Ethnography with a Faith Community

Oscillating between In- and Outsider

Deniz Coşan Eke

Introduction

First let me introduce myself, I am a Turkish Alevi woman who immigrated to Germany and then, throughout her academic journey, discovered her deeply veiled identity and belief. That said, although I grew up in an Alevi family and an environment in which many Alevi live, I only started to identify as an Alevi after I started my PhD research. The main reason for this was my personal security, because in my childhood, Alevis' religious activities were mostly carried out in secret, as Alevism was not considered a legitimate (in either legal or religious terms) faith group in Turkey. Another reason was fear of discrimination, which is a common feeling amongst Alevis, not only personally, but also as a community of faith. My family warned me not to say explicitly that I was an Alevi, in order to protect myself from discrimination and socio-cultural pressures (Erdemir et al 2010). Consequently, I did not carry out any research on the Alevi faith until my doctoral research, and I did not participate in any religious rituals or practices during my time in Turkey due to the chilling effect of religious pressure. Therefore, my doctoral studies were a unique experience, in that I faced my own fears and in turn learned about the intricacies of my own identity. During my research, I was in a unique 'insider' position, as I was not only a curious PhD researcher, but also had the same cultural and religious background as the partici-

pants. Being Alevi evolved into a relational interface that has helped me to position myself within the existing networks of Alevi communities.

In my PhD research, I conducted ethnographic research on Alevi communities in Turkey and Germany in order to set the theological tradition of a faith sanctified in texts in relation to being embodied in rituals and practice (Wigg-Stevenson 2018). Hence, I analysed Alevi practices to explore how spirituality contributes to collective memory and identity. In brief, I examined the Alevi faith not only from its own internal perspective, but also to develop an external perspective by exploring narratives about believers, especially religious leaders.

Boundaries between the insider and outsider

During four long years of doctoral studies in Social Anthropology at LMU in Munich, I had the chance to do research both at home, in Turkey, and away from home, in Germany, in a country foreign to me, whilst also working with an inside belief group as a member of that group. This allowed me to "immerse in the social context under research" (Sökefeld/Dürr 2018:230). When I started my research, I defined Turkey as my home country, as I knew its language, culture, politics and social structure better than Germany. However, after many years of living in Germany, and with my time in Turkey dwindling, it was difficult for me to describe the latter as fieldwork at home. Of course, this does not mean that I would describe Germany as fieldwork at home, either. Rather, my situation and experience of feeling at home was time-dependent, as the Italian sociologists Paolo Boccagni and Carlos Vargas-Silvas also point out:

> As immigrants' life course proceeds, feeling at home has to do less with continuity with the past than with the possibility to live in a place perceived as safe, familiar and orderly, possibly with one's own family members. As time in immigration goes by, home ends up being a matter more of perceived normality than of ethnicity (2021: 12).

The changing meaning behind the concept of 'home' – for me as an immigrant – shaped my research and constantly led me to reconsider both my ideas and my feelings of belonging. During ethnographic work, researchers often discuss how they can reveal their identity, which in turn affects their research (see Smith 2016; Atay 2017).

After a while, my investigation also became an auto-ethnography in which I looked at myself as both an insider and an outsider to the group I was studying. This personal process allowed me to focus on many new topics, such as belonging and related experiences of fear and trust that were challenging for me.

Drawing on these personal experiences and feelings in my PhD research inspired me to write this article about my fieldwork, which in turn may provide insights for other researchers in this domain. Therefore, the main research question of this chapter examines some of the difficulties I encountered as an insider researcher doing ethnographic research within a faith community. I argue that research depends on whether the person conducting the research defines him or herself as a member of that belief or not. In other words, the vulnerabilities and privileges of researchers who are 'insiders' of a faith differ from those who are 'outsiders'. At the same time, my own example shows that the boundaries between insider and outsider are not that clearcut but are fluid and shaped by complex social, political and historical processes.

Religious ethnography

For an insider researcher, although research may seem to have many advantages in establishing close and trusting relationships with research participants, this position may represent the risk of losing critical distance and objectivity (Denscombe 2010). For example, the supernatural *Keramet* (miracle) stories that are part of Alevi mysticism are used by *dedes* to gain authority and legitimacy in front of their followers and against non-Alevi communities in Islam (Tee 2010). This authority may influence the researcher and make him or her want to believe in miracles.

However, there are two important points in this regard. First, when the researcher carries out fieldwork and runs with the narratives of these miracles, they may have more chance of understanding the practices and rituals of belief more deeply than an outsider researcher who does not believe or is not a member of the group. Second, if the researcher is a member of this group, questions about whether they believe in these miracles can be used to test how much they relates to the faith group. In either case, the researcher can use their insider theological knowledge, i.e., knowledge of the divine of religious belief, as an additional tool in their ethnography, in order to gain insights into different places, actions, ideas and groups.

Ethnography as "dense description" (Geertz 1973) can help in discovering believers' theological perspectives about a faith by using qualitative methods such as participant observation, field notes, interviews, diaries and document analysis (Whitehead 2005).

According to Julian Murchison and Curtis Coats, "ethnographic methods will also allow us to remain attendant to the social dimensions of complex flows and networks and avoid the tendency to perceive these religious practices as entirely individualized" (2015: 991). Along these lines, theological knowledge, discovered through ethnographic methods, can ensure that research on religion is an in-depth and comprehensive analysis. In this way, as James Bielo points out:

> Religious ethnography pushes the limits of the anthropological imperative of total fieldwork immersion. Ultimately, religious ethnography provides a sharp reminder that fieldwork is not simply a research task and a social endeavor, it is a moral, existential, and ontological project (2015: 33).

A researcher studying a faith community must consider that everyone therein has an idea, a feeling or an understanding of that faith. Thus, when one takes on the role of a researcher of a faith, even if they are a member of that faith, their expertise in all aspects of that belief will be tested by its followers. This testing situation can sometimes involve questions, and sometimes it can be in the form of observing the re-

searcher's participation in belief rituals. While the researcher observes a community, they are also observed by that community. In ethnographic fieldwork, surveillance or being observed by research participants is experienced for different reasons and to varying degrees (see Sökefeld and Strasser 2016). Most of the Alevis involved in my research, who had taken an active role in or supported leftist ideological movements, had had experience with state surveillance and were therefore sensitive to being observed, and thus they observed me in order to protect themselves from oppression and discrimination.

However, this observation – and this is what I wish to underline in this article – is not only a group's desire to ensure its own safety or to control the researcher, but it also an opportunity to ensure how sincere the researcher is in their expression and presentation of religious belief. Therefore, the researcher may perceive even more pressure than the believers of that faith to know in detail the sacred, theological and historical details. Despite this burden, the other important point is that ethnographic research involves serendipity and is based on social relationships and intensive interactions with research participants; hence, it often produces non-expected results. Therefore, the questions asked at the beginning of the fieldwork may change during the research and/or be enriched by complementary fieldwork as more and different questions arise. The methodological practice of anthropology, which characterises its difference from other disciplines, is aptly summarised by Martin Sökefeld and Miriam Ince (2016):

> For anthropology it is not a methodological problem to change the research question or the original research hypotheses in the course of research. On the contrary, it is almost a methodological premise of anthropology that the research perspective changes, because this is evidence that we have learned something new 'in the field' and therefore have to adapt our original research question to the new findings. Field research is thus based on the principle of trial and error and the constant feedback of (preliminary) results on the research question and methodology (2016:6).

I had a similar methodological problem when I started my PhD fieldwork and was flying blind until I found suitable questions for my research. I felt really stressed when I decided to change many of the questions I wrote down at the very outset. Throughout my earlier academic career in sociology, I had researched mainly by trying to answer the following questions: "What happened? Has it happened everywhere? Has it been repeated over time? What are the underlying causes of this phenomenon?" Consequently, I did not need to change the research questions, as I was collecting data around more generalised questions. In contrast to sociological research, as stated by Biole, "ethnographic success and failure hangs in the balance of how well relationships with fellow humans are established and nurtured" (2015: 31). As a matter of fact, ethnographic research as the primary methodological approach used to analyse faith groups makes it possible to communicate effectively and build mutual trust with them.

By participating in the research group and their religious and cultural activities, my PhD thesis advisor, Martin Sökefeld, stated that establishing a bond of trust, especially with the members of a belief community, is the most fundamental condition of cooperation with any research participants, in order to engage in more face-to-face interactions, reflect the characteristics of the group and ensure the reliability, validity and accountability of research findings. Therefore, ethnographic research on a belief group, exploring religious, practical and socio-cultural dimensions and spending a certain amount of time with them in a particular place, helps formulate research questions to reflect issues within the group. Thanks to his guiding suggestion at the beginning of the research, both my relationship with the research group and my views on the research questions and objectives changed as time spent in fieldwork increased.

Another important contribution to my thesis was Sökefeld's book on the Alevi community, namely "The Struggle for Recognition: The Alevi Movement and the Transnational Area in Germany" (2008), which examined changes to and the transformations of Alevis through ethnographic methods in the context of Alevi organizations. For this purpose, he carried out field studies, focusing on the German city of Hamburg,

with Alevi cultural centres between 2000 and 2004. This book, which gave me an idea for my doctoral research, is used as one of the main reference sources in academic studies on Alevis in the diaspora. What makes it a standard reference is that it is an important academic study on a religious group with transnational levels on the politics of identity within the debate on recognition, as well as the contribution of its theoretical framework in the fields of religion, diaspora, identity and social movements. Also, his research raises awareness that general models of immigrant and religious groups that are essentialised into homogeneous and monolithic categories should be avoided to ensure broader and more careful considerations of different minority communities within Germany. Before sharing my experiences and research based on the Alevi community, it is essential to provide a brief overview of my research group, i.e., the Alevi faith group.

The Alevi community

In addition to the historical origins of Alevism as a faith, which is closely related to Sufism, Alevi society has actually been influenced more by the unique characteristics of Turkey's historical, political and socio-cultural infrastructure. Alevi values and rituals are mostly studied as part of Turkey's local and national religious contexts. As a religious and cultural community, Alevis define their faith as a spiritual path to awakening the sacred, divine power within itself. According to Alevi mysticism, it is the unity of the creator and the created, and the harmonious unity of creation is the cause of creation and the basis of its continuity. In Alevism, there is a belief that each part of the universe in some way reflects the whole or God. Alevis also believe that humans, as God's supreme creation, have divine power (sacred power) within themselves. The God of Alevis is the divine spirit that is in everything and everyone. This divine spirit is hidden in the human heart. The phrase "Do not

seek God outwardly! If your heart is pure, God is within you" has been accepted as one of the guiding principles by Haji Bektasch-i Veli[1].

The main religious ritual of the Alevis is a *cem*, and Alevis gather for their religious rituals in *cemevis*. Alevi clergies are referred to as *dedes* (the male form) and *anas* (the female form). For example, the spirituality of *dedes*, who are religious leaders, is based on their genealogy and their ability to perform miracles (*keramet*), which is also believed to be an inherited characteristic. Since *dedes*' spirituality includes a divine and sacred power, *talips* (believers in Alevism)[2] believe that *dedes* can realise their wishes and desires (Cosan Eke, 2021). As the social anthropologist David Shankland (1998: 18), who has worked with Alevis for many years, stated, "In the context used by the Alevi, it is used to mean favored by God by virtue of being able to perform a miracle, as in Sufism in general" (1998: 18). Men and women pray in the same place during *cem* rituals, during which Alevi *dedes* address members of the congregation as "*Can*", meaning "pure soul", because Alevis believe there is no ethnic, economic and/or gender difference between those who attend the *cem* ritual after passing through the door of the *cemevi*. Although Alevis live predominantly in Turkey, Alevism as a faith has been part of transnational flows and networks in recent years, and they have settled in various countries as international migration has increased. Despite being a minority group wherever they live, they are the second largest belief group after

1 One of the most important Turkish Sufi orders, Bektashism, is named after the Anatolian saint Haji Bektash Veli (d. 1271). Alevis place great importance on Haji Bektash because Haji Bektash Veli has a sacred authority in Alevism, given the messages of universal peace, unity and togetherness. (More information: Küçük, Hülya. 2002. *The Role of the Bektāshīs in Turkey's National Struggle. A Historical and Critical Study*. Leiden u. a. 2002. Dressler, Markus. 2015. *Writing Religion: The Making of Turkish Alevi Islam*. Oxford University Press. Kara, Cem. 2019. *Grenzen überschreitende Derwische Kulturbeziehungen des Bektaschi-Ordens 1826–1925. Gottengen:* Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht).

2 Not every Alevi can be called a *talip*. To be a *talip*, a person must define himself as an Alevi, belong to a particular *dede* lineage and promise a *dede* from his own lineage to abide by the rules of the Alevi faith.

the Sunni group in Turkey. However, this fact has not yet led to official recognition of their religious and cultural identity by the Turkish state.

There are two main reasons for this non-recognition. First, in the Turkish understanding of the secular state, there is a soft separation between religion and the state, because Sunni Islam has a privileged status in relation to political, economic and legal interests determined by said state. Second, under Turkish law, Alevis are included in the general Sunni-Muslim identity and are not defined as a separate faith group. Moreover, Alevism is used as an umbrella term to describe many different faith communities, including Nusayris, Bektashi, Abdals, Tahtacilar, Yörüks and Kurdish Alevis.

Alevis in Turkey lament that the political doctrine deprives them of their social, political and cultural rights, thereby causing a sense of social exclusion. Such a lack of official recognition has led to a position of undefinable and undebatable discrimination against Alevis in Turkish society. Moreover, they have been exposed to social repression, and even massacres, for centuries because of their faith, and so they have preferred to conceal their identity, a practice that is called *takiyye* (dissimulation). The beginning of the process of giving up hiding their identities is emigration, which has been increasing since the 1960s (Cosan Eke 2021).

The migration process from Turkey to Germany started with a recruitment agreement in 1961. This migration, which increased very rapidly with the recruitment of less educated and less skilled workers living in the villages in 1968, continued to increase in 1973 when immigrants started to live with their families in Germany under the Family Reunification Law (Cosan Eke 2021). It is estimated today to be around 4 million people of Turkish origin living in Germany (approximately 4% of the country's population) (Curtis 2013:69). Although the cultural representation of immigrants from Turkey as 'others' who do not want 'integration' is still being discussed, Martin Sökefeld underlines the studies that show that immigrants from Turkey have a high level of emotional attachment to Germany in terms of both media use and language skills (2004).

It is estimated that 48.5% of the population of Turkish Alevis living in Germany were born in Germany, and the majority of them are Ger-

man citizens (Sirkeci and Erdoğan 2012). According to Alevi organizations in Europe, 25% of Turkish immigrants in Germany are Alevis, while the AABF (The Alevi Federation Germany *e.V.* (Turkish: *Almanya Alevi Birlikleri Federasyonu*, abbr.: AABF) states that there are 700,000 Alevis in Germany alone (AABF homepage). It is difficult to talk about exact figures because there is no official data on the Turkish population based on their religious or ethnic identity. The emergence of organisations established by Alevis, which started in Germany at the end of the 1980s and spread to other European countries. These organisations have a very important place in the Alevi movement through their solidarity network, which includes local, national and transnational processes.

Nevertheless, there is currently no comprehensive study of all of the individual and collective rituals, ethical rules, canonical texts, doctrines, daily practices, roles and behaviours of religious leaders, organisations, identities, places of worship and activities that make up the Alevi faith, because local differences are integrated with the national and international divergences of Alevi communities. Jeremy Menchik explains this trend in his article:

> This heterogeneity means that what constitutes religion is historically specific rather than universal. This fundamental observation has clear implications for researchers. A suitable theoretical starting point for researchers is institutionalized practices (contextualized and historical) in which practitioners of religions are involved. (2017: 564).

By following Menchik's contextuality, I designed my research on the institutionalised practices of a religious group, thus helping to limit my dissertation, and I focused particularly on Alevi associations and federations in Turkey and Germany. Although Alevis are exposed to assimilation, discrimination and legal non-recognition as a religious community in Turkey, they are nevertheless officially recognised as a divergent faith from (Sunni) Muslims in some German states[3]. As part of my thesis, I

3 The five states, namely Berlin, North Rhine Westphalia (NRW), Hesse, Baden Württemberg and Bavaria, accepted the applications for recognition of Alevis

discovered that the Alevi movement in Germany has endeavoured to develop its identity by combining religious, ethnic and national elements. Although Hurd (2008, 16) points out that "to define the boundaries of the secular and the religious is itself a political decision", I have observed that the Alevi identity constructed in Germany has become more secular and has developed in ways that lead to a multi-layered transformation of their identities through migration experiences and political and legal arrangements (Cosan Eke 2021).

Consequently, thanks to their efforts, Alevi associations in Europe have been strengthened, and they have transformed themselves from a social movement into a transnational community (Sökefeld 2008).

Conclusion

Returning to my research question of whether I encountered any difficulties when doing my ethnographic research with a faith community, I can answer this question from two main perspectives. The first lies in the difficulties involved in doing research on religion itself, as it contains meanings, not only in terms of certain rules and practices, collective rituals and activities, but also in the personal and daily life routines of individuals. The meanings that this belief produces are involved in people's interactions with one another, in the form of language, objects, practices, written sources and stories (Wuthnow 1994). Therefore, religion is a multi-faceted research phenomenon and a "too unstable category to be treated as an isolable entity" (Hurd, 2015). Furthermore, due to a religion's inherent fluidity and heterogeneity, it is difficult to generalise about a faith group (Menchick, 2017). According to the British anthropologist Simon Coleman, who focuses his research on global Christianity, religion is a particularly difficult subject for the field researcher to

as a belief community. Alevis in Hamburg (2012), Lower Saxony (2013) and Bremen (2014) signed an 'Equality of Rights Agreement' with these state governments, thus granting them important rights and providing the community with legal status.

handle, partly because of its non-empirical nature and partly because of the "rational assumptions of most social sciences" (2002b: 77). It is difficult to deal with the theological frameworks of faith because the theological background of faith, as a form of spiritual discipline, is not an area of in-depth knowledge enjoyed by all people within that faith. These difficulties in defining faith, especially the theological narrative, may be a compelling reason for analysing field notes.

In this regard, the conceptualisation of religion consists of seven dimensions developed by Ninian Smart (Smart, 1998, 1999), which help the researcher gain insights into the fuzziness of religion and shape their field notes. These dimensions are narrative/mythological, doctrinal, ethical, institutional, material, ritual and experiential. The narrative dimension refers to the historical stories of a religion, communicated either orally or in written form. The doctrinal element refers to the philosophical nature of the religion, such as the nature of God. Next, the ethical dimension means the rules or laws of a religion. The institutional dimension includes the organisation of a religious community, for example within a church, a mosque or a temple. The material dimension refers to specific places that are important to a religion, whilst the ritual dimension concerns specific practices, such as prayer and meditation. Finally, the experiential dimension means strong emotional experiences generated by rituals (Smart, 1999).

Another difficulty relates to the position of the researcher in the field. At the beginning of my research, I did not have to put in much effort to be accepted locally, because most of the people involved in the research trusted me once they knew that I was an Alevi. However, I have not had the same migration experiences as the majority of Alevis living in Germany because the vast majority of the group I focused on in my fieldwork were Alevi immigrants from Turkey who had immigrated to Germany after the Bilateral Labour Recruitment Agreement in 1961 (Steinert 2014; Kolinsky 1996; Abadan-Unat 2011) [4] or were born and raised in Germany

4 After World War II, there was a major labour shortage in Germany and high unemployment in southern European countries, including Turkey. The German government signed bilateral labour recruitment agreements with Italy

and had little or no personal life experience in Turkey. In terms of migration history, I can also define my position as that of a partial outsider to the research group.

Performing religious ethnography as an insider might make it seem that one is more competent in understanding a religious group and their experiences more deeply and authentically (Stringer, 2002 in Ganiel & Mitchell, 2006). Therefore, my research participants had high expectations from me and my work, especially in terms of Alevi theology, history, political and sociological knowledge.

As far as I am concerned, my insider position gave me a chance to gain access to the group, albeit this insider position as an Alevi was at the same time an outsider position, namely that of a researcher doing fieldwork. It was mostly difficult for me to live up to the expectations of the participants as an insider researcher because my position was not aligned with the migration process or the economic and social status of the participants. As a result, I decided to focus my research on participant observation and in-depth interviews as an outsider. At the end of my research, I noticed that the multiple identities involved in field research provide an opportunity for comprehensive perspectives. As claimed by Wilcox:

> Many permutations of partial insider, totally inside and totally outside identities among researchers offer us a range of perspectives on the same phenomenon (2002:51).

Although the analysis of the researcher's position in fieldwork is complex, they are simultaneously an insider *and* an outsider, though the

---

(1955), Spain, Greece (1960), Turkey (1961), Morocco (1963), Portugal (1964), Tunisia (1965), and Yugoslavia (1968). More information: Steinert, Johannes-Dieter.2014. "Migration and Migration Policy: West Germany and the Recruitment of Foreign Labour", 1945–61. Journal of Contemporary History. Volume 49, Issue 1. Kolinsky, Eva. 1996. "Non-German Minorities in German Society" in Horrocks, David & Kolinsky, Eva (eds). Turkish Culture in German Society Today. Oxford: Berghahn Books. Abadan-Unat, Nermin. 2011. Turks in Europe: From Guest Worker to Transnational Citizen. New York & Oxford: Berghahn Books.

dichotomy can disappear in the same research. After a while, when they started to invite me to their religious and cultural activities, they knew that I was not only a believer, but also a researcher from a university. Generally, the people who participated in my research allowed me to record their religious services for my research, even though they felt somewhat uncomfortable with this arrangement, because they had been pressured in the past in Turkey. This is a prime example of combining my internal and external positions. As stated by Setlhabi (2014), members of other cultures become insiders by researching a social setting and sometimes by spending extended periods of time in the field; on the other hand, members of a culture become outsiders thanks to their position as researchers.

During my doctoral studies, Martin Sökefeld provided me with unique advice, backed up by his theoretical and methodological knowledge and critiques of my research, which would also apply to future studies. Indeed, one of the most important perspectives he gave me for ethnographic study with a belief group is that it is necessary to avoid categorically problematising, essentialising and fixing differences therein, since ethnographic research can offer a comprehensive and deep analysis that includes changes and transformations within the boundaries of social and cultural contexts, in which 'reality' itself is actively created by all interactions.

After a long period of ethnographic research, I argue that the paradigm emphasising the duality between outside and inside, or between observer and observed, can be used to describe the diverse and ever-changing position of a researcher. This fluid status has positive effects on gaining access to data and the acquisition of multi-layered information in the field (Narayan 1993; Caronia 2018). Religious identity especially can be grasped deeply in the context of debating multiple identities. As argued by Martin Sökefeld, identities shaped by personal experiences are never fixed, as they are always "under construction" (2008: 20). In this context, both the position of the researcher and the identity of faith groups formed in the context of migration processes are subject to such dynamic variability, and both should be assumed to be always 'under construction'.

References

Atay, Tayfun (2017): "Sosyal Antropolojide Yöntem ve Etik Sorunu: Klasik Ethnografikten diyalojik Ethnografiye Dogru." Hacettepe Üniversitesi İletişim Fakültesi Kültürel Çalışmalar Dergisi 4/1, pp. 189–206. https://doi.org/10.17572/mj2017.1.189206

AABF, Deutschland. Home – Alevitische Gemeinde Deutschland e.V. (retrieved on 20.12.2022)

Bielo, James (2015): Anthropology of Religion: The Basics, London: Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315728407.

Boccagni Paolo/Carlos Vargas-Silva (2021): "Feeling at home across time and place: A study of Ecuadorians in three European cities." In: Population Space and Place 27/6, pp. 1–13. https://doi. org/10.1002/psp.2431

Caronia, Letizia (2018): "How 'at Home' is an Ethnographer at Home? Territories of Knowledge and the Making of Ethnographic Understanding." In: Journal of Organizational Behavior Management 7/2, pp.114-134.

Clifford, James/George Marcus (1986): Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography, Berkeley: California University Press.

Curtis, Michael (2013): Jews, Antisemitism, and the Middle East, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers

Coleman, Simon (2002): "'But Are They Really Christian?' Contesting Knowledge and Identity in and out of the Field." In: James Spickard/Shawn Landres/Meredith McGuire (eds.), Personal Knowledge and Beyond: Reshaping the Ethnography of Religion, New York: NYU Press.

Cosan Eke, Deniz (2021): The Changing Leadership Roles of "Dedes" in the Alevi Movement: Ethnographic Studies on Alevi Associations in Turkey and Germany from the 1990s to the Present, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag.

Denscombe, Martyn (2010): The Good Research Guide: For Small-Scale Social Research Projects, Maidenhead: Open University Press.

Erdemir Aykan/Cahit Korkmaz/Halil Karaçalı/Muharrem Erdem/Theresa Weitzhofer/Umut Beşpınar (2010a): Türkiye'de Alevi Olmak (Being Alevi in Turkey), Ankara: Dipnot Bas. Yay. Ltd. Şti.

Erdemir Aykan/Cahit Korkmaz/Halil Karaçalı/Muharrem Erdem/Theresa Weitzhofer/Umut Beşpınar (2010b: Alevilerin Bakışaçısı ile Türkiye'de Ayrımcılık (Discrimination in Turkey from the Viewpoints of Alevis), Ankara: Dipnot Bas. Yay. Ltd. Şti.

Ganiel, Gladys/Claire Mitchell (2006): "Turning the Categories Inside-Out-Complex Identifications and Multiple Interactions in Religious Ethnography." In: Sociology of Religion 67/1, pp. 3–21.

Geertz, Clifford (1973): The Interpretation of Cultures, New York: Basic Books.

Gill, Fiona/Catherine Maclean (2002): "Knowing your Place: Gender and Reflexivity in Two Ethnographies." In: Socilogical Research Online 7/2, pp. 118–128.

Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman (2008): The Politics of Secularism in International Relations, Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Hurd, Elizabeth Shakman (2015): Beyond Religious Freedom: The New Global Politics of Religion. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Menchik, Jeremy (2017): "Review Article. The Constructivist Approach to Religion and World Politics. The Constructivist Approach to Religion and World Politics." In: Comparative Politics 49/4, pp. 561–581.

Murchison, Julia/Curtis Coats (2015): "Ethnography of Religious Instants: Multi-Sited Ethnography and the Idea of "Third Spaces." In: Religions 6, pp. 988–1005. doi:10.3390/rel6030988.

Narayan, Kirin (1993): "How Native Is a 'Native' Anthropologist?" In: American Anthropologist 95/3, pp. 671–686.

Shankland, David (1998): "Anthropology and Ethnicity: The Place of Ethnography in New Alevi Movement." In: Told Olsson/Elisabeth Özdalga/Catharina Raudvere (eds.), Alevi Identity: Cultural, Religious and Social Perspectives, Istanbul: Swedish Research Institute.

Setlhabi, Keletso Gaone (2014): "I Took an Allegiance to Secrecy: Complexities of Conducting Ethnographic Research at Home." In: Africa 84/2, pp. 314–34.

Sirkeci, Ibrahim/Murat Erdogan (2012): "Editorial: Göç ve Türkiye." In: Migration Letters 9/4, pp. 297–302.

Smart, Ninian (1998): The world's religisons, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Smart, Ninian (1999): Dimensions of the Sacred: An Anatomy of the World's Beliefs, Oakland, CA: University of California Press.

Smith, Sara (2016): "Intimacy and angst in the field." In: Gender, Place & Culture 23/1, pp. 134–146. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369X.2014.958067

Sökefeld, Martin (2004): "Das Paradigma kultureller Differenz: Zur Forschung und Diskussion über Migranten aus der Türkei in Deutschland." In: Martin Sökefeld (ed), Jenseits des Paradigmas kultureller Differenz, Neue Perspektiven auf Einwanderer aus der Türkei, Bielefeld: transcript Verlag, pp. 9–34.

Sökefeld, Martin (2008): The Struggle of Recognition: The Alevi Movement in Germany and in Transnational Space, Oxford/New York: Berghahn Books.

Sökefeld, Martin/Eveline Dürr (201): "Zeit im Feld: Feldforschung als Paradigma und als Praxis." In: Philipp Zehmisch/Ursula Münster/Jens Zickgraf/Claudia Lang (eds.), Soziale Ästhetik, Atmosphäre, Medialität. Beiträge, aus der Ethnologie, Münster: Lit Verlag.

Tee, Carolina (2010): "Holy Lineages, Migration and Reformulation of Alevi Tradition: A Study of the Derviş Cemal ocak from Erzincan." In: British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 37/3, pp. 335–392.

Whitehead, Tony L (2005): "Basic Classical Ethnographic Research Methods Secondary Data Analysis, Fieldwork, Observation/Participant Observation, and Informal and Semi-structured Interviewing." In: Ethnographically Informed Community and Cultural Assessment Research Systems (EICCARS) Working Paper Series.

Wigg-Stevenson, Natalie (2018): "What's Really Going on: Ethnographic Theology and the Production of Theological Knowledge." Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies 18/6, pp. 423–429.

Wilcox, Melissa (2002): "Dancing on the Fence: Researching lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender Christians." In: James Spickard/Shawn Landres/Meredith McGuire (eds.), Personal Knowledge and Beyond:

Reshaping the ethnography of religion, pp. 47–62, New York: New York University Press.
Wuthnow, Robert (1994): Producing the Sacred, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.