

Etöz, Zeliha, Ankara University, Tukey

Can Discrimination and Domination Produce Democratic Implications? If Answer is ‘yes’, in What Context? Life-world of Alevi and Kızılbâş.

An ethnic or religious minority can, above all, be defined by the relatively high degree of vulnerability of the group to discrimination and oppression. Once subjected to the effects of a negating environment as such, some of the group members may align themselves to accord with the external requirements imposed or with the elements of the surrounding culture, while the others might explicitly resist against, or tacitly exclude themselves from, the values, norms, ie, the world-view of the majority, which altogether results in the internal conflicts and even disintegration of the minority group.

However, under certain conditions, the group may exhibit an opposite reaction and the external force may induce a cohesion at the communal level, an inter-group solidarity, eliminating, with a certain degree of success, internal problems and conflicts, sometimes even leading to forms of self-government.

If the problem is examined in terms of means, rather than consequences, of the group dynamics in the second case, the minority may, under certain conditions, borrow the means of the majority (coercion, exclusion, etc.) in maintaining the internal order of the group, or adopt a totally different set of values (egalitarian, participative, etc.) for the same goal, depending on its sociocultural background. In the latter case, the minority may develop several patterns of interrelations and interactions, as a reaction to the attitude of, or in order to discriminate itself from, or to compensate for the sufferings caused by, the majority.

I would like to ask, therefore, if the practice of the discriminated/oppressed necessarily opens possibilities for counter practices of democracy within the minority group and to argue the meaning and extent of the inclusion of the participative, anti-hierarchical, egalitarian practices, and also to discuss if the use of such ‘democratic’ means and approval of such ‘democratic’ attitudes bring about the solution of above mentioned intergroup conflicts in the life-world of Alevi and Kızılbâş.