious classes from the curriculum altogether.

Another case that was taken to the ECtHR involved an Alevi citizen called Sinan Işık, who initially applied to a national court in 2004 to change the stated religion on his ID card from "Muslim" to "Alevi". On the basis of the argument made by the *Diyanet* that Alevism was "a sect, not a religion", the Turkish court rejected Işık's request, and after losing an appeal in the Supreme Court of Appeals, Işık took his case to the ECtHR in 2005, which ruled in 2010 that not only was the lack of an "Alevi" option a violation of human rights, the mere existence of a "religion" category on a mandatory government identity card was itself a violation of fundamental human rights, and asked the Turkish government to remove it (Milliyet 2010a). The Turkish government is yet to act on this verdict.

With respect to the major Alevi demands of the recognition of *cem* houses as official places of worship and a change in the status of the *Diyanet*, no step was taken by the AKP government following the workshops. The AKP government declined to extend official recognition to *cem* houses on the grounds that a constitutional change would be necessary for such a

change, based on the law related to religious covenants and lodges (*Tekke ve Zaviyeler Kanunu*) known as the laws of revolution (*inkilap kanunlari*), which are under constitutional protection (Çalışlar 2011). Furthermore, the AKP government also refused to change the status of the *Diyanet*, pointing to the same law and the constitutional foundation of the office (Berkan 2007). It expressed the view that mosques are common religious centers for all Muslims, which is the also the official view expressed by the *Diyanet*. The leadership of the *Diyanet*, which is dominated by representatives of Sunni Islam, opposed the recognition of *cem* houses as places of worship on the grounds that the move would turn Alevism, which they consider to be a part of Islam, into an independent religion, thus separating the Alevi from Islam (Radikal 2008a). The *Diyanet* considers *cem* houses to be part of Turkey's cultural richness rather than an alternative to the mosques, which is a viewpoint shared by the AKP government. In 2012, a demand from an Alevi MP to open a *cem* house in Parliament alongside the mosque was turned down by the AKP government on the basis of the *Diyanet*'s negative opinion of *cem* houses. Like the *Diyanet*, AKP officials argue that there is only one place of worship recognized in Islam: the mosque (Radikal 2010b).

Nevertheless, the workshops did result in some symbolic steps on certain issues, such as the status of Madımak Hotel. Concerning the issue of turning Madımak Hotel into a museum, the AKP government sought to come up with a solution that would both please the Alevi and not irritate the Sunni majority, in particular the pious inhabitants of Sivas. As a result, in June 2011 the confiscated Madımak Hotel was transformed into a Centre for Science and Culture, with one corner devoted to the commemoration of those killed in the fire of 2 July 1993. This was not in fact what many of the Alevi required from the state, as they wanted the hotel to be converted into a museum; the Alevi were also offended that the memorial listing those who had died in the fire included also the names of the perpetrators, who were among those killed (Türker 2011).

Another symbolic gesture that aimed at winning over the hearts and minds of the Alevi was the launch of programs on TRT 2 (second channel state television) devoted to the Alevi faith during the holy month of *Muharram,* starting in January 2009. In a further move in November 2011, PM Erdoğan apologized for the Dersim massacre of Alevi in the Tunceli province that had been carried out by state forces in 1936–1939 as they sought to suppress an Alevi-Kurdish uprising. Despite these efforts of appeasing the Alevi, the government continued to fail to address the

more important issues, such as the recognition of *cem* houses as places of worship and the status of the *Diyanet*. The AKP government again pointed out that repealing the law for the closure of shrines and dervish lodges (*tekke ve zaviyelerin kapatılmasını öngören kanun*), which had been adopted on 30 November 1925 as part of the laws of revolution (*inkılap kanunları*), would be required if legal recognition was to be granted to *cem* houses (Çalışlar 2011). AKP officials maintained that the laws of revolution are under constitutional protection. Thus, without a change to the Constitution, it would not be legally possible to recognize *cem* houses. It is important to note that a significant part of the Alevi community would also oppose the abolition of the law for the closure of shrines and dervish lodges, since such a move would allow for the proliferation of radical Sunni movements, which the Alevi staunchly oppose. This further complicates the matter.

The Alevi workshops in the end actually widened the rupture between the AKP government and the Alevi community. One significant error of judgment was giving Sunni academicians from Faculties of Divinity and members of the *Diyanet* the responsibility of shaping the workshops. This was perceived by the Alevi as yet another attempt of the AKP government to define Alevism and to create a state version of it. The invitation of the Sunni theologians to the Alevi workshops was based on the understanding that the Sunni should also be consulted on the Alevi issue, but was problematic in the sense that the basic rights of a community (the Alevi) were considered as being open to debate. Another blunder was the invitation of Ökkeş Şendiller (Kenger), an ultra-nationalist and among the prime suspects of the Kahramanmaraş massacre committed against the Alevi in 1978, to the workshops. Following protests from the Alevi community, the AKP government chose to withdraw his invitation.

One Alevi NGO leader in Istanbul remarked that the Alevi community had initially been hopeful of the results of the Alevi workshops, but was frustrated in the end:

> The Alevi policy of the AKP is not well-planned and not well-followed up. The Alevi workshops have only defined the Alevi problems, rather than bringing a resolution to them. Moreover, irrelevant people, such as Ökkeş Şendiller, were invited to the workshops. Numerous Alevi NGO representatives were invited, but we do not recognize them. It should have been the leaders of the Alevi community that the government officials consulted with, not irrelevant people.

Another important shortcoming of the Alevi workshops that was noted by observers was that they were geared toward identifying to what extent the state could satisfy the Alevi community's demands,[7] which was in opposition to the claim put forward by the organizers of the workshops that the objective was to learn, understand, and deliberate on the Alevi complaints related to the state (Subaşı 2010). During the workshops, the state sought to negotiate the Alevi demands down to an acceptable level for the AKP government, which had red lines with respect to the Alevi issue due to their own understanding of Alevism, which was based on the Sunni-Hanefi interpretation. For many Alevi, this approach of the AKP government was unacceptable, since their beliefs were non-negotiable.

Moreover, the fact that the Alevi workshops were organized under the auspices of the Ministry of State was an important factor that contributed to the alienation of left-wing Alevi organizations, culminating in their withdrawal from the workshops. From the outset, the AKP government had wanted to keep the organization of the workshops under its control;[8] but if it had been civil society organizations rather than the state that had been at the helm of the organization, there would have been greater participation from the Alevi organizations, and the Alevi community would have been more inclined to embrace the results of the workshops. What actually transpired was that the state control of the workshops gave credence to the claims among the Alevi community that the AKP government has been seeking to Sunnify the Alevi.

4.7   Deterioration of Alevi-AKP Relations

It was not only the purely cosmetic improvements that came out of the Alevi initiative to address their identity concerns that frustrated the Alevi community. There was also some resentment at the AKP approach to such Alevi-related issues as the Sivas massacre trial, as well as the rhetoric being used by AKP officials related to the Alevi, which was perceived as being derogatory. As a result, the already existing gap between the AKP government and the Alevi has widened, and the AKP's authoritarian style of governance and its increasing conservative rhetoric and policies after 2011 have further reinforced the fury of the Alevi community, the overwhelming majority of which prefer the secular lifestyle. It is fair to say that since the AKP, a party with a pronounced Sunni-Hanefi identity, came to power in 2002, the Alevi community has become increasingly alienated from the state.

One of the reasons for the growing mistrust in the AKP government among the Alevi community was the court verdict related to the perpetrators of the Sivas massacre. In 1993, 37 people, mostly intellectuals, were burned to death by a large group of Sunni extremists in Madımak Hotel in Sivas. Although most of the perpetrators of the massacre were given prison sentences, six managed to escape in 1997 and remained unpunished as a result of a 13 March 2012 court verdict, which ruled that the case had passed the statute of limitations (NTVMSNBC.com 2012). On that day, PM Erdoğan had said: "May this bring good fortune" (Hürriyet 2012). The next day, demonstrators protesting the decision were brutally suppressed. Moreover, the close proximity between the lawyers of the defendants and the AKP—eight are MPs and many are local politicians—raised questions about the AKP's sincerity in taking Alevi concerns seriously. The verdict of the court and the perceived insensitivity of the AKP government to the Alevi concerns served to bring together all of the Alevi associations and foundations, the AVF, the ABF, and the Federation of Alevi Associations (ADF), in a very rare event indeed, to issue a joint declaration protesting the decision (Cem Vakfı Bildiri).

Similarly, when the AKP government decided to name the third Bosphorus bridge "Yavuz Sultan Selim", the Alevi were outraged, Yavuz Sultan Selim being an infamous Ottoman ruler who is carved into the collective memory of the Alevi community as the murderer of tens of thousands of Alevi in Anatolia. Besides, the AKP government prohibited the commemoration of the Kahramanmaraş massacre, committed against the Alevi in 1978, in recent years, citing a need to maintain civil order.

Another, recent cause of resentment is the perception that the AKP government has taken a sectarian line toward the Syrian crisis, supporting the Muslim Brotherhood and jihadist Islamic groups among the Syrian opposition, who bear a deep resentment against the Alevi-Nusayri community. This has pitted the Alevi community against the AKP government also in the Syrian crisis, and Alevi organizations have protested the Syria policy of the AKP government in demonstrations all across the country. Moreover, the Alevi community felt humiliated by the statements of AKP officials about Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the Alevi and Kurdish head of the main opposition CHP. After Kılıçdaroğlu questioned the AKP government's Syrian policy, officials from the ruling party, including the PM, implied that the CHP leader's support for the Assad regime was based on his Alevi origins, exacerbating the annoyance of the Alevi (Beyazgazete.com 2012; Radikal 2011b).

Owing to increasingly authoritarian tendencies of the AKP government, its emphasis on conservative policies and its majoritarian understanding of democracy, especially after 2011 when the military was all but removed from politics as a result of the delegitimizing influence of the Ergenekon investigation and a number of coup plots, a great number of secularist Turks sensed that their lifestyles, as well as their freedom of expression, were under threat. As put by a keen observer of Turkish politics, "perhaps more than the substance of the AKP's recent policies, it is the angry, condescending, and authoritarian tone of Erdoğan's statements that aggravates concern within the secular sectors" (Özbudun 2014: 3). Finally, a new law, ratified in June 2013, which put further restrictions on the sale, promotion, and advertising of alcohol, was the straw that broke the camel's back for the more secularist segments of the society. All of these factors came to a head with a social explosion against the AKP government's policies at Gezi Park in the heart of Istanbul.

At the end of May 2013, people began holding peaceful demonstrations against the municipal government's controversial plan to demolish Gezi Park, a small public park in the iconic Taksim Square, in order to build a shopping mall. The brutal response of the police, which dispersed the crowd with teargas, triggered a series of larger demonstrations against the AKP government that shook the country for several weeks, during which four people died and 7832 were injured (Hürriyet 2013). In later demonstrations, two more people died from among the heavily injured. All six people who were killed during the protest wave were Alevi. The Alevi community had been one of the greatest supporters of the Gezi Park demonstrations, believing that their secular lifestyle was under threat from the AKP government's conservative policies; just as there was an accumulated resentment resulting from the failure of the AKP government to meet the Alevi demands for recognition, the AKP government's perceived Sunni-leaning Syria policy, the invocation of the statute of limitations on the Sivas massacre trial, and the rhetoric and practices adopted by the AKP related to their plight.

As stated above, since the AKP came to power in 2002, there has been an increasing sense of alienation from the state among the Alevi community. With the coming to power of the AKP, the Sunni-Hanefi identity of the state has been widely promoted, at the expense of its secular character. The Alevi, by contrast, are known for their secularist outlook, and have traditionally supported Republican values, including secularism. Furthermore, as a result of the clientelistic policies of the AKP government, civil service

posts have in the main been filled by the AKP supporters, and the transformation of the state identity from a secular into one that is more Sunni-Hanefi in nature, as well as the alienation of the Alevi community, not only reinforces the Alevi opposition against the AKP but also provides a fertile ground for the flourishing of radical political ideas and organizations among the Alevi. According to one observer, the feeling of exclusion from the state has come to such a point among the Alevi that they are even objecting to urban transformation projects that aim to demolish old buildings and construct new more robust ones that can resist earthquakes.[9]

Despite the massive support of the Alevi for the Gezi Park demonstrations, the AKP government has opted to prioritize the Kurdish issue over the Alevi problem, hoping to break the deadlock in the negotiations for the settlement of the Kurdish problem. Contrary to the expectations that the Gezi incidents and the growing resentment of the AKP government among the Alevi would prompt the AKP to recognize the rights of the Alevi community, the AKP government decided to deal with the Alevi issue as a separate package. This is based on the AKP's belief that the rights to be granted to the Alevi community are intimately linked to the Sunni-Hanefi identity of the AKP government. In addition to the sensitivity of the Alevi issue for the identity of the AKP government, constitutional hurdles surrounding the recognition of Alevi rights, as well as the upcoming elections, have contributed to the delay in recognizing Alevi rights. Accordingly, the only gesture to the Alevi community in the democratization package announced by the AKP government at the end of October 2013 was that the University of Nevşehir in central Anatolia was renamed Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli University, honoring a historically significant Alevi figure.

The relations between the AKP government and the Alevi community continued to go downhill in the aftermath of the Gezi Park demonstrations. When Berkin Elvan, a 15-year-old Turkish Alevi, died after remaining in a coma for 269 days, new clashes between Turkish police and protesters erupted in Istanbul and Ankara in March 2014. Berkin Elvan, then aged 14, had been caught up in the clashes between the demonstrators and the police in Istanbul in June 2013 during the Gezi Park events and had been hit in the head by a teargas cartridge fired by the police. Alevi neighborhoods in Istanbul, in particular Okmeydani, have continued to be the scene of violent anti-AKP government protests since the Gezi Park events.

4.8   THE AKP GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS UNDER PRIME MINISTER DAVUTOĞLU TO BRIDGE THE GAP WITH THE ALEVI COMMUNITY

Following the election of Erdoğan to the presidency on 10 August 2014 with 52 % of the vote cast, Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu was elected as the AKP's new leader and the country's new prime minister. One of the most sensitive issues Davutoğlu was faced with in his term were the Alevi identity demands. The fact that these demands had not been met by the AKP government despite the Alevi opening and the fact that the Alevi community was infuriated by the practices and rhetoric used by the AKP government officials in the aftermath of the Alevi initiative turned the Alevi issue into a significant societal fault line in Turkey, which threatened to increase instability. Thus, after coming to office, one of Davutoğlu's first initiatives as prime minister was to renew efforts to win the hearts and minds of the Alevi community.

Also the ECtHR ruling in September 2014 regarding compulsory religious instruction at schools in Turkey pressured the new AKP government to take further steps on the Alevi issue. The ECtHR decided on an appeal filed in Ankara in 2011 by 14 Turkish members of Alevi faith concerning the compulsory *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* course at Turkish schools (Hürriyet 2014). The Court did not find satisfactory the recent changes made to the content of course books, including the inclusion of information about the Alevi faith, in regard to their neutrality and impartiality; it found that the religion courses violated Article 2 of ECHR Protocol No. 1 (right to education). The ECtHR proposed that, like Christian and Jewish pupils, who already have the possibility to be exempted from religion classes, pupils of Alevi faith should also have the right to opt out of these courses. The initial reaction of the AKP government to the ruling of the ECtHR was that *religious culture* and *ethics knowledge* classes are instructed at Turkish schools in such a way that all the religious beliefs are taught (Milliyet 2014a). Furthermore, PM Davutoğlu defended religious instruction at schools in Turkey by pointing out that such courses prevent radicalizing trends in religion by imparting appropriate religious knowledge. In addition, he suggested that new changes could be made to the religious instruction courses in order to correct the possible mistakes and complete lacking content (Milliyet 2014b). On 18 December 2014 Turkey appealed the ECtHR ruling.

As part of his initiative to mend fences with the Alevi community, on 8 November 2014, PM Davutoğlu visited the predominantly Alevi town of Hacıbektaş in the Central Anatolian province of Nevşehir in order to spend the day of *Ashura* with Alevi citizens and commemorate the martyrs of Karbala. On his visit to Hacıbektaş, Davutoğlu pledged that visiting the tomb of Alevi mystic Hacı Bektaş Veli would become free of charge (Ibid.). He also stated that Madımak Centre for Science and Culture could be transformed into a living museum in line with the demands of the Alevi community. The same month, Davutoğlu paid a visit to a *cem* house in the predominantly Kurdish-Alevi populated Eastern province of Tunceli and met Alevi *dede*. It was the first time during the term of the AKP government that a prime minister visited a *cem* house. On his visit to Tunceli, Davutoğlu pledged that the old military barracks in Tunceli would be turned into a museum, religious sites in Tunceli would be renovated and the roads leading to these sites would be re-built, and Tunceli University would be renamed Munzur University, after the region's Munzur river (Milliyet 2014c). Following former Prime Minister Erdoğan's previous apology, he once more apologized for the killing of people by state forces during an uprising of the Alevi-Kurdish population in Dersim (Tunceli) in 1937. Besides, Davutoğlu stressed equal-citizenship rights and spoke out against any kind of discrimination.

Despite these gestures, the major Alevi demands, such as those regarding the status of *cem* houses, the *Diyanet*, and compulsory religious instruction at schools, still remained unresolved because of their controversial status among the AKP government officials and voters. The AKP government rather preferred to continue the consultation process with the Alevi community representatives on these more significant Alevi identity demands. In this sense, the AKP government's strategy concerning the Alevi issue appears hesitant and at best incrementalist. Cosmetic changes announced by the AKP government have been viewed with considerable skepticism among the Alevi, as they once again fail to grant recognition to core Alevi demands (T24 2014).

Amid Davutoğlu's efforts to gain the sympathies of the Alevi community, the ECtHR announced its verdict on the status of *cem* houses in Turkey. With respect to the 2010 appeal of Cem Vakfı, a major Alevi NGO, which claimed that the fact that the Turkish government did not pay the electricity bills of Yeni Bosna Center of Culture in Istanbul, which includes a *cem* house, while exempting mosques, churches, and synagogues from paying electricity bills, was discriminatory, the ECtHR decided on 2

December 2014 in favor of the complainant (Radikal 2014). The Court based its verdict on Article 9 and Article 14 of the ECHR, which prohibit discrimination. This verdict of the international court further strengthened the Alevi community's argument that *cem* houses should be granted official status as sites of worship.

4.9 Conclusion

Since 2007, the AKP government has been making moves to deal with the Alevi's grievances, but, in making only symbolic gestures, it has failed to address the core Alevi demands related to their group identity, such as the recognition of *cem* houses as places of worship, changes in the status of the *Diyanet*, and amendments to the compulsory religion classes in schools. The failure of the AKP government's Alevi initiative may be linked to the AKP's desire not to offend the more conservative members of the party, as well as the pious segments of its electorate. The AKP government's attitude of viewing the demands of the Alevi from a religious standpoint rather than as a human rights issue is a significant hurdle in the way of resolving the Alevi's problems, and the *Diyanet* has stood out as a significant actor in this equation in its veto of the recognition of *cem* houses as places of worship. Moreover, the fact that tackling the Alevi concerns would require changing laws that are under constitutional protection has, to some extent, deterred the AKP government from acting, while Turkey's stalled EU accession negotiations are a further factor undermining progress on the issue. Besides, also Kemalist segments of the Alevi community would not easily agree with the overturning of the laws of revolution. Last but not least, it is worth noting that the AKP government has prioritized a conservative agenda since the 2010 constitutional referendum and the Ergenekon trials, which have shifted the power balance in the state in its favor, and this has surely contributed to the postponement of the settlement of the Alevi concerns.

In order to resolve the Alevi concerns, sooner or later Turkey will be obliged to re-evaluate its notion of the nation, and to adopt a more inclusive understanding of it. This will necessitate a change in the current definition of the Turkish nation, which is based on Sunni-Hanefi Islam and bears a striking resemblance to the Ottoman conceptualization of the Muslim *millet* (Aktürk 2009). This definition is exclusive of the Alevi community from the latter's point of view, since it views the Alevi as part of the Muslim *millet* and the Turkish nation, but promotes Sunni-Hanefi Islam

in the state and society. In short, Turkey will need to adopt a more liberal, non-religious, and citizenship-based definition of the Turkish nation if it is to come to terms with the Alevi demands in a satisfactory manner.

Following the 1 November 2015 parliamentary elections, which brought a landslide victory for the AKP, enabling it to continue its single-party government, Prime Minister Davutoğlu appointed the former coordinator of the Alevi initiative, Necdet Subaşı, as one of his head consultants. Further, the AKP government expressed its intention to overcome the issue of recognition of *cem* houses. Furthermore, the Syrian refugee crisis and Turkey's strained relations with the Russian Federation have led to a tentative rapprochement between the EU and Turkey. It remains to be seen whether the AKP's comfortable electoral position and a rising importance of Turkey's relations with the EU would revive the AKP's reformist drive to resolve the core identity issues of the Alevi community.

NOTES

1. For more details on the similarities and differences between the Turkish Alevi and the Syrian Alewite, see Aringberg-Laanatza (1998: 151–65).
2. Information obtained through an interview with an Alevi NGO representative in Istanbul, 22 December 2011.
3. Interview with an Alevi NGO representative in Aydın, 27 January 2012.
4. Interview with an Alevi NGO Representative in Izmir, 7 January 2012.
5. Interview with an Alevi NGO representative in Istanbul, 22 December 2011.
6. Hasan and Eylem Zengin v. Turkey, Application No. 1448/04, Judgment of 19 October 2007.
7. Interview with Ruşen Çakır, *Vatan Daily*, Istanbul, 7 October 2013.
8. Interview with Ruşen Çakır, *Vatan Daily*, Istanbul, 7 October 2013.
9. Interview with Yüksel Taşkın, Marmara University, 18 September 2013.

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The Ambivalent Situation of Turkey's Armenians: Between Collective Historical Trauma and Psychological Repression, Loyal Citizenship and Minority Status, Social Integration and Discrimination, Assimilation and Self-assertion

5.1 Introduction

The Armenians are the most researched group among Turkey's non-Muslim ethnic and religious minorities (see especially Özdoğan et al. 2009; Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı 2012). We carried out interviews with members of the Armenian minority between September 2011 and August 2015 during 12 field trips. The distribution and collection of the questionnaires used (see appendix) took place between October 2011 and January 2013. As was also the case with Syriacs and the Alevi, we stayed in touch with selected Armenian interviewees by several electronic means of communication and were thus able to obtain up-to-date information and to receive answers to open questions also later. As most members of Turkey's Armenian community live in the urban area of Istanbul, the interviews, collection of materials, and questionnaires were focused on the Bosporus region. In addition, field research was also conducted during a trip to Iskenderun, Samandağ, and Vakıflı Köyü in Turkey's Southeastern

Mediterranean region in February 2012 and during an excursion to Dersim (Tunceli) in Eastern Anatolia in August 2012.

Gaining information on the situation of Turkey's Armenian community and its social and political attitudes with the help of empirical social research methods proved, generally speaking, much more complicated and required noticeably higher amounts of time, energy, and patience than doing the same for the Syriac community. Despite our regular presence in Istanbul and numerous and patient attempts at making contacts and establishing personal relationships, it proved very time-consuming to obtain information and data, as representatives of the Armenian community were generally reluctant to talk about the topics relevant for this study and often seemed to lack interest in providing support for this research project. This applies primarily to members of the Armenian population that were not involved in ethno-cultural and ethno-political activities, but sometimes also religious functionaries and activists belonging to various non-religious civil society institutions. Trust in the interviewer seemed very difficult to develop, which limited the opportunities for research within the Armenian community. Especially obtaining quantitative data was problematic, as can be seen in the difference between the number of questionnaires completed by representatives of the Syriac and Armenian communities (see Chap. 7). The latter tended to criticize the length of the questionnaire. The generally strong rejection of questionnaires or the very low preparedness to complete them became unexpected challenges for those Armenians who supported our survey and who made a concerted effort to recruit respondents among their Armenian friends and relatives, which often eventually led to amazement and resignation. Activists for the Turkish-Armenian organization "Nor Zatonk", who had carried out a survey of Armenian political attitudes in 2007 (Nor Zatonk 2007), complained about very similar difficulties, although they had a better group-internal network at their disposal due to their Armenian background and therefore had significantly easier starting conditions for their survey than us.

Generally speaking, these problems can be explained by several interconnected factors. Due to the living conditions typical for urban areas and the days being filled with private, professional, and social commitments, it was noticeable that both potential and active interviewees faced an acute shortage of time. Other crucial social and political reasons will be elaborated on in Sect. 5.4. It must be emphasized very strongly in this context that these observations are not intended as criticism of Armenians' views and behavior toward the authors. Ultimately, experiencing these difficulties has contributed positively to critical self-evaluation on our part and to adjusting

our study to the local situation, and has allowed us to better record, understand, and evaluate the Armenians' situations, sensitivities, and concerns.

5.2 The Origin, Religion, Number, Spread, and Ethno-religious Environment of the Armenians in Turkey

The historical origin and movements of the Armenians are still in dispute in academia. The existence of the ancestors of the Armenians in East Anatolia can nonetheless be traced back for about 2700 years. Their original area of settlement is mostly congruent with the region of the former Uratians and spans the East Anatolian high plateau (with the region Van in its center) as well as the Southern Caucasian Mountains—which today are their main area of settlement. Since the Middle Ages and the establishment of the Ottoman reign, the Armenians also gradually spread to the West. Historians thus label those Armenians living in the Eastern part of their area of settlement under Persian and later Russian authority East Armenians, and those in the Ottoman Empire West Armenians (Koutcharian 1989: 22–25; Ternon 1996: 139f.). Up to the First World War, when many Armenians in Anatolia were killed or displaced, West Armenians were mostly distributed in the East and Central Anatolian area (including the Northern and Southern parts) as well as the numerous cities in the West of today's Turkey (especially Istanbul and Izmir). In their core area in Eastern Anatolia, they often constituted a strong minority of over 40% of the total population, whereas in a very few areas they constituted the majority with more than 50%.

Just as with the Syriacs, the Christianization of the Armenians most probably began as early as in the first century. Officially, the church most Armenians outside of Turkey belong to is the autocephalous Armenian Apostolic (resp. Orthodox) Church. Further, a small number of Turkey's Armenians belong to the Armenian Catholic and Armenian Protestant churches. Besides, an uncertain number of Armenians belong to several free evangelical churches or are atheists.

It is estimated that the number of Armenians with Turkish citizenship and a traditional Christian background lies between 40,000 and 70,000 in today's Turkey. As a consequence of emigration, circular migration, and assimilation, however, the number of Turkish Armenians tends to decrease. In addition to this, there are an estimated 100,000–170,000 illegal Armenian economic migrants in Turkey, some of whom already have integrated socially to a great extent.

Furthermore, there is a rather large group of Muslim Armenians, whose ancestors were forced to convert to Sunni or Alevi Islam to escape displacement and death in the massacres in the 1910s. Also countless children were adopted by Kurdish, Zaza, Turkish, and Arabic families, brought up with new religious and ethnic standards, and thus became assimilated. There is also a number of Armenian Crypto-Christians distributed in Anatolia, who keep their identity, customs, and habits secret and practice Islam in the public sphere. The number of Islamized Armenians and Crypto-Armenians, which are sometimes called "Dönme" ("returnee" or "convert"), is very difficult to estimate; according to the source it ranges from 30,000 to several million (!) people (Estukyan 2015; Hofmann 1997: 172ff.; Hrant Dink Vakfı 2015; Koutcharian 1989: 169–172; Radikal 2013; Ziflioğlu 2011). In the context of the Armenian question also, the origin and ethnicity of the Hemşinli group is still highly disputed. Their language can be categorized as a dialect of the Armenian language, and it seems probable that their formerly Christian ancestors started to convert to Islam from the fifteenth century onward. The vast majority of the Hemşinli see themselves as a distinct ethnicity or a group stemming from Turk ancestors – thus refusing any association with the Armenian group (Andrews 1989: 130ff.).

Today, the main area of settlement of the Armenians is located in Istanbul as a gravitational center of Armenian life in Turkey, where they are embedded in an environment mostly dominated by Sunnites. This urbane milieu features old-established Armenians as well as many Armenian families who immigrated to Istanbul in the last decades, coming from diverse rural and urban parts of Anatolia. Another group of approx. 2000 people, rather concentrated yet not closely settling together, can be found in the South East Turkish province of Antakya (mostly in the cities of Iskenderun and Antakya and in the vicinity of Samandağ). Apart from Armenians, this area is inhabited by Turkish, Syriac, Arabic, and other Christians from diverse confessions. The multi-ethnic and multi-religious appearance of this region is mostly shaped by Turkish, Kurdish, and Arabian Sunnites as well as a greater number of Arabian Alawites (Nusairi). The village Vakıflı (Köyü) near Samandağ with its 120 inhabitants is the only village in Turkey inhabited by Armenians only.

According to our interviews and research, small groups or single families of Christian Armenians remain in particular cities in Turkey, for example, Kayseri, Kastamonu, Malatya, Adiyaman, Diyarbakır, Izmir, Elazığ, and Sivas, and in the regions of Van, Adana-Mersin, and Muş. Furthermore, as a result

of the massacres resp. the 1915 events during and after World War I, a significantly large diaspora of Armenians from Turkey now lives in the Middle East, in Central and Western Europe (especially France), overseas (especially in the USA), and in some Eastern European countries (e.g. Russia and Bulgaria).

5.3   Historical Situation and Circumstances

The Armenians in the Ottoman Empire and the 1915 Events

The granting of the millet status to the Armenians of the Armenian Apostolic church by the Ottomans[1] brought with it the associated disadvantages in comparison to Muslims. However, it also meant that they were given special rights, for example, in regard to running their own community. Given this context, they were able to reach a significant economic, social, and cultural position within the Ottoman Empire, and some of them were employed in the political arena, for example, as ministers or diplomats. Due to their loyalty to the Ottomans and the fact that both groups had shared interests both the Armenians and the Jews were recognized as so-called *millet-i sadika* (loyal nation) by the Ottomans (see Anschütz 1989: 456–459). A number of different historical, social, political, geographic, demographic, and psychological factors ultimately caused the relationship between the Armenians and the Ottomans to deteriorate, whereas the Jewish-Ottoman relationship developed differently (see Giesel 2013: 340; 2014b: 7; 2015b: 33ff.). The conflict between the Ottomans and the Armenians, which started to intensify in the second half of the nineteenth century and which ultimately had very serious, existential consequences for the Armenians in Anatolia, is based on a mixture of social and political conflicts. Here, the development of Turkish and Armenian nationalism plays a crucial role which was effected by the emergence and spread of nationalism or nationalist movements in most of Europe and the expansionary ambitions by several European great powers toward the Ottoman Empire. In this context, several escalatory factors not only overlapped, but also reinforced each other in the course of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the course of the nineteenth century, the Armenians became more and more discontent with their social and political situation of inequality within the Ottoman Empire because of, among other factors:

- the gradual pauperization especially of the East Anatolian Armenian population caused by (i) an increase in corruption, (ii) illegal Kurdish

acts to gain money from the Armenians, and (iii) the high burden of taxes put upon non-Muslims;

- too little protection and indeed denial of legal security by Ottoman authorities; and
- slow progress of the "Tanzimat" reforms or insufficient realization of the concessions and legal improvements for non-Muslims.

These grievances promoted the emergence and development of Armenian nationalism. In this context, especially Russia played an important part, as it declared itself the protector of the Anatolian Armenians and used them as a destabilizing factor to fragment the Ottoman Empire and thus enforce its own expansionary policy (just as did the other super powers France, Great Britain, and Austria-Hungary, with the Armenians and other groups). This as well as the Armenian support of the foreign powers' pressure to realize reforms led to mistrust, antipathy, and accusations of disloyalty of the Ottomans toward the Armenians and other Christian groups and resulted in an increase of Turkish/pro-Ottoman nationalism (which had only been diffuse before) as well as in the resolution not to accept further attempts towards segregation and destabilization by the Christian groups in the Ottoman Empire. In this context, Ottoman-Armenian relations were dramatically influenced by the consequences of the wars on the Balkan and in the Caucasus in the 1870s as well as the Berlin congress in 1878. In conflicts with local Christian rebels and due to the military intervention of European countries, the Ottomans lost great parts of their territory on the Balkan and in the Caucasus (mostly inhabited by Christians), which led to the killing and expulsion of great parts of the Muslim population of these areas. Thereby, the politically forced demand for Armenian autonomy was considered meaningless by the Ottomans for demographic reasons. (Giesel 2013: 330–334, 337ff.; Gust 1993: 74ff.; Hofmann 1997: 85ff.; Koutcharian 1989: 45–50, 58–64, 71; Ternon 1996: 140ff.).

As a result of this increasing tension as well as of the lack of political reforms and concessions made by the Ottoman state after 1878, parts of the Western Armenian population became further radicalized. In the 1880s and 1890s, these circumstances facilitated the creation of several Armenian political parties, paramilitary self-defense groups, and terrorist underground movements which, depending on their orientation, aimed at achieving (with peaceful and/or violent means) more rights, autonomy, or independence for their ethnic group. The Ottomans reacted to the

increasing Armenian militancy as of the 1890s by supporting paramilitary Kurdish groups (Hamidiye), which were used against the Armenians in Anatolia and acted with pronounced brutality. These circumstances led to a spiral of violence and counter-violence between Armenians and Muslims/Ottomans. These attacks reached their climax in the countrywide pogroms of 1894–1896 and the Adana massacre in 1909. It was mainly Armenian civilians who became the victims of this violence, so that their number in the Ottoman Empire was significantly reduced in the decades before World War I. Numbers regarding Armenian deaths before World War I (e.g. because of the attacks 1894–1896 and 1909) range between just above 80,000 and 300,000. The majority of Armenians was, however, not involved in nationalist revolutionary activities and remained loyal to the Ottomans to a greater or lesser extent. This is why the Armenian nationalists' attempts to organize local uprisings throughout the Empire or mobilize the population in other ways did not succeed. This happened, among other reasons, because they expected to be able to bring about changes in domestic politics by supporting liberal Turkish-Ottoman forces resp. the liberal wing of the Young Turks (Akçam 2006: 42; Balakian 2004: 54ff.; Giesel 2013: 334–341; Gust 1993: 110ff.; Hofmann 1997: 85ff.; Koutcharian 1989: 77, 91–113; Kreiser and Neumann 2003: 372–374; Matuz 1996: 245; Ternon 1988: 61ff., 69, 96ff.; Ternon 1996: 141ff.).

Due to the Ottomans' defeat in the war of Tripolis and the Balkan war of 1912, a forced agreement with Russia on 8 February 1914, which was meant to further pro-Armenian reforms supervised by European officials in East Anatolia, and due to the fact that the Russian Army was supported by Armenian volunteers from Anatolia during the failed Ottoman Caucasus campaign in 1914/1915 (all had led to further persecution, expulsion, and murder of Muslims and losses of their territory), the Young Turkish nationalism and racism became even more radical as it already had been before. Although the majority of the Armenian civilians, political parties, and soldiers[2] also had remained loyal toward the Ottoman Empire after its entry in World War I, the government now blamed all Armenians for the military problems in East Anatolia. Under the influence of the experiences, incidences, and attitudes in the decades before (see above and Chap. 3), the willingness to solve the Armenian question by means of expulsion and extermination of the Armenian civilian population became strong after early 1915.[3] The Armenians were seen as the greatest non-Muslim danger when it came to maintaining control over the territories in Anatolia and the creation of homogeneous conditions in both religion

and ethnicity. Furthermore, they constituted a racial, demographic, and geographic obstacle to the unification of the Anatolian Turks/Muslims with the Turkish people of the South Caucasus and Central Asia—a central aim of the Turanist ideology propagated by the Young Turkish leaders (Barth 2006: 64–68, 72ff.; Koutcharian 1989: 109–115; Kreiser and Neumann 2003: 372–374; Özkırımlı and Sofos 2008: 124–129; Ternon 1988: 105–108; Ternon 1996: 141–143).

This situation led to the well-known large-scale anti-Armenian massacres and deportations to East Anatolia and the Syrian desert from spring 1915 until mid-1916, which were accompanied by detentions, forced labor, expropriation, robbery, looting, rapes, abductions and enslavement, torture, and mass exodus. Apart from planned executions and random killings, countless people were killed on the deportation marches as well as at their end points due to malnutrition, illnesses, exhaustion and as a consequence of forced labor. Some Ottoman officials, Kurdish local elites and parts of the Muslim population, however, refused to sympathize or comply with the orders to kill and/or deport and tried to protect and support Christians; the same was done by some of the German soldiers stationed on site. Some of the Ottoman Armenians could flee from the territories in the South Caucasus and the Middle East controlled by Russia, Britain, and France and were hidden, sheltered, or assimilated by Sunnite or Alevi families (especially women and children) and/or converted (voluntarily or not) to Islam to stay alive (Barth 2006: 71; Gust 2005: 219, 537ff.; Koutcharian 1989: 115–126; Kreiser/Neumann 2006: 372–377; Libaridian 1987: 206; Ternon 1996: 143–146).

The incidences of 1915 and 1916 still constitute a collective trauma, remembered as *Aghet*—catastrophe—by the Armenians. They have been termed genocide both by the Armenians themselves and by the greatest part of international political actors as well as historiography—as assessment which is based on a broad spectrum of sources (Akçam 1996; Gust 2005: 69, 210, 219; Kévorkian 2006b; Koutcharian 1989: 118–120; Orbay 1963: 179; Ternon 1996: 143, 146–149). Significant parts of Turkish politicians, society, and academia, however, although they admit that there have been hundreds of thousands of Armenian casualties during that period, deny the deliberateness of the genocide. The deportations are depicted as necessary protective measures to maintain security, in an emergency situation or as actions of self-defense and self-protection in times of war. According to these statements, these measures only affected disloyal Armenians who posed a danger to the Muslim (and the loyal Armenian) civilian popula-

tion. The many deaths of Armenian civilians are ascribed to unfavorable and unplanned circumstances like epidemics, supply shortages, and occasional assaults by non-state actors or irregular troops which could not have been controlled by the Ottoman government. Additionally, several documents are presented as forged, statements by foreign witnesses, as being biased, and procedures during the Istanbul trials as having been faulty (Barth 2006: 77ff.; Göçek 2006; Kévorkian 2006b; Kreiser and Neumann 2003: 376ff.; Lewy 2005: 121; Özdemir 2005; Ternon 1996: 149–153; ZfT 1998: 58; Zürcher 1997: 121). High-ranking Kurdish political actors in Turkey itself and in other countries, however, acknowledge the actions having been genocidal and accept and regret a Kurdish active involvement; yet at the same time they call attention towards the instrumental use of the Kurds by the political elite of the Young Turks. We do not here find it necessary to employ the term "genocide", as the battle around the label seems to damage rather than strengthen the necessary consensus regarding the abhorrent nature of the events in question.

The following combat operations which took place between 1917 and 1922 during World War I and the Turkish War of Independence alternately ended in both loss and gain of territory for the young Turkish and later Turkish nationalist Kemalist organizations. Until 1922 at the latest Turkish troops led by Mustafa Kemal could gradually re-conquer and secure extensive territories in West and East Anatolia as well as South Caucasia. This affected mostly Armenians which had fled in 1915/1916 and had returned on their own account or been systematically repatriated by the Allied Powers. Due to their military successes, the Kemalists were in a strategically good position for the peace talks in Lausanne 1922/1923. Thus, for example, the establishment of an Armenian state—a condition which had been part of the treaty of Sèvres in 1920—was not considered at all anymore. Furthermore, the "population exchange" condition of the Lausanne treaty between Turkey and Greece also affected several tens of thousands of Armenians. As a consequence of these events, the number and spread of all Anatolian Christians was reduced to a minimum (Barth 2006: 70ff.; Koutcharian 1989: 129–171).

There exist diverse, often unreliable and conflicting numbers and estimates regarding the quantitative-demographic total extent of the pogroms against the Armenians, starting from the first systematic attacks in the nineteenth century until the end of the Ottoman Empire. Depending on particular political interests, the numbers are also often exaggerated or understated. Apart from this, not only the time frame of the particular source (though

it can often not be identified reliably) is of interest but also how many Armenians indeed lived in the Ottoman Empire before the beginnings of the 1915 events. According to Ottoman figures, this number would amount to 1.29 million; Armenian statistics speak of 2.1 million. Estimates concerning the victims of the genocide are often not limited to the climax in 1915/1916 but also include the following events until the end of World War I or the Turkish War of Independence. The diverse numbers in general vary between 200,000 and 1.8 million, with the Turkish data ranging from 200,000 to 800,000 and international sources mostly speaking about 1–1.2 million deaths. Especially difficult to determine and thus rather controversial are those figures concerning the number of survivors (estimates range from 600,000 to 1 million) who could flee death (Akçam 2006: 42, 199ff.; Barth 2006: 71; Gürün 1985: 227; Gust 2005: 519; Kévorkian 2006a: 781; Koutcharian 1989: 122, 126–129, 266; Lang 1981: 37; Libaridian 1987: 206; Matuz 1996: 265; Orbay 1963: 179; Ternon 1996: 145, 151).

The Situation of the Armenians in the Turkish Republic from 1923 Until the End of the Twentieth Century

Due to the pressure put up by the European great powers resp. as a result of the Treaty of Lausanne, the Armenians were explicitly recognized as a minority within the newly founded Turkish Republic in 1923. Based on this status, they were granted certain rights to save and develop their own culture, language, and identity as an ethno-religious group, including, among others, the right to maintain their own institutions like schools, hospitals, and cemeteries, and the right to preserve their specific non-Turkish first and family names. Despite its embrace of the principles of laicism and republicanism, however, the Kemalist national ideology made an inextricable link between membership in the Turkish nation and adherence to Islam. The majority of Turkish society and its national-political leadership therefore regarded non-Muslims as foreign elements in Turkish society which allegedly had been placed there by the international powers. In the subsequent years and decades, the Turkish government used legal, administrative, and practical measures to undermine and violate the rights of these minorities, who became the targets of the discriminatory nationalist policies of an assimilatory Turkification and ethnic homogenization (Bali 2006; Giesel 2013: 349–353; 2015a: 16ff.; Güven 2012: 85–118; Rumpf 1993:178, 186, 189).

While laws were passed in the 1920s which prohibited escaped Armenians from returning to their Anatolian homeland, measures were also undertaken

that aimed at driving the remaining Armenians out of Turkey. These included social pressure, restrictions on their freedom of activity and movement, and threats and attacks by state authorities and members of the local population. This resulted in the emigration of several thousands of Armenians to Syria in 1929/1930, the forced resettlement and deportation of the Armenian population from rural areas (especially in Central and Eastern Anatolia) to larger towns and cities (especially Istanbul) in 1934, and in the flight of nearly all Armenians from the "Sanjak of Alexandretta" region after its integration into Turkey in 1939. Another group of Armenians left Turkey in 1945/1946 as a result of a repatriation campaign by the Soviet Union (Güven 2012: 106–108, 123–125; Koutcharian 1989: 172; Pekesen 2006).

The Kemalist demographic policies aimed at increasing the state's control over those Armenians who were unwilling to leave and at transferring their property to the ownership of ethnic Turks at very low prices. Initially, the state authorities tried to avoid giving the impression that they were encouraging Armenian emigration and to instrumentalize the local Muslim population against the Armenians. They were, however, only partially successful in this, as several sources indicate that, at this time, Armenians and Turks (as well as the new arrivals from the Balkans) co-existed and cooperated peacefully in many areas. Despite these positive examples and temporary improvements, the Armenians' political and social situation and that of their religious communities was characterized by many comprehensive problems in the Kemalist Turkey of the twentieth century, for example, harassment by state authorities and the local population; violent attacks that occasionally led to deaths; forced expropriation of the properties owned by Christian communities, schools, and private citizens; the illegal occupation of Armenian properties by Muslims; security forces, authorities, and courts' refusal to work for the Armenians, their interests, or civic rights; discrimination by the public sector; bureaucratic obstacles imposed on religious and educational institutions which hindered the organization of their activities; harassment and attacks against Armenian recruits in the army; discrimination in Turkish school textbooks; libelous allegations against Armenians in the press (which depended on political circumstances and interests); the destruction and looting of religious and cultural buildings and their misuse as barns, warehouses, museums, and sports halls or for raw materials; the denial of refurbishment or construction permits for church or school buildings; direct or social pressure to convert to Islam, and so on. (Bali 2006; Güven 2012: 106–108; Koutcharian 1989: 172–179).

While the late 1940s and early 1950s were a short period of relative ease for the Armenians, their situation remained difficult also during this time and deteriorated more significantly in the 1970s and 1980s. Apart from the problems mentioned above, especially the activities of the Armenian Apostolic church and schools were restricted. These developments were caused by the following circumstances:

- the negative synergy effects of the Greco-Turkish conflict on the Armenians, which were first seen in the September pogroms of 1955 and which escalated during the Cypriot crisis;
- the Lebanese war, which was accompanied by an increase in anti-Christian sentiments;
- the attacks by the Armenian terror organization ASALA (Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia) on Turkish institutions and diplomats in the 1970s and 1980s, which resulted in 79 deaths;[4]
- the right-wing military coup in 1980, which fuelled an increase in Turkish nationalism on the political and social level; and
- the armed Kurdish-Turkish conflict, which reinforced the political and public stigmatization of minority groups and which also had an effect on the remaining Armenians in Eastern Anatolia who were at the mercy of the PKK, the Turkish army, and other Kurdish actors[5] (Güven 2012: 118–135; Koutcharian 1989: 171–176).
- and the eruption of the violent conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1988.

This overall situation and the associated political and social pressure increased the Armenians' vulnerability to being blackmailed, their intimidation, and public restraint and encouraged those few who had remained in rural areas to resettle abroad or in Istanbul. The tendency to migrate within Turkey or internationally has affected the Armenian community throughout. According to the Armenian Patriarchate, approximately 25,000 Armenians left Turkey, and 15,000–20,000 persons moved to Istanbul between 1955 and 1981 (Koutcharian 1989: 174). The gradual and modest social liberalization processes and the lifting of restrictions on ethno-political activities in the 1980s and 1990s had little effect on the Armenians, as these changes applied primarily to ethnically Turkish or Sunni groups. In 1994, the Armenian side started publishing the Turkish-language political-cultural weekly Agos with the aim of leading the Armenian community out of its isolation from the Turkish mainstream

and to facilitate mutual exchange. The publisher Hrant Dink emphasized (as had several high ranked Armenian clerics and journalist in the decades before, despite the huge problems of their community) that the Armenians regarded themselves as loyal Turkish citizens and a part of Turkish society which needed to become more articulate (Dink, 1994, 20).

5.4   Contemporary Situation and Circumstances

Aspects and Ambivalence of Improvements of the Political and Social Situation of Turkey's Armenians in the 2000s and the Role of the EU

In contrast to members of other minorities in Turkey (e.g. the Syriacs), a great majority of the Armenian interview partners (people from the street as well as intellectuals and activists) do not see the beginning of membership negotiations between the EU and Turkey in 1999 as the main trigger for the positive changes of their situation. Rather, they identify the results of and public reactions toward the 2007 murder of Hrant Dink, sociocritical Turkish-Armenian journalist, activist, and co-editor of *Agos*, as the starting point for this process. Dink, who intensively pointed toward and criticized the problems and situations of the Christian minorities as well as the lack of interest in dealing with the past (especially when it comes to 1915/1916) in Turkey, was in the focus of the Turkish justice system, media, and nationalists. After his killing by Turkish nationalists, the Armenian community received more public attention than ever before. There were, for example, pro-Armenian public mass demonstrations of solidarity with the participation of many Turks. In this context, Armenians, Turks, and members of other ethnic groups marched together also against shortcomings of the Turkish democracy as well as violations of human rights. Even the amount of declarations of sympathy by leading Turkish politicians (including Erdoğan) and mainstream media, which called the murder an act of treason and an attack against the whole of Turkey, was extraordinarily high. As a consequence of the murder, a change of mind seemed to be triggered in greater parts of the Turkish society, which included a change in the perception of the Armenians and other minorities as well as a heightened sensitivity to their problems. This, in turn, led to stronger support on part of society as well as an increased acceptance of the Armenians; prejudices and distrust decreased while interest and curiosity grew. The advanced support by a relatively great number of Turks also

inspired many (especially younger) Armenians to deal with their problems and their history within Turkey and to stand up for their rights—a development which also increased the self-confidence of the Armenian community itself. General information on the Armenians, their recent and historical problems, the discriminations and crimes against them, as well as the issue of Islamized/Crypto-Armenians became increasingly interesting for the public and thus were popular topics of print, online and TV media, specialist literature, and many conferences. This also led to a stronger awareness and discussion of the 1915 events—which ultimately conquered one of the biggest political and social taboos.[6] These developments also effected a further *ethnic* and *religious revival* of the Islamized Armenians (see Sect. 5.2).

Apart from these developments which prove to be positive for the Armenians, there have been more social and political improvements of their situation since the 2000s. These include relatively more freedom of opinion to talk about particular topics such as the 1915 events; relatively less stigmatization, offenses, and attacks; better possibilities to openly demand political and social rights, to publicly show their religious and ethnic afiliation, and to carry out ethno-cultural activities and found organizations; better dialogue and relations with the government; small scale governmental support for educational system and media; more approvals for renovations and for the rebuilding of historic Christian buildings; return of expropriated goods to the Armenians churches; and a positive impact on the Turkish Armenians of Turkey's better relations with the Republic of Armenia.

Although the tangible improvements in the Armenians' situation that occurred after Hrant Dink's murder resulted primarily from the above-mentioned political and social impulses within Turkey itself, they were also facilitated by further internal and external factors. The EU's influence on political changes represents an external factor. On the domestic level, the coming to power of the AKP was also a catalyst for changes in the policy on minorities which interacted with the EU's influence. As the AKP government sought a rapprochement with the EU, it was more willing to at least partially fulfill Brussels' demands than its predecessor. Furthermore, the AKP and its supporters' desire for socio-political changes led to partial democratization processes and the gradual fall from power of the strongly nationalist Kemalist establishment which was generally hostile to minorities. This was true especially during the first two terms of the AKP government.

There are different views within the Armenian community regarding the role of the EU in the improvement of their living conditions. While the majority deny that the EU played a more important role than the internal transformation processes, they nevertheless concede that the negotiations with Brussels laid certain foundations for later developments. The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg is, however, considered an important international actor in the struggle for better minority rights protection, as it has repeatedly reached verdicts in favor of the Armenian community (e.g. in regard to the return of expropriated properties) and the Turkish government is legally bound by its decisions.

Generally speaking, attitudes toward the role of the EU among the Armenians are often critical. Some interviewees highlighted that the EU deals with minority rights issues in a superficial and insufficient way that focused too much on PR measures and failed to sufficiently influence change within Turkey. Others worried that too much EU pressure could be counterproductive and lead the Turkish government to abandon all attempts at improving the country's minority rights provisions. They argue that further changes could only be brought about by domestic actors. This is why they advocate that the EU should limit itself to financing and otherwise supporting projects and scientific research into potential solutions to the existing conflicts. With regards to their critical attitudes towards current EU politics, interviewees also declared that Armenians are no longer willing to act as a plaything for the interests of international political actors, as they had done in the past. In this context, a significant part of Armenian intellectuals and activists also has shown fundamental reservations regarding our EU-funded study. Several of them expressed their over-saturation with foreign-led research projects on Turkey's Armenian community. They criticized that the recently improved conditions had led to a flood of scientific and political interest in their group after its situation had been ignored by international academics and politicians for decades. The studies that have been conducted so far are perceived as half-hearted, superficial and serving mainly the researchers' interests rather than leading to tangible improvements for the Armenian minority.

Despite the many abovementioned improvements, most Armenian interviewees emphasized that these changes merely amounted to relative and ambivalent changes in comparison to the situation in the twentieth century before the AKP came to power. Generally speaking, the government's policies represent a mix of moderate, concrete improvements, on

the one hand, and delays or blockades, on the other. This is why a number of problems remain that are either solved only partially or not at all, which is the focus of the following section.

General and Specific Political and Social Problems in Contemporary Turkey

Almost all remaining basic problems are characteristic of the problematic situation the Armenians have been facing for several decades. A general problem is that the Christian communities or churches do not have the status of legal personality. Their properties are therefore owned by private persons, so that the potential danger persists that the church as a community loses access to a given property. As a result of an expropriation campaign that targeted both religious and private property and lasted several decades, all Christian groups in today's Turkey were deprived of their real estate so that they now only own a fraction of the churches, monasteries, land, and other properties that they owned before the foundation of the Turkish Republic. Despite the improvement of some legal provisions concerning the return of confiscated property in the first half of the 2000s, the implementation of these changes is still slow and incomplete. Additionally, the non-Muslim religious groups do not have the same status and the same rights and support for their religious communities as the state is giving to Sunni Muslims. Turkish citizens of Christian faith pay the same taxes as Turkey's Muslim citizens, but the state is excluding the Christian communities from tax-funded initiatives that are accessible to Sunni Muslims only.[7] Furthermore, the Armenian religious community still faces several other problems, for example, the ban on training clergy, restrictions on acquiring or donating property, and the systematic denial or obstruction of the legally required permits for constructing new churches. Due to a lack both in priests and in churches, the Armenian churches are not at all able to sufficiently meet the basic and by now (as a consequence also of the strong religious and ethnic revival processes among the Islamized and Crypto-Armenians) increased need for spiritual succor outside of Istanbul. Many existing churches or other places of prayer (e.g. in Diyarbakır, Van, Kayseri, Elazığ, Sivas, Iskenderun, and Vakıflı) depend on irregular and short visits by a small number of circular priests. This is also related to basic problems and obstacles when it comes to the acknowledgment and registration of Islamized and Crypto-Armenians

as Armenian Christians. As they are officially registered as Muslims,[8] they do not have the legal status of an "Armenian minority" and thus do not have the confirmed rights for minorities (e.g. usage and building of Armenian schools, churches, and cemeteries).

Another important issue is the difficult financial, organizational, and cultural situation of the Armenian schools. Main problems are: the strict control and interference (e.g. through a dual leadership structure) in Armenian schools and their curriculum, syllabi, teaching concepts, and school books by the Turkish state; several restrictions on and repression of Armenian parents, pupils, the Patriarchate, and the school leadership by Turkish authorities; financial discrimination; arbitrarily school closures; difficulties in training Armenian teachers; and many more. These measures and the obvious "Turkification" policy reduced the Armenian scope for independent action, resulted in a decline of students at Armenian schools, gradually led to a "drying out" of Armenian schools (similarly to Armenian Christian parishes), and significantly speed up assimilation processes in general as well as the loss of the Armenian language in particular (in contrast to the original aim of the schools to preserve of the Armenian culture, language, and identity) (for further information about the minority school issue see Giesel 2014b: 14ff.; 2015b: 68ff.; Koutcharian 1989: 176–178; Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı 2012: 37–48).

Furthermore, numerous Armenian (as well as Syriac) interviewees complained of feeling partially and occasionally severely restricted in their freedom of expression. These complaints are especially based on the regular use of the controversial Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code (see Chap. 3) against Armenians and other Turkish citizens. This affects, for example, the designation of the mass murder of the Armenians as genocide, as this continues to be denied by the Turkish government.[9]

Christians and Jews are described as trouble-makers, barbarians, traitors, and spies in the currently outdated textbooks for secondary schools accredited by the ministry of education (see BvdAD 2012). This form of discrimination in school textbooks reflects the fundamental problem of extensive discrimination in the public and political sphere, which all non-Muslim groups irrespective of their legal status experience. In contrast to Turkey's Muslim citizens and despite their normative equal legal status as Turkish citizens, non-Muslims are usually denied opportunities for social and professional advancement. This pertains especially to the public sector, for example, in the sphere of politics, administration, the legal and medical professions, education, defense, and security, at the local, regional,

and national levels. While some non-Muslims have succeeded in obtaining low-level work in these areas, they are deprived of equal opportunities for career advancement and top-level jobs in comparison to their Muslim peers. In addition to this, numerous interviewees of all ages complained of harassment, insults, and mistreatment by their fellow recruits and superiors during their military service.[10] As mentioned in the section above, this problematic situation, which has continued for decades, has recently shown signs of modest improvement.

However, the main demand of most ethno-political, ethno-religious and ethno-cultural Armenian actors is a general improvement of the situation and the solution to the problems stated above with the help of appropriate normative and practical measures on a legal, political, and social level. The general aim is to achieve respect toward the minorities as well as to effect the political, social, and cultural equality; free development; and promotion of their members.[11] Virtually all Armenian activists are aware that these normative ideas and demands are inspired by the vision of an ideal situation which will be difficult and slow to attain. The hope for tangible improvements in minority rights as a part of a fundamental overhaul of the constitution is nevertheless high. There are, however, different opinions within the Armenian community in regard to the already implemented changes or improvements and future prospects. One group expects a long-term continuation of the improvements in minority rights provisions and tends to look optimistically toward the future despite partial setbacks and stagnation. Members of this group often emphasize that their political rights remain insufficient, but that they experience less tension and discrimination in their daily lives so that they feel more at ease. They therefore understand to a certain extent why the government's policies on minorities are progressing slowly and explain that the pace of transformations in Turkey tends to be slow and fraught with difficulties. They further highlight that the AKP has so far displayed good will and that the party needs more time to implement the necessary changes as it has to take several interest groups and difficulties (e.g. the heterogeneous opposition, the party's own electorate and foreign allies, the Kurdish question, etc.) into account. A different group of Armenians criticizes the slow pace of the reforms and their rather symbolic character. They believe that the country's fundamental problems remain unsolved and that the situation for minorities continues to be unfavorable despite some changes.

Since the early 2010s and the AKP's third election victory in 2011 at the latest, the Armenians have become increasingly skeptical as certain

political developments have set in that continue until the time of writing. Their skepticism is due to, for example, the continuous increase in authoritarian, nationalistic, and Islamist elements in the AKP's policies, setbacks in the democratization process (Giesel 2013: 359), the deterioration of Turkey's relationship with the EU, and the failure to reform the constitution. At the same time, the pace of reform of minority rights as well as the expansion of Turkey's relationship and cooperation with Armenia have stagnated. Apart from domestic factors, external or foreign policy factors also play a role in this. One of these factors is the pressure which Azerbaijan, a close ally and cooperation partner of Turkey, is putting on the Turkish government due to the unsolved Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. Another factor was the planned enactment of a French law which criminalized the denial of the Armenian genocide, a law which provoked strong reactions in Turkish politics and society. Even leading representatives of Armenian lay and religious institutions in Turkey heavily criticized this law and declared it counterproductive. They argued that it restricted freedom of opinion and expression and fuelled Turkish nationalism on the social and political levels which in turn had and continues to have a detrimental effect on the Armenian community.[12]

Between 2010 and 2013, these political developments were accompanied by several anti-Armenian incidents which were noted with particular attention and concern by the Armenian community. These included Erdoğan's threat in 2010 to expel all economic migrants from Armenia in response to the Armenian government's increased efforts to have the events of 1915/1916 recognized as genocide by the international community; the destruction of an Armenian church and the adjacent cemetery in Malatya by the local authorities; the violent murder of an ethnically Armenian soldier in the Turkish army; an increased marking of Armenian buildings in Istanbul; anti-Armenian mass protests; and an extensive PR campaign in 2012 to commemorate the massacre of Azeris in Hocalı by Armenian soldiers during the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. This commemoration, in which AKP and MHP politicians actively participated, portrayed the massacre as genocide. However, apart from these incidents and the slowing down or stagnation of the reform process, this period was also marked by some state concessions and improvements, for example, financial support for Armenian newspapers, greater access allowance to Armenian schools, consultation of institutions regarding constitutional reform (see above), and official declarations of sympathy by the Turkish Foreign Minister Davutoğlu in 2013 and by President Erdoğan in 2014, when they bemoaned the mass killings and the suffering

of the Armenians during World War I yet also called for the commemoration of the victims on both sides as well as mutual reconciliation. This mixture of contradictory tendencies causes confusion within the Armenian community, but also fuels hopes for further positive developments.

Forms of Ethnic and Religious Organization

The range of today's ethno-religious, ethno-cultural, and ethno-political organizations of Armenians and their activities is wide and will only be broadly outlined in the following. An official recognition of the Armenians as a minority afforded them with more opportunities for a broader religious and ethno-cultural development in the public. For decades, these opportunities had been bound to religious institutions, as i) following the Lausanne treaty and its reliance on the historical *millet* model, Armenians (just as Greeks and Jews) were only seen and acknowledged as a religious minority, not an ethnic one and ii) the organization of a group on the basis of affiliation to a (non-Turkish) ethnic minority only was forbidden under Turkish law. The religious head of the Armenian community in Turkey is the "Armenian Patriarchate of Constantinople" in Istanbul. Due to their much lesser number of members, the "Armenian Catholic Archdiocese of Constantinople" plays a minor role within the Armenian community as a whole. Even though there are hundreds of Armenian churches in Turkey, the Armenian community actively only uses 33 orthodox/apostolic, 12 catholic, and 3 protestant churches, most of which are to be found within the city of Istanbul. The other churches are being used for other purposes or in ruins. Apart from that, the Armenian Church holds 2 hospitals and 2 orphanages as well as 19 schools (ranging from pre-schools, primary schools, and junior high to high schools) in Istanbul.[13]

Additionally, the Armenian community has issued several publications, like, for example, the Armenian daily newspapers *Jamanak* (established in 1908) and *Marmara*, the mostly Turkish weekly newspaper *Agos*, the trilingual (English, Turkish, Armenian) *Lraper*, official organ of the Armenian Apostolic Patriarchate, the journal *Surp Pergiç* issued by the hospital of the same name, the satirical magazine *Jbid*, as well as some periodicals titled *Kulis*, *Şoğagat* and *Norsan*. There are also several printed magazines which are issued irregularly by diverse Armenian associations (see below), mostly in Turkish. Apart from online versions of the periodicals mentioned, in the last few years also purely online information gateways in Turkish and Armenian have been established by Armenian

organizations and associations (e.g. *bolsohays.com* and *hyetert.com*). In the course of the social and political liberalization processes in Turkey, also the number of possibilities for an ethno-cultural, ethno-religious, and ethno-political participation of non-Turkish and non-Sunnite groups has increased remarkably. Since 2000, these possibilities have been used by parts of the Armenian community, too. Next to the foundation of diverse non-religious associations, also on the church level, many new foundations and associations emerged—in Istanbul as well as in towns that are, by now, inhabited by only a few Armenians.

The socio-political developments in Turkey also triggered a pluralization of the Christian-Armenian religious community itself – which, in turn, led to the formation of subgroups and discussions about the structure, activities and socio-political stance of the churches in the future. As part of a diversification of the Christian-Armenian religious community itself, also the generation gap becomes more evident within the Apostolic Patriarchate. One side is formed by the established officials, mostly elderly men, conservative, and pro-government, which are, in general, not interested in a change of either the current situation or direction of the apostolic church. The other side, however, mostly comprising younger members of the community, insists on deeper reforms and more democracy within the church. They accuse the established elites of being non-transparent, power-obsessed, and authoritarian, of not doing enough for the preservation of the Armenian culture, language, and identity as well as of only supporting some modest ethno-cultural activities, which can be controlled and channeled by the state, and of blocking all those plans that might interfere with their power or bring about something new.[14]

Generally speaking, the activities of the non-religious associations are much more diverse than those of the religious groups; their political orientations ranging across being contra-, neutral or pro-governmental and including a wide array of political ideologies and affiliations. One of the more critically oriented and socio- as well as ethno-politically active organizations is the "Hrant Dink Foundation", which was founded in 2007 and since then has organized many studies; publications; conferences; public discussions; workshops (e.g. for journalists); cultural and art events; Turkish-Armenian exchange programs; the establishment of an archive; exchange, education, and scholarship programs; awards; and so on. Some of its aims are (in memory of the visions of Hrant Dink): to combat racism and discrimination based on ethnic and religious grounds, support Turkey's democratization process, and develop cultural relations among

the peoples of Turkey, Armenia, and Europe. It also explores the historical and current political and social situation of the Armenians, with the 1915 events and the fate of the Islamized Armenians being only two of several focal points. With this work, the Hrant Dink Foundation has achieved a highly positive reputation and a strong authority in academia, politics, and society as well as with many Armenians within and outside of Turkey. Even though it is originally Armenian and although its activities often refer to Armenian culture, the foundation is open for all those interested, regardless of their ethnic or religious backgrounds, and also examines other ethnic, religious, and other social minorities. This also holds true for some other Armenian ethno-cultural and ethno-political organizations, for example, the "Ermeni Kültürü ve Dayanışma Derneği" or "Nor Zatonk". Most of the other Armenian associations in Turkey, however, merely focus on the Christian Armenians. One especially remarkable example is the association "Dersim Ermenileri Sosyal İnanç ve Yardımlaşma Derneği" in Istanbul. Its members are originally from Dersim/Tunceli and turned their former Zaza Alevi identity into a Christian or atheist Armenian identity.

The manner and amount of support of the Armenian organizations by the Armenian public both actively and passively as well as their attitudes toward the activities and positions of the associations are highly diverse and erratic—thus reflecting the heterogeneity of the interests and attitudes of the Armenian community as well as the associations. It can be noted, however, that the majority of the Armenians in Turkey (aside from attendance at church) are barely involved in the different religious and non-religious organizations and their activities. The causes for this are linked to the Armenian population's social embeddedness, experiences, and the resulting social and political attitudes which are the focus of the following section.

Integration and Experiences in Their Social Environment and Socio-political Attitudes of Turkey's Armenians

The social conditions of the metropolis of Istanbul are characterized by several" important features which have significantly reduced the degree of everyday threat and discrimination of the non-Muslim minorities like Armenians in comparison to the rest of Anatolia: (i) anonymity due to its population size, (ii) ethnic and religious diversity, and (iii) tendency to tolerant, liberal views, and ways of life by a sizeable part of its inhabitants. Nevertheless, the Armenians' as well as Syriacs' situation in the capital

has been characterized by nationalistically and religiously motivated conflicts, especially in the twentieth century. Everyday problems in the form of discrimination or hostility in people's social lives arose from the fact that Armenians as well as members of other minority groups no longer populated areas densely or dominantly after 1955. Instead, they have been embedded into a Muslim-dominated environment which contains residents who could hold nationalistic, Islamist, and xenophobic views.

This specific situation in Istanbul has led many Armenians to adopt strategic types of behavior to avoid discrimination, that is, efforts to remain inconspicuous, quiet, and outwardly adapted to or integrated into mainstream society to gain appreciation by the Muslim environment, avoidance of political expressions and activities, a conscious choice of typical Turkish first names, a reduction or total avoidance of church visits, and so on. In this way, they can interact with and gain recognition by their social environment without making many Muslims aware of their Christian, Armenian heritage. In this context, a part of the Turkish Armenians prefer not or refuse to identify themselves as a member of a (social) minority due to their relatively strong social integration and assimilation into the Turkish mainstream in connection with their secular attitudes resp. weak affiliation to the Christian religion practiced by their ancestors and group members (Giesel 2013: 362). Many of Istanbul's Armenians have succeeded in establishing themselves economically, so that a greater part of them can be considered members of Turkey's middle and upper social classes today.

The fear of losing their social achievements and their high economic status and of being socially stigmatized as ethno-religious minorities with all the associated consequences encouraged most of Istanbul's Armenians even in the context of the social and political liberalization processes in the 2000s to retain their strategic types of behavior and to avoid open ethno-cultural and ethno-political activities and demands, as they feared that they still might provoke the Turkish state and mainstream society. The improved political, social, and economic conditions in the last decade have even led many of Istanbul's Armenians to develop a stronger attachment to the Turkish state and its government (see below). This attitude is supported by the majority of Istanbul's Armenian clergy, who are dependent on good relations with the Turkish government.

Within this context, a significant part of the urban Armenian population seems disinterested in a (too close) personal or externally conducted examination of certain aspects of the Armenians' historical or

political situation in Turkey, as they often do not see how this would help with their everyday lives and their social needs. For social and psychological reasons, (…) most potential respondents in our research wished to avoid being confronted with the negative aspects of their history and current situation as they were mainly interested in their social and economic advancement and in good mutual relations with the mainstream society today and in the foreseeable future.[15] In this context also the historical trauma caused by the 1915 events is of relatively lesser importance in everyday life or plays a less important role as a psychologically present fact for many Armenians living in Istanbul. In this respect there is a discrepancy between many "ordinary" members of the Armenian community, on the one hand, and intellectuals and activists, on the other (especially regarding the question how to deal with the 1915 events).

Ultimately, these circumstances and attitudes, which prioritize a secure and economically successful life, facilitate a loss of significance of the Armenians religion, history, culture, and heritage and advance a further assimilation of Istanbul's Armenian community into Turkey's mainstream society. The most significant indicator for this is that the Turkish language has marginalized its Armenian counterpart as a means of communication in the private and family sphere, and command of the Armenian language is declining.[16] This tendency particularly strongly affects the younger generation. On the other hand, especially members of the younger generation have shown an increased interest in the history and fate of the Armenians and especially the 1915 events since the 2000s. This interest is noticeably less pronounced among the older generation.

Those Armenians who live in the multi-ethnic and multi-religious region of Iskenderun-Hatay-Samandağ (e.g. in Vakıflı) are embedded in an environment which is mostly dominated by Arabic Alawites (Nusairi), with whom most Armenians have friendly and cooperative relations. They tend to share common problems, fears, and attitudes, for example, in regard to economic and political difficulties and the fragile security situation in this border region as a result of the Syrian civil war.[17] Problems that are specific to the Armenian community in this area are the limited financial and logistical opportunities for ethno-cultural and ethno-religious development and the preservation of traditions.

The situation of those Armenian families who are scattered around Anatolia is particularly difficult. For them, the need to assimilate and integrate is comparatively higher, as most of them lack access to local ethno-religious

networks so that their opportunities for linguistic, cultural, and religious development and preservation are very limited.[18] Their everyday social situation alternates between good working relationships with their Sunni-dominated environment and the latent fear or danger of being victimized by nationalists or Islamists. Some of the parents living in these regions send their children to Istanbul to receive a Christian-Armenian religious and language education. The above-described social and political conditions and attitudes are also a responsible factor for the lack of support for our study by many Armenians, as described in the first section of this chapter.

The political affiliations of Turkey's Armenians are very heterogeneous, as was also indicated by a study of social and political attitudes (and many more aspects) published by the Armenian NGO "Nor Zatonk" in 2007. Basically, there are Armenian activists in many Turkish political parties. In this, they resemble other Muslim and non-Muslim groups in the country, like the Jews (see Giesel 2014b: 21–24; 2015a: 23–25; 2015b: 60–64; 2016b: 4; Güven 2012: 120, 127; Nor Zatonk 2007: 3, 25–33; ZfT 1998: 30). Currently, most Armenians sympathize with and vote for the three parliamentary parties CHP, AKP, and HDP. Nevertheless, many Armenians keep critical attitudes toward parts of the agendas pursued by their "favorite" political parties and therefore support or elect those that exhibit the most common ground with their individual views, that is, the ones they regard as the "lesser evil". Since the 2015 parliamentary elections, the HDP, CHP, and AKP each have an ethnically Armenian member of parliament. This is the first time that Armenians are represented in the Turkish parliament since 1961.

A number of Armenians support the CHP due to that party's secularist and republican credentials and the fear that the country's society might become too dominated by Islam under the AKP's leadership. In this context, the CHP is perceived as a face of modernity as also as a politically leftist resp. social-democratic party. Given the attempts at internal liberalization by parts of the CHP and its status as the strongest opposition party in the parliament, the CHP's Armenian supporters hope that this party would be able to not only counterbalance the AKP's one-party rule but also promote further socio-political innovation and thereby improve minority rights.

In contrast to this, the AKP is supported by a different group among the Armenians due to the short-term economic successes achieved under its leadership (and its neo-liberal orientation), its (former) politically and socially liberal agenda, and its policies which at least partially improved the situation for the minorities, even if the progress is clearly perceived as insufficient. The

Armenians who sympathize with the AKP object to the CHP's past and the open hostility toward minorities expressed by its radically nationalist wing. In this context, it is often emphasized that it was not the Kemalists with their secularist and republican ideals who stood up for the relative improvement of the rights of non-Muslim groups, but the AKP, despite its Islamic-conservative or even Islamic and nationalist orientation. Noticing the AKP's gradual policy shift (see above), however, Armenians have started to tend to turn away from this party in the last few years. But especially due to the political developments since 2015 the AKP has lost a significant part of its (even formerly strong) supporters within the Armenian community.

Since its foundation, the HDP, which is dominated by Kurdish activists but understands itself as a movement uniting both the political left and all ethnic, religious, or otherwise stigmatized social minority groups, has become an alternative political force for Armenian voters. The party's electorate includes persons who generally belong to the wide spectrum of the political left, including radical and moderate groups (e.g. former ÖDP, BDP, or CHP voters), as well as persons who do not genuinely support the political left, but whose main concerns are improvements in minority rights provisions and the prevention of a radicalization of political nationalism (e.g. former CHP and AKP voters or non-voters and even some Kurdish Islamists from Southeastern Anatolia, who strategically politically oppose the AKP). Apart from this, two Armenian Christians were candidates for the radically nationalistic parliamentary party MHP in the 2014 local elections. They described the as a "culturally nationalistic party" in which ethnic and religious belonging were unimportant (sic!). They also said that they were not assimilated and proud of their Armenian identity as well as their Turkish homeland, and that they believed that all groups should cooperate for the benefit of the country (Ertani 2014). Although these views do not represent the majority of Turkey's Armenians views of the MHP, they do echo what most of them think regarding their identities.

5.5   Final Remarks, Latest Developments, and Prospects

To sum things up, the historical, social, political, and psychological situation of the Armenians in the Turkish Republic is characterized by the ambivalent interplay of collective historical trauma vs. psychological repression, strong loyal citizenship vs. minority status, social integration vs. discrimination, and assimilation vs. self-assertion. In this context, one

can also find differences within the group and ambivalences, especially when it comes to social and political attitudes. Just as ambivalent is the strategically multi-pronged governmental policy toward the Armenians (and other minorities), constituting an interplay between blockades and the granting of concessions. It is striking that the social situation of the Armenians in the country is far better than their situation within the political and administrative sectors.

Many Armenians see the ongoing development toward Islamic, nationalist, and authoritarian government since 2010 as well as the regression of the process of liberal democratization which had only just begun not only as a deterioration of their integration as a minority but as a setback on the social and political level of their situation as Turkish citizens. The violent suppression of protest movements since 2013, the stronger persecution of political opponents, and the restriction of the freedom of press and of opinion as well as of judicial independence have led to anxieties and fears. These developments are expected to worsen the situation of the Armenians as a minority, as the solution to minority-related problems is clearly seen in further liberal democratization. The domestic crisis and its consequences after the Turkish parliamentary elections in 2015—the explosiveness of which, surprisingly, even exceeded the potential for conflict created by the precarious Armenian and international commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the 1915 events—intensified the already existing anxieties and fears about the future. For parts of the Armenian population, these developments have led to an increase in their willingness to emigrate. Other parts still feel strongly connected to their Turkish homeland and try to come to terms with the social and economic conditions as successfully and inconspicuously as possible and refrain from most political entanglements and activities. Especially some younger people, however, still stand up for better minority rights, the preservation of the Armenian identity and democratization. What unites Turkey's Armenian community is the recognition that the country's general political situation and the government's interests tend to be subject to rapid changes, so that it is ultimately uncertain whether or not there will be improvements in minority rights conditions.

Despite the currently difficult and unpredictable situation, some interviewees expressed their hopes for further improvements for minorities on the political and legal level, for example, by the "democratization package" announced by the government. Some, however, believed that further changes in favor of the minorities would not take place before 2016 due to the great potential for tensions and conflicts caused by the elections in March 2015 as well as the

activities concerning the 100th anniversary of the 1915 events, which are not looked upon favorably. They believed that the AKP planned to capitalize on the nationalist, anti-Armenian atmosphere within the Turkish society caused by the genocide controversy and to wait for the mood to cool down after the calculated election victory before once again taking up a reform agenda. The changes which have been announced and are hoped for by the Armenians would, among other measures, include a revision of the law regarding the freedom of religion, including a change of the legal status of church as well as civil/non-church institutions. As a consequence of another AKP election victory in November 2015 and of Turkey and the EU drawing closer again because of the refugee crisis, parts of the Armenian population started to hope anew for a more stable political situation as well as the possibility of a constitutional amendment with a special focus on minority rights. There are, however, controversial discussions within the Armenian community on whether the plan for the new constitution, which would simultaneously bring more minority rights and the implementation of a presidential system (as demanded by the AKP), should indeed be supported—as the planned presidential rights would damage Turkish democracy even further. Recent political and social developments in the context of the AKP's reaction to the failed military coup in summer 2016 have shattered most of the Armenians' (and other minorities') above-mentioned political hopes for the time being.

NOTES

1. Not only the Christian Orthodox Armenians but also the Christian Orthodox Syriacs, Georgians, Ethiopians, and Copts were included in this so-called Millet-i Arman.
2. Approx. 60,000 Ottoman-Armenian soldiers took part in the Ottoman military campaign in the Caucasus in 1914.
3. It should not be forgotten that the aggressive and provocative foreign policy of expansion conducted by Russia (which also attacked and deported Armenians living in the Russian-controlled, Eastern Armenian areas of settlement; see Koutcharian 1989: 16) contributed to and can be held responsible at least in part for the escalation. It is obvious that the main aim of Russia was not to protect the Armenians but to exploit them to enforce Russian interests.
4. These activities provoked attacks on Armenian schools, religious organizations, and private citizens as well as anti-Armenian rhetoric in the Turkish press.
5. The affected Armenians' situation and problems strongly resemble those of the Syriacs in Eastern Anatolia.

6. Similar attempts and activities had also already been conducted sporadically before 2007. An important milestone here was the 2005 conference held at Bilgi University in Istanbul, where, for the first time in Turkey, the pogroms were discussed publicly within an academic environment.

7. This financial support enables Sunnis to build and run mosques as the state picks up the bills for, for example, repairs and personnel. Religious, cultural, or charitable organizations, institutions, activities, projects, and publications are also funded or co-funded by the state.

8. A basic problem which emerges from this context and is usually criticized as a "door opener" for open acts of discrimination is the "religious affiliation" entry in Turkish IDs.

9. The recognition and reappraisal of and compensation for the crimes committed against Armenians (and Syriacs) in the twentieth century, including an official apology by the Turkish government, is one of the main and psychologically most important demands of the Armenian (and Syriac) communities.

10. Some Armenian (and Syriac) interviewees, however, also mentioned that some superiors tried on occasion to stop this kind of treatment. A significant proportion of those who were spared harassment were soldiers of Alevi background, according to the respondents.

11. Additionally, other specific demands that touch on ethno-cultural and ethno-political aspects are the right to unlimited ethno-cultural development, more financial support for non-religious Armenian institutions and for the preservation of the Armenians' historical and cultural heritage (as an integral part of the Turkish state's general cultural heritage), an end to politically and religiously motivated legal proceedings against Armenian persons and institutions, and many more.

12. Hrant Dink expressed similar views regarding a similar bill that was discussed in the French parliament in 2006.

13. Due to administrative and organizational problems as well as the progression of assimilation as a consequence of social and political circumstances, the number of Armenian students has decreased in the last 20–30 years from approx. 6000 to 3000 at the time of writing.

14. This controversy is directly related to the years-old conflict surrounding the Patriarchal elections. For further information, see Özdoğan and Kılıçdağı (2012: 49–58).

15. In this context, the activities and demands against the Turkish government that are pursued by the Armenian diaspora, especially in France and the US, are seen as too radical, exaggerated, and detrimental to their situation and are criticized accordingly.

16. For statistical data, see Melkonyan (2012).

17. In the Dersim region, the relationship between Armenians and the Alevi is similar and generally symbiotic (Hür 2008). However, many people's increased

rejection of the Zazaist-Kurdish and Alevi identities in favor of an Armenian one does on occasion lead to some tensions and controversial discussions.

18. Many of these communities are so small that they have no church and lack the financial potential or do not obtain state permission to build churches or organize schools. Here, the worship is held at private places or hidden locations in the countryside. Especially the Krypto-Armenians or converted, formerly Islamized Armenians, face this problem (Estukyan 2015; Radikal 2013; Ziflioğlu 2011).

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Like a Drop in the Ocean: The Last Syriacs in Turkey in a Maelstrom of Nationalism, Islamism, Assimilation, and Diverging Socio-political Interests

6.1 Introduction

The quantitative and qualitative data on the Syriacs used for this study were collected in the period from July 2011 to October 2013, during 12 excursions to Istanbul and the Southeastern Anatolian provinces Diyarbakır, Mardin, and Şırnak. The main focus, however, was on the province Mardin, the field studies being conducted in the municipal centers Mardin and Midyat as well as another town, eight villages, and five inhabited church premises (including the biggest and best-known monasteries in the region, Mor Gabriel and Deir-ul-Zafaran). Additional, updated qualitative data was collected during sojourns in Turkey in October 2014 and August and November 2015.

Since the genesis of Turkish nationalism, that is, from the end of the nineteenth until today, the ethnic group of Syriacs has been reduced remarkably in those areas previously dominated by them. Consequently, this group—which for historical reasons is firmly rooted in the area of Mesopotamia—is imminently threatened with extinction on the territory of present-day Turkey as well as in the Middle East. Both the shared historical as well as today's experiences of marginalization, threat, discrimination, and persecution left great parts of the affected Syriacs with psychological traumata, existential fears, as well as suspicion and little or no openness in public and toward strangers. This applies especially to the few Syriacs who have remained in Southeast Anatolia. On the local level, they are

embedded into a Muslim mainstream society which is more strongly characterized by a conservative and radical Islam and antipathy toward non-Muslims than other areas in Southeast Anatolia or Turkey in general. This can also be felt in everyday life. These circumstances also influenced the field research, so that the collection of useable data often proved difficult. Additionally, the tense conditions in general and the volatile security situation at the border triangle between Turkey, Syria, and Iraq due to the armed conflict between Turks and Kurds and the fighting in Syria and Iraq often affected the field research. Thus, at times, this work was accompanied and sometimes constricted by particular challenges and precautionary measures. Those experiences, however, already gave important insight into the everyday lives of the local Syriacs, as also the field researcher perceived the concentration of military and police forces, secret service, and several groups prone to violence as well as the generally hostile attitude of a bigger part of the local majorities toward non-Muslims. Nonetheless, during the course of the study, mutual trust between the interviewer and the informants increased, and data collection became easier.[1] In the urban area of Istanbul, the research conditions and results were similar to those encountered when dealing with the local Armenian community.

In contrast to other non-Turkish and/or non-Sunni religious and ethnic groups and minorities in Turkey (i.e. Alevi, Armenians, Kurds, etc.), the Syriacs and their conditions do not attract much attention in the media, specialized literature, the public, or politics and thus also mostly lack a public and/or political lobby. This is the case both on a national level, that is, in Turkey itself, and on the international level. Reasons for this are, among others: the relatively small size of the group; their shared closeness and reserved stance; the marginalization and small public, political, and economic significance of the group; and the peripheral location of their home region. This chapter thus fills an important void in the literature. Given the unique value of the extensive fieldwork we conducted there, it focuses most strongly on the situation of the Syriacs in the Southeast Anatolian area of their traditional origin.

Both from the national viewpoint (in relation to the Sunnite [Hanafite] Turkish majority) and the regional one (in relation to the Sunnite [Sha'afite] Kurdish majority), the Christian Syriacs comprise a religious and, at the same time, ethnic minority. The term *Syriac* refers to a very heterogeneous ethnic group, whose members belong to the Eastern Christian churches of the Syriac tradition, whose services tend to feature liturgical language use of ancient Syriac resp. Middle Aramaic. They usually identify themselves as "Suroye" (turk. "Süryani") and trace their origins to the ancient Assyrians

or Arameans. The Christian religion, which was probably adopted by parts of the Syriac community as early as the first century AD, plays an important role in the group's historical, cultural, and social consciousness. The different subgroups of Syriacs speak several modern Aramaic dialects—in case they were not assimilated by other language groups (see below).

The members of this group refer to the (cross-border) consistency of Syriac settlement for thousands of years in the Mesopotamia region, although they do not inhabit an independent state. Currently, there are Middle Eastern Syriac groups in Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, and Lebanon, mostly surrounded by a (mainly Sunni) Muslim majority. There exists a great diaspora in Central, Western, and Northern Europe as well as in Australia, the US, and also—to a lesser degree—in South America.

6.2   Ethnic and Confessional Group Identities and Differentiations

The greater group of Syriacs in the Middle East and in the diaspora is further divided into diverse confessional, regional, and sub-ethnic groups—cross-border as well as within the context of their respective home countries. Within these particular groups again, there exist particularities related to religious history, confession, ethnicity and culture, origins, social psychology, history, and national ideologies. These are the reasons for the various names and labels assigned to specific subgroups (Arameans, Assyrians, Nestorians, Chaldeans) as well as collective names for larger groups (Assyro-Arameans, Assyrians/Arameans/Chaldeans, Chaldo-Assyrians, "Syrian/Syriac Christians" or "Christian Syrians/Syriacs", etc.). Highly important here is the confessional affiliation with a particular church of the Syriacs, who separated into diverse groups from the fifth century AD onward. The main branches are the *monophysite, jacobite West Syrian Church* (Syriac Orthodox Church of Antioch, the Syriac Catholic Church, and the Syrian Maronite Church of Antioch) and the *diphysite East Syrian Church* (Chaldean Catholic Church, the Assyrian Church of the East resp. "Nestorian Church", and the Ancient Church of the East). Both the Syriac Catholic Church and the Chaldean Catholic Church are united with Rome. Additionally, there are several forms of Syriac Protestant Churches in Turkey. Many confessional subgroups, for a variety of reasons, split into further independent subgroups. As a consequence, a great variety of (partially autocephalous) forms of Syriac Christianity are to be found on all continents today (especially in the developing world, e.g. the Saint Thomas Christians in India); but the adherents to these

religious denominations do not belong to the group of Syriacs/Assyro-Arameans from the ethnic point of view. Apart from geographical (East/West), ecclesiastic (diphysite/monophysite) and national-ideological (Assyrians/Arameans) criteria, there are also (sub-)ethnic differentiations between East and West Syrians based on their dialect (Surit/Turoyo) (cf. Andrews and Benninghaus 1989: 166).

Whereas in some Middle Eastern regions and countries as well as in the diaspora there are clear differentiations (e.g. in Iraq), Assyrians and Arameans in Turkey mostly agree on a super-ordinate, ethnic, and national unity due to historical and social merging processes. The questions of differentiation play a minor role for the majority of Turkish Syriacs (Assyro-Arameans) in view of the development of their social and political situation. Nonetheless there exist diverse views on the precise classification of the subgroups, Chaldeans and especially Nestorians mostly tending toward considering themselves Assyrians, Syriac Orthodox Christians mostly seeing themselves as Arameans. As a consequence of this complex and unclear situations as well as mixed marriages between the (sub-) groups, it proves difficult for both the external observer as well as members of the broad group of Syriacs themselves to grasp the dimensions of the greater group as well as the size of the respective subgroups.

6.3   Distribution, Group Size, Linguistic Idiosyncrasies, and Ethnic and Religious Environment of Syriacs in Contemporary Turkey

In the past, the Syriacs were spread within Turkey in the broad area of South Anatolia, parts of East Anatolia, Antioch, and Cilicia. Especially the contemporary Turkish region of Turabdin became a center of Syriac settlement and Christian religion. This region (an extensive plateau spreading from Mardin in the West to Midyat to the banks of the river Tigris in the East, bordering the Mesopotamian plains in the South) even today features dozens of churches and monasteries from early Christian times/late Antiquity. Whereas the West Syrian Church was mostly common in today's Turabdin and those regions to the West and Northwest of it (South East and East Anatolia), East Syrian settlements were mostly found in the regions East and Northeast of the Turabdin, starting from the areas around Silopi in the West to Hakkari in the East (and, from there, spread into Iraq) as well as Siirt and Van in the North. As a consequence of extensive measures taken to exterminate and displace the Syriacs in the twentieth century (see below), these have mostly vanished from their original areas, except

for the Turabdin. Today, the Syriacs' main residential area in Turkey is Istanbul. Due to migration, an estimated number of 12,000–18,000 Syriacs live here. Only in one of their former main settlement areas, the Turabdin, on a strip from Mardin to Idil (Azekh), 2000–3000 Syriacs still live. At the moment, these are spread among 30 villages, hamlets, and towns (including those villages which were depopulated and repopulated again as part of a return movement), the population structure of which is sometimes dominated by Syriacs but also by Kurds. The cultural and economic center of the Syriacs in this region is the provincial town of Midyat, located in the heart of the Turabdin, where there are around 500 Christians remaining. More precise numbers about the Christian-Syrian inhabitants are not easy to find, as a considerable part of those Syriacs who mostly live abroad spend weeks or months every year in the Turabdin (they are mostly registered only in their new home countries but still owning houses and lands in Southeast Anatolia). Additionally, there are a few Syriac Christians in Izmir and Ankara, as well as in Iskenderun, Diyarbakır, Adıyaman, Malatya, Elazığ, and a few other places.

Among the Western Syrian Churches, it is the Syriac Catholic Church (which has at least several hundred members) and the Syriac Orthodox Church of the Antioch Patriarchate that are present in Turkey today. The Orthodox Church has some 10,000 members throughout the country and thus dominates Syrian Christianity in Turkey. The Chaldean Catholic Church, which is in communion with Rome, only counts a maximum of several hundred members, most of whom live in Istanbul and in very small communities in Mardin province. The Assyrian Church of the East or the "Nestorian Church", which used to be active in Turkey, seized to exist as an organization. Nevertheless, a very small number of Nestorians or persons of Nestorian ancestry continue to live in Turkey, but most of them have converted to Islam. Apart from this, the Syriac Protestant Church is present in the country and counts several hundred faithful (before the civil war in Southeastern Anatolia since 2015).

Ethno-linguistic differences can also be found depending on the location. While those Syriacs who are resident in the Turkish heartland and in the vast expanses of the Turabdin speak Aramaic as their mother tongue, Syriacs living in the border regions of the Turabdin either speak Arabic (e.g. in Mardin and Idil/Azekh) or Kurdish (e.g. in *Hah/Anıtlı*) as their mother tongue. Most of the Syriacs living in Istanbul only speak Turkish, while those migrants with an origin from Mardin partially still speak Arabic as their mother tongue.

6.4   Historical Development and Genesis of the Persecution of the Syriacs in the Ottoman Empire and the Turkish Republic

Situation and Conflicts of the Syriacs in the Ottoman Empire

The major settlement areas of Syriacs came under Ottoman rule in the sixteenth century. The law granted the Syriacs of the Ottoman Empire the legal status of "Dhimmi", and they were included into the Armenian millet. It was not until the second half of the nineteenth century that the Chaldean Catholic, the Syriac Protestant, and the Syriac Orthodox churches were recognized as religious organizations in their own right, a development that must be seen in the context of reforms that were being implemented at that time (see Giesel 2013: 328ff., 333; Koutcharian 1989: 42–44).

Over the course of the centuries, Muslim Kurdish and Arab tribes made concerted efforts to gain access to the Turabdin from the North and the South, respectively, and thus entered the Syriac heartland, which was considered desirable due to its fertility. This resulted in armed conflicts and the settlement of Kurds, Mhalami and Arabs in this region. Apart from economic factors, religion also played a decisive role during the course of these conflicts.

Important demographic changes did not occur until the late nineteenth or early twentieth century when the Ottoman Empire witnessed the emergence and spread of Turkish nationalism. In the context of the implementation of nationalistic ideas and the violent conflict between Turkish and Armenian nationalists, also other Christians in some locations became subject to large-scale and severe persecution and massacres by (pro-)Ottoman, Muslim actors, that is, the Kurdish "Hamidiye" used by Sultan Abdülhamid II in the 1890s. These attacks also affected the Syriacs, who within the context of the religiously oriented and ethnically indifferent millet system were often seen as belonging to the same group as the Armenians due to their adherence to (Eastern Orthodox) Christianity (see Hosfeld 2015: 72ff., 103ff.).

Furthermore, Great Britain took advantage of the Syriacs' precarious situation to further her colonial ambitions in the Near East and made certain promises especially from the World War I until 1920 (in the context of the Treaty of Sèvres) which encouraged parts of the Syriac community to openly revolt against the Ottoman administration. Other (minimal) parts of the Syriac community joined forces with the Russian Empire in its fight against the Ottomans, which ultimately led to further attacks and persecution. (Ottoman-) Turkish nationalists consider these kinds of

activities as treason and use them to explain the Ottoman attacks on the Syriacs (see Sonyel 2001; The World War I Document Archive 2014; ZfT 1989: 127). These violent measures against the Syriacs reached their climax in the 1915 mass murder of the Armenians, which also strongly affected the Syriacs, and continued throughout the First World War and occasionally also during the Turkish wars of liberation until the early 1920s (see e.g. Hosfeld 2015: 177ff.). These attacks (especially in 1915), which the Syriacs call *Seyfo* (Aramaic: "sword", derived from the expression "the year of the sword"), resulted in a strong numerical decline and a reduction of the regional spread of the Syriac community in Southeast Anatolia, including the Urmia region in today's Northwestern Iran. According to some estimates, approximately 1 million Syriacs lived in the Ottoman-controlled areas at the beginning of the twentieth century. Academic researchers have put the number of Syriac victims of the mass murder in Iran and Turkey at between 250,000 and 750,000 persons (see Khosoreva 2007; Rummel 1996: 228ff.; Travis 2010: 237–277, 293ff.), while some Syriac actors believe that the number of victims could be as high as 900,000.

As a result of the violent attacks since the beginning of the First World War, continuing pressure and fear of renewed persecution, Syriacs emigrated in large waves from Southeast Anatolia from 1915 until the 1920s. They settled in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Europe, and overseas. Small sections of the Syriac community also decided or were forced to convert from Christianity to Islam in order to escape pressure, displacement, or murder. A small number of Syriacs married Muslim partners, a process which was regularly expedited by the abduction of young Syriac women. This tendency continued for decades, even after the 1920s. These events (especially those of 1915) until today continue to play an extraordinarily important and traumatic role in the collective consciousness of the Syriacs, who agree with the Armenians and the majority of international historians and political scientists that they amounted to genocide.

Situation and Conflicts of Syriacs in the Turkish Republic until the End of the 1990s

Prosecution, displacement, and assimilation also shaped (to varying degrees, depending on place and time) the decades following the founding of the Turkish Republic. The situation of the Syriacs in the Turkish Republic was shaped by a raison d'état based on Turkish (Kemalist) national ideology and the assimilatory and discriminating measures against ethnic groups and minorities stemming from it.

The Syriacs never received the official status of a national minority in Turkey and the rights connected to this according to the Treaty of Lausanne (1923). This had a great impact on their opportunities to live their religion and culture in public (see below). There are several reasons why the Syriacs did not receive the official minority status in the 1920s. An important one was that the lack of organization within the particular churches and separations within the group, rivalries, and conflicts prevented a unified and organized course of action of the diverse branches. This situation was exploited by the Turkish government to politically weaken the positions and possibilities of the Syriacs in these negotiations and put important religious representatives under pressure or altogether win them over to prevent the application of the internationally established minority rights to this group. Additionally, and in contrast to other minorities, the Syriacs lacked an international protector state which could have advocated the application of minority rights to them in the negotiations in Lausanne (see Anschütz 1989: 455; Giesel 2013: 348; Rumpf 1993: 182).

On the ethno-cultural and ethno-religious levels, this resulted in linguistic, cultural, religious, and other restrictions and bans on the Syriacs throughout the twentieth century. Like the recognized non-Muslim minorities, they were subject to violent attacks for many decades, most of which were either condoned or even organized by the Turkish state. These kinds of incidents not only affected the Syriacs in their region of origin in Southeastern Anatolia, but also in the urban space of Istanbul (e.g. during the September pogroms in Istanbul in 1955).

A second, equally decisive development in the twentieth century, which, in the long run, affected the decimation of the Syriacs in Turkey until today, began in the Turabdin in the 1960s. First, also the Syriacs living in the highly underdeveloped Southeast Anatolia were affected by the common domestic migration and guest worker movements during these years. Apart from economic reasons, however, emigration was furthered by the consistent pressure issued by the Turkish administration but, above all, by the local Muslim population with a strong Kurdish majority—whose number grew consistently in this area. A particular problem for the Christian population was the deterioration of their safety conditions. They experienced violence at the hands of the Muslim civilian population (spontaneous as well as organized; threats, coercions, assaults, extortion, abductions, robbery, homicide, destruction of farmland, etc.). These acts became more frequent especially during international political and military conflicts between Christians and Muslims like in Cyprus or Lebanon.

Furthermore, in the second half of the 1970s, some of the Mhalami (originally from the Turabdin) who had fled from Lebanon took violent revenge on the Christian people in the Turabdin because of the Lebanese Christian parties' severe assaults against the local Mhalami. However, it was the escalation of the conflict between Kurds and Turks in the 1980s that led to a climax in the persecution, flight, and expulsion of the Syriacs, who had become caught in the cross fire between the two conflicting parties (see Giesel 2013: 252ff.).

Those groups of Kurds who were allied with the Turkish government and supplied with arms to fight Kurdish rebels (so-called village guards) used their power to freely take violent actions against the Christian inhabitants based on religious and economic motivations. Due to the relocation measures taken by the government to move Kurdish people from remote mountain regions to the Turabdin and the Mesopotamian plains to fight the PKK, the need for farmland by the Kurds grew—which again added to the social conflicts between local Christians and Muslims. A further important role is played by the economic and political interests of local Kurdish landowners (Ağas, main pillar of the feudal-like social structure in this region), who supported the Turkish government to safeguard their individual interests and privileges. To secure this support by the local elites, the Turkish government not only accepted these violations of the law against Syriacs but sometimes even furthered them directly or indirectly and to various degrees on national-ideological or pro-Islamic grounds. Also the activity of a radical Sunni "Hezbollah" devising terrorist acts from the underground has been related to these political alliances. Especially in the 1990s, this group committed attacks to kill Syriacs as well as Kurds who were perceived as secularist, socialist, and/or separatist and businessmen, for example, traders of alcohol. If Syriacs were accused of cooperating with the PKK, often the testimony by Kurdish "village guards" or village communities without any evidence sufficed for legal prosecution and deadly retaliation measures by the Turkish security. In turn, there also were attacks... There also were attacks by PKK members on local Christian people as they were accused of cooperating with the Turkish government or Kurdish "village guards".

The activities and interests of Turkish governments within the Kurdish-Syriac conflict still remain opaque and contradictory (Ibid.). Yet, despite the oppressive measures taken by the Turkish administration and security forces against Christians in Turabdin, especially the military posts around some villages (e.g. *Hah* [*Anıtlı*] and *Midin* [aram.; turk.: *Öğündük*)

helped to preserve these—as armed local Muslim groups were kept from violent attacks and further measures to subdue the villagers. Nonetheless, in the 1990s the number of attacks on those Syriacs still remaining in the area increased again.

These highly dangerous and life-threatening conditions led to large-scale emigration of Syriacs from the Turabdin. In the beginning, the majority of emigrants (especially from the region of Mardin) moved to Istanbul. Later many went on to settle in Western and Northern Europe but also in Australia and North America. In effect, many villages and town districts were left without any inhabitants, fell into disrepair, and were destroyed or settled by Kurdish families. Thus it proves rather difficult to measure the quantitative dimension of the migration processes from the 1960s onward; it is estimated that up to 100,000 Syriacs have left the country since then. This process has been accompanied by significant economic and social marginalization of this group in its area of origin.

6.5   Syriacs in the Twenty-first Century: Conditions and Situation in the Context of Political and Social Transformations

The previous pages have shown that in the twentieth century the Syriacs did not benefit from the moderate liberalization tendencies that had set in in the political and social spheres as of the 1980s. While the improvements which resulted from this trend—despite certain setbacks—could be felt by most Sunni-Muslim groups which were ethnically non-Turkish and contributed to the (temporary) political settlement of the Kurdish question in the 1990s, the opposite was true for the Syriacs (see Giesel 2016b: 35; Giesel 2016c: 95ff.). It was at this time that attacks and forced displacement reached their negative climax and affected especially the Syriacs living in the Turabdin.

It took until the late 1990s or early 2000s for the existential, social, and political situation of the Syriacs in the Turabdin to improve, a development that was again accompanied by political and social transformation processes. In the context of a need for political liberalization and reforms within the Turkish society and the start of EU accession negotiations in 1999, the Turkish government made an effort to improve its minority and human rights record and to find a non-military solution to the Kurdish conflict. Part of this effort was the official and media savvy invitation in 2001 by the then Prime Minister, Bülent Ecevit, addressed at

the displaced Syriacs to return to the Turabdin and his offer of state support if they were to take up this invitation. Also the PKK issued security guarantees and welcoming statements toward the Syriacs. Furthermore, the Sunni terrorist organization *Hezbollah* ceased to operate, a development which fuelled allegations of state tutelage of this organization. Due to these changes, the security situation in the Turabdin as well as the local Syriacs' political, cultural, and social situation improved gradually as of the early 2000s. This led to a modest repatriation movement, but the permission to return was limited to roughly the Turabdin region. It was mainly Syriacs who had fled to Germany, Sweden, France, and Switzerland who repatriated; their numbers reached their climax between 2005 and 2010. Those who wished to settle further east, for example, in the regions of Şırnak and Hakkari, were refused permission to do so by the Turkish authorities (see ESU 2014). The long-term development of the Syriacs' general social and political situation has proven highly ambivalent until today. Those gradual improvements which have taken place since the turn of the twenty-first century have slowed in recent years, especially in the Turabdin region. They are also relativized by certain setbacks, so that most Syriacs consider them insufficient. The following pages will summarize the main improvements as well as the most important remaining grievances and the manner in which they are addressed by the Syriac community.

Fundamental Improvements

It is, first of all, the enhanced security situation in the Turabdin which represents a fundamental improvement. It is, however, relative, as the situation in the region remains volatile and continues to be characterized by latent tensions and occasional attacks (see below). Secondly, the political and social liberalization and EU accession processes have afforded Turkey's Syriacs with new opportunities for public activities and ethno-cultural and religious expansion. This includes ethno-political activities and improved (potential) opportunities for political participation. Thirdly, the legal situation has partially improved, so that Syriacs have, in a limited way, found it easier to seek redress for legal violations in the country's courts. While the Turkish authorities tend to look critically at and occasionally tried to restrict the Syriacs' modest, but increasing ethno-cultural and religious activities, they are nevertheless increasingly inclined to tolerate or permit them.

The increased opportunities for ethno-cultural development are reflected in the following: (i) the creation of ethno-cultural clubs and religious foundations (some in Istanbul, but most of them in several villages and towns in Turabdin); (ii) online activities, for example, the information and exchange platform www.suryaniler.com, the publishing of a Turkish-Syriac periodical (*Sabro*) and a short weekly online radio program; (iii) partial use of Aramaic in some publications; (iv) privately organized Aramaic language courses; (v) the creation of a chair for Aramaic language at the state *Artuklu* University in Mardin in 2012; (vi) the publication of numerous Turkish-language monographs and articles on cultural, religious, historical, ethnic, philosophical, political, sociological, and psychological aspects of the Syriac community; and so on.

Due to the liberalization of Turkish public life and the activities by parts of their intellectual elite, the Syriacs have received an unprecedented amount of attention in the media and academia in the last decade (*for the similar developments in the case of the Armenians, see Sect. 5.4*). This has resulted in a modest, but tangible increase in the interest that parts of the Muslim mainstream have in the situation, culture, history and even the language of the Syriacs. In addition to this, many Turks have taken advantage of the increased domestic tourism opportunities and the improved security situation to undertake educational trips to the historically, culturally, and architecturally significant Turabdin region. This has led to increased contacts with local Syriacs and more attention being paid to their living conditions. The social and political problems experienced by the Syriacs as a minority in Turkey are, however, treated in a differentiated and critical way only by few media outlets (e.g. by the left-liberal daily newspaper *Radical* and the Armenian Turkish-language weekly *Agos*). In some cases, the available Islamistic and nationalistic publications portray the Syriacs in a negative light (for example by considering the Syriac repatriation movement as a political conspiracy aimed at the creation of a Syriac state on Turkish soil).

The process of making far-reaching changes to the Turkish constitution has led to the involvement of certain Syriac activists in the consultations and discussions of the provisions for minority rights in the new constitution since 2012. This process has also resulted in an official state evaluation of the Syriac community's situation and the opportunity for its representatives to express wishes for improvement in the socio-political sphere. After the attempts at fundamentally re-writing the constitution failed, the government promised further concrete measures aimed at improving the Syriacs and other religious minorities' living conditions as part of a "democratization package". The first remarkable result in this

regard is the permission to construct a new Syriac Orthodox church in Istanbul, which was granted in January 2015. This construction permit was the first to be issued for a church building since the establishment of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

General Legal and Political Problems

Irrespective of these positive developments, Turkey's Syriacs still face fundamental and serious problems. In contrast to the country's Armenians, Jews, and Greeks, they are not officially recognized as a minority in the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne. Nevertheless, as the rights for recognized minority groups stipulated in 1923 were legally and practically undermined in the subsequent years and decades (see Rumpf 1993: 186), the Syriacs often face the same problems and obstacles as recognized minority groups. Mainly, these are issues related to the legal status of Christian communities and churches; the return, use, construction, and repairing of church buildings; the denial of clergy training; discrimination in the public and political sphere; restrictions in the freedom of expression (e.g. regarding Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code; for information about this issue see e.g. Hürriyet 2000; Schwaigert 2002: 21ff.); discrimination in school textbooks (e.g. in the edited history textbook for the 10th grade from 2011; see BvdAD 2012); mistreatments during the military service; and so on (see Chap. 5 on the similar Armenian concerns).

In addition, as they do not enjoy the status of an officially recognized minority, Syriacs do not have the same cultural, linguistic, religious, and organizational rights or opportunities for developments as the Jews, Armenians, and Greeks. This applies especially to religion and language issues. While practicing their religion is not forbidden, it is subject to stronger restrictions than for the recognized groups. Syriacs also regard the denial of rights concerning the public preservation, use, and transmission of Aramaic as particularly problematic, as their ethnic self-perception is not only closely related to their Christian religion but also to their language. Syriacs were forced to change their Assyro-Aramaic names to Turkish ones, and during the twentieth century, Aramaic language teaching was officially forbidden, and opportunities for religious instruction were severely restricted, so that the Syriacs were unable to display or pass on their language in contrast to the abilities of recognized minority groups. Especially in Istanbul, these restrictions led to the loss of the Aramaic (as well as the Mardin Arabic) idiom, which was increasingly replaced by Turkish, and to a tangible reduction in knowledge about

the significance of religious and ethno-cultural traditions. This situation encouraged some Syriacs in the Turabdin to secretly teach the Aramaic language and religion in monasteries or private locations throughout the twentieth century. When these initiatives were discovered, the monasteries and churches as well as the parents of the Syriac students who had been taught this way faced legal proceedings.

Syriacs are permitted to officially run own private schools. As of 2002, instruction in languages that are spoken in Turkey is no longer forbidden, but instructors nevertheless tend to need official authorization, which has so far very often been denied to the Syriacs. This, however, contradicts other practices, for example, the provision of Aramaic language teaching at the state university in Mardin and the tolerance regarding print publications in Aramaic. The unclear legal situation and uneven implementation of the law have increasingly been used in the last ten years to organize Aramaic language classes in selected monasteries and churches as well as on private premises. Quite often, language instruction is unofficially integrated into Syriac-Christian religious education, which has been authorized by the state. It should be highlighted that this is a status quo which could change at any time and might lead to arbitrary suppression of and punitive sanctions against the Syriacs involved. Similar problems with the Turkish authorities as well as coping mechanisms tend to arise in regard to the renovation or extension of historical church buildings used by Syrian Christian parishes. As the bureaucratic procedures are often deliberately delayed and the legal permits are usually denied by the relevant authorities, there has been a trend toward unauthorized and risky refurbishment, restoration, and architectural extension initiatives since the early 2000s. Most of these are financed by Syriacs living abroad or by states or NGOs in "the West". This trend has also affected several church buildings in the Turabdin which are more than 1000 years old. The relevant state authorities in Turkey are aware of this, but are currently turning a blind eye. This, however, happens on the understanding that this status quo might change at any time and that the semi-legal or illegal activities might be outlawed, suppressed, and/or sanctioned. The destruction of the buildings altered in this way also remains a possibility. In this regard as well as in regard to Aramaic language education (with some exceptions), the actual situation on the ground has involved fewer tensions or has even improved, relatively speaking, since the 2010s, but remains insecure and precarious.

Administrative measures of this kind (such as in regard to construction projects and native language teaching) create psychological, social, and political dependencies that allow the state to control, channel, and

restrict the Syriacs' political and ethno-cultural activities in the interests of the state. In order to preserve the status quo and to maintain the modest advantages described above, many Syriacs try not to criticize shortcomings and stay away from political activities that might put them on a confrontational course with the central or local state authorities. But not only due to these contradictory circumstances and the unstable legal situation explained above, many Syriacs, especially those in the Turabdin, feel insecure, intimidated, or frightened of the future. The following chapter will discuss further aspects of specific and serious problems in more detail.

Selected Local Issues, Problems, and Circumstances and the Role of Different Political Actors

Apart from the fundamental problems related to Turkey's domestic and minority policies and the nature of the mainstream attitudes in Turkish society that were discussed in the previous section, the Syriacs are faced with a wealth of further specific problems in their respective environments. In order to adequately understand and evaluate these problems, it is necessary to bear in mind that the Syriac population living in a) Istanbul, b) Mardin, and c) the remaining rural areas and small towns of the Turabdin tends to differ in regard to their socio-political situation, problems, experiences, integration, and attitudes. The circumstances experienced by the Syriacs in Istanbul strongly resemble the situation and attitudes encountered by the Armenians in this city, as described in the previous chapter. The conditions and problems in the Turabdin, however, differ significantly from those in Istanbul (with the city of Mardin representing an exception in this area, as it displays mixed phenomena).

The Syriacs' situation in the Turabdin is particularly strongly linked to the Kurdish issue as well as the AKP's domestic and foreign policy and social and religious interests. Within the context of the relations between the Syriacs and the Kurds in the Turabdin, the political and social polarization of Kurdish society plays a decisive role. On the one hand, it can be argued that a great part of the local Kurdish population can be divided into two very different blocks: i) an Islamic-conservative and/or radical block that also includes a wide range of increasingly successful business- and tradesmen, the "village guard" families and large parts of the local power elite; this block tends to sympathize with the AKP and is protected by it, especially in the Turabdin; ii) a collective of Kurdish-nationalist, politically liberal, partially or at times secularist and socialist forces (including parts of the population with a parallel moderate as well as stronger

Muslim identity) that have displayed their proximity to the DTP, BDP, and HDP parties in recent years. On the other hand, a significant part of the Kurdish community positions itself between these two political blocks and is torn between their positions in diffuse ways.

Especially members from group i) tend to view the remaining Christians (especially the returnees) and the Syriacs who live abroad now but return every year, sometimes in order to sue the Turkish state for the return of their property, not only as a threat to their social and economic interests and needs, but also as a group that challenges their perception of the region as being predominantly Muslim. This part of the local Kurdish population is therefore often hostile toward the Syriacs and tends to express this in their behavior toward them in various ways (see below). In the last few years, this situation has resulted in some violent attacks and assassinations (including the use of firearms and explosives) with several serious injuries, the destruction of agricultural land and crops (especially grape yards for wine production due to religious motivations) in order to deprive the Syriacs of their means of subsistence, kidnappings with ransom demands, small-scale fights, theft, and so on. Especially those Syriacs who have returned to the Turabdin or who are ethnic, political, or human rights activists have been attacked in this way. Apart from this, the Syriac population and its ethno-political activists in the Turabdin are subject to occasional provocations, harassment, intimidation, insults, threats, and other types of abuse by members of the Muslim population and sometimes also by Turkish or Kurdish state officials (see below). These kinds of incidents do not happen on a daily basis, but they are nevertheless regular occurrences.

In this context, especially the return of property formerly belonging to Syriacs has led to many conflicts and drawn-out legal battles. After the legal owners had fled between the 1970s and 1990s, these properties were acquired by local Muslims (especially families of the village guards). While many Kurds and some Arabs continued to use some of this land for agricultural purposes without the permission by the Syriac owners, other properties fell into disuse and began to grow wild. Today, this land is covered by shrubs and bushes, so that the Turkish state administration tends to arbitrarily declare it as forest and gradually take it over since the surveys stipulated by the 2006 land registry law had been conducted. Even if this property is not really covered by trees and the Syriac owners are able to produce written evidence of their claims to this land, the Turkish state insists that the relevant land registry legislation stipulates that "forested" areas should be considered as property of the state. The conflict

surrounding the ca. 1700-year-old Syriac Orthodox monastery Mor Gabriel, which has attracted a considerable amount of international attention, should be seen in this context.[2]

These conflicts highlight that it is especially the return of former Syriac refugees that represents a central problem for the Muslims that are affected by it. In this context it is important to point to the socio-economic dimension to this problem, due to the fact that the rapidly increasing Muslim community has an urgent need to use the disputed land for economic purposes resp. to survive at all, as their income is already very low. This situation has an effect on the policies pursued by the AKP government toward the Syriacs in the Turabdin. For one, the AKP shares much common ground with the strongly Islamic-conservative or even Islamist attitudes held by the local Muslim population. Moreover, given the AKP's decreasing grip on power in Southeast Anatolia, Turkey's governing party relies more and more on the political support especially of these members of Kurdish society, for example, in order to emerge as the dominant force in regional elections in competition with the BDP resp. HDP. This trend becomes noticeable, for example, in the lack of or insufficient protection of the Syriac community's security, or inadequate investigations of attacks on Syrian Christians, delays in the associated legal processes, controversial legal judgments against Syriac litigators, harassment and disadvantages when applying for all kinds of state permits, discrimination against Syriac villages in regard to infrastructural projects, and so on. Furthermore, parts of their properties declared as nationalized 'forests' are often given or sold to loyal local Muslim clans by the authorities for strategic, political and/ or financial reasons. Syriacs experience long delays when litigating against the Turkish state or the trial never reaches the judgment stage. Often, Syriac plaintiffs also only achieve partial legal successes even if the evidence is clearly in their favor. Furthermore, police officials threatened the Syriacs with serious consequences if they made these incidences and physical attacks against them known publicly. This is in stark contrast to the publicly articulated and heavily mediatized concessions made by the AKP government towards the Syriacs (especially towards the returnees).[3]

The practical everyday and legal situation of the returnees is the most difficult, as they are most affected by the problems described above. They are the weakest and most vulnerable part of the region's population. The state authorities often act in an uncooperative or hostile manner and, on occasion, arbitrarily refuse to accept applications for a variety of permits or other registration documents. In this context, it is worth mentioning that

many returnees are citizens of the countries they lived in before return-
ing to the Turabdin and are treated as foreign visitors or tourists by the
relevant authorities. This is a circumstance that complicates many admin-
istrative procedures, creates a situation of uncertainty, and makes the
affected people susceptible to blackmail. Due to the regulations in place,
only certain returnees are able to immediately claim Turkish citizenship,
whereas the applications for others are often delayed or turned down.
Despite these problems and uncertainties, numerous families who have
returned from abroad have been able to establish themselves socially and
economically over time due to their strong persistence and support from
the Syriac diaspora in Europe. Until at least 2013/2014, when we spoke
with many of them, they were trying to look positively toward the future.

In areas of Syriac settlement that are less affected by these problems,
other relations with and attitudes toward the AKP can be detected. While
people in these areas are aware of the abovementioned problems associ-
ated with the AKP government, they also view the party as the main actor
responsible for the improvements in minority rights and regard it as a
more agreeable alternative or lesser evil in comparison to other parties.
The improved political and social conditions in the last decade have even
led many of Istanbul's Syriacs to develop a stronger attachment to the
Turkish state resp. AKP government, which they perceive as a guaran-
tor of their economic success. As some Syriacs obviously feel the need
not to turn down all opportunities for political participation or seek a
professional affiliation to administrative and political structures, a very
small number of Syriacs work for the AKP at the local level in Mardin and
Istanbul. It is worth noting in this context that most Syriacs are more criti-
cal of the CHP than of the AKP, as they consider the former as traditional
defenders of a strong (Kemalist) Turkish nationalism and a "laicism" with
a strong national-ideological preference for "Turkish" Sunnis (see Giesel
2014b: 22; Giesel 2015a: 14; Giesel 2015b: 61) that has had serious
consequences for Turkey's Syriac community.

Aspects of Kurdish-Syriac Cooperation, Pro-Syriac Attitudes, and the Role of BDP/HDP

Especially the predominantly Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP)
activists and sympathizers have since the 2000s been trying to establish
good relations with Syriacs and other ethnic and religious minority groups
(e.g. Armenians, Jews, Kurdish Yezidis). This policy is aimed at gaining
the support of other stigmatized and discriminated groups in Turkey, to

involve them in the BDP's political activities and to establish this party as the representative of these groups' interests on a local and national level. This organizational concept has also led to the creation of the closely affiliated Peoples' Democratic Party (HDP) in 2012. These developments are accompanied by a noticeable increase in interest in the Syriacs on the part of the Kurdish community, which includes the extension of contacts between both groups and the open recognition of the mass murder of Armenians and Syriacs as genocide and an apology for the part played by Kurds in these attacks. Most of the Syriac community in the Turabdin region reacts with caution, careful openness, and some suspicion to these recent developments. Most Syriacs regard the serious conflicts of the past and present as fundamentally religious and not so much ethnically motivated. Due to their negative experience with Muslim groups in the past and their collective historical trauma, they perceive and mistrust also moderate and tolerant religious and secular representatives of Muslim groups resp. origin in a fundamental and undifferentiated way primarily as Muslims. In this context, many of them fear to be instrumentalized by Kurdish politicians for their own political interests and aims and to thus be drawn involuntarily into the Turkish-Kurdish conflict, which they had traditionally tried to avoid as much as possible. They fear further stigmatization, discrimination, and punitive measures implemented by the state and by mainstream Turkish society based on the allegation that they were supporting Kurdish separatists and terrorists.

Nevertheless, many Syriac Christians in the Turabdin are aware that the BDP/HDP is currently the only political force represented in the Turkish parliament which listens to their concerns and offers them opportunities for fundamental political participation as well as a platform for the articulation of essential political interests as a minority. This has encouraged a majority of Syriacs in the Turabdin to view the BDP/HDP in a more positive light and ascribe it more democratic credentials than the other Turkish parties, even though some of the party's political-ideological program and (a more radical) Kurdish ethno-nationalism itself receive less support from many members of this group. A core of Syriac ethno-political activists has emerged, which not only sympathizes or cooperates with the BDP, but has also taken advantage of the opportunities for political participation on the regional and national levels. For example, there are several Syriac BDP members in the Mardin regional parliament since 2009, among them since 2011 the Syriac-Chaldean BDP/HDP representative Erol Dora, who is the first Christian MP in the Turkish parliament after 60 years, and the female BDP politician Februniye Akyol, who became Mardin's vice-mayor

in 2014, which is the first time in Turkish history that a female Christian was elected to such an office. In the meantime, however, besides growing critical attitudes toward the AKP, parts of the local Syriac population are also growing increasingly skeptical of the BDP/HDP as a result of the returning PKK operations in the Turabdin as of summer 2015, which have also affected Syriac villages.

When considering Kurdish-Syriac relations, it must not be forgotten that there are moderate Islamic or conservative Kurds (who are not affiliated to the BDP and its environment), which appreciate the Syriacs to an extent, do not perceive them as a threat especially due to their small number, recognize their historical roots and their cultural significance in this region, and on occasion try to support them either directly or indirectly *(this also leads to conflicts within the Kurdish community)*. At times, this also applies to parts of the local Kurdish power elite, i.e. in the case of interventions in favor of the local Syriacs' security during the Islamist, anti-Christian riots in Midyat in 2006 which formed part of the international dispute surrounding the caricatures of the prophet Mohammed. Certain Syriac actors' economic power also has a positive effect on the attitudes of parts of the local Kurdish community toward the Syriacs, as this region is structurally weak and deprived and Kurds benefit from these Syriac actors' businesses. Especially those Syriacs who have returned from abroad and who are often quite wealthy play an important role in this regard as well as more broadly for the economic development of the Turabdin.

Group-internal Distinctions and Regional Differences in the Syriac Community Regarding Ethno-cultural and Ethno-political Activities

Despite the complicated and overall still quite hostile circumstances detailed above, Syriac Christians in Turkey have made use of the available opportunities to organize ethno-cultural and ethno-political activities, albeit modestly. For social, political, psychological, and financial reasons, the establishment of such activities and institutions as well as the mobilization of supporters have been slow and long-winded since the early 2000s. Nevertheless, a number of ethno-political and religious actors mainly from the Turabdin (especially representatives of the Syriac Orthodox church and Syriac refugee associations from abroad) openly criticize the situation of the Syriac community. Apart from the demand for official recognition of the Syriacs as a minority group, they are calling for constitutional safeguards for

minority rights (see Chap. 5 on the Armenians), a solution to the specific problems described in the section above, and thorough improvements of their living conditions, so that they can be brought in line with the social and political needs and expectations of the Syriacs living in the Turabdin.

A sizeable part of Turkeys' Syriac community, however, distances itself unofficially and officially from these kinds of demands and claims, which are controversially discussed within the community itself. Some Syriac interest groups (mainly from Istanbul) express public criticism of these kinds of ethno-political and ethno-cultural activities. For example, the foundation and running of an independent association in Istanbul (*Mezo-Der*, active from 2004 until 2013) by a small number of Syriac activists, who tended to be independent and critical of the state, was massively obstructed and boycotted by members of the mainstream of the Syriac community in Istanbul itself. Most of those who oppose this kind of organization are part of the capital's Syriac economic elite, who are largely successful in terms of socio-economic integration into Turkish society and tied to or dependent in one way or another on the Turkish state. Ethno-cultural, ethno-political, and confrontational religio-political activities are considered by them as detrimental to their interests as they fear social and political discrimination, losing their social achievements and their high economic status, and being socially stigmatized as ethno-religious minorities with all the associated consequences. Therefore, they do not wish for their group to attract public attention or provoke the Turkish state and mainstream society even potentially. This attitude is strongly supported by the representatives of Istanbul's Syriac Orthodox church in Istanbul (in concurrence with those in Turabdin), who are dependent on good relations with the Turkish government as well as on financial support from their mainly affluent lay believers. Despite these controversies, an umbrella organization, which had succeeded in winning a considerable part of the individual Syriac associations in Turabdin as members, was founded in 2014 and competes with a number of Syriac cultural organizations which are critical of the state. Representatives of the latter accuse the active umbrella organization activists (many of whom are from Istanbul) of acting on behalf of the Turkish state and for their personal (mostly economic) gains and to the detriment of the Syriac community's interests. Representatives of the umbrella organization counter these allegations by highlighting that contact and cooperation with the state made the organization of ethno-cultural activities easier and opened up opportunities for new ones (for detailed information see Güsten 2012 and 2013).

Regarding the ethno-cultural activities organized by Syriacs in Istanbul, it is noticeable that their ethno-organizational vitality is significantly less than that of the Armenians, who make up a larger number of the city's population, despite a visible increase in their activities. This is so despite the fact that there are many parallels between these two groups in regard to their social attitudes, experiences, sensitivities, and behavioral norms.

Finally, in this context it can be stated that most Syriac Christians from Southeast Anatolia strongly value Syriac culture, history, language, heritage, ethnicity and especially the Christian religion. This stands in obvious contrast to the developments in Istanbul's Syriac community, which has certain traces of a social, economic and partially cultural assimilation into Turkey's mainstream society and lost some psychological attachment to their Turabdin heritage after decades of living in the urban sphere. This has attracted the criticism of the majority of the Turabdin-based Syriacs, most of whom live in economically and socially challenging conditions. In this context they also complain about the insufficient or virtual lack of social and political support from the Syriac Christian community in Istanbul.

6.6   Latest Developments and Concluding Remarks

Although Turkey's Syriac community is numerically very small, their situation is highly complex and affords interesting insights into various aspects of Turkish politics and society as well as into the consequences on vulnerable people's lives of Turkish social and political dynamics. Generally speaking, their situation is very ambivalent and contradictory. It is characterized by a constant interplay of improvements and measures taken against them. Given the specific social and political situation in Turkey, the Syriacs' socially, politically, psychologically, and historically conditioned internal differences weaken their ethno-political position and prevent them from achieving a higher degree of organization and representation of their interests as a group. Despite the gradual improvement in their situation under the AKP government, numerous unsolved problems remain on many levels. Today, many of Turkey's Syriacs continue to be treated as second-class citizens and are discriminated against although they are Turkish citizens who, according to the constitution, should have equal rights to the Muslim mainstream population and although they behave basically loyally and peacefully toward the Turkish state (despite their many negative experiences).

It is obvious that the Syriacs' fundamental situation in the twenty-first century (especially in the Turabdin) continues to be influenced by the same problems as during the late Ottoman Empire and Kemalist Turkey of the twentieth century. These include the repercussions of the Kurdish conflict, the lack of legal status as a recognized minority, religious intolerance or Islamic radicalism, and social competition with parts of the Muslim population whose lives are characterized by poverty, lack of arable land and infrastructure, as well as rapidly rising birth rates.

While changes are promised and Syriacs have been invited to return to the Turabdin, their peers who live there, including the returnees, are subject to discrimination, hostility, and restrictions by state institutions and their local allies who make them feel unwelcome and seriously threatened in Turkey. The impressive public statements made by high-ranking government representatives about liberalism and tolerance and the invitation to return (e.g. by Ecevit in 2001 or Bülent Arınç as deputy prime minister in 2013; see Çevik 2013) are perceived by many Syriacs as a political PR strategy. They contrast markedly with the developments in the Turabdin, which the people affected view as a creeping and hidden continuation of the expulsion policies pursued earlier. Besides, the current policies pursued by the Turkish government are increasingly characterized by nationalistic, authoritarian, and Islamist elements, which is why many Syriac Christians are fearing a further deterioration of their living conditions.

On the other hand, there are positive hopes for the future as Turkey's Syriac community is gradually being discovered as the carrier of a culture with deep historical and regional roots and as a factor that encourages tourism in the Turabdin. Furthermore, some people hope that they will provide new impulses for the Turabdin region's economic and social development. Due to the limited improvements in their overall situation and the social situation of many Syriacs in Istanbul, the group is occasionally referred to as an indicative example for Turkey's social and political progress, despite the complex social and political problems detailed above (see ESU 2014). A development which has fuelled the Syriacs' hopes for an improvement of their situation is the "democratization package" (see Chap. 3) which the AKP government proposed in 2014 and which is supposed to benefit all religious minorities irrespective of their legal status. According to the agenda of the package, the positive outcomes for the Syriac community in the future could be: the accreditation of private Aramaic language schools (even in monasteries), re-introduction of traditional Aramaic names for towns and villages, return of confiscated

properties to religious Syriac organizations and an end to further confiscations or misappropriations, official recognition as a minority group and the guarantee of the associated rights, etc. (see Alaturka 2014).

All these circumstances indicate the two-faced and strategically flexible character of the Turkish government's policies. The Turabdin region's contradictory political conditions can be explained by, among other factors, the dilemma which emerged for the current (and the previous) government that is torn between keeping the promises it has made to the EU and realizing its own political interests in the region and the whole country. Given the political experiences of the past, the concessions toward the Syriac community might be suspected of being a deliberate strategy aimed at proving critics at the national and international levels wrong and at avoiding a further deterioration of Turkey's relationship with the EU.[4] In this context it is also important to note that the promise and partial implementation by the AKP government of general improvements for non-Muslims while thorough equality is being withheld is reminiscent of Ottoman political premises which at times accorded non-Muslims extensive rights within the millet system, but nevertheless gave them a lower legal status than Muslims (see Giesel 2013: 357; Giesel 2016b: 41). Nevertheless, some representatives of the Syriac leadership perceive the revival of these key Ottoman traditions as more desirable than the policies pursued by previous Turkish administrations and as a fundamental chance for gradual improvements.[5] The Syriac community is, however, split on this question, especially in the Turabdin, and wavers between resignation and hope *(Ibid.)*.

This general situation, which was noted during the main research period which ended in late 2013, has taken a turn for the sinister in 2014 and 2015 due to political developments in Turkey and the Near East. The Syriacs' security situation in the Turabdin has deteriorated or was further destabilized, which has become a cause for concern. Two factors are responsible for this development: (i) the violent but successful establishment of the IS in large parts of Syria and Iraq and the consequent strengthening of radically Islamist terrorist forces in Southeastern Anatolia and (ii) the refugee crisis which was caused by IS violence and the fighting in Syria and Iraq and which brought innumerable Muslim and Christian refugees to Turkey. The stalemate which resulted from the outcome of the elections on 7 June 2015 furthermore led to an intensification of the political crisis in Turkey and encouraged the AKP to employ destabilization tactics which were aimed at increasing its power. This provoked an

escalating return of the violent Kurdish conflict, which in turn resulted in a serious deterioration of the Syriacs' situation in the Turabdin. Their existence in the Turabdin is again existentially threatened, as the PKK and the Turkish army have re-started military operations in summer 2015, which now also directly affect some Syriac villages in the Turabdin in the form of fires which destroy their arable land, the creation of military exclusion zones, additional military posts, and shooting incidents. In addition, an increase in harassment, hostilities, threats, pressure, and isolated attacks by different Kurdish/Muslim and/or state actors toward the Turabdins' Syriacs can be noted. Apart from the severe limits to freedom of movement, which had been regained in the 2000s, these tensions pose an acute threat to investments, basic economic development, and personal security of the Syriacs.

After the number of returning families had already stagnated since the 2010s due to the lack of tangible improvements in the basic local social and political conditions and the consequences of the refugee crisis, the re-emergence of the Kurdish conflict has led to an increasing number of returned (and even established) Syriac families choosing to re-emigrate to those European countries where they had been before. It is possible to conclude from this that the mood in the local population has changed significantly between 2013 and 2015 in that a strong pessimism has replaced the slight optimism that had previously existed. Not even the situation after the new elections of 1 November 2015 was able to bring about a short-term easing of the tensions. At the time of writing, it remains unclear and questionable whether the AKP government is willing and able to take care of the problems faced by small minority groups like the Syriacs, because it is involved in numerous social and political domestic conflicts. It is therefore also unclear if the Syriacs have a medium- or long-term future in the Turabdin. The danger of a severe decimation of their numbers, however, also remains in Istanbul because of the strong assimilation processes in this urban space and the future possibility that political and social conflicts might affect the Syriacs there, too.

After having looked at our three religious minority groups in detail in the preceding chapters, we will now turn to a comparative analysis of these groups. We focus on how they view their identities and situations as minorities, what main problems they encounter in their relations with state and society, to what extent and how they perceive the political climate and circumstances to have changed, and how they view the role played by the EU and the accession process for their situations.

Notes

1. However, the closeness and self-isolation of the Syriac interviewees was less strong than with those Jewish people in Turkey who were studied in another research project conducted by the author of this chapter within the same time period (see Giesel 2014b: 19; 2015b: 56).
2. For more details see, for example, Stieger (2009), Villelabeitia (2009).
3. For further information and examples see, for example, Benli 2012; Jacob (2011); Jahrbuch Türkei (2011, 2012: 47); Suryoye Augsburg (2010).
4. In this context, the Syriacs (especially from the Turabdin) perceive the EU's activities aimed at promoting democracy and human rights in Turkey in a more positive light than the Armenians. They nevertheless accuse the EU of passivity and failing to vehemently and effectively fight for improvements in the Syriacs' situation despite its nature as a union of countries with majority Christian populations.
5. In this context, a new trend is visible in which the AKP government applies the socio-political dogma of the primacy of religion to occasionally show more public appreciation for representatives and members of non-Muslim, Abrahamic religions than for atheist or secular actors in Turkey.

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General and Comparative Analysis

7.1   GENERAL INFORMATION

The survey whose results are discussed below was conducted by the authors and their team in different regions and cities of Turkey between 2011 and 2013. As it focused on the situation of minorities, not only people from the city of Istanbul were surveyed but especially those from other regions where most members of the target groups live. The questionnaires used comprised 91 questions, most of which were similar or identical across the groups, while each questionnaire also contained some group-specific questions. As the remainder of our data collection, also the survey focused on the Alevi, the Syriacs (or Assyrians), and the Armenians. It thus encompassed a large religious minority, the Alevi; a smaller scientifically neglected Christian minority, the Syriacs; and the Armenians, a minority which is politically very sensitive due to the 1915 events.

All in all, 708 persons answered a questionnaire, including 401 Alevi, 242 Syriacs, and 65 Armenians. As it is difficult in Turkey to obtain reliable information from the Christian minorities, Syriac and Armenian respondents were usually met individually, and the questionnaire was completed while a member of the survey team was present. Beforehand, the team had to find interviewees, gain their confidence, and ease possible suspicions especially regarding the further use of the answers. Therefore, the number of interviewees from the Christian minorities was not very high, but the raised data is rare and of high quality.

71 % of the Alevi interviewees were male and 29 % female; 73 % of the Syriacs were male and 27 % female; and 56 % of the Armenians were male while 44 % were female. The respondents' age varied between 18 and 85 years. There were many interviewees under 30 among the Syriacs. Most of the surveyed Alevi and Syriacs possess a secondary-school diploma, and among the Armenians most persons even have a diploma from a university or a college of higher education. Asked for their highest educational degree, 19.5 % of the Alevi stated primary education, 10 % junior high school, 33 % senior high school, and 30 % university or college of higher education. Among the Syriacs, 20 % have a primary school degree, 27 % junior high school, 35 % senior high school, and 15 % university or college of higher education. 9 % of the Armenians stated that they only achieved a degree from a primary school, 19 % from a junior high school, 27 % from a senior high school, and 36 % from a university or a college of higher education. Despite the rather good to very good education of the interviewees, their monthly earnings are not particularly high. 42 % of the Alevi earn less than 1000 Turkish Lira per month (less than 372 Euro), 36 % earn between 1000 and 2000, and another 10 % up to 4000 Lira. Among the Syriacs, 48 % earn less than 1000 Lira, 26 % up to 2000, and 13 % up to 4000. 17 % of the Armenians have a monthly income of less than 1000 Lira, 40 % between 1000 and 2000, and another 28 % up to 4000.

Knowledge of the corresponding language is an important criterion for the affiliation to a minority. Asked for their language skills, 81 % of the Syriacs named Syriac as their native language and 4.5 % as their second language. 9.5 % only have little and 4.5 % no knowledge of the Syriac language. The situation is quite different with regard to the Armenians. Only 49 % of them named Armenian as their native language and another 32 % as their second language. 14 % have little and 1.5 % no knowledge of the Armenian language. Turkish is spoken and understood by all interviewees. 80 % of the Syriacs have Kurdish, 45 % Arabic, 29 % English, 20 % German, and 4.5 % French language skills. Among the Armenians, 57 % know English, 23 % French, 14 % Arabic[1], and 9 % German. This shows preferences for certain foreign languages. However, the questionnaires did not inquire about the level of language skills.

7.2   PATTERNS OF IDENTIFICATION

Our empirical analysis begins with the minorities' self-perception. This places issues of identity and self-definition into the focus of the examination. The following presentation is based on the theoretical assumption
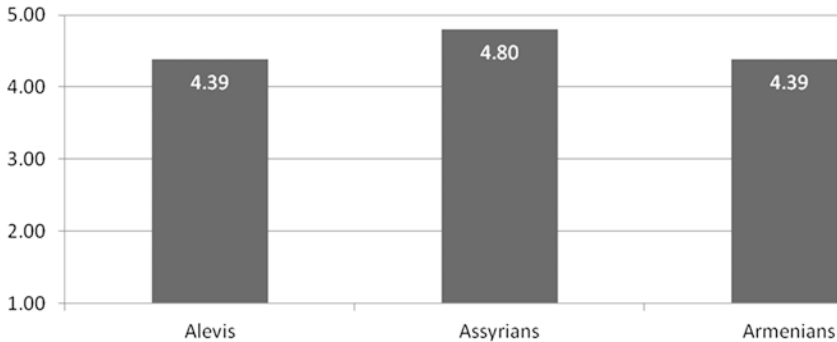
Fig. 7.1   Minority identities (mean values)

that a person's identity is socially constructed and communicated. With regard to the formation of her identity, a human is not a solitary but a social creature. She is anchored in group-specific contexts which shape a human's assumptions about herself, her self-perception. The formation of identity thus is a social and communicative process that is indispensable for the formation of personality and at the same time constitutive for the development and formation of groups by the adoption of certain identity-defining elements. Such basic elements may, for example, be language, religion, culture, or origin. With regard to the examination of minorities, these elements gain special importance since members of these groups use them to distinguish themselves from other members of society, as do the latter with the former. Identity is measured by means of items widely used by the empirical identity research and well-established by numerous studies. The most interesting and relevant answers to selected questions are presented below. The complete questionnaire can be found in the appendix.[2]

   Asked how much the interviewees feel as Alevi, Syriac, or Armenian on a scale of 1–5, 5 being the highest value, all three minorities strongly identified with their group (Fig. 7.1). The Alevi's answers' mean value is 4.39 and the standard deviation 0.85, which indicates quite homogeneous answers, as we find also in the other two groups. Among the Syriacs the mean is 4.8 and the corresponding standard deviation 0.57, while the Armenians' mean with regard to this question is 4.39 and the standard deviation 0.79.
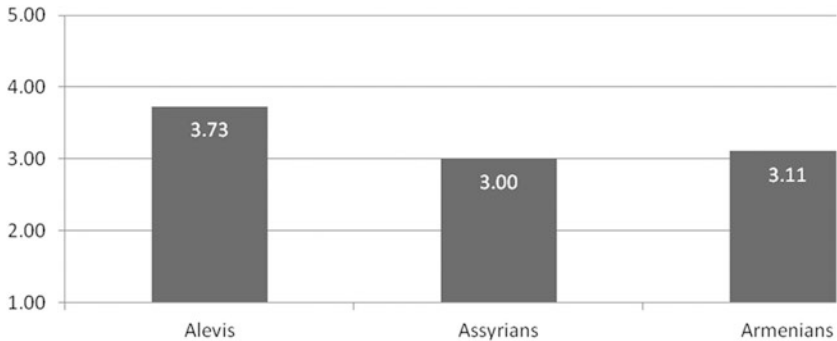
Fig. 7.2 Identity as Turkish citizen (mean values)

These results reveal the strongest minority identity among the Syriacs, while the Armenians and Alevi's identity is somewhat less distinct. This is fully in line with what we would expect based on the qualitative analysis presented in the preceding chapters. A one-way analysis of variance shows that the differences with regard to identity are significant ($F_{(2, 678)}$ = 22.1; $p < 0.001$). The corresponding post hoc tests confirm that the Syrians identify more strongly with their group than the other two minorities.

Asked how much they feel as Turkish citizen (Fig. 7.2), a majority of the Alevi answered "very much" or "much" (M = 3.73 and SD = 1.27). In contrast, the Syriacs feel much less as citizens of Turkey (M = 3.00 and SD = 1.3), while the Armenians' answers lie in between with a mean value of 3.11 (SD = 1.14). This fits with the answers to the previous question and also with our expectations based on the qualitative analysis.

A one-way analysis of variance shows significant differences ($F_{(2, 617)}$ = 45.88; $p < 0.001$). The corresponding post hoc tests reveal that the Alevi's identification as Turkish citizens is significantly stronger than that among the other two groups. The latter minorities' values for identification do not significantly differ.

This data makes visible an ethnic and confessional division. Especially the Syriacs strongly experience their own minority identity, which moreover goes along with a strong identification with the respective place of residence. 76 % of the Syriacs feel much or very much as residents of their city or village, while only 9 % hardly identify themselves with their place of residence (M = 4.17 and SD = 1.14). Among the Alevi, 32 % have a strong identification as residents of their city or village, compared to 13.5 % with

a weak one (M = 3.19 and SD = 1.49); 42 % of the Armenians show a strong identification as residents of their city or village, compared to 18 % that show a weak one (M = 3.32 and SD = 1.14). Again we see that the experience of their singularity and distinctiveness as a group separate from others in society is strongest among the Syriacs and weakest among the Alevi, with the Armenians falling in the middle.

Two further questions confirm this tendency. Asked how much they feel as members of a minority in Turkey, the Alevi were rather undecided (M = 2.95 and SD = 1.42). In contrast, the Syriacs feel much more as members of a minority (M = 3.63 and SD = 1.27). The Armenians feel even more as a minority (M = 3.72 and SD = 1.04), which can probably be explained by the fact that unlike the Syriacs they actually have official minority status and by the salience of their minority status due to the genocide debate. A one-way analysis of variance shows that the Alevi significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 691)}$ = 23.25; p < 0.001), which unlike the Alevi clearly feel as members of a minority.

A difficult question probes the commitment to minority membership in public. Here, the Alevi were again undecided (M = 3.00 and SD = 0.95). But nearly no one said that he never outs himself as Alevi in public. Among the Syriacs, the public commitment is more distinct, while the Armenians' answers lie between the other two groups' answers (M = 3.29 and SD = 0.86). Corresponding post hoc test confirmed that Syriacs significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 696)}$ = 37.18; p < 0.001). The data thus again indicates that especially Syriacs feel as members of their own group and also show this in public. The other two groups are less likely to present themselves as members of a minority in public. However, they are definitely aware of their origin and position as minority members.

In comparison to the other two groups, the Alevi are an exception, since they are a religious minority in the first place. This identity can be combined with different ethnic/national identities, generally the Turkish or the Kurdish one. The relationship of Alevism to the majority version of Islam is, however, contested. If the Alevi are asked how they see themselves, a majority of 54 % answer that they are Muslims and therefore part of Islam. Only 8 % perceive themselves as an independent religious group, and 21 % are undecided (M = 4.29 and SD = 1.00). However, the Alevi are becoming more and more aware of their special position. 37 % think that their Alevi identity is evolving into an independent ethnic identity; 25 % do not think so; and 29 % are undecided (M = 3.99 and SD = 0.95).
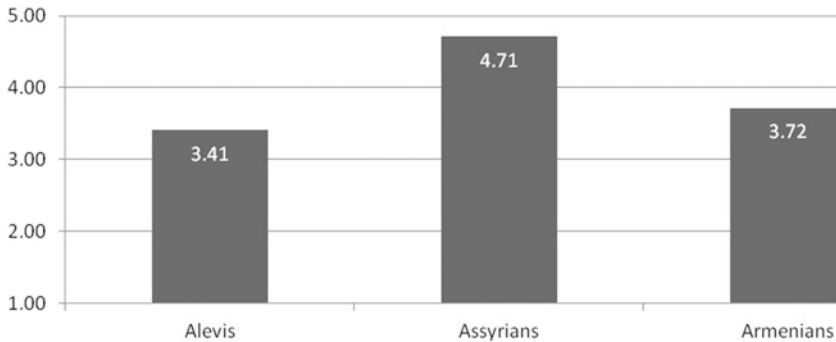
Fig. 7.3   Characteristics of identity—religion (mean values)

If one believes these statements, the Alevi seem to be developing toward a more independent group.

After the analysis of the intensity of minority identities, we will now examine the characteristics that the interviewees perceive as constitutive for their identities. What elements make up their group identities, and which of them play a special role for the formation of the minority identity? Only Syriacs and Armenians were asked about the importance of language as characteristic of their identity. The results show that the Syriacs perceive their own language as more important than the Armenians ($M = 4.71$ and $SD = 0.78$ for the Syriacs, compared to $M = 4.19$ and $SD = 0.87$ for the Armenians). The Syriacs attribute a greater role to their own language, especially since 83 % of them value this characteristic as very important. This may also be connected to different levels of language skills.

The second major characteristic which may form identity is religion (Fig. 7.3). The Alevi's answers have a mean of 3.41 ($SD = 1.44$), the Syriacs' 4.71 ($SD = 0.74$), and the Armenians' 3.72 ($SD = 1.15$). The Alevi's low mean value is surprising, given that they normally try to distinguish themselves from the ruling Sunni Islam. Especially the Syriacs perceive religion as an important characteristic.

While surprisingly religion is not very important for the Alevi's minority identity, the question regarding cultural specificity gives a rather different result (Fig. 7.4). Asked how important culture is for their identity as Alevi, the mean value is 4.57 ($SD = 0.79$). The Syriacs' mean is 4.76 ($SD = 0.74$) and the Armenians' 4.25 ($SD = 1.0$). The lower importance of religious as compared to cultural specificity expressed by Alevi can perhaps be
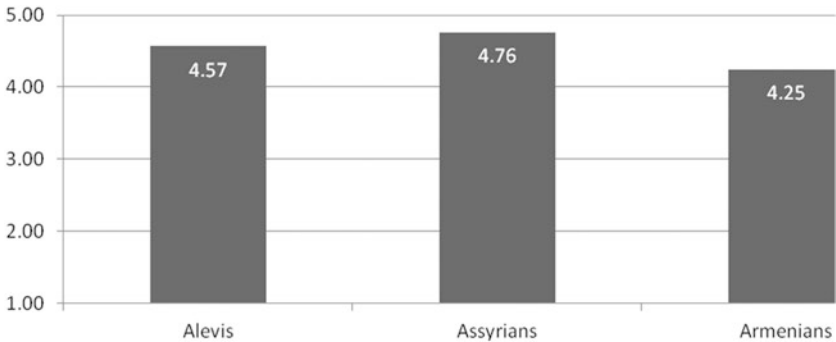
Fig. 7.4   Characteristics of identity—culture (mean values)
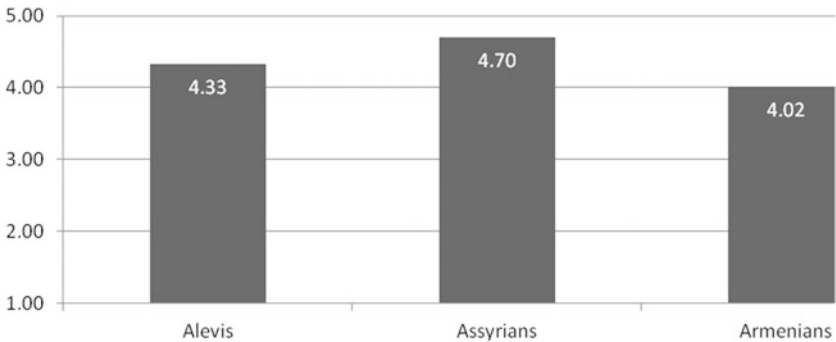
Fig. 7.5   Characteristics of identity—history (mean values)

explained by their generally secularist orientation, due to which also religious characteristics may be perceived and valued less as elements of religion and more as cultural attributes of the own group.

History was analyzed as the fourth characteristic of identity formation (Fig. 7.5). Here, the Alevi's answers' mean is 4.33 (SD = 0.92), the Syriacs' 4.70 (SD = 1.09), and the Armenians' 4.02 (SD = 1.09). Thus, among the Armenians the characteristic "history" is least important. This result is surprising, given the extensive public debate on the historical experiences of the Armenians vis-à-vis the Turkish state and society. It might be that the results reflect some backlash against being strongly associated with the debate around the 1915 events, which would be in line with the general
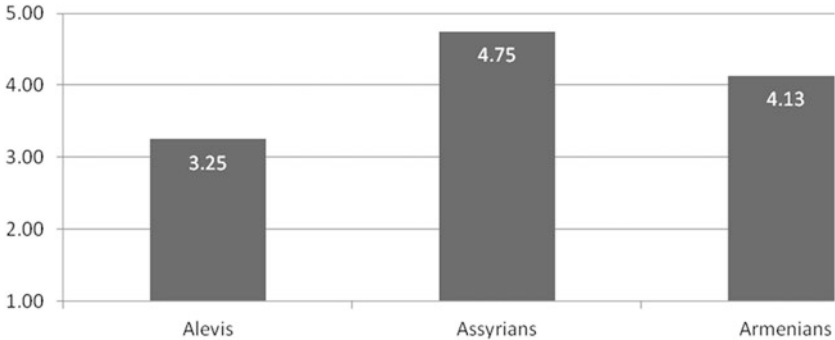
Fig. 7.6   Characteristics of identity—ethnic origin (mean values)

reluctance we observed among our Armenian interview partners when it came to talking about this issue.

The last characteristic whose importance for minority identity was examined is ethnic origin (Fig. 7.6). Here, the Alevi's mean is 3.52 (SD = 1.52), the Syriacs' 4.57 (SD = 0.89), and the Armenians' 4.13 (SD = 0.99). Given that most of the Alevi are ethnically Turkish, the much lower salience of ethnicity for their group identity is no mystery.

The order of importance for group identity of the examined factors is also interesting to compare: Among the Alevi, culture followed by history strongly define their group identity, while religion and ethnicity are considerably less important. Among the Syriacs, all four factors plus also language are highly salient, which reinforces their self-perception as different from the rest of society on multiple grounds. Among the Armenians, culture, ethnicity, history, and language are all important, but less so than among the Syriacs, with religion following at a slight distance.

This data again shows the strong minority identity of the Syriacs, while among the Alevi and Armenians this identity is not quite so distinct. The Syriacs attach a greater importance to all of the named characteristics—language, religion, culture, history, and ethnic origin—than the other two groups. Religion is very important for the Syriacs, whereas the Alevi and Armenians emphasize culture more strongly. History, which for all three minorities also means persecution, plays an important role, although the Armenians, in our data, do not perceive it as important as could be expected due to their historical experience.

The above results mostly correspond with the answers to the question which characteristic respondents perceive as very important for their group's sustainment. The possible answers here were similar to the possible answers explained above. 91 % of the Syriacs perceive language as important for the sustainment of their group and 82 % even as very important; only 1 % regard it as not important (M = 4.74 and SD = 0.63). Among the Armenians, 52 % regard language as very important and 29 % as important, compared to 1.5 % that perceive it as not important (M = 4.33 and SD = 0.85).

Asked for the importance of religion for the sustainment of their group, 48 % of the Alevi answered "important" and 20 % "not important" (M = 3.49 and SD = 1.33). This corresponds with the result that a majority but not a broad one regard religion as an important characteristic. Among the Syriacs, 92 % perceive religion as important, while 2 % have the contrary opinion (M = 4.69 and SD = 0.68). 60 % of the Armenians answered "important" and 6 % "not important" (M = 3.87 and SD = 1.00).

With regard to culture all three groups show similar results. 86 % of the Alevi attach a great importance to culture for their group's sustainment, compared to 1 % that has a contrary opinion (M = 4.52 and SD = 0.70). Among the Syriacs, we found 89 %, compared to 2 % (M = 4.66 and SD = 0.73), and among the Armenians, 74 % compared to 8 % (M = 4.17 and SD = 1.03). In contrast, the results concerning the relevance of origin are quite different. 63 % of the Alevi regard origin as important and 14 % as not important (M = 3.88 and SD = 1.26). Among the Syriacs the answers showed 85 % compared to 2 % (M = 4.51 and SD = 0.76), and among the Armenians 79 % and 6 % (M = 4.20 and SD = 0.99). Here again, the high result of the Syriacs, who perceive origin as an important element of their group's sustainment, attracts attention. The data concerning history is very similar. 69 % of the Alevi regard this as important and 5 % as not important (M = 4.16 and SD = 1.03); among the Syriacs, 85 % regard history as important and 2.5 % as not important (M = 4.50 and SD = 0.80). 68 % of the Armenians perceive history as important, 13 % as not important, and 21.5 % as partly important (M = 3.87 and SD = 1.16). The comparatively low importance of history expressed among the Armenians is again surprising (see above).

Finally, the interviewees were asked about the importance of marriage for the sustainment of their group (Fig. 7.7). All three groups perceive this characteristic as important; however, there are differences: The Alevi's answers lie in between the others (M = 3.63 and SD = 1.29), while the
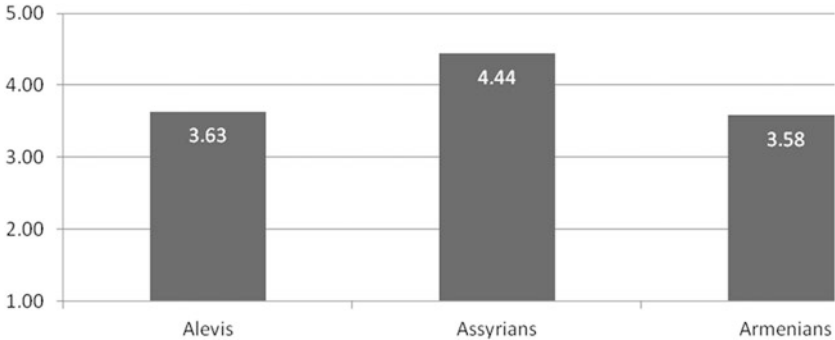
Fig. 7.7 Importance of marriage for the sustainment of the own group (mean values)
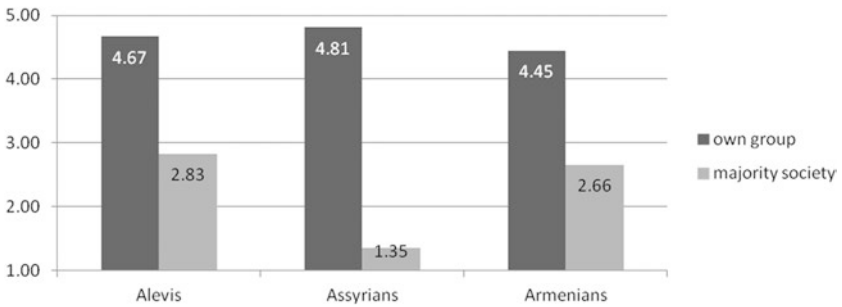
Fig. 7.8 Acceptance of marriage of relatives to members of the own group and of the Sunni majority society (mean values)

Syriacs ($M = 4.44$ and SD = 0.87) see this factor as more important than the Armenians ($M = 3.58$ and SD = 1.02). Among the Armenians, we thus find a majority attaching significant importance to marriage as an element of group sustainment, but there are also many members not sharing this opinion. Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and confirmed that the Syriacs differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 668)} = 40.17$; $p < 0.001$). Among the Syriacs, marriage within the own group is very important.

Asking for the acceptance of marriage of relatives to members of other ethnic or religious groups, we received similar results (Fig. 7.8). The Alevi have varied opinions: 25 % regard a marriage with Sunni as very acceptable

or acceptable, but 34 % as rather not or not acceptable; 36 % are undecided (M = 2.83 and SD = 1.21). 91 % of the Alevi support marrying among Alevis while 5 % are undecided (M = 4.67 and SD = 0.66). Among the Syriacs, only 4 % perceive a marriage to Muslims as acceptable, 6 % are undecided, 8 % perceive it as rather not acceptable, and 78.5 % as not acceptable (M=1.35 and SD=0.84). In contrast, marrying Syriacs is perceived as very positive (M = 4.81 and SD = 0.64), and marriage to other Christians is accepted. Among the Armenians, 18 % perceive marriage with Muslims as acceptable; 37 % are undecided; and 40 % perceive it as (rather) not acceptable (M = 4.45 and SD = 0.71). Although all three minorities regard marriage within the own group as a relevant but not very important element of their identity, their attitude toward a marriage to Sunni is clearly negative. Among the two Christian groups, this attitude is expectably even more distinct. Corresponding post hoc tests proved that also here the Syriacs significantly differ from the other two groups and see marriage into the Turkish majority society more negatively ($F_{(2, 676)}$ = 137.87; $p < 0.001$).

Each identity changes over time, incorporates new elements, and loses others. Each generation newly decides on the "content" of its group's identity and has to find its way between self-determination and adaptation. In Turkey with its Sunni-dominated majority culture and the long-time term of office of the conservative-Islamic AKP, this pressure is particularly high. We thus asked whether the young generation adopts elements of the Sunni culture. 20 % of the Alevi have the opinion the young generation often adopts elements of the majority culture, 40 % see this only rarely, and 39 % are undecided (M = 2.69 and SD = 1.02). Among the Syriacs, only 14 % think such an adoption often happens, and 61 % think it rarely happens. 23 % of them are undecided (M = 2.18 and SD = 1.16). However, 37 % of the Armenians are convinced the young generation often adopts elements of the Sunni culture, while 18 % see this rarely and 45 % are undecided (M = 3.20 and SD = 0.92). Analogous to the results about the minorities' identity, we find a low willingness to adopt majority culture elements among the Syriacs, a medium willingness among the Alevi, and a high one among the Armenians. This can be caused by the low number of Armenians in Turkey but also by their place of residence. Elements of the majority culture are faster and more willingly adopted by people living in a big city than in the countryside. Moreover, there are considerably more opportunities to get to know other people and their culture in a big city.
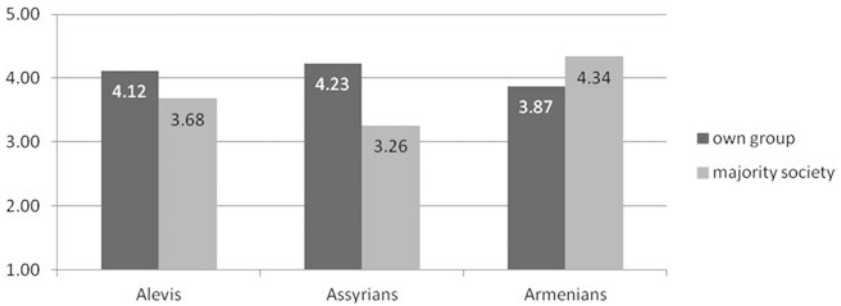
Fig. 7.9 Frequency of contacts with own group and with majority society (mean values)

However, our results show that the minority members mostly get in touch with members of their own group while simultaneously maintaining contact with the majority society. The frequency of contacts varies between the three minorities (Fig. 7.9). The Alevi have more contact with their own group ($M = 4.12$ and SD = 0.91 concerning Alevi and $M = 3.68$ and SD = 0.95 concerning Sunni). Among the Syriacs we found similar results ($M = 4.23$ and SD = 0.94 concerning Syriacs, and $M = 3.26$ and SD = 1.16 concerning Muslims), although surely for different reasons: The Alevi can have more contact with their own group because there are far more of them, while the Syriacs do so because they stick together more against the outside world. In comparison to both groups, the Armenians gave contrary answers ($M = 3.87$ and SD = 0.95 concerning Armenians, and $M = 4.34$ and SD = 0.83 concerning Muslims), again showing their relatively strong integration.

The results concerning the frequency of contacts are quite similar to the results concerning identity: Syriacs get in touch with members of their own group more often than Armenians with members of their group. This may be caused by the smaller number of Armenians in Turkey, making it impossible to only maintain contact with members of the own group, as well as with their location in big city environments. There are only few contacts to other minorities as well as to members of the own minority in Europe or the United States. It is quite interesting that the Armenians in Turkey only have few contacts to Armenians in Armenia. 23 % only occasionally get in touch with them and 60 % rarely or never.

This image is completed by the question about friendships between members of the minority and members of the majority society. Asked how many Sunni friends they have (5 = a great many; 4 = many; 3 = some;
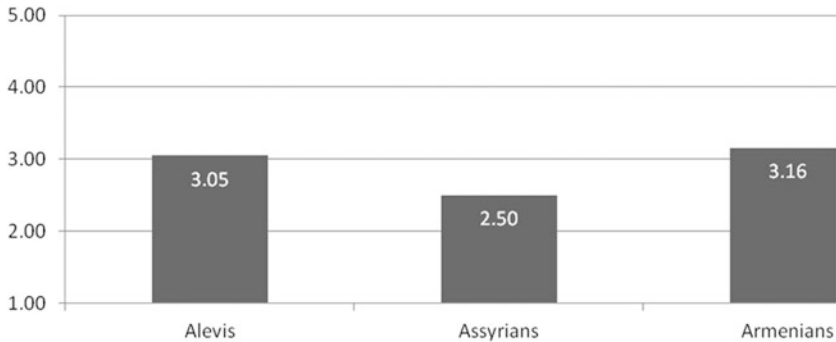
Fig. 7.10   Similarities between minority and majority society (mean values)

2 = few; 1 = no), the Alevi's answers' mean value is 3.75 (SD = 0.98). When they were asked whether they have more Sunni or Alevi friends, 54 % answered they have more Sunni friends and 39 % more Alevi friends. These results—like the data presented before—point to a close relation between Alevi and Sunni. The Syriacs' mean is 3.10 (SD = 1.15). Asked which group of friends is bigger, 29 % answered they have more Muslim than Christian friends; 61 % have more Christian friends. The Armenians again seem to be most open to majority society: Their mean is 4.20 (SD = 0.91), and 57 % of them have more Sunni than Christian friends and 31 % more Christian friends.

We also asked for similarities between the minorities and the majority society (Fig. 7.10). The Alevi were split about this question with a mean value of 3.05 (SD = 1.05). In contrast, the Syriacs were more skeptical with a mean of 2.50 (SD = 1.06). The Armenians, consistent with our other results, saw most similarity, with a mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.86). Post hoc tests showed again that the Syriacs significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 682)}$ = 23.39; $p < 0.01$).

Finally, we asked for respondents' confidence in other groups in Turkey (Fig. 7.11). The Alevi have more confidence in Turks than the other two minorities (M = 3.49 and SD = 1.16)—while their confidence in their own group is 4.19 (SD = 1.02). This image changes if the focus is turned to Sunni. Here, the Alevi's answers' mean is 2.34 (SD = 1.12). Similar answers resulted when they were asked about Christians (M = 2.43).

In contrast, the Syriacs are much more skeptical, showing much less confidence in Turks (M = 2.36 and SD = 1.05)—while their confidence in
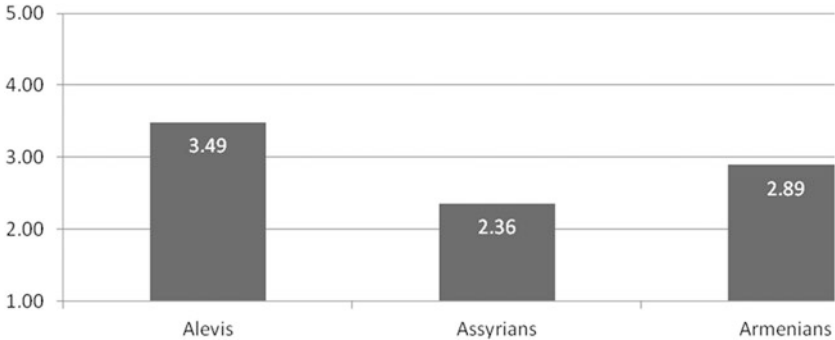
Fig. 7.11   Confidence in Turks (mean values)

their own group is 4.46 (SD = 0.95). When explicitly asking about confidence in Muslims, the mean was even lower (M = 2.04 and SD = 1.08). They only have slightly more confidence in Alevi (M = 2.95 and SD = 1.05). Their attitude toward Orthodox Christians is different, showing quite great confidence (M = 4.07 and SD = 0.92). The results concerning other Christians are similar.

The Armenians show attitudes similar to the Syriacs'. They also have less confidence in Turks (M = 2.89 and SD = 0.91)—while their confidence in their own group is 3.75 (SD = 0.78). Explicitly asked about Muslims, they gave similar answers (M = 2.86 and SD = 0.80). However, their confidence in Alevi is slightly higher (M = 3.47 and SD = 1.00). The Armenians' attitude toward Orthodox Christians is not as positive as among the Syriacs (M = 3.31 and SD = 0.70). The results concerning non-Orthodox Christians are again similar. All differences between the groups proved to be significant in post hoc tests ($F_{(2, 595)}$ = 68.78; $p < 0.01$).

To sum up, especially Syriacs tend to form an own, strong group. All in all, but also with regard to selected elements of identity, they showed a stronger minority identity than the other two groups. Alevi seems to be more integrated into the majority society, while Armenians rank in between the other two but also occasionally exhibit quite strong tendencies to counteract their distinctiveness. All three groups clearly show the classic elements of a socially constructed minority group identity, however to a different extent, based on individual characteristics, preferences with regard to inter-group contacts and marriage as well as confidence in the surrounding majority society. The answers sometimes considerably

differed within the groups, revealing deep divisions among the interviewees concerning certain questions. However, the awareness of deviating from the majority society in central characteristics and thus belonging to a special group seems to be high among all interviewed persons. Despite the differences in origin, social status, income, and other individual-level characteristics of the interviewees, an awareness of being part of a minority obviously shapes their attitudes and behavior. In this sense, they can clearly be seen as social minorities (see Chap. 3), even if they might sometimes prefer not to be seen as such.

7.3   State and Religion

The relations between the Turkish state and the minorities in Turkey are a delicate issue. For a long time, the Turkish government denied the existence of minorities. Since the coming into power of the conservative-Islamic AKP, even more pressure on non-Islamic minorities to adapt to norms of the majority society is being exercised. Minority rights were included in the EU's conditionality regime as part of the Copenhagen criteria. This made the protection and strengthening of minority rights, like the teaching and use of the own language, an important issue of EU-Turkish relations. The associated pressure definitely helped lead to some progress since 1999, although it did not cause profound changes in the Turkish state's behavior toward its minorities. This had to do with the fact that the EU accession process seems open-ended and is fraught with frustrations for both sides, but also with many other factors which have been discussed in the previous chapters. In the following paragraphs, we will have a closer look at the minorities' attitudes toward the state, issues of discrimination, and the governance of religion.

Asked about their satisfaction with the relations between Alevi and the Turkish state (Fig. 7.12), the Alevi are the least satisfied group ($M = 2.12$ and SD = 1.09). The Syriacs are slightly more satisfied ($M = 2.45$ and SD = 1.19), while the Armenians are even a bit more satisfied ($M = 2.56$ and SD = 1.14). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2,\ 698)} = 8.57$; $p < 0.001$). These results reveal comparable tendencies among all three minorities, although the Alevi are most dissatisfied. This most likely has to do with the fact that many of them tend toward left-wing, progressive views, and secularism, while the AKP government, which had been in power for years at the time of the survey, is economically liberal,
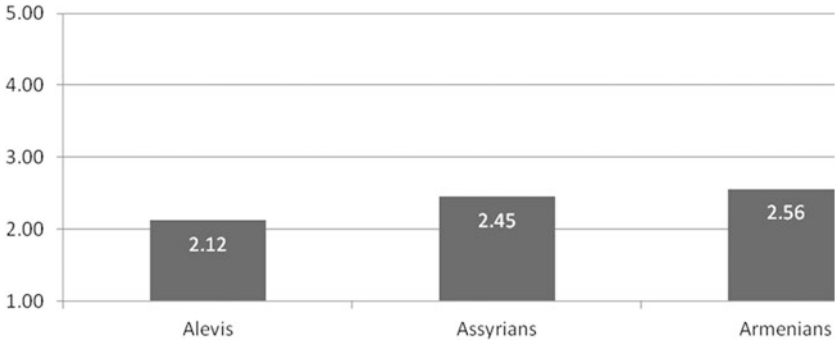
Fig. 7.12 Satisfaction with the relations between the own minority and the Turkish state (mean values)

socially conservative, and pro-Islamic. There are thus plenty of reasons which can compound each other for Alevi to be particularly critical of the Turkish state at the present time. Given the fact that many of their concerns and grievances remain unaddressed, it is of course not surprising that all three minority groups are overall not satisfied with the Turkish state.

We also wanted to know whether our respondents thought that the attitudes of members of their group toward the state have changed during the previous years, and how. 14 % of the Alevi express the opinion that their attitude has improved, 38 % think it has worsened, and 47 % think it has not changed ($M = 2.62$ and SD = 1.00). Again, this likely has to do with the rise to power of the AKP. Among the Syriacs 60 % saw an improvement, 11 % a deterioration, and 44 % no change ($M = 3.28$ and SD = 0.83). A stunning 69 % of the Armenians saw an improvement and only 6 % a deterioration; 23 % saw no change ($M = 3.73$ and SD = 0.84). Post hoc tests showed significant differences between all three groups ($F_{(2, 695)} = 61.41$; $p < 0.001$). Only the Alevi predominantly think their attitude toward the state has worsened, whereas the other two groups saw more improvement than deterioration. It is, however, likely, given the increasing strain they have come under in the Turabdin in the past two years, that Syriacs would no longer see so much improvement now. Alevi as well are likely to have become even more critical since the Gezi protests. How the attitudes of Armenians might have changed recently is difficult to say.
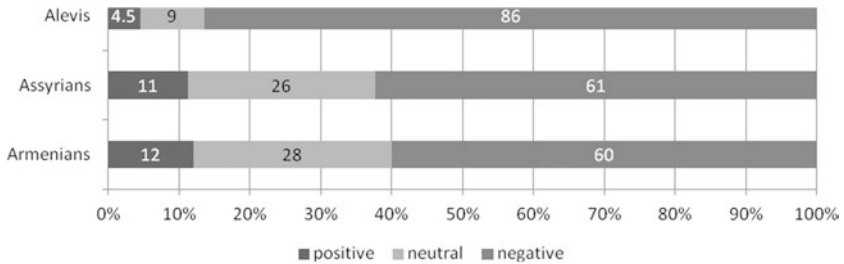
Fig. 7.13   Opinion about the state's attitude toward minorities

While all three minorities exhibit a rather negative attitude toward the Turkish state, they also perceive a negative attitude of the state toward the minorities (Fig. 7.13). Only 4.5 % of the Alevi think the Turkish state has a positive opinion about Alevi, while 86 % think it has a negative one; 9 % see a neutral attitude ($M = 1.90$ and SD = 0.79). Among the Syriacs, 11 % perceive the state's opinion as positive, 61 % negative, and 26 % neutral ($M = 2.33$ and SD = 1.00). 12 % of the Armenians see a positive attitude but 60 % a negative and 28 % a neutral one ($M = 2.32$ and SD = 0.93). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups again by being particularly critical of the state ($F_{(2,\,700)} = 19.62$; $p < 0.001$).

These values show the complicated relationship between the Turkish state and its minorities. Their general disappointment is underlined when the minorities are asked about their confidence in governmental institutions regarding minority protection. They show strong distrust of these institutions. Below, the first value always illustrates trust with regard to a certain institution and the second distrust. The Alevi have nearly no confidence in the Turkish president (5 % trust–79 % distrust), just as in the government (3.5 %–86 %), the parliament (5.5 %–67 %), the political parties (8 %–55 %), authorities (5 %–70 %), the judiciary (8 %–61 %), the police (4 %–76 %), the military (14 %–54 %), the Turkish press (8 %–54 %), as well as the education system (5 %–72 %). Only the Alevi press receives a high degree of trust (65 %–10 %). These results reveal the dramatically low confidence in many central public institutions regarding minority protection.

Comparable results can be found among the other minorities. The Syriacs also show a low confidence in the Turkish president in terms of minority protection (11.5 %–61 %), just as in the government (7 %–68 %), the parliament (8 %–62 %), the political parties (5 %–59.5 %), authorities (3 %–69 %), the

judiciary (10 %–65 %), the police (9.5 %–65 %), the military (10 %–68 %), the Turkish press (8 %–54 %), as well as the education system (11 %–58 %). Only the Syriac press receives a high degree of trust (67 %–14.5 %).

The results among the Armenians are as follows: President (23 %–40 %), just as the government (18.5 %–51 %), the parliament (18 %–34 %), the political parties (8 %–32 %), authorities (11 %–51 %), the judiciary (15 %–55 %), the police (5 %–62 %), the military (6 %–58 %), the Turkish press (17 %–24 %), as well as the education system (11 %–58.5 %). Similarly, only the Armenian press receives a higher degree of trust (48 %–15 %).

Regarding minority protection, these results show a considerable distrust of Turkish public institutions among all three minorities. Although the Armenians have slightly more confidence, their opinion is also overall not positive. These very negative opinions with respect to all public institutions are quite unusual. Comparable studies in other countries indicate that minorities normally only mistrust some institutions (especially political parties, the government, and the press) while other institutions receive some trust, as they are perceived as more neutral. In contrast, all three groups interviewed by us distrust all public Turkish institutions including the president and only trust their own institutions. This should be serious cause for concern, as it indicates a general climate of fundamental insecurity for minorities and makes their inclusion into a pluralized and democratized Turkey very difficult.

The question whether the minorities see themselves as represented by public institutions led to similar results. The minorities are only satisfied with their own institutions. 74 % of the Alevi think Alevi organizations represent them well in Turkey; only 5.5 % have a contrary opinion ($M = 4.09$ and $SD = 0.93$). 76 % think religious Alevi organizations represent them well; only 7 % do not think so ($M = 4.14$ and $SD = 0.97$). Among the Syriacs, 57.5 % see themselves well represented by their organizations, but 19 % see themselves poorly represented ($M = 3.70$ and $SD = 1.00$). 69 % think their church represents them well and 11 % not ($M = 4.00$ and $SD = 1.00$). 49 % of the Armenians see themselves well represented by their organizations but 17 % poorly ($M = 3.45$ and $SD = 1.01$). About the Armenian church 37 % think it represents them well and 21 % that it does this poorly ($M = 3.13$ and $SD = 1.22$). The members of the minorities are thus skeptical regarding their own institutions, too, but a positive attitude prevails here.

Discrimination certainly is one of the most difficult issues of minority policy. The Turkish history of the twentieth century displays a continuous series of pogroms, massacres, and many forms of persecution and repression. Up to the present time, members of minorities have to act carefully
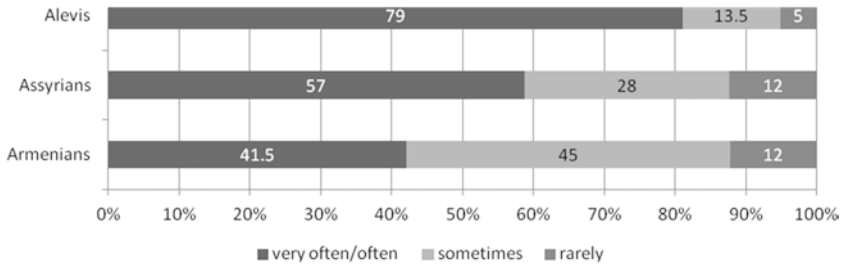
Fig. 7.14   Frequency of discrimination against the own minority by the Turkish state
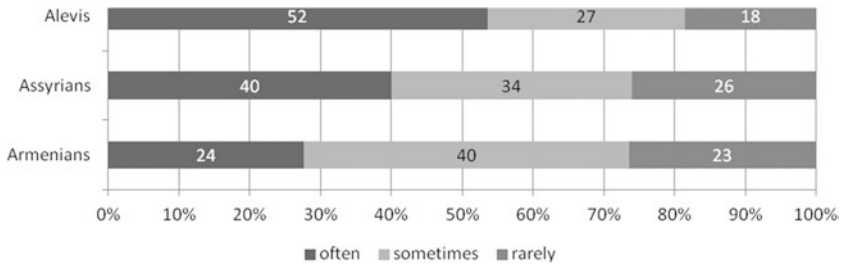
Fig. 7.15   Frequency of discrimination against the interviewee by the Turkish state

in public. Even though murders, like that of the Armenian journalist Hrant Dink, occur rather rarely, everyday discrimination, for example, by the state is still common. At first we asked for the frequency of discrimination of the own group (Fig. 7.14). 79 % of the Alevi think discrimination by the state appears very often or often, 13.5 % sometimes, and 5 % rarely ($M = 4.15$ and SD $= 0.86$). Among the Syriacs, 57 % think the state discriminates against them very often or often, 28 % sometimes, and 12 % rarely ($M = 3.64$ and SD $= 1.05$). 41.5 % of the Armenians see discrimination very often or often, 45 % sometimes, and 12 % rarely ($M = 3.50$ and SD $= 1.00$). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups by being more critical ($F_{(2, 691)} = 27.59$; $p < 0.001$). Again the Armenians stand out by being relatively content compared to the other groups.

These values correspond with the results of the question asking for personal experience of discrimination (Fig. 7.15). Asked how often they

have experienced discrimination by the state, 52 % of the Alevis answered often, 27 % sometimes, and 18 % rarely (M = 3.49 and SD = 1.18). 40 % of the Syriacs often experienced such discrimination, 34 % sometimes, and 26 % rarely (M = 3.15 and SD = 1.15). Among the Armenians, 24 % often suffered discrimination, 40 % sometimes, and 23 % rarely (M = 3.10 and SD = 1.10). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and again that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 6920)}$ = 7.84; $p < 0.001$). They are more skeptical than the Syriacs and even much more skeptical than the Armenians. The data also shows that the members of minorities think the state more often discriminates against their group as a whole than against themselves, a result which is in line with research on this topic in general: Respondents almost invariably sense more discrimination "around them" than they indicate experiencing personally.

It is also interesting to see in which areas discrimination is noticed. Below, areas where the interviewees noticed very much or much discrimination are listed in descending order. Multiple answers were allowed. The Alevi see most discrimination in the following areas: education system (68 %), freedom of expression (67 %), state (66 %), basic rights (59 %), society (54 %), ethnic self-fulfillment (53 %), history (53 %), culture (51 %), economy (48 %), judiciary (45 %), Turkish press (39 %), professional life (36 %), military (35 %), and Turkish television (34 %). Among the Syriacs, discrimination is noticed as follows: education system (64.5 %), basic rights (55 %), state (54 %), military (52.5 %), history (52 %), freedom of expression (51 %), judiciary (49 %), society (47.5 %), ethnic self-fulfillment (44 %), culture (38 %), Turkish television (30 %), economy (30 %), professional life (29 %), and Turkish press (27 %). The Armenians experienced discrimination in the following areas: freedom of expression (69 %), history (65 %), education system (60 %), military (49 %), ethnic self-fulfillment (49 %), basic rights (46 %), culture (42 %), judiciary (41.5 %), state (41.5 %), society (29 %), Turkish press (28 %), Turkish television (23 %), professional life (14 %), and economy (12 %).

Comparing all three minorities, it is noticeable that all three see much discrimination within the education system and the areas freedom of expression, basic rights, and history. These areas affect the minorities' cultural life and identity directly. The state in general is perceived as more discriminatory than single institutions like the military and the judiciary. Compared to them, the Turkish press and television are judged less negatively. It is also noticeable that less discrimination is experienced in the
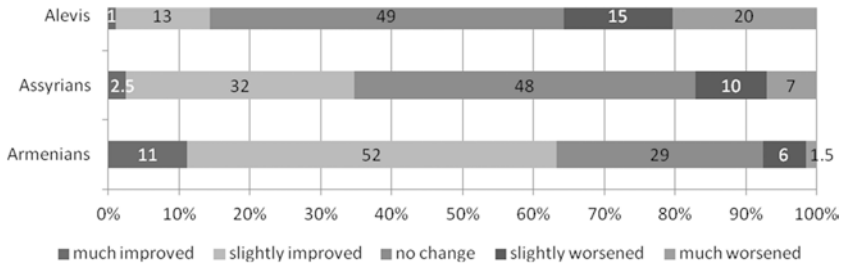
Fig. 7.16 Change of the Turkish state's attitude toward the three minorities during the last ten years

economy and in professional life. There the minorities, and especially the Armenians, seem to be better integrated.

Our survey clearly indicates that the state is perceived as having a negative opinion about minorities. We also wanted to find out whether the interviewees see a change in the state's opinion over the past years. Asked how the state's attitude toward the respective minority has changed during the last ten years (approximately since the coming into power of the AKP), 1 % of the Alevis saw a great and 13 % a small improvement (Fig. 7.16). 49 % saw no change, while 15 % saw a small and 20 % a great deterioration ($M = 2.61$ and SD = 0.99). 2.5 % of the Syriacs perceive the state's attitude as much and 32 % as slightly improved. 48 % saw no change, and 10 % perceive its attitude as slightly and 7 % as much worsened ($M = 3.14$ and SD = 0.87). In contrast, 11 % of the Armenians saw great and 52 % small improvements. Only 29 % saw no change, 6 % a small, and 1.5 % a great deterioration ($M = 3.64$ and SD = 0.82). Thus, only the Armenians predominantly perceive the state's development as positive. Post hoc tests showed that all three groups significantly differ from each other ($F_{(2, 695)} = 46.85$; $p < 0.001$).

This judgment corresponds to the opinions about the development of minority protection in Turkey. Asked whether the state's minority protection has changed over the last ten years, 1.5 % of the Alevis saw a great and 16.5 % a small improvement. 47 % saw no change while 10 % saw a small and 22 % a great deterioration ($M = 3.64$ and SD = 0.82). In contrast, 3 % of the Syriacs noticed a great and 40 % a small improvement. 40.5 % of them noticed no change, 8 % a small deterioration, and 7 % a great one ($M = 3.24$ and SD = 0.92). Among the Armenians, 11 % saw a great and 66 % a small improvement, while 19 % saw no change, 1.5 % a small, and 1.5 % a great deterioration ($M = 3.84$ and SD = 0.69).
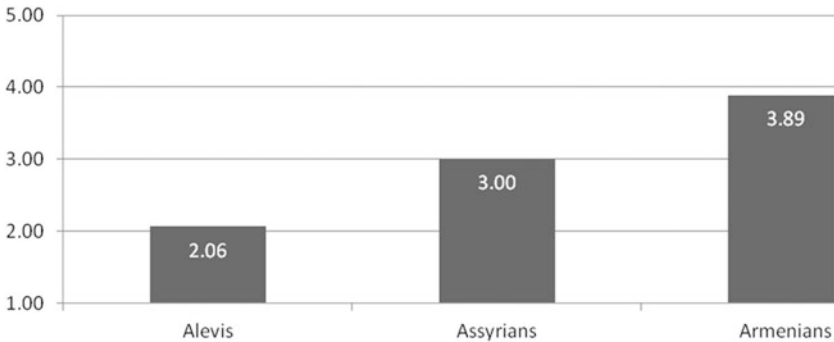
Fig. 7.17 Comparison of the Erdoğan government and its predecessor (mean values)

Members of the Christian minorities, thus, see a small improvement during the last decade when comparing their current situation and the situation at time of AKP's coming into power. But the intensity and nature of Erdoğan's reforms changed over time. Hence, we wanted to know how the interviewees see the most current developments. Asked how Erdoğan's policy toward the respective minority has changed over the last two to three years compared to his first years of government, 8 % of the Alevis noticed an improvement, 32 % no change, and 58 % a deterioration, from among those 33 % even a great deterioration ($M = 2.16$ and SD = 1.01). Among the Syriacs, 26 % saw an improvement of the minority policy, 38 % no change, and 36 % a deterioration ($M = 2.71$ and SD = 1.10). 35 % of the Armenians observed an improvement while 12 % saw no change and 48 % a deterioration ($M = 2.65$ and SD = 1.28).

The minorities watch Erdoğan's obvious canvassing of conservative voters very skeptically, since this leads to more pressure on the minorities. Moreover, the Alevi are very skeptical about the AKP's opening toward their own group. A clear majority perceives this as negative ($M = 1.72$ and SD = 1.06). This corresponds with the opinion that the AKP does not sufficiently respond to demands of the Alevi.

When assessing the entire work of the Erdoğan government, the minorities are divided (Fig. 7.17). The Alevi are, as has already become clear, very skeptical about Erdoğan's government compared to its predecessor ($M = 2.06$ and SD = 1.00). In contrast, the Syriacs are rather undecided ($M = 3.00$ and SD = 1.01). Here again, the Armenians have the
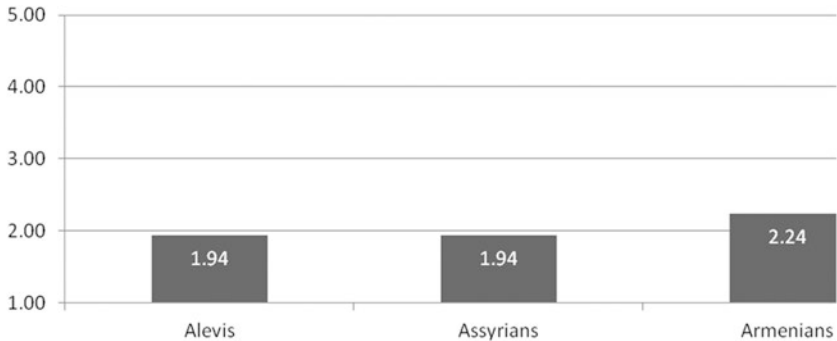
Fig. 7.18   Critical review of the past

most positive opinion ($M = 3.89$ and SD = 0.67). Post hoc tests showed that all three groups significantly differ from each other ($F_{(2, 690)} = 131.39$; $p < 0.001$). Thus, the Erdoğan government is perceived by differently the minorities. While especially the Alevi are very skeptical and rather see a deterioration of their situation, the Syriacs are undecided, and the Armenians even sense a great improvement of their situation.

What elements influence the minorities' opinions about state and government? Finally, two particularly explosive issues are examined: the manner in which historical events are dealt with and obstructions to religious practice.

Asked to what extent past assaults or massacres of their minority are critically reviewed in Turkey (Fig. 7.18), 7 % of the Alevi answered this is done to a great extent, and 15.5 % are undecided, but a clear majority of 74 % only see a reluctant or even no review of these events ($M = 1.94$ and SD = 1.05). We found similar results among the Syriacs: 7 % observe much review, 19 % are undecided, and 74 % only see a weak review ($M = 1.94$ and SD = 1.03). The Armenians perceived the situation for their group slightly more positively. 14 % think a critical review of the past is done to a great extent, 28 % are undecided and 57 % think this is only done to a small extent or even not at all ($M = 2.24$ and SD = 1.05). Corresponding post hoc tests showed no significant differences ($F_{(2, 690)} = 2.35$; n.s.).

We also asked whether the approach to reviewing these events has changed during the last ten years and obtained results showing similar differences between the three minorities. Here, the Alevi ($M = 2.58$ and SD = 1.00) and the Syriacs' results ($M = 2.78$ and SD = 0.99) are quite
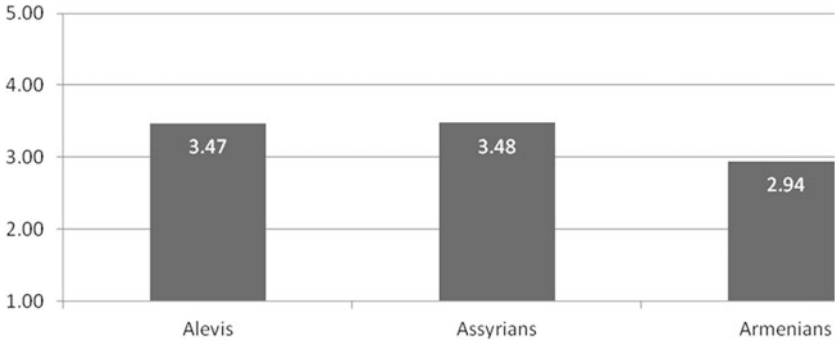
Fig. 7.19   Obstruction of religious practice (mean values)

similar, but the Armenians' again differed (M = 3.34 and SD = 0.98). The latter are the only group thinking the critical review of assaults or massacres of their minority in Turkey has improved during the last years.

We also examined how freely the minorities can practice their religion in Turkey. This includes asking about the level of obstruction of religious practice as well as the pressure to Islamize. 55 % of the Alevi feel constrained to a great extent in practicing their religion, 18.5 % are undecided, and 25 % feel constrained to a small extent (M = 3.47 and SD = 1.20). Similar results can be found among the Syriacs. 53 % feel constrained to a great extent, 24 % are undecided, and 23.5 % feel constrained to a small extent (M = 3.48 and SD = 1.16). 28 % of the Armenians feel constrained to a great extent, while 38.5 % are undecided and 31 % feel constrained to a small extent (M = 2.94 and SD = 1.13). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Armenians differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 694)}$ = 5.94; $p < 0.001$). The Armenians feel less constrained in practicing their religion than members of the other two groups (Fig. 7.19).

Again, the interviewees were also asked to assess the development during the last years. With regard to obstruction of religious practice, the Alevi (M = 3.15 and SD = 1.00) and the Syriacs (M = 3.32 and SD = 0.99) tended not to see improvements. However, the Armenians rather think the situation has improved (M = 3.66 and SD = 0.90).

The last question of this section aimed at a particularly sensitive issue. The interviewees were asked whether and to what extent they face pressure to Islamize (Fig. 7.20). 52 % of the Alevi answered they face a great pressure,
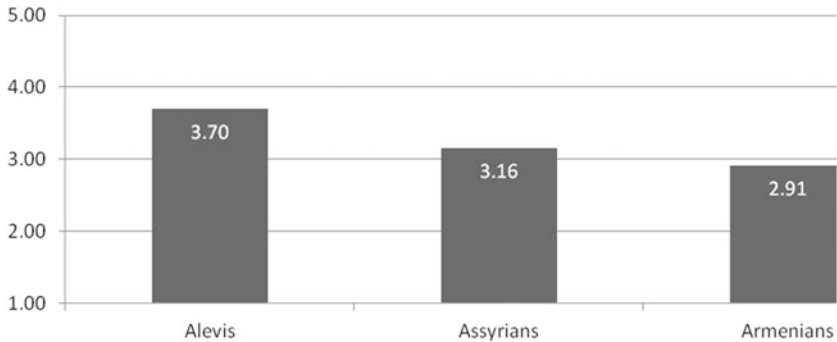
Fig. 7.20   Pressure to Islamize

21 % a medium pressure, and 15.5 % a small or no pressure to Islamize (*M* = 3.70 and SD = 1.18). Among the Syriacs, 42 % feel a great pressure, 32 % a medium, and 26 % a small or no pressure (*M* = 3.16 and SD = 1.21). 37 % of the Armenians answered they face a great pressure, 23 % a medium, and 40 % a small or no pressure (*M* = 2.91 and SD = 1.27). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group member-ship and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups in feeling particular pressure to assimilate to the majority religion ($F_{(2, 698)}$ = 22.49; $p < 0.001$).

Asked how this pressure has changed during the last years, most of the Alevi answered it has risen (*M* = 3.87 and SD = 1.06). In contrast, the Syriacs (*M* = 3.05 and SD = 0.98) and Armenians (*M* = 3.14 and SD = 1.02) are rather undecided. It is clear that especially the Alevi perceive a great pres-sure to adapt to Sunni Islam. Among the other two groups, this perception similarly prevails—however to a smaller extent. This makes sense, given that the Alevi are also Muslims, who are considered misled in their faith by some of their Sunni compatriots, compared to the Armenians and Syriacs, who belong to an entirely different family of religions.

To sum up, we can conclude that the members of all three polled groups have a skeptical opinion about the Turkish state. A majority of each group is dissatisfied with the current situation and distrusts all institutions of the Turkish state, while their own organizations are seen slightly skeptically but benevolently. Discrimination against one's own person and especially the own group is often experienced by the interviewees. This backs up the European Commission's admonitions in its progress reports to improve the situation of minorities. Especially Alevi perceive the changes under
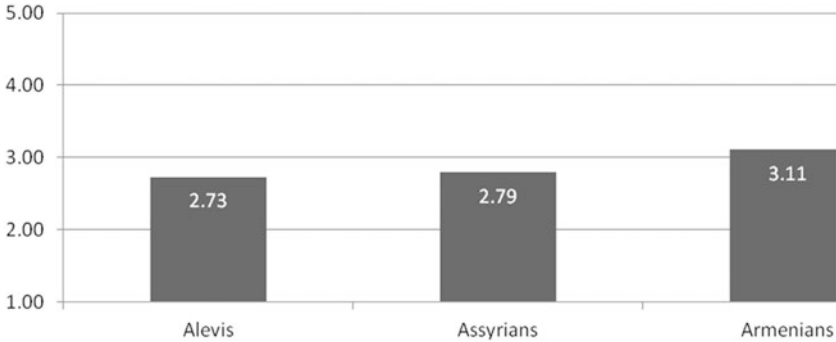
Fig. 7.21 Satisfaction with the relations to the Turkish majority society (mean values)

the Erdoğan government during the last years negatively, whereas the Christian minorities have a more positive opinion—the Syriacs a slightly more positive and the Armenians a clearly more positive one. However, all minorities feel—to a different extent—obstructed when practicing their religion, and especially the Alevi sense an intensifying pressure to Islamize. The critical review of crimes of the Turkish state against its minorities is still in its infancy. Despite all progress and positive symbolic gestures by the government during the past years, there is still much historical review to accomplish. All in all, our empirical results fits with claims made in the scientific literature that the Erdoğan government does pursue a strengthening of minority rights but uses its minority policy rather instrumentally. Activities in favor of minorities end when minority policy cannot be used for certain political aims, like securing majorities in parliament or complying with demands of the EU, or when values and norms of the minorities are contrary to Erdoğan's Islamic-conservative world view.

7.4   SOCIETY AND DISCRIMINATION

After the last section analyzed the relations between the three minorities and the Turkish state, the following section focuses on social relations between the minorities and the Sunni majority society. This will show some similarities but also some differences compared to the relations to the state.

First, the interviewees were asked about their satisfaction with the relations between their minority and the Turkish society (Fig. 7.21). The
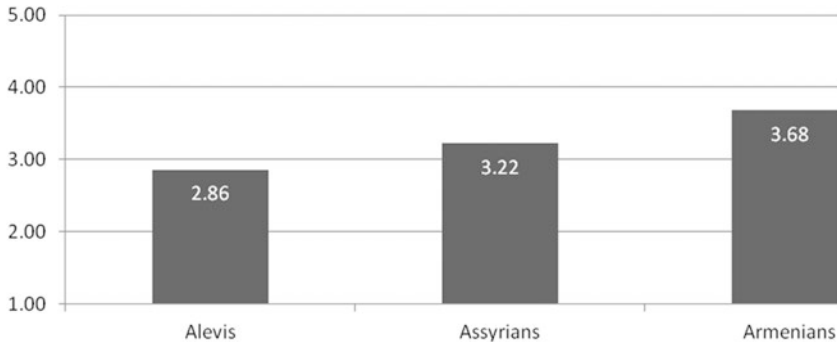
Fig. 7.22   Change of relations to the Turkish majority society (mean values)

Alevi spoke out rather critically (M = 2.73 and SD = 1.02). The Syriacs answered in a similar way (M = 2.79 and SD = 1.02). In contrast, the Armenians perceive their relations to the Turkish society slightly more positively (M = 3.11 and SD = 0.99). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Armenians significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 695)}$ = 3.57; $p < 0.05$).

Asked whether these relations have changed over the last ten years (Fig. 7.22), the Alevi were divided (M = 2.86 and SD = 1.04). However, the Syriacs (M = 3.22 and SD = 0.84) and Armenians (M = 3.68 and SD = 0.80) both see a noticeable improvement. Post hoc tests showed significantly different values for all three groups ($F_{(2, 700)}$ = 25.64; $p < 0.001$). As became apparent in the previous section, the Alevi are the most skeptical group, seeing no improvement of their relation toward the Turkish majority society during the last years.

But the Christian minorities also have no illusions about their reputation among the majority society. Only 5.5 % of the Alevi think that Turkish society has a positive image of them; 13 % see a neutral and 81 % a negative attitude toward them (M = 2.08 and SD = 0.73). Among the Syriacs, 13 % see a positive attitude, 28.5 % a neutral, and 57 % a negative one (M = 2.44 and SD = 0.95). Only 6 % of the Armenians think that majority society has a positive image of them; 40 % see at least a neutral but 52 % a negative image (M = 2.45 and SD = 0.73). The quite low standard deviation of all three minorities' answers indicates that most of the interviewees agree that the Sunni majority society has a negative image of their group.
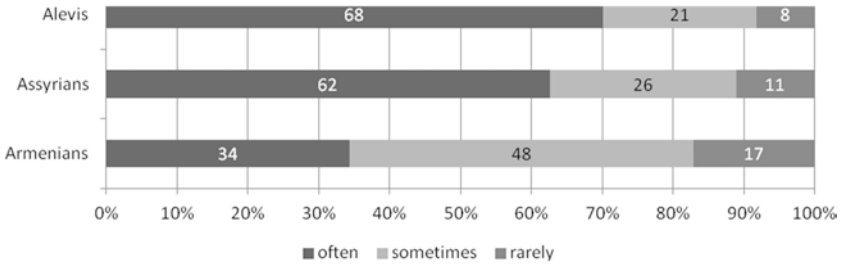
Fig. 7.23 Frequency of discrimination by the majority society

Analogous to the question about discrimination by the state, we also asked about discrimination by the majority society (Fig. 7.23). First, we investigated the frequency of discrimination against the respective minority by the Sunni majority society. 68 % of the Alevi have the opinion that such discrimination occurs often, 21 % sometimes, and 8 % rarely ($M = 3.83$ and SD = 0.91). From the Syriacs we got comparable results: 62 % see frequent, 26 % occasional, and 11 % rare discrimination ($M = 3.69$ and SD = 0.95). In contrast, the Armenians were less critical: 34 % see frequent, 48 % occasional, and 17 % rare discrimination ($M = 3.29$ and SD = 0.88). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Armenians again differ from the other two groups by seeing less discrimination ($F_{(2, 695)} = 9.99$; $p < 0.001$).

Again, we compared these general—group-related—perceptions to respondents' personal experiences. Asked how often they personally experience discrimination by the society, 46 % of the Alevi answered often, 35 % sometimes, and 17 % rarely ($M = 3.37$ and SD = 1.00). Likewise, 46 % of the Syriacs often experience such discrimination, 29 % sometimes, and 25 % rarely ($M = 3.30$ and SD = 1.12). Among the Armenians, 32 % answered "often", another 32 % "sometimes", and 34 % "rarely" ($M = 2.98$ and SD = 1.07). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Armenians differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 694)} = 3.68$; $p < 0.05$).

Comparing these values and the respective results concerning discrimination by the state and by society, we can see that Alevi and Syriacs experience slightly more discrimination by the state than by the majority society. The Armenians were divided; the questions about discrimination by the state revealed higher as well as lower values. But all in all the results show that discrimination by the state as well as by society is common in Turkey.

Especially Alevi and Syriacs experience a high degree of discrimination by the majority society—nearly half of the interviewees have personal experience with discrimination.

There are many different reasons or pretexts for discrimination. Therefore, we asked about several elements of minority group identity that might cause discrimination. The Alevi named the following reasons for discrimination (listed in descending order; multiple answers were allowed): Alevism in general (79 %), the Alevi history (72 %), the Alevi culture (65.5 %), their ethnic origin (57 %), and the Sunni's social and economic fears (48 %). The Syriacs named the Christian religion (85 %), their ethnic origin (73 %), historical events (69 %), die Syriac culture (67 %), the Syriac language (64 %), and the Muslims' social and economic fears (52.5 %). The Armenians also most frequently named the Christian religion (80 %), then historical events (75 %), ethnic origin (71 %), the Armenian language (48 %), the Armenian culture (45 %), and the Muslims' social and economic fears (35 %). All minorities see religion (in the Alevi's case "Alevism") as the main reason for discrimination, followed by historical events. Linguistic and cultural aspects are named often but not very often. Similar to the experience of discrimination by the state, as discussed above, discrimination by society in economic life or due to the minorities' economic position occurs relatively rarely. This shows again that the minorities are quite well-integrated into economic life.

What about changes concerning this topic? Did the political and social changes in Turkey during the last years reduce discrimination against minorities (Fig. 7.24)? Here, the Alevi again answered very skeptically (M = 2.03 and SD = 1.12). A majority thinks discrimination against Alevi has hardly changed during the last years. The Syriacs were skeptical, too (M = 2.52 and SD = 1.05), whereas the Armenians' attitude is slightly more positive (M = 2.89 and SD = 1.21). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences between all three groups ($F_{(2, 692)}$ = 25.32; $p < 0.001$).

Seeing that the three minorities judge the current situation quite critically, questions about expected future developments seem called for. How do members of the minorities see their personal futures as well as their group's future in Turkey? At first, we generally asked whether they think the present political, economic, religious, social, and cultural situation will change during the following years, due to the current political developments. The Alevi were again very skeptical (M = 2.68 and SD = 1.16). In contrast, the members of the other two minorities gave more positive
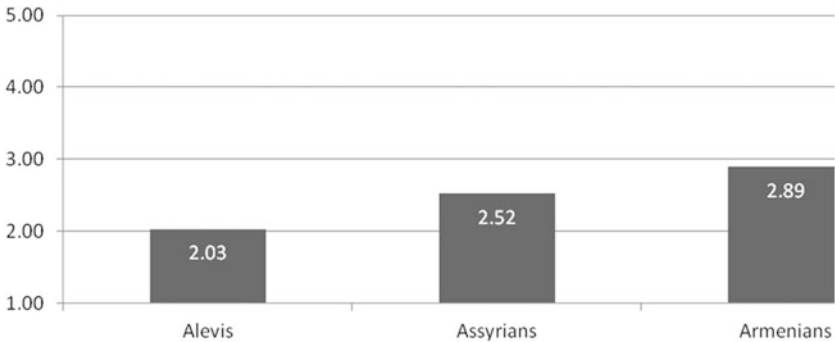
Fig. 7.24 Changes of the discrimination by the Turkish majority society (mean values)

answers. Syriacs (M = 3.24 and SD = 0.98) and Armenians (M = 3.15 and SD = 0.91) expect a small improvement. The Syriacs expressed the most positive attitude of the three examined minorities, which is in line with the positive developments of the years preceding our survey, as laid out in Chap. 6. However, as explained above, it is likely that this impression has already soured again since our survey was conducted.

Asking about a minority's future involves questions about felt autonomy, adaptation, participation, and exclusion as well as prospects and limits of building one's own life. We thus finally examine the potential pressures on minorities to assimilate and to emigrate. Asked to what extent the Sunni majority society applies pressure on them to emigrate (Fig. 7.25), 10 % of the Alevi answered there is a great pressure, 51 % a medium or small pressure, and 36 % no pressure (M = 2.11 and SD = 1.09). The Syriacs' answers were quite different. 36 % of them feel a great pressure, 46 % medium or small pressure, and 16.5 % no pressure (M = 2.95 and SD = 1.25). Among the Armenians, 18 % think there is a great pressure, 49 % medium or small pressure, and 29 % no pressure (M = 2.33 and SD = 1.13). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Syriacs differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 688)}$ = 38.69; $p < 0.001$). Thus, the pressure on Christians to emigrate seems higher than on the Alevi, with the Syriacs feeling particular pressure. The latter may also have to do with the fact that many of them live in rural areas, where social pressures are in general felt more strongly than in urban environments. Perhaps surprising and certainly worrisome is that even Alevi often do feel some pressure to emigrate.
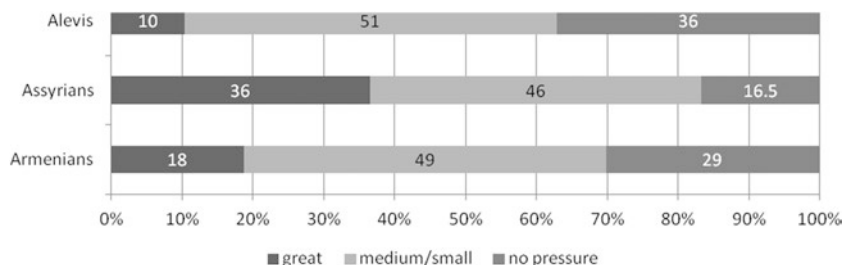
Fig. 7.25   Pressure to emigrate by the majority society

What about pressure to emigrate applied by the Turkish state? 16 % of the Alevi answered this pressure is great, 46 % that there is medium to small pressure, and 36 % there is no pressure ($M = 2.19$ and $SD = 1.18$). The results from the Syriacs are again different. 36 % of them think there is great, 45 % a medium or small, and 18 % no pressure ($M = 2.94$ and $SD = 1.31$). Among the Armenians, 14 % feel great, 58.5 % medium or small, and 25 % no pressure ($M = 2.22$ and $SD = 1.05$). Pressure to emigrate by the state and by society is thus experienced quite similarly by all groups. Only the Alevi feel a slightly higher pressure by the state. All in all, these questions reveal alarmingly high levels of pressure to emigrate, given that the three minorities have lived together with the majority society for centuries. The minorities' feeling of such pressure exhibits great deficits of integration into society and politics.

This leads to the question whether the pressure to emigrate has changed during the last ten years. A relative majority among the interviewed minorities across all groups thinks there was no change. Among the other interviewees, the Alevis see a deterioration of their situation ($M = 3.21$ and $SD = 1.15$) while Syriacs ($M = 2.76$ and $SD = 0.97$) and Armenians ($M = 2.42$ and $SD = 1.05$) rather see an improvement. Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 601)} = 19.72$; $p < 0.001$).

Asked about the intensity of the second kind of pressure—the pressure to assimilate by the Sunni majority society (Fig. 7.26), 58 % of the Alevi answered there is great, 36 % medium or small, and 4 % no pressure ($M = 3.57$ and $SD = 1.11$). Among the Syriacs, 17 % feel great pressure, 66 % medium or small, and 11 % no pressure ($M = 3.27$ and $SD = 1.05$). 37 % of the Armenians answered there is great pressure, 54 % medium or
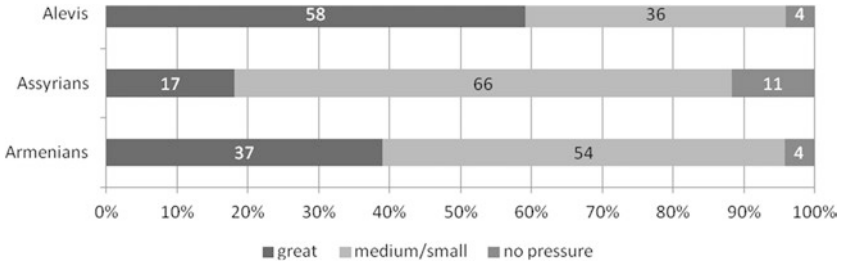
Fig. 7.26   Pressure to assimilate by the majority society

small pressure, and 4 % no pressure ($M = 3.21$ and SD $= 1.04$). Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 690)} = 7.43$; $p < 0.001$). Especially the Alevi sense the pressure to assimilate. Among the Christian groups, the Armenians sense this pressure more than the Syriacs. As we have seen, they also often succumb to this pressure. The number of interviewees feeling no pressure is very low in all groups.

We then asked to what extent the Turkish *state* applies pressure on the minorities to assimilate. 67 % of the Alevi answered this pressure is great, 28 % that it is medium or small, and 3 % that there is no such pressure ($M = 3.80$ and SD $= 1.03$). Among the Syriacs, 45 % think there is great, 45 % medium or small, and 7 % no pressure ($M = 3.31$ and SD $= 1.15$). 31 % of the Armenians think the Turkish state applies pressure to assimilate to a great extent, 58 % to a medium or small extent, and 8 % not at all ($M = 3.02$ and SD $= 1.17$). Again, the Alevi sense a higher pressure by the state than by society, as in this case do the Syriacs, whereas the Armenians do not. The number of interviewees feeling no pressure is again very low.

We also examined whether the pressure to assimilate has changed over the last ten years. Here, the Alevi feel a deterioration of their situation and a rising pressure to assimilate ($M = 3.90$ and SD $= 1.04$)—in contrast to the Syriacs ($M = 2.97$ and SD $= 0.94$) and Armenians ($M = 2.75$ and SD $= 0.83$). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 656)} = 77.78$; $p < 0.001$). This corresponds to their answers with regard to the pressure to emigrate, where the Alevi see deterioration, too. In contrast, both Christian minorities at the time of our survey perceive a rather stable situation with a slight tendency to improve.
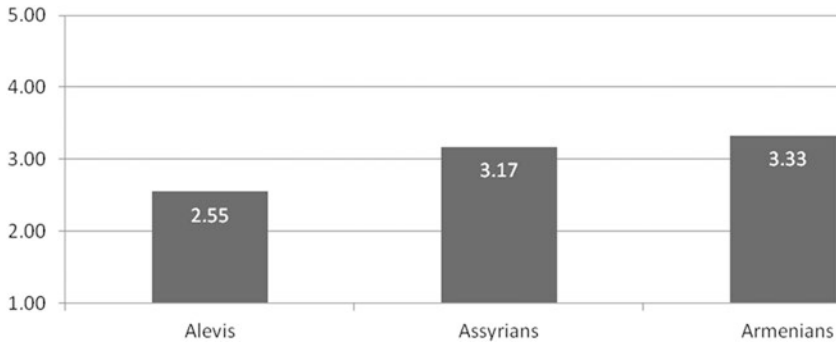
Fig. 7.27 Change of attitude toward the state (mean values)

We can thus conclude that discrimination against the minorities by state and society is common in Turkey, although especially discrimination by the state should not exist, given that as member of the Council of Europe Turkey is obliged to meet basic and human rights. All interviewees have experienced discrimination. Among them, especially Alevi and Syriacs sense much discrimination by the majority society. The positive economic situation and revival of the last years induced a positive development from the minorities' perspective. According to our results, integration into economic life seems to be working. Here, discrimination is sensed to a lesser extent. However, especially the Alevi feel a high pressure to emigrate and to assimilate, which has even intensified during the last years, while the Christian minorities see their situations slightly eased, albeit from a highly problematic starting point.

The answers to the question whether the interviewees' attitude toward the state has changed over the last ten years show patterns similar to the results above (Fig. 7.27). With regard to the state, a majority of the Alevi is skeptical (M = 2.55 and SD = 0.96), thinking their attitude has worsened. In contrast, the Syriacs (M = 3.17 and SD = 0.90) and Armenians' attitudes (M = 3.33 and SD = 1.04) have slightly improved.

Asking the same for the change of the interviewees' attitudes toward the majority society, we got similar results. Here, the Alevi were slightly skeptical (M = 2.89 and SD = 0.82), while Syriacs (M = 3.08 and SD = 0.85) and Armenians (M = 3.33 and SD = 0.87) see a slightly improved attitude on the part of their own group toward majority society. Thus, the slightly improved relations between the Christian minorities and the Turkish state

and majority society have led to a more positive attitude among them. But among the Alevi skepticism dominates. Majority society and minorities remain rather alien to each other.

7.5   THE ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN UNION

Minority rights are an important issue in Turkey's accession negotiations with the EU, and it is fair to say that the EU tries to be a positive force for the improvement of minority rights in the country. We thus asked how the minorities judge the EU's engagement for their rights (Fig. 7.28). 17 % of the Alevi are satisfied by the EU's actions, 54 % judge them as neither good nor bad, and 25 % consider them disappointing (M = 2.88 and SD = 0.92). Among the Syriacs, 38 % are satisfied, 42 % judge the EU's engagement neither good nor bad, and 19 % consider it disappointing (M = 3.22 and SD = 0.96). 28 % of the Armenians answered they are satisfied, 45 % judge the EU's engagement neither good nor bad, and 23 % consider it disappointing (M = 3.05 and SD = 1.01). The Alevi are thus mostly skeptical toward the EU's engagement while the other minorities are cautiously satisfied. Post hoc tests showed significant differences especially between the Alevi as least satisfied and the Syriacs as most satisfied with the EU's engagement on their group's behalf ($F_{(2, 686)}$ = 9.42; $p < 0.001$).

The above results are quite similar to the following results concerning representation of minorities by the EU. 20 % of the Alevi think the EU represents them very well or well, 34 % neither well nor badly, and 36 % badly or not at all (M = 2.73 and SD = 1.14). However, 44 % of the Syriacs see themselves well represented, 32 % neither well nor badly and 20 % badly or not at
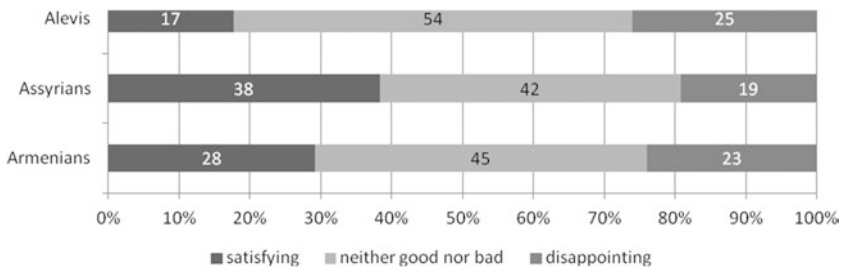
Fig. 7.28   Engagement of the European Union for minorities
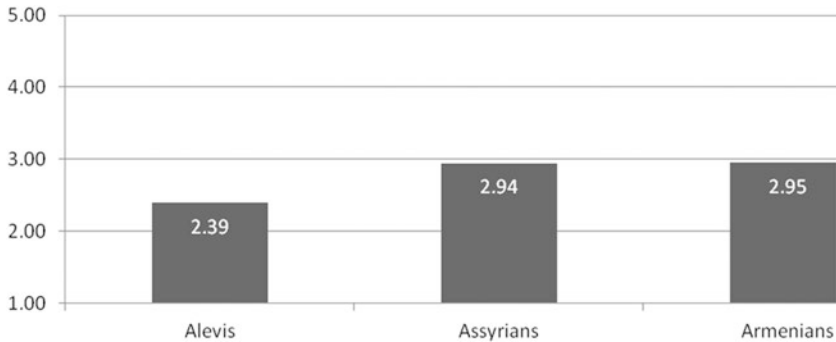
Fig. 7.29 Effect of the accession negotiations on the respective minority's position (mean values)

all ($M = 3.32$ and SD $= 1.10$). Among the Armenians, 23 % answered that the EU represents them well, 43 % neither well nor badly, and 29 % badly or not at all ($M = 2.84$ and SD $= 0.96$). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Syriacs differ from the other two groups by being relatively satisfied with how the EU represents them ($F_{(2, 654)} = 20.14$; $p < 0.001$). Although the Alevi and Armenians are mostly skeptical about the EU, they are less skeptical about it than toward the most important national institutions, like president and government, as shown above. Still, given that the EU prioritizes their rights strongly in the accession negotiations, the relatively low degree of satisfaction with it among the minorities is food for thought. It may, for example, indicate that they feel the EU is not fighting for them with enough determination (e.g. by being too lenient with the Turkish government), or that its involvement has unwanted negative repercussions for them (e.g. by drawing attention to them which increases pressure on them), or both.

The following two questions consequently examined to what extent the EU is seen to influence domestic Turkish reforms. At first, we asked how the accession negotiations since 1999 have affected the respective minority's position (Fig. 7.29). The Alevi were mostly skeptical, seeing only a small influence ($M = 2.39$ and SD $= 0.97$). The Syriacs were divided ($M = 2.94$ and SD $= 1.04$), just as the Armenians ($M = 2.95$ and SD $= 0.75$). Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups by being most skeptical ($F_{(2, 696)} = 26.68$; $p < 0.001$).
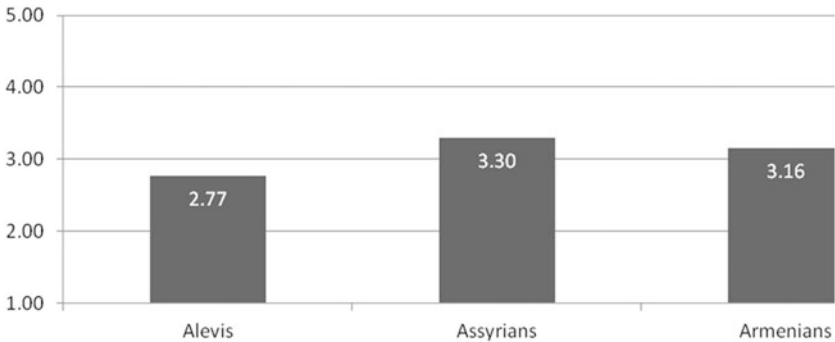
Fig. 7.30 The European Union's role regarding minority protection (mean values)

The more specific question what role the EU plays with regard to minority protection in Turkey was answered similarly (Fig. 7.30). Here, the Alevi think the EU plays a rather small role ($M = 2.77$ and SD = 1.05), whereas the Syriacs ($M = 3.30$ and SD = 0.99) and Armenians ($M = 3.16$ and SD = 0.74) see this role as somewhat stronger. Post hoc tests showed that there are significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi once again differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 694)} = 21.21$; $p < 0.001$). These results show that the Alevi perceive the EU's influence as rather small, while the Christian minorities are less skeptical. Especially the Syriacs do see an influence of the EU.

Finally, the interviewees were asked to generally judge the relations between Turkey and the European Union. We first asked whether these relations have changed over the past ten years. Here, the Alevi mostly see a deterioration ($M = 2.72$ and SD = 0.96) while the Syriacs ($M = 3.37$ and SD = 0.84) as well as the Armenians ($M = 3.63$ and SD = 0.95) perceive an improvement. Post hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group membership and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 695)} = 51.45$; $p < 0.001$).

The following two questions examined how the interviewees see the Turkish government and society's interest in joining the EU. The Alevi think the Turkish government only has a small interest in joining the European Union ($M = 2.68$ and SD = 1.19). In contrast, the Syriacs ($M = 3.27$ and SD = 1.02) and Armenians ($M = 3.13$ and SD = 0.99) see a rather strong interest in EU membership of the Turkish government. Post
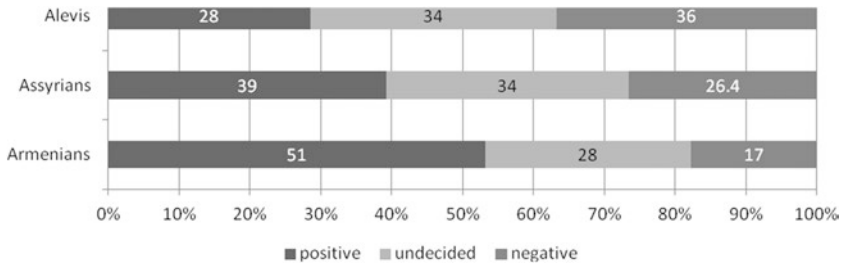
Fig. 7.31   Evaluation of a future EU membership of Turkey

hoc tests showed significant differences depending on group member-ship and that the Alevi differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 693)}$ = 21.42; $p < 0.001$).

We obtained similar answers to the same question with regard to Turkish society. Again the Alevi see a rather small interest (M = 2.83 and SD = 0.91), while especially Syriacs (M = 3.39 and SD = 0.87), but Armenians as well (M = 3.14 and SD = 0.98), perceive a greater interest. Post hoc tests showed here, too, that the Alevi significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 693)}$ = 28.58; $p < 0.001$). These results indicate that many Alevi not only distrust the AKP government when it claims to be serious about pursuing EU membership, but are more generally quite alienated from the political direction the country has been taking since the AKP's rise to power. They are considerably more likely than members of the other minorities examined here to belong to Turkey's disenchanted left-liberal-progressive and western-oriented part of society, which not only has become increasingly concerned with Erdogan's leadership but also feels betrayed and politically alienated by the EU.

At the end of this part of the survey, the interviewees were requested to judge a future EU membership of Turkey (Fig. 7.31). 28 % of the Alevi answered that they see this positively, 34 % are undecided, and 36 % see it negatively (M = 2.87 and SD = 1.13). The Christian minorities' answers were different: 39 % of the Syriacs judge a future membership positively, 34 % are undecided, and 26.5 % see it negatively (M = 3.22 and SD = 1.17). Among the Armenians, 51 % see it positively, 28 % are unde-cided, and 17 % judge it negatively (M = 3.48 and SD = 1.10). Post hoc tests again showed that the Alevi significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 695)}$ = 12.09; $p < 0.001$). In line with the above, a majority of the Alevi judges a future EU membership of Turkey skeptically. The other

two minorities have a more positive attitude although there is no absolute majority in favor of membership among the Syriacs.

Asked how probable a future EU membership of Turkey is, 5 % of the Alevi answered "probable" or "very probable", 22 % "medium likely", and 72 % "unlikely" or "very unlikely" (M = 2.13 and SD = 0.81). Among the Syriacs, 13 % answered "(very) probable", 45 % "medium likely", and 41 % "(very) unlikely" (M = 2.62 and SD = 0.89). 11 % of the Armenians answered "(very) probable", 40 % "medium likely", and 46 % "(very) unlikely" (M = 2.54 and SD = 0.82). Post hoc tests showed that the Alevi significantly differ from the other two groups ($F_{(2, 696)}$ = 27.04; p < 0.001). Thus, a majority of the interviewees assess this issue very realistically. A future accession of Turkey to the European Union would definitely mean several additional years of tough negotiations, and it remains quite uncertain whether it will end with a regular EU membership.

The following, concluding chapter will highlight some of the most important findings across Chaps. 4, 5, 6, and 7 and place them in the larger context of the challenges which now and for the foreseeable future face Turkey, its religious minorities, and its relationship with the European Union.

Note

1. This result is not representative for the Armenians in Turkey, only few of whom speak Arabic. It is due to the fact that we received several questionnaires from the Arabic dominated region of Iskenderun-Atakya-Samandag in south(-east) Turkey. In this region we can find a maximum of ca. 1,500-2,000 Armenians, compared to the about 60,000 Armenians in Istanbul, who include almost no Arabic speakers.
2. All following numbers were rounded up or down for clarity and ease of comparison. It may occur that the sum of values does not add up to 100 %. The difference comprises missing answers due to non-response.

Conclusions

8.1 Looking Back

In conclusion, we sum up some of the most important among the many findings this book has presented regarding the evolving situations of religious minorities in Turkey in the context of European integration and changes in Turkey's domestic politics since the late 1990s. Chapter 2 has explained how minority rights have risen to prominence as a topic in European governance, and how minority rights protection norms have evolved and been incorporated into the EU's accession conditionality. We have learned that there is a European minority rights regime, even as minority rights policy is neither supra-nationalized nor, at least explicitly, strongly developed in the EU's primary legislation, due to political sensitivities among the member states. We also learn that minority rights protection is an important part of the EU's accession conditionality, which was inspired by the rise of ethnic conflict observed in Central and Eastern Europe after the end of the Cold War. The chapter's second part then zoomed in on how the EU has been judging Turkey's performance on minority rights protection, revealing a pattern of incomplete progress that has recently stalled.

Chapter 3 first explained our analytical concepts of securitization and desecuritization. It then provided an overview of how Turkey has dealt with its (religious) minorities since Ottoman times, with a focus on the past decades. It revealed a historical background of strong securitization

of minority rights emerging from the last decades of the Ottoman Empire and the beginnings of the Turkish Republic. It then showed how EU accession negotiations have provided an important impetus toward a desecuritization process already begun in the 1980s, which however remains partial, incomplete, and far from irreversible.

Chapter 4 analyzed the Alevi, a large heterodox Muslim minority, in many locations well-integrated into mainstream society, who however often experience obstacles to living their distinctiveness due to assimilation pressures by Sunni Islam. Being Muslim but not part of the majority version of it was revealed to create its own problems. Throughout at least the pre-AKP Turkish Republican history, the expectation was that Alevi should blend in with the rest of the Turkish population under the banner of secularism, even though divisions within Islam continued to play a significant role in society (see also Grigoriadis 2006). The existence of the Alevi has in fact been seen as "a threat to the integrity of Islam as a religion and as a unifying force for the nation" (Erdogan 2006: 26). While in Turkish public discourse the Kurdish issue has recently been talked about more frankly,[1] the same trend is not visible for the Alevi. They seem to struggle still to find their place within a state founded on secular values but with the implicit state religion of Sunni Islam. The Alevi belief has never been officially recognized, and their practices are not represented in the compulsory religion courses in schools. In sum, "problems of Alevi groups are mostly related to the recognition of their religious identity" (Erdogan 2006: 28). Key demands of the Alevi have not been met in spite of persistent struggle. This is also partly due to internal divisions among the Alevi between those more supportive of the AKP and working to fit in with mainstream society, on the one side, and those who are critical of the AKP government, on the other. The latter tend to be left-liberal-progressive, Kemalist, traditional CHP supporters, firmly secularist, and recently sympathetic to the anti-government protests. They are, in short, in trouble in today's Turkey. Another important fact revealed in this and the seventh chapter, where our survey results are presented, is that, although the EU has been a major factor for the promotion of the rights of minority communities, the Alevi have displayed a critical attitude not only toward the AKP government but also toward the EU. This can be due to left-wing economic views which clash with the EU's neoliberal orientation as well as to their strong anchoring in pro-Republican ideology, which has portrayed the West as a potential source of threat for Turkish unity and integrity. Compared to the other minorities under examination here, the Alevi

most strongly identify with the Turkish Republican tradition, which has placed them in a historically paradoxical position between suffering from state-led repression and identifying strongly with the same state.

While the Alevi suffer the unique form of lack of recognition caused by being a Muslim minority expected to not accentuate its being different, non-Muslim minorities have other primary problems, notably "restrictions on their institutional, property and educational rights" (Erdogan 2006: 28). The Armenians have been recognized as a minority according to the Lausanne treaty and enjoyed the corresponding formal rights. According to Erdogan (2006), this has contributed to their grievances being neglected. They are "not seen, discussed or taken into account as a party in the democratisation process, in spite of efforts to the contrary by the EU institutions" (Ibid.: 26). The full reasons for their neglect are that 1) their rights were guaranteed in Lausanne, so the perception is that they have no legitimate reasons to complain; 2) they never engaged in armed conflict to protect their rights and so the media largely ignored them; and 3) they are few in numbers. "In sum", according to Erdogan (2006), "they did not constitute any threat to the security considerations of the state. They were simply ignored." This might indeed explain the many remaining grievances of this community, which were presented in Chap. 5. Notable is also that the Armenians, like the Syriacs, live with a history of massive persecution. Today they appear deeply divided between seeking accommodation toward, even assimilation into mainstream society, and actively striving for more rights.

The Syriacs' history of persecution and emigration has brought them to the brink of extinction in Turkey. While a Christian minority like the Armenians, they are not recognized as a minority according to the Lausanne treaty. This has put them under consistent pressure to either leave their homelands in Turkey or assimilate. As is also the case for the Armenians, we see especially high levels of assimilation in Istanbul, the big-city environment. However, since the 2000s we can also see some more organizing on the part of Syriac civil society. The beginning of the EU accession process might have been a turning point in this regard. Today, the Syriacs receive more attention in Turkey, and there have been some advances in their situation. However, our interviews and surveys have revealed a deep sense of caution and suspicion, a fear of asking for too much. Syriacs still experience much harassment, especially in the Turabdin. Generally speaking, in the countryside, conflict between distinct groups is exacerbated by struggles over scarce resources and by less liberal attitudes. The Syriacs

returning to their homelands after emigration have it most difficult, as the AKP government does not really seem willing to help them: It needs the support of the conservative Kurds, with whom the Syriacs often experience conflict, to control the region. Still, at the time of our survey the Syriacs were quite supportive of the AKP, stating that it has brought about an improvement of their situation. The CHP has been seen as problematic, because of its traditional propagation of Turkish-Muslim nationalism. The BDP/HDP has been gaining cautious support as the party aiming to represent Turkey's minorities. Most recently, as a result of renewed fighting in the Turabdin region, the Syriacs are again existentially threatened and might soon lose, if they have not already, all sense of improvements they have gained over the preceding years.

Comparing our minority groups in Chap. 7 has revealed a host of interesting findings, of which we will only stress a few here. When we compare our respondents' sense of their groups' collective identities, we can see that the Syriacs' group identity is most distinct. The Alevi's is less distinct but seems to be in the process of becoming stronger. Armenians lie in the middle but also show stronger tendencies to assimilation than the other two groups. This may surprise readers, as one might expect that an Islamic community would be more prone to progressively integrate in Turkey, while the Armenians, given all the disputes over their history, would be developing a more pronounced sense of distinction. The opposite seems to be the case. It is the Alevi who are currently undergoing a process of alienation from Turkish mainstream society, while Armenians are moving in the opposite direction and the Syriacs are hedging their bets.

The reported relationships of all three groups with the Turkish state are very bad indeed. Armenians stand out as being relatively more content compared to the other groups and as seeing improvement in the state's attitude since the AKP came to power—again this might surprise those who associate Armenians primarily with the genocide debate. It is quite clear that other issues matter more to Turkey's Armenians. Members of both Christian minorities generally see a small improvement when comparing their current situation (at the time of our survey) and that at the time of the AKP's coming to power. The Erdoğan government as such is perceived differently by the minorities. While especially the Alevi are very skeptical and rather see a deterioration of their situation as a result of AKP government, the Syriacs are undecided, and the Armenians even sense an improvement of their situation until recently. However, at the time of writing the tables have already turned again, and the minorities' situations

are no longer improving, in some respects even deteriorating. This is also to do with declining EU influence—we will return to this point below.

A further and particularly alarming finding reported in Chap. 7 is that the members of the minorities polled have basically no trust at all in any state or other majority public institution. This should be serious cause for concern, as it indicates a general climate of fundamental insecurity for minorities and makes their inclusion into a pluralized and democratized Turkey very difficult, even in the best case scenario that Turkish governments would consistently seek to move in this direction. Alarming is also the felt pressure to emigrate: Syriacs report that they feel very strong pressure to emigrate, followed by the Armenians, but even the Alevi feel such pressure. All three groups also feel pressure to assimilate; particularly the Armenians seem likely to give in to such pressure at the present time. In regard to this as many other problems, the Alevi see further deterioration while the other groups see some improvement, atleast until recently.

In spite of all differences between them, the religious minorities studied here share some important basic demands: All want official recognition as a minority group; all want expanded constitutional safeguards for minority rights; and all want solutions to their specific and often very practical problems. It is also evident that they are haunted by fear of losing what little they have—this is visible even among the Alevi but especially among the Armenians and Syriacs. It must be seen as a further indication of a fundamental sense of insecurity of religious minorities within the Turkish state and society.

8.2   Looking Forward

As a result of partial desecuritization of minority rights in the last decade alongside Turkey's EU accession process, real improvements have been made in the situation of minorities in Turkey. For instance, the new Foundation Laws adopted in 2008, despite some shortcomings, support the restitution of previously confiscated properties. Notwithstanding the significant progress made, these reform efforts need to be complemented by further improvements in the fields of education rights, political participation of minorities, the media—in minority languages and about minorities, religious education, right to property, right to association and peaceful assembly, freedom of movement, and prohibition of discrimination. The new constitution in preparation by the Turkish government will prove to be a test case for the democratic credentials of the state as regards

the treatment of minorities. The removal of discriminatory provisions against minorities, such as mandatory religious education, from the current constitution, which was drafted in the aftermath of the 1980 coup, would help continue the desecuritization process.

A caveat here is that the desecuritization of minority rights, while generally a beneficial process aligning such rights to liberal norms and values, does not automatically lead to improvement for the situations of minorities. Being made part of "normal politics" can also mean that the issue area becomes hijacked by other actors with other interests, which might not necessarily coincide with those of the affected minorities. In Turkey, the securitization of minority rights was clearly tied to the Kemalist, Republican tradition, and a strong role of the military-secular establishment. Desecuritization has been facilitated by and gone hand in hand with their declining relevance and power and the rise to power of different elites. But this does not necessarily have to be all good news. It might not solve old societal conflicts but rather rearrange them, or create new ones. What we can observe in Turkey is a growing influence of the majority Sunni version of Islam under the leadership of a populist and increasingly autocratic government. This might mean that minorities might once again be framed as "other" and suffer the consequences, only now based on different premises, such as on open religious and cultural divisions which were previously kept under tabs by a secularist state ideology.

Given these conditions, the best hope for Turkey's religious minorities might now be a paradigm shift from active to passive secularism (Warhola and Bezci 2010). This could address the Alevi's worries about increasing threats to secularism and counter the polarization which would otherwise result naturally from the rising societal salience of religion since the AKP's rise to power (and which would harm also Armenians and Syriacs). In any case, it is clear that in order to really improve the lives of its minorities, Turkey needs liberal democratization, not religious-conservative majoritarianism, or increasing authoritarianism.

Turning, lastly, to the role of the European Union, undoubtedly the EU has played a significant part in the desecuritization of minority rights in Turkey. The new political environment which it helped construct made it possible to question the previously dominant exclusivist notion of Turkish citizenship and helped to remove hurdles to the free exercise of religious, political, and cultural rights for minority groups. Indicative of this change, the number of minority associations rose significantly, and there is now more print and visual material published on minorities.

As a result of legislative changes, more and more members of minorities lodge cases with the Turkish courts as well as with the European Court of Human Rights.

But can the accession process continue to help improve the situation of minorities in Turkey? Not the way things are going now. As Onar and Özgüneş (2010: 121) point out, the European minority regime is a "flawed model of best practice for at least three reasons": there is no consensus on what constitutes a minority; there is a gap between directives to members and candidates (double standards); and there is a "discrepancy between the EU's compelling normative thrust and lack of concrete guidelines" (Ibid.: 122). This all means that "the carrot and sticks approach to minority protection can spur the enactment of reform, but does not guarantee the internalization of the norm nor ensure that formal reform will be translated into practice" (Ibid.: 123).

A second problem is that, at the moment, given the obvious reluctance on the part of the EU, the accession perspective is no longer credible to Turkey, and EU conditionality therefore does not properly work. Europeanization in Turkey basically continues, to the extent that it does, for fear of the alternatives, not because the EU is able to exert "soft power". It has become a mainly technocratic process, carried on by the negotiating teams and bureaucrats on both sides, that lacks political vision and guidance. The AKP government increasingly prioritizes domestic and foreign policy concerns that lead it to diverge from EU expectations. The EU seems to care less and less about what is happening in Turkey, which is shortsighted for a whole range of reasons and which does not help Turkey's minorities.

A third problem is that European counterparts have shown little comprehension of nor understanding for the fact that minority rights had been heavily securitized domestically for Turkey's entire Republican history, and to some extent even before. They have thereby been ill-prepared for the task at hand. As evidenced by our surveys, the EU does not get a good rap among Turkey's religious minorities. The Alevi are again most skeptical, followed by the Armenians and the Syriacs (who again do not ask for much). The Alevi have even turned in their majority against EU membership (while Armenians remain clearly supportive and Syriacs lie in between).[2] This may indicate that the minorities feel the EU is not fighting for them with enough determination (e.g. by being too lenient with the Turkish government), or that its involvement has unwanted negative repercussions for them (e.g. by drawing attention to them which

results in increased pressure), or both. More research is needed to help us understand these views and develop lessons on how EU and other external actors might actually be more and more consistently helpful for the struggling Turkish religious minorities.

Note

1. At least this was the case until summer 2015, when relations between the AKP and the PKK as well as the HDP began to deteriorate again.
2. These are the results of our quantitative analysis. Our qualitative research has delivered somewhat different results on this point, with Syriacs and especially Armenians appearing also highly critical of EU membership. We cannot here resolve this puzzle.

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Appendix A: Survey and Interview Questions

Note 1—Merging of Three Original Questionnaires: The following questionnaire contains questions and answers of all three original questionnaires since most of the questions are the same or only slightly differ. If only the respective minority's name differs, the names are written in squared brackets only separated by slashes, e.g. [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]. Questions and/or answers *not* identically included in all three original questionnaires are preceded by a hint in squared brackets, e.g. [only Alevis].

Note 2—Formatting: Questions are written in bold type. Different answers are separated by hyphens preceded and followed by spaces, e.g. yes—no. If a question should be answered with regard to several items (groups, topics, etc.), these items are written in italic type. Additional instructions are written in capital letters. Underlines are reproduced as in the original questionnaires.

    With the help of the following questions, we could like to get to know your personal view on different topics. There are no right or wrong answers. Therefore please, do not consider what answers other persons think you should give—but choose the answers reflecting your own, your personal opinion. Such answers are most useful for us.

Please, answer all questions on your own! Follow the given order of questions and please do not omit any question. While answering, do not look back to pages with already answered questions and do not look at the following pages. Your answers will be treated with the utmost discretion and will only be used for scientific purposes.

Thank you very much for your participation!

1. **With my current life, I am…**
   very satisfied—satisfied—neither satisfied nor dissatisfied—dissatisfied—very dissatisfied

2. **I look forward to the coming year…**
   with great hope—with some hope—with neither hope nor fears—with some fears—with great fears

   [only Syriacs] **A. Place of residence in Turkey**
   I am living in Turkey nearly all the time.—I am living in Turkey since my return or emigration in ___—I am living in Turkey for several months per year and also have a place of residence abroad.

3. **How many inhabitants does the place of residence have where you <u>have grown up</u>?**
   up to 200—200–1000—1000–5000—5000–10,000—10,000–50,000—50,000–100,000—100,000–500,000—500,000–1,000,000—more than 1,000,000

4. **How many inhabitants does the place of residence <u>in Turkey</u> have where you are <u>currently living for the most time</u>?**
   up to 200—200–1000—1000–5000—5000–10,000—10,000–50,000—50,000–100,000—100,000–500,000—500,000–1,000,000—more than 1,000,000

5. **At the place of residence in Turkey where you are living for the most time, there are…**
   [only Alevis] (nearly) only Alevis—mostly Alevis—a balanced number of Alevis and Sunnites—mostly Sunnites—(nearly) only Sunnites

   [only Syriacs and Armenians] (nearly) only Christians—mostly Christians- a balanced number of Christians and Muslims—mostly Muslims—(nearly) only Muslims

6. **In daily life, how often do you get in touch with the following groups?**
   PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

[only Alevis] *other Alevis; Sunnites; Shiites; Jews; Christians; Yezids; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Syriacs] *other Syriacs; other Christians in Turkey; Muslims; Yezids; Alevis; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Armenians] *other Armenians; other Christians in Turkey; Muslims; Jews; Alevis; other, e.g. ___ :*

very often—often—sometimes—rarely—very rarely/never

7. **How often do you get in touch with other [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] outside Turkey?**

PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

[only Alevis] *in Europe; in Sweden; in France; in Belgium; in Germany; in the USA; in Australia; other, e.g. ___; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Syriacs] *in Arabic neighbouring countries; in Europe; in Sweden; in Switzerland; in Germany; in the USA; in Australia; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Armenians] *in Armenia; in Europe; in France; in the United Kingdom; in Germany; in the USA; in Australia; other, e.g. ___ :*

very often—often—sometimes—rarely—very rarely/never

8. [only Alevis] **How many <u>close</u> Sunnite friends do you have in Turkey?**

8. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **How many <u>close</u> Muslim friends do you have in Turkey?**

a great many—many—some—few—no

9. [only Alevis] **In Turkey, do you have more Sunnite than Alevi relatives/friends?**

9. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In Turkey, do you have more Muslim than Christian relatives/friends?**

yes—no

10. **How much do you feel as…?**

PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

[only Alevis] *European; Alevi; Turk (people/nation); Turk (citizen); Kurd; Zaza; Kurmanji; Arab; Turkman; inhabitant of your place of residence; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Syriacs] *European; Christian; Turk (people/nation); Turk (citizen); Syriacs; inhabitant of the Turabdin; inhabitant of your place of residence; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Armenians] *European; Christian; Turk (people/nation); Turk (citizen); Armenian; inhabitant of your place of residence; other, e.g. ___ :*

very much—much—medium—little—very little/not at all

11. **How much do you feel as member of a minority in Turkey?**

very much—much—medium—little—very little/not at all

12. **How often do you, as [Alevi/Syriac/Armenian], publicly avow yourself to being member of the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]?**

very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never

13. **How important are the following characteristics for your [Alevi/Syriac/Armenian] identity?**

PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

[only Alevis] *religion; culture; history; ethnic origin; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Syriacs and Armenians] *language; religion; culture; history; ethnic origin; other, e.g. ___ :*

very important—important—partly important—less important—not at all important

14. [only Alevis] **What do you think, how developed are the similarities between the Alevis and the Sunnite majority society?**

14. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **What do you think, how developed are the similarities between the [Syriacs/Armenians] and the Muslim majority society?**

very developed—developed—partly developed—less developed—very less/not at all developed

15. **How much do you trust the following ethnic and religious groups in Turkey?**

PLEASE ONLY ANSWER THIS QUESTION, IF YOU REALLY WANT TO ANSWER.

PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

[only Alevis] *Alevis; Turks; Kurds; Arabs; Sunnites; Shiites; Christians; Jews; Yezids; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Syriacs] *Syriacs; Turks; Kurds; Arabs; Muslims; Alevis; other orthodox Christians; other non-orthodox Christians; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Armenians] *Armenians; Turks; Kurds; Arabs; Muslims; Alevis; other orthodox Christians; other non-orthodox Christians; other, e.g. ___ :*

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

16. **What do you think, how developed are equal opportunities of [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] within the Turkish society with regard to the following areas?**

     PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

     politics; society; culture; professional life; daily life; recreational activities; values and norms; language; religion; all in all; other, e.g. ___ :

     very developed—developed—partly developed—less developed—very less/not at all developed

17. **How has the equality of opportunity of [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] developed during the last 10 years?**

     great improvement—small improvement—no change—small deterioration—great deterioration

18. **As how important do you perceive the following characteristics for the sustainment of your group?**

     PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

     [only Alevis] *religion; culture; origin; history; marriage only among Alevis; other, e.g. ___ :*

     [only Syriacs] *language; religion; culture; origin; history; marriage only among Syriacs; other, e.g. ___ :*

     [only Armenians] *language; religion; culture; origin; history; marriage only among Armenians; other, e.g. ___ :*

     very important—important—partly important—less important—not at all important

19. [only Alevis] **In your view, does the young Alevi generation increasingly adopt elements of Sunnite culture and identity?**

19. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In your view, does the young [Syriac/Armenian] generation increasingly adopt elements of Muslim (respectively Turkish or Kurdish) culture and identity?**

     very often—often—sometimes—rarely—not at all

20. [only Alevis] **In your opinion, what attitude towards the Alevis does the <u>Sunnite majority society</u> have?**

20. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In your opinion, what attitude towards the [Syriacs/Armenians] does the <u>Muslim majority society</u> have?**

     (very) positive—rather positive—neutral—rather negative—(very) negative

21. **In your opinion, what attitude towards the [Alevis/Syriacs/ Armenians] does the <u>Turkish state</u> have?**

     (very) positive—rather positive—neutral—rather negative— (very) negative

22. **To what extent do you are religious?**

     very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

23. **How important is religion in your daily life?**

     very important—quite important—neither quite nor less important—less important—not at all important

24. [only Alevis] **What do you think, to what extent does the Alevi religious education affect Alevi children and teenagers?**

24. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **What do you think, to what extent does the Christian religious education affect [Syriac/ Armenian] children and teenagers?**

     very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

25. [only Alevis] **What do you think, to what extent does the Sunnite-Islamic religious education in Turkey affect Alevi children and teenagers?**

25. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **What do you think, to what extent does the Islamic religious education in Turkey affect [Syriac/ Armenian] children and teenagers?**

     very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

26. **To what extent do you feel constrained while practising your religion in Turkey?**

     very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

27. **How have the opportunities to practise your religion changed during the last years?** *They have…*

     (much) improved—slightly improved—not changed—slightly deteriorated—(much) deteriorated

28. [only Alevis] **In your view, what attitude towards the Alevis do official representatives of the Sunnite-Islamic religious community have?**

28. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In your view, what attitude towards the [Syriacs/Armenians] do official representatives of the Islamic religious community have?**

(very) positive—rather positive—neutral—rather negative—(very) negative

29. [only Alevis] **In your view, how has the attitude of official representatives of the Sunnite-Islamic religious community towards the Alevis changed during the last years?**

29. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In your view, how has the attitude of official representatives of the Islamic religious community towards the [Syriacs/Armenians] changed during the last years?**

    (much) improved—slightly improved—not changed—slightly deteriorated—(much) deteriorated

30. [only Alevis] **Do you encounter pressure to Sunnite Islamize in Turkey?**

30. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **Do you encounter pressure to Islamize in Turkey?**

    very great pressure—rather great pressure—medium pressure—rather small pressure—very small pressure/no pressure at all

31. **How has this pressure to Islamize changed during the last years?** *The pressure to Islamize has…*

    very much risen—risen—not changed—declined—very much declined

32. **Do you get involved with political aims?**

    very much—much—moderately—somewhat—not at all

33. **Where do you get involved?**

    MULTIPLE ANSWERS POSSIBLE

    political party, movement etc.—trade union—association, club—citizen's group—national association—cultural activities—church/religious association—youth organisation—other, e.g. ___—nowhere at the moment

34. **How much do you trust the following institutions in Turkey with regard to protection of (religious) minorities?**

    PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

    president; government; parliament; political parties; opposition; authorities; judiciary; police; military; Turkish radio/TV; Turkish press; non-Turkish radio/TV from Turkey; non-Turkish press from Turkey; [Alevi/Syriac/Armenian] radio/TV; [Alevi/Syriac/Armenian] press; international radio/TV; international press; education system; elected regional administration/mayor; centrally appointed regional administration; local administration :

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—not at all

35. **How many of the currently <u>four</u> parties/party associations in the Turkish parliament do you not like?**

    four (all)—three—two—one—none

36. **How many of the current parties/party associations in the Turkish parliament would you maybe support?**

    four (all)—three—two—one—none

37. **To what extent do you feel represented by the following institutions?**

    PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

    [only Alevis] *president; government; parliament; political parties; opposition; authorities; Alevis religious organisations (Cem Evleri); Alevi organisations in Turkey; Alevi organisations from abroad; Turkish human rights organisations; foreign human rights organisations; European Union :*

    [only Syriacs] *president; government; parliament; political parties; opposition; authorities; Syriac Church; Syriac organisations in Turkey; Syriac organisations from abroad; Turkish human rights organisations; foreign human rights organisations; European Union:*

    [only Armenians] *president; government; parliament; political parties; opposition; authorities; Armenian Church; Armenian organisations in Turkey; Armenian organisations from abroad; Turkish human rights organisations; foreign human rights organisations; European Union :*

    very well represented—quite well represented—neither well nor poorly represented—rather poorly represented—very poorly/not at all represented

38. **In your opinion, to what extent has the EU's political pressure on the Turkish government changed/improved your legal, political, social, and religious situation during the last years?**

    very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—very small extent/not at all

39. **How would you judge the EU's actions in Turkey in favour of the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]?**

    very satisfying—satisfying—moderately—disappointing—very disappointing

40. [only Alevis] **How have the relations between Turkey and the EU changed during the last 10 years?**

40. [only Syriacs] **How have the relations between Turkey and other Christian countries changed during the last 10 years?**
40. [only Armenians] **How have the relations between Turkey and Armenia changed during the last 10 years?**
    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened
41. [only Alevis] **How satisfied are you with the relations between the Alevis and the <u>Sunnite majority society</u> in Turkey?**
41. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **How satisfied are you with the relations between the [Syriacs/Armenians] and the <u>Muslim majority society</u> in Turkey?**
    (very) satisfied—rather satisfied—neither satisfied nor dissatisfied—rather dissatisfied—(very) dissatisfied
42. **How satisfied are you with the relations between the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] and the <u>Turkish state</u>?**
    (very) satisfied—rather satisfied—neither satisfied nor dissatisfied—rather dissatisfied—(very) dissatisfied
43. [only Alevis] **In your view, how have the relations between Alevis and the Sunnite majority society changed during the last 10 years?**
43. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In your view, how have the relations between [Syriacs/Armenians] and the Muslim majority society changed during the last 10 years?**
    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened
44. **In your view, how have the relations between [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] and the Turkish state changed during the last 10 years?**
    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened
45. **In your opinion, marriage of relatives with members of other ethnic or religious groups is...**
    PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.
    [only Alevis] *Sunnites; Shiites; Christians; Yezids; Jews; Alevis; other, e.g. ___ :*
    [only Syriacs] *Muslims; Syriacs; other orthodox Christians (e.g. Armenians, Greek); other non-orthodox Christians; Alevis; Yezids; Jews; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Armenians] *Muslims; Armenians; other orthodox Christians (e.g. Syriacs, Greek); other non-orthodox Christians; Alevis; Yezids; Jews; other, e.g. ___ :*

(very) acceptable—rather acceptable—neither acceptable nor unacceptable—rather unacceptable—(very) unacceptable

46. [only Alevis] **How often do you participate in Sunnite cultural and religious festivities and other events (marriages, Mevlud, Kurban Bajram etc.)?**
46. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **How often do you participate in Muslim cultural and religious festivities and other events (marriages, Barjam, Ramadan etc.)?**
    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never
47. [only Alevis] **How often do you invite Sunnites to Alevi cultural-religious festivities?**
47. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **How often do you invite Muslims to Christian respectively [Syriac/Armenian] cultural-religious festivities?**
    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never
48. **If you are invited by Sunnites, how often are these invitations culturally obligatory?**
    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never
49. **To what extent are these invitations and visits motivated by your personal interest or positive sentiments?**
    very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—very small extent/not at all
50. [only Alevis] **How often, do you think, does the Sunnite majority society discriminate against Alevis?**
50. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **How often, do you think, does the Muslim majority society discriminate against [Syriacs/Armenians]?**
    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never
51. **How often, do you think, does the Turkish state discriminate against [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]?**
    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never
52. **How often did you personally experience discrimination by the majority society?**
    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never
53. **How often did you personally experience discrimination by the Turkish state?**

    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never

54. **In your opinion, how has the majority society's attitude respectively behaviour towards the [Alevis/Syriacs/ Armenians] changed during the last 10 years?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened— (very) much worsened

55. **In your opinion, how has the Turkish state's attitude respectively behaviour towards the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] changed during the last 10 years?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened— (very) much worsened

56. **How, do you think, has the attitude of parties/politicians towards the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] changed during the last 10 years?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened— (very) much worsened

57. **How has your personal attitude towards the Turkish state changed during the last 10 years?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened— (very) much worsened

58. [only Alevis] **How has your personal attitude towards the Sunnite majority society changed during the last 10 years?**

58. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **How has your personal attitude towards the Muslim majority society changed during the last 10 years?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened— (very) much worsened

59. **In which areas do you notice discrimination against [Alevis/ Syriacs/Armenians]?**

    PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

    freedom of religion; education system; society; state; judiciary; freedom of expression; basic rights; economy; buying land; professional life; military; Turkish radio/TV; non-Turkish radio/TV; Turkish press; non-Turkish press; culture; ethnic self-fulfilment; history; other, e.g. ___ :

    very often—often—sometimes—rarely—never

60. **In your view, to what extent do the following elements cause discrimination against the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] in Turkey?**

PLEASE PUT A CROSS IN EVERY LINE.

[only Alevis] *Alevism in general; ethnic origin; Alevi culture; Alevi history; the Sunnites' social and economic fears; other, e.g. ___ :*

[only Syriacs and Armenians] *Christian religion; ethnic origin; [Syriac/Armenian] culture; [Syriac/Armenian] history; the Muslims' social and economic fears; other, e.g. ___ :*

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

61. **To what extent have the political and social changes in Turkey during the last years reduced discrimination against the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]?**

very much decreased—considerably decreased—slightly decreased—hardly decreased—not at all decreased

62. **How has the state's protection of (religious) minorities changed during the last 10 years?**

(very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened

63. **In your opinion, how has the attitude of state-owned and privately-owned media towards the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] changed during the last 10 years?**

(very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened

64. [only Alevis] **In your view, to what extent are past assaults respectively massacres of Alevis (e.g. 1938, 1978, 1993) critically reviewed in Turkey?**

64. [only Syriacs] **In your view, to what extent are past assaults respectively massacres of Christians (e.g. 1915) critically reviewed in Turkey?**

64. [only Armenians] **In your view, to what extent are past assaults respectively massacres of Armenians (e.g. 1915) critically reviewed in Turkey?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

65. [only Alevis] **How has the critical review of past assaults respectively massacres of Alevis (e.g. 1938, 1978, 1993) changed during the last 10 years?**

65. [only Syriacs] **How has the critical review of past assaults respectively massacres Christians (e.g. 1915) changed during the last 10 years?**

65. [only Armenians] **How has the critical review of past assaults respectively massacres of Armenians (e.g. 1915) changed during the last 10 years?**

(very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened

[only Syriacs] **B. Do you think the Syriacs in Turkey are made responsible for conflicts between Turkey and other Christian states (e.g. the Cyprus conflict or the cartoon controversy 2006) by the Turkish state?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

[only Armenians] **B. Do you think the Armenians in Turkey are made responsible for conflicts between Turkey and Armenia (or other Christian states) by the Turkish state?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

[only Syriacs] **C. Do you think the Syriacs in Turkey are made responsible for conflicts between Turkey and other Christian states (e.g. the Cyprus conflict or the cartoon controversy 2006) by the Turkish majority society?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

[only Armenians] **C. Do you think the Armenians in Turkey are made responsible for conflicts between Turkey and Armenia (or other Christian states) by the Turkish majority society?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

[only Syriacs and Armenians] **D. Has this treatment (C) changed during the last 10 years?**

(very) positively—rather positively—neither positively nor negatively—rather negatively—(very) negatively

[only Alevis] **E. In your opinion, who are the Alevis?**

Muslims/part of the Islam—partly Muslims, partly an independent religious group—an independent religious group—I don't know

[only Alevis] **F. Do you think the Alevi identity gradually evolves into an independent ethnic identity?**

yes—maybe—no—I don't know

[only Alevis] **G. How do you see the AKP's opening towards the Alevis?**

(very) positive—rather positive—neither positive nor negative—rather negative—(very) negative

[only Alevis] **H. In your view, how much does the AKP's opening towards the Alevis follow the demands of the Alevi community and solve its problems?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—not at all

66. [only Alevis] **As Alevi, to what extent do you feel understood and supported by the member states of the European Union with regard to political, legal, and religious problems?**

66. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **As [Syriac/Armenian], to what extent do you feel understood and supported by the Christian member states of the European Union with regard to political, legal, and religious problems?**

    (very) well—rather well—neither well nor poorly—rather poorly—(very) poorly

67. **How did your (political, legal, religious etc.) situation change under the Erdoğan government compared to its predecessor?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened

68. **How has the Erdoğan government's policy towards the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] as religious minority changed during the last 2 to 3 years compared to its first years of government?**

    (very) much improved—improved—not changed—worsened—(very) much worsened

69. **In your opinion, how much is the Turkish government interested in joining the European Union?**

    very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

70. [only Alevis] **In your opinion, how much is the Sunnite majority society interested in joining the European Union?**

70. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **In your opinion, how much is the Muslim majority society interested in joining the European Union?**

    very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

71. **How do you see the future EU-membership of Turkey?**

    very positive—rather positive—neither positive nor negative—rather negative—very negative

72. **What do you think, how likely is a future accession of Turkey to the EU?**

    very likely—likely—medium likely—unlikely—very unlikely

73. **How have the EU-accession negotiations affected the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]' position in Turkey since 1999?**

    very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

74. **In your view, what role does the EU play with regard to minority protection in Turkey?**

very great role—great role—medium role—small role—no role

75. **Do you think [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] are economically been disadvantaged due to their different religious orientation?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—hardly/not at all

76. **Do you think an improvement of the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]' legal, religious, political, and social position also improves their economic situation?**

very much—much—moderately—somewhat—not at all

77. **What do you think, in view of the current political developments in Turkey, how will the political, economic, religious, social, and cultural situation of the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] change during the next years?**

(very) much improve—improve—not change—worsen—(very) much worsen

78. [only Alevis] **To what extent does the Sunnite majority society force the Alevis to emigrate?**

78. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **To what extent does the Muslim majority society force the [Syriacs/Armenians] to emigrate?**

very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

79. **To what extent does the Turkish state force the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] to emigrate?**

very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

80. **If yes, how has the pressure to emigrate changed during the last 10 years?** *The pressure has…*

(very much) risen—slightly risen—not changed—slightly declined—(very much) declined

81. [only Alevis] **To what extent does the Sunnite majority society force the Alevis to assimilate?**

81. [only Syriacs and Armenians] **To what extent does the Muslim majority society force the [Syriacs/Armenians] to assimilate?**

very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

82. **To what extent does the Turkish state force the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians] to assimilate?**

very great extent—great extent—medium extent—small extent—not at all

83. **How has the pressure to assimilate changed during the last 10 years?** *The pressure has…*

    (very much) risen—slightly risen—not changed—slightly declined—(very much) declined

84. **What do you think about the [Alevis/Syriacs/Armenians]' future in Turkey compared to the current situation?** *The future will be…*

    much better—better—unchanged—worse—much worse

    General information about yourself
    PLEASE ANSWER THESE QUESTIONS, TOO.

85. **Gender:** male—female
86. **Age:** _____
87. **What is your highest educational degree?**

    no degree—primary education—junior high school—senior high school—university or college of higher education—doctorate

88. **How much do you earn per month?**

    less than 1000 Turkish Lira (TL)—1000–2000 TL—2000–4000 TL—4000–6000 TL—6000–10,000 TL—more than 10,000 TL

89. [only Alevis] **What is your native language?**

    Turkish—Kurdish—Turkmenian—Zaza—Arabic—other, e.g. ___

89. [only Syriacs] **How good is your knowledge of the Syriac language?**

    native language—second language—little knowledge—no knowledge

89. [only Armenians] **How good is your knowledge of the Armenian language?**

    native language—second language—little knowledge—no knowledge

90. **What other languages do you speak?**

    [only Alevis] Turkish—French—English—Kurdish—German—Arabic—Zaza—other, e.g. ___

    [Syriacs and Armenians] Turkish—French—English—Kurdish—German—Arabic—other, e.g. ___

91. **Further comments (optional):** ___

    THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR COOPERATION!

Appendix B: Interviews with Alevi NGO Leaders and Experts

Note: In addition to the interviews listed below, we carried out many interviews with private individuals, whose results also inform our analysis. The Interviews with the Alevi representatives were conducted by Mehmet Bardakçı.

Name	Function/ occupation	Organization	Minority group status	Date of interview	Location of interview
Doğan Bermek	General President	Federation of Alevi Foundations (Alevi Vakıfları Federasyonu, AVF)	Alevi	22 December 2011	Istanbul
Ali Kenanoğlu	Chairman	Hubyar Sultan Alevi Culture Association (Hubyar Sultan Alevi Kültür Derneği)	Alevi	22 December 2011	Istanbul
Selahattin Yıldız	Chairman	Alevi-Bektaşi Association (Alevi-Bektaşi Derneği)	Alevi	7 January 2012	İzmir
No Name	Official	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD) İzmir-Karşıyaka Branch	Alevi	27 November 2011	İzmir
Engin Gündük	Chairman	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD) İzmir-Buca Branch	Alevi	7 January 2012	İzmir

Name	Function/ occupation	Organization	Minority group status	Date of interview	Location of interview
Hıdır Akbayır	General Manager	Cem Foundation (Cem Vakfı)	Alevi	23 December 2011	Istanbul
Cemal Şahin	Secretary General	Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association (Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, PSAKD)	Alevi	9 December 2011	Ankara
Tuncer Baş	Deputy General President	Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian Culture Foundation (Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı, HBVAKV)	Alevi	9 December 2011	Ankara
Cafer Kotan	Honorary Chairman	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD) Kuşadası Branch	Alevi	28 January 2012	Kuşadası
No Name	Alevi dede	Ehl-i Beyt Belief, Education and Culture Foundation (Ehl-i Beyt İnanç, Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı)	Alevi	14 January 2012	İzmir
Ender Kırmızı	Chairman	Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association (Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği, PSAKD) Bornova Branch	Alevi	14 January 2012	İzmir
Yolcu Bilginç	General President	Tahtacı Culture Associations (Tahtacı Kültür Dernekleri)	Alevi-Tahtacı	14 January 2012	İzmir
Mustafa Arslan	Chairman	Alevi-Bektaşi Culture and Promotion Association (Alevi-Bektaşi Kültür Tanıtma Derneği)	Alevi	7 January 2012	İzmir
Erdal Demir	Chairman	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD) Aydın Branch	Alevi	27 January 2012	Aydın
Ali İhsan Şahin	Chairman	Cem Foundation İzmir Area	Alevi	20 January 2012	İzmir
Hüseyin Yıldırım	Secretary General	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD)	Alevi	8 December 2011	Ankara
Emel Sungur	General President	Pir Sultan Abdal 2. July Culture and Education Foundation (Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kültür ve Eğitim Vakfı)	Alevi	8 December 2011	Ankara

Name	Function/ occupation	Organization	Minority group status	Date of interview	Location of interview
Düzgün Çelik	Chairman	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD) Selçuk Branch	Alevi	28 January 2012	Selçuk
No Name	Deputy Chairman	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD) Menderes Branch	Alevi	27 January 2012	Menderes
Selahattin Özel	General President	Alevi Culture Associations (Alevi Kültür Dernekleri, AKD)	Alevi	20 January 2012	İzmir
Fermani Altun	Chairman	World Ehl-i Beyt Foundation (Dünya Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı)	Alevi	22 December 2011	Istanbul

Appendix C: Interviews with Armenian Institutional Representatives and Activists

Note: In addition to the interviews listed below, we carried out many interviews with private individuals, whose results also inform our analysis. The Interviews with the Armenian representatives were conducted by Christoph Giesel.

Name/interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview
Sibil Cekmen	Representative/ Activist	**Ermeni Kültürü ve Dayanışma Derneği (Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association)**	10 and 11 February 2012 10 August 2012	Istanbul
Mirhan Pirgiç Gültekin	Chairman	Dersim Ermenileri Sosyal Yardımlaşma Derneği (Dersim Armenian Social Aid Association)	11 June 2012 3 November 2013 — 28 July 2012	Istanbul — Dersim (Tunceli)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 01	Journalist/ Representative/ Human and Minority Rights Activist	AGOS newspaper and Armenian secular NGO in Istanbul (anonymous)	18 September 2011 26 November 2011 21 April 2012 17 October 2012	Istanbul

(*continued*)

Name/interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 02	Armenian Co-Organiser / Representative	Multi-ethnical/ -cultural/ -religious Internet radio project "Nor Radyo"	19 October 2011 9 June 2012 2 November 2013	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 03	Armenian (religious) Activist	Protestant Christian Church Organisation (anonymous)	19 October 2011 29 December 2011 6 January 2012 3 November 2013 23 August 2014 6 August 2015	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 04	Part of the leadership	**Ermeni Kültürü ve Dayanışma Derneği (Armenian Culture and Solidarity Association)**	16 November 2011	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 05	Representative/ Activist	CSO "Nor Zatonk"	25 November 2011 20 April 2012	Istanbul
No name (female): anonymous IP no. 06	Representative/ Activist	Hrant Dink Vakfı (-Foundation)	26 November 2011	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 07	Journalist, Representative, Activist	AGOS newspaper and Armenian Orthodox Church Organisation in Istanbul (anonymous, no. 1)	27 December 2011 10 August 2012 2 November 2013 12 October 2014 7 August 2015	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 08	Representative/ Activist, special function: anonymous	Armenian Orthodox Church Foundation in Istanbul (anonymous, no. 2)	7 January 2012	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 09	Chairman	Armenian secular NGO in Istanbul (anonymous)	4 and 23 February 2012 4 November 2013	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 10	Functionary and altar server	Armenian Orthodox Church Foundation/ in Istanbul (anonymous, no. 3)	5 February 2012 13 October 2014	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 11	Representative, special function: anonymous	Vakıflı Köyü Ermeni Ortodoks Kilisesi Vakfı (Vakıflı Köyü Armenian Orthodox Church Foundation)	19 February 2012	Vakıflı Köyü

Name/interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 12	Representative/ Activist	Vakıflı Köyü Kalkındırma ve Dayanışma Derneği (Vakıflı Köyü Village Development and Solidarity Association)	20 February 2012	Samandağ
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 13	Religious Representative and Activist, special function: anonymous	Armenian Church Organisation in the Iskenderun- Antakya region (anonymous)	22 February 2012	Iskenderun
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 14	active Armenian political party member/local politician	CHP—Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (Republican People's Party)	18 April 2012	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 15	Journalist	Armenian newspaper from Istanbul in Armenian language (anonymous)	12 June 2012	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 16	Representative, special function: anonymous	Cultural and social organization for Kurdish/Zaza Alevi converts with Armenian Christian Orthodox roots	28 June 2012	Dersim (Tunceli)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 17	(Armenian) Representative	Christian religious organization (anonymous) from Malatya	29 June 2012	Dersim (Tunceli)
No name (female): anonymous IP no. 18	Representative/ Minority Rights and Social Activist	Cultural, religious and charitable Organisation of Islamized and Crypto-Armenians (anonymous organisation and town [no. 1] in Anatolia)	3 November 2013	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 19	Representative	Religious and cultural Armenian Association (anonymous organisation and town [no. 2] in Anatolia)	4 November 2013	Istanbul

Appendix D: Interviews with Syriac Institutional Representatives and Activists

Note: In addition to the interviews listed below, we carried out many interviews with private individuals, whose results also inform our analysis. The Interviews with the Syriac representatives were conducted by Christoph Giesel.

Name/ interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview(s)
Yakup Gabriel	Local politician Independent minority rights and NGO activist	Halkların Demokratik Partisi (HDP) Midyat Süryani Kültür Derneği (Syriac Culture Association Midyat)	23 November 2011 27 October 2013	Midyat
No name (female): anonymous IP no. 01	Syriac Humanitarian Aid and Gender Activist	Syriac Association (anonymous)	27 October 2013	Midyat
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 02	Representative (special functions: anonymous)	Syriac Orthodox Church/Syriac Association (anonymous)	7 August 2011 26 July 2012 28 October 2013	Midyat

(*continued*)

Name/ interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview(s)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 03	Chairman	Syriac Association (anonymous)	24 December 2011 27 October 2013	Midyat
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 04	Chairman/ Minority Rights Activist	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 1 (Mardin-Midyat region)	9 August 2011 22 September 2011 19 December 2011 25 October 2012 28 October 2013 22 November 2015 (by telephone)	Midyat
No name (female): anonymous IP no. 05	Representative	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 2 (Mardin-Midyat region)	24 November 2011	Anonymous village no. 2 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 06	Chairman	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 3 (Mardin-Midyat region)	16 February 2012 26 October 2012	Anonymous village no. 3 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 07	Representative/ Activist	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 4 (Mardin-Midyat region)	14 February 2012	Anonymous village no. 4 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 08	Chairman	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 5 (Mardin-Midyat region)	25. October 2012	Anonymous village no. 5 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 09	Chairman	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 6 (Mardin-Midyat region)	12 August 2011 — 14 February 2012 27 October 2013	Anonymous village no. 6 (Mardin-Midyat region) — Midyat Midyat

Name/ interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview(s)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 10	Chairman	Syriac village association/ anonymous village no. 7 (Mardin-Midyat region)	14 August 2011 22 November 2011	Anonymous village no. 7 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 11	Representative	Syriac Church Foundation (anonymous)/ anonymous village no. 7 (Mardin-Midyat region)	23 November 2011	Anonymous village no. 7 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 12	Representative	Church Association (anonymous)/ Adıyaman	24 September 2011	Anonymous village no. 7 (Mardin-Midyat region)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 13	Representative/ independent ethno-political and cultural activist	Syriac Association (anonymous town, Mardin-Midyat region)	23 December 2011 — 11 June 2012 4 November 2013	Anonymous town (Mardin-Şırnak region) — Istanbul Istanbul
No name (female): anonymous IP no. 14	Representative/ Minority Rights, Humanitarian Aid and Church Activist	Several Syriac Associations	15 October 2011 17 February 2012 27 October 2013 (by telephone) — 30 and 31 March 2012	Anonymous town (Mardin-Şırnak region) — Qaraqosh/ Kirkuk (Iraq)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 15	Official, function: anonymous	Syriac Orthodox Church Foundation	12 August 2011 23 November 2011 25 July 2012	Mor Gabriel Monastery/ Midyat region
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 16	Official, special function: anonymous	Syriac Orthodox Church Foundation	23 November 2011 14 February 2012 24 October 2012	Deir-Ul Zafaran Monastery/ Mardin

Name/ interview partner (IP)	Function/ occupation	Organization	Dates of interviews	Location of interview(s)
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 17	Representative (special function: anonymous)	Mardin Süryani Birliği Derneği (Association of the Syriac Community in Mardin)	21 December 2011 13 February 2012 — 28 October 2013	Mardin — Midyat
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 18	Representative (special function: anonymous)	Syriac Church Organization in Mardin (anonymous)	23 November 2011	Mardin
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 19	Representative (special function: anonymous)	Religious Syriac Organisation (anonymous)	24 November 2011	Diyarbakır
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 20	Representative/ Ethno-cultural and Media activist	Syriac Association (anonymous)	18 November 2011 10 February 2012 2 November 2013 10 October 2014 20 November 2015	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 21	High Representative	Mezopotamia Derneği –Mezo-Der (Syriac Cultural Association Istanbul)	08 June 2012	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 22	Representative	Syriac-Chaldean (Catholic) Organisation (anonymous)	3 November 2013	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 23	Representative/ independent Syriac ethno-cultural and religious activist (Syriac)	Several Syriac Church and secular organizations (anonymous)	10 August 2012 7 August 2015	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 24	Representative	"Bible Society", Turkish branch/ Istanbul	19 October 2011 25 February 2012	Istanbul
No name (male): anonymous IP no. 25	Representative	Föderation der Aramäer in Deutschland/ Federation of Syriacs in Germany	17 January 2011	Berlin

Appendix E: Expert Interviews

Professor Günay Göksu Özdoğan
Faculty of Political Sciences/Department of Political Science
   and International Relations
Marmara University Istanbul
Interview Date and Place: 3 July 2011/Jena (Germany)

Professor Hüseyin Bağcı
Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences/Department
   of International Relations
Middle East Technical University Ankara
Interview Date and Place: 25 July 2011/Ankara

Professor Ayhan Yalçınkaya
Faculty of Political Sciences
Ankara University
Interview Date: 9 December 2011

Dr. Ohannes Kılıçdağı
Faculty of Social and Human Sciences/Department of Sociology Bilgi
   University Istanbul
Interview Date and Place: 23 February 2012/Istanbul

Phone Interview with Professor Yüksel Taşkın
Faculty of Political Sciences

Marmara University
Interview Date: 18 September 2013

Phone Interview with Journalist Ruşen Çakır
Vatan Daily Newspaper
Interview Date: 7 October 2013

Phone Interview with Visiting Researcher Dilek Kurban
Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik
Berlin
Interview Date: 16 October 2013

Assistant Professor Burak Gümüş
Faculty for Economics and Administrative Sciences/Department
    of Political and Social Sciences)
Trakya University Edirne
Interview Dates and Place: 17 October 2012, 31 October 2013,
    21 August 2014 and 6 August 2015/Edirne

Hazal Hürman
Journalist (BİA News) and Human Rights Activist/Istanbul
Interview Dates and Place: 10 August 2012, 13 October 2014
    and 7 August 2015/Istanbul

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[1] Note: Page numbers followed by 'n' refer to footnotes.