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The Alevi Social Movement's Contribution to Democracy in Turkey

New social movements emerge with democracy; at the same time they are forms of collective action that support democracies. New social movements, as challengers and as maintainers of democracy, involve continuous interaction between the challengers and system, protecting civil society from encroachments by the system. In that frame, social movements provide a means for activists to draw public attention to the population, issues, and programs that previously lacked political standing. In other words, they are specifically the bodies that identify problems and push them onto the public agenda.

Turkey was founded as an authoritarian unitary nation-state although its population was highly heterogeneous. However, new social movements try to politicize the institutions of civil society and thereby to reconstitute democratic demands in society. In this context, the Alevi social movement, while it tries to enter the public sphere and to express itself, has pushed for democracy in Turkey like other social movements.

In this session we will discuss how and in which ways the Alevi social movement has been supporting democracy in Turkey?