Governmentalities of Alevi Cultural Heritage: On Recognition, Surveillance, and "Domesticated Diversity" in Contemporary Turkey

Benjamin Weineck

Although the term Cultural Heritage carries a rather positive connotation—bringing together notions such as safeguarding and human creativity—critical investigations have underlined the various strategic, economic and political rationalities inscribed in this term. In 2010 UNESCO categorized the Alevi ritual sequence, *semah,* as Intangible Cultural Heritage and as such it was inscribed in the Turkish National Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage, although Alevis are oftentimes marginalized by the Turkish state due to its Sunni-Turkist conception of belonging. The celebration of an Alevi ritual as enriching Turkey's "cultural diversity" thus necessitated an analytical approach that comes to terms with the tension between this formal recognition, ongoing political surveillance, and the very specific notions of diversity that have been put into play. With reference to Foucault's (as well as Rose's) analysis of contemporary government as "governmentality," Cultural Heritage can be grasped in its ambivalent (but not necessarily conflicting) form of governmental liberation and control. The paper thus enlarges the analytical scale of thinking about Cultural Heritage in its correlation with identity-formation, as well as the politics of recognition and governance.

Keywords: Alevis; Turkey; Diversity; Heritage; Governmentality; Ritual

Introduction: Governmentalities of Heritage

UNESCO has taken up a number of new measures since the beginning of the millennium in its endeavor to safeguard the Cultural Heritage of humanity. While former UNESCO activities on Cultural Heritage were exclusively directed at "tangible" cultural and "natural" sites, the more recent steps were taken in order to enhance an awareness of Intangible Cultural Heritage (or ICH), such as oral traditions, rituals, or traditional crafts. A former focus on monumental heritage and natural sites was criticized by scholars and practitioners as paying too little attention to diverse and multiple forms of human creativity, which are expressed in a variety of practices and traditions (Coombe 375). Accordingly, the shift to ICH is:

> recognizing that communities, in particular indigenous communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals, play an important role in the production, safeguarding, maintenance and re-creation of the intangible cultural heritage, thus helping to enrich cultural diversity and human creativity. (UNESCO Convention)

The UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* places the bearers of the particular traditions in the center of any safeguarding ac-

tivity—which, according to Merkel, "can be understood as a sincere attempt to contribute to their empowerment and to correct earlier elitist approaches" (68). Other scholars underline the importance of ICH for the formation and assurance of group identities (Wulf 86) or its capacity for enabling "vernacular" groups to figure in an "agentive way to act upon one's own world" (Brosius and Polit 2).

In 2010, the Alevi *semah*-dance—a sequence from the *cem*-ritual[1]—was declared to be ICH and as such inscribed in the Turkish National Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage as "fostering and enriching traditional music culture of Turkey" (UNESCO Nomination file 6). Alevis make up about 15 to 30% of Turkey's population, yet are not legally recognized as a religious community in their own, as Sunni-Turkist notions of belonging were—and still are—salient in many aspects of Turkish polities and politics. The recognition of an Alevi ritual as Cultural Heritage, enriching Turkey's "cultural diversity," thus begs an analytical approach capable of encompassing Alevi aspirations for recognition, underlying governmental understandings of nationhood and diversity, *and* their mutual interrelations.

Therefore, this paper analyzes Cultural Heritage as a tool for the assemblage of governance and "diversity management."

In order to grasp both the aspect of safeguarding and empowerment, as well as the particular (and most likely nationalist) notion of cultural difference that heritage policies enact, I consider it useful to draw upon an idea of government that captures some ratio of the liberating and limiting modes of political intervention vis-à-vis the population. The late Michel Foucault and his successors, particularly Nikolas Rose, have characterized contemporary government less in terms of ruling by law or discipline. Dissociating the exercise of political power from domination, they emphasize how (neo)liberal forms of conduct rather shape, guide, direct, or govern populations by recognizing and enhancing the individual's capacity for acting upon him- or herself (Foucault, *Biopolitik* 97). Since liberalism requires individual freedom of the subject, the government's responsibility is not to suppress, but rather to promote certain forms of subjectivity: Accordingly, *laissez faire* and freedom are perceived of as a specific way of *political* economy or political intervention rather than the "antithesis of government" (Rose 69). The way in which Foucault and Rose consider freedom to be a form of political conduct can inform an analysis of the politics on Cultural Heritage and its liberal notions of empowerment in several ways: The focus on empowerment of "vernacu-

lar groups" in ICH discourse on the one hand, and Alevism as a socio-religious problem of (nationalist/Islamist/neoliberal) government on the other requires a way of thinking that must come to terms with the ostensible tension between and alleged binary equations of liberation and control, inclusion and exclusion, empowerment and containment.

This paper seeks to analyze the emergence of—or, better put, the construction of—an Alevi heritage in Turkey as such a form of political conduct, which on the one hand meets the Alevi communities' aspirations for recognition. Yet the character of the strategies and technologies applied, in concert with UNESCO as powerful actor in the assemblage of government, render very specific political understandings and *mentalities* of cultural difference to be legible, firm, and true. This way of thinking about government—in terms of the relation of specific political knowledge embodied in any political action or strategy—is called "governmentality." It is my argument that references to Cultural Heritage may indeed forge coherence within the groups concerned—which would be desirable under liberal notions of citizenship and minority issues. Yet the language of UNESCO and the specific understanding of diversity it enacts prescribe to the communities a knowledge about them-

selves as being commodified and of "domesticated diversity" (Göner 127), which severely limits their capacities for both political participation and resistance.

Methodological Considerations
Many scholars have emphasized how heritage regimes, with their complex array of actors—heritage promoters of civil "indigenous" groups, national politicians and bureaucrats, intergovernmental regimes—bring to bear new forms of political conduct and subjectivity (Harrison 7; Tauschek 20). Hall highlights the evaluating character of Cultural Heritage policies as inherently classifying and arranging: Heritage thus represents not only the desire and practice of preserving certain aspects of the past, but constitutes "the symbolic power to order knowledge, to rank, classify and arrange, and thus to give meaning to objects and things through interpretative schemas" (88). These particular formations of knowledge and mentalities of government are embodied in the instruments, strategies, and politics applied. The approach of a governmentality of heritage tries to grasp this interrelation of knowledge and power, and the specific governmental understandings that are inscribed in political strategies, practices, and programs (Rose 2). Therefore, this approach relies on discourse analysis

and takes for granted the inventive character of language and any conceptual practice for reality—a reality that is of course always a specific political reality, which makes things and objects governable or that constitutes them as a problem to be acted upon.
This analysis of the governmentalities of an Alevi heritage in Turkey thus investigates the notions and governmental understandings of religious and cultural difference and belonging that produce the political practice. Neither does it ask, for example, if an empowering element of heritage policies succeeded or not, nor is it a hermeneutical investigation of the "real objectives behind a certain strategy" (Rose 56). Rather, such an analysis attempts to grasp the practices' own accounts of reality by scrutinizing the forms of political order and subjectivity that are enacted by this governmental knowledge and by the political strategies it informs. As policies on Cultural Heritage rely on classification and arrangement, it is asked what kinds of operations are undertaken to render an Alevi ritual practice into Cultural Heritage of a polity that continuously reproduces Sunni-Turkist ideas of nationhood.
An important and analytically powerful aspect of governmentality analysis is its understanding of government as an "assem-

blage" (Coombe 379) of multiple, decentralized practices of conduct, which makes it possible to grasp intersecting national and transnational governmental forces (Turkey – UNESCO), as well as the subjects that act in this field of discursive possibilities and constraints. An analysis of governmentality also considers the creative ways in which subjects take up initiatives and behave toward these political strategies. Governing, in this sense, is the art of combining techniques of domination and freedom and an ability to set processes into motion "through which the self is constructed or modified by himself" (Foucault, "Hermeneutics" 204).
Intangible Cultural Heritage, which explicitly addresses the bearers of objects and practices that are to be turned into heritage, not only acknowledges "the importance of communities, in particular indigenous communities" in the creation and reproduction of the heritage of humanity (UNESCO Convention), but also considers ICH to be inherently "community based":

> intangible cultural heritage can only be heritage when it is recognized as such by the communities, groups or individuals that create, maintain and transmit it—without their recognition, nobody else can decide for them that a given expression or practice is their heritage. (UNESCO Heritage)[2]

This form of governance thus also relies on the activity of these "communities, groups or individuals" to decide on their own terms about their Cultural Heritage, which contributes to the notion of heritage as empowering these communities vis-à-vis state actors (Merkel; Wulf; Brosius and Polit). An analysis of the governmentalities of heritage investigates the ways in which government shapes its subjects' aspirations of recognition and harnesses their capacity for self-directed conduct to meet certain political ends. The question at stake here is how, for example, forms of knowledge and "interpretive schemas" (Hall 88) on Cultural Heritage are adopted by these groups and individuals taking up the UNESCO language of heritage and its underlying notion of empowerment to foster construction of their identities. What kind of subjectivity, what kind of political order and what concepts of the nation are portrayed in these aspirations for identity, and struggles for recognition and belonging?

I certainly do not deny the emotional value of ICH and its potential for preserving threatened practices and objects for the purpose of safeguarding and constructing identities. The analysis taken up here also does not aim to deconstruct Alevi Cultural Heritage as a mere strategic tool made up by bureaucrats to meet certain ends. Like-wise, the specific form of political conduct called governmentality does not deny a possibly emotional value of heritage, but rather makes use of it in a creative form and takes into account the will and capacity for its subjects to safeguard their heritage. As will be shown, this does not turn out to be a mere functionalist approach to government, which may turn its subjects toward any desirable direction without fearing resistance or problems of "translating" programs into action. On the contrary: There are certainly spaces and possibilities of resisting governmental will and conduct, and parts of the Alevi movement in Turkey do have the capacity to continuously challenge the nationalist, Sunni-Turkist dominance. Yet there is reason to doubt whether the UNESCO language of Cultural Heritage is able to empower and represent the marginalized. This problem is also raised by Göner (129), who employs a Gramscian reading of the Alevi associations' activities in their quest for recognition: She refers to the activities of some Alevi organizations, like the Karacaahmet Foundation in her example, as codifying the diverse Alevi belief system(s). The notions of order and codification embedded in these endeavors, according to Göner, appropriate the very normative perceptions of religion held by the members of the majority, i.e. Sunni Muslims. In order to be represented as a religious group in its own, these activities subscribe to the hegemonic framework of religion which requires, for example, a single written sacred text. The aspect of consent to a hegemonic knowledge about oneself is central to this Gramscian approach to power and doubtlessly useful in coming to terms with the politics of representation on Alevis in Turkey. Although these thoughts on hegemony and an ostensibly *voluntary* consent to it (as its central characteristic feature) also constitute to the backdrop for this paper's analytical framework, the approach followed here differs from a focus on hegemony in that it analyzes liberal government's conduct as the practice of being made up of "citizens capable of bearing a kind of regulated freedom" (Rose; Miller 174). This understanding comes to terms with the UNESCO's perception of empowerment of "communities," their intelligibility, and their representation. Since Butler so powerfully underlined an inescapable alliance of representation and coercion in *Gender Trouble*, critical investigations must be careful to attend to such narratives of representation and empowerment. Also in the context of Heritage Studies, many scholars have emphasized the inherently political and bureaucratic character of heritage regimes and their capacity for iden-

tity politics and nationalist aspirations for identifying and inscribing belonging (Smith "Archaeological Theory"; Ashworth). Analyzing and criticizing the construction of a particular Turkish Alevi-Bektaşi heritage and the paternalistic discourse involved may also empower further critical reflections on ongoing subtle forms of surveillance and less subtle forms of physical violence in the field of identity politics and national engineering.

Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage: Issues and Actors

Every year, a committee consisting of members elected by the UNESCO General Assembly judges state parties' proposals for inscribing elements onto the "Representative List of Intangible Cultural Heritage" (UNESCO Convention). In 2010 it granted the *semah*-dance, a sequence of the Alevi-Bektaşi *cem*-ritual, the status of ICH.[3] There are five criteria that must be met in order to be granted inscription, among which is that the element "will contribute to ensuring visibility and awareness of the significance of the Intangible Cultural Heritage and to encouraging dialogue" and that it will be included in the National Inventory for Intangible Cultural Heritage (UNESCO Criteria). Although state parties are those that must apply for nomination, one of the criteria is also that

the actors, groups, or communities concerned should extensively participate in the application process (UNESCO Criteria). This very aspect should raise a flag regarding the institutional requirements shaping heritage construction: As state actors are the ones in charge of applying to the UNESCO (in collaboration with "civil" actors), it is their specific concepts of Cultural Heritage that may be accepted by UNESCO. Heritage thus most likely becomes an instrument of a nationalist agenda: In her work *Uses of Heritage*, Laurajane Smith underlined how political discourse on heritage has the potential to underpin certain communities'—specifically, those in political power—concepts of history, nationhood, and belonging (11). This functional and strategic notion that heritage is "created as needed" (Ashworth 26) is analytically useful in coming to terms with an Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage. Alevi communities in Turkey are in an ambivalent position: A Kemalist interpretation of the nation links Turkishness to Sunni Islam, which excludes both Alevis as non-Sunni Muslims, as well as Kurdish-speaking Alevis. As such, the Law on Dervish Lodges *(Tekke ve Zaviye Kanunu)* of 1925 forbade all forms of religious orders and associated ritual practices, clothing, and titles. This has also had wide implications for Alevi ritual practice: Whereas

mosques and imams, for example, are able to obtain public finance, Alevi *cem evis* are defined as "culture houses" and as such are not publicly fundable.[4] In fact, this aspect of aspired-for equal citizenship *(eşit yurttaşlık)* is one of the main issues in the struggle for recognition of Alevi communities in Turkey, as well as in the diaspora (Sökefeld 229). Additionally, Alevi children are required to participate in Sunna-conform religious education at school *(din ve ahlak dersleri)*,[5] and mosques are built in Alevi villages (Göner 118). On the other side of these assimilationist policies toward Alevism are a bevy of Alevi-Bektaşi cultural organizations which, in accordance with the UNESCO Criteria, were also included in the application processes for their Cultural Heritage (UNESCO, Nomination file 14).[6] And yet tolerating the work of these Alevi-Bektaşi NGOs does not render the communities recognized as religiously different subjects on a level that is institutionally equal to Sunni Islam.

This ambivalence is also connected to the question of whether Alevism is considered "culture" or "religion." Recently, Massicard (107) has emphasized how Turkish polities like the Presidency of Religious Affairs (*Diyanet*) or the Ministry of Education continuously avoid referring to Alevism as a "religious minority." In textbooks for the aforementioned compulsory religious ed-

ucation in school for example, Alevism is rendered merely a mystical "interpretation in Islamic belief" (107) and is not considered as a school of belief in its own right (*mezhep*). The differences between Sunni Islamic and Alevi religious practices are, in line with the argumentation of the Presidency of Religious Affairs, explained as cultural specificities due to geographical spread and the Alevis' inhabiting rural landscapes far from urban centers (104). As another aspect of this policy of culturalization, the *Diyanet* positioned itself as a promoter of Alevi cultural history and knowledge when it published texts like the hagiographies of the saint Hacı Bektaş in the series of *Alevi-Bektaşi Klasikleri* (Massicard 104). Likewise, since 1990 the Ministry of Culture and Tourism took over management of the annual Hacı Bektaş Festival that takes place at the Bektaşi *tekke* near Nevşehir (139). The rituals performed there are also broadcast live on TV, but are promoted as part of Turkish heritage, cultural diversity, and folklore, delinked to any notion of religious or theological deviance from Sunni Islam. Furthermore, the word "Alevi" does not appear at all in the 250-page volume on *Religious Life in Turkey*, issued by the *Diyanet* in the beginning of 2014.[7] The mentioned study assimilates Alevism within the realm of Islam, and thus draws the con-

clusion that 99.2% of the Turkish population is Muslim (XXX). Inner-Islamic difference is acknowledged along the lines of schools of thought, i.e. Maliki, Hanafi, Shafiʿi, Hanbali, and, additionally, the Shiite Caferi (XXX).

Both of these measures—culturalization and annihilation—are examples of a type of political conduct toward Alevis that arranges and classifies a certain understanding of cultural difference and religious deviation. Although they allow for and promote some form of Alevi cultural expression, other, less-subtle forms of control continue to exist: The Ministry of the Interior regularly directs private television stations on how to cover, for example, cultural events like the *Hacı Bektaş Festivalı* or the *Newroz* celebrations, including what kind of vocabulary to employ (Massicard 92).

The Alevi-Bektaşi *semah*-dance, which was rendered UNESCO ICH in 2010, also corresponds to this notion of a cultural rather than religious characterization of the Alevi-Bektaşi belief system: Although the ritual sequence depicts the Alevi-Bektaşi understandings of God's relationship to human beings, this religious aspect has come to be ever more "de-sacralized" (Massicard 131). The *semah*-dance, as one part of the Alevi *cem*-ritual, has gained considerable importance over other ele-

ments of Alevi-Bektaşi ritual practice. Dinçer stresses how rural urban migrations and the geographical diffusion of Alevi communities have had an immense impact on the communities' ritual practice since about the 1950s (35). Her fieldwork revealed that in urban *cem*-rituals (in Izmir and Istanbul), in which Alevis from various regions with different mother tongues and varying concepts of ethnic belonging participate, the *semah* as one of the "twelve services" of the *cem*-ritual played a predominant role in relation to the other ritual sequences (37). Motika and Langer also emphasize that in the public performance of rituals, some sequences are either omitted or reduced to mere symbolic acts (99). Since the various forms of Alevism do not possess a canonizing religious apparatus, the religious character of the ritual is oftentimes downplayed when participants of different geographical, ethnic or linguistic backgrounds gather for a ritual (Massicard 130). Likewise, when turned into a common Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage, the various forms of the ritual are interpreted as an "evident sign of the richness in *semah* culture" (UNESCO Nomination file 4) and not, for example, as an evident sign of the richness of diverse theological reflections other than those of Sunni Islam.

Additionally, it is Intangible Cultural Heritage that is sought in the recent UNESCO conventions. Thus, the institutional channels to articulate the demands of heritage and identity require a focus on rituals, as opposed to tangible artifacts of the past. This stress on *semah* as Alevi-Bektaşi heritage is an example of how socio-religious developments within the Alevi communities are underpinned by the UNESCO discourse on Cultural Heritage: In this respect, Massicard quite aptly speaks of "external- and self-folklorization" (130) because "culture," on the one hand, serves as the "most consensual way of Alevi organizations to foster belonging" (134). As Turkish political discourse denies Alevism being thought of as a religious group of considerable size, some of the Alevi-Bektaşi organizations explicitly promote *cultural* common denominators—such as the *saz*, poetry, or the *semah*—to amalgamate various Alevi communities with differing notions of religious and ethnic coherence (130). On the other hand, this cultural understanding of Alevism as Turkish folklore corresponds to the patterns and understandings of the *Diyanet* about Alevism, accommodating the very discourse that denies Alevis in Turkey their own religious education at public schools or state-funded locales for religious devotion (*cem evi*s) analogue to mosques.

There is yet another aspect of heritage policies that may provide insight into forms of political knowledge about Alevism as Turkish folklore, concerning the naming as "Alevi-Bektaşi" of the Cultural Heritage. Strikingly, only four of the eighteen NGOs involved in the heritage construction operate under the heading "Alevi," while others use names referring to the Saint Hacı Bektaş or to tribal associations such as *tahtacı* (UNESCO Nomination file 13). These denominations again bear witness of the ambivalent standing of Alevis in Turkey, and to the specific character of a certain form of understanding of cultural difference: In the 1990s when most of these organizations were founded, it was generally not allowed to draw on names that could suggest a possible separation of the Turkish nation along religious, social, or ethnic lines (Sökefeld 231). Yet it was and is tolerated that these organizations may represent Alevi interests. The tight bond between "Alevi" and "Bektaşi" in many of these denominations and, in fact, in the naming of the ritual in question as "Alevi-Bektaşi" heritage, also denotes a certain form of state-controlled, domesticated difference: As Dressler has pointed out, the term Alevi-Bektaşi is used mostly by Turkish-speaking Alevis, which excludes Kurdish Alevis and with that the notion of the politically subversive charac-

ter of Alevism (25). Although Alevis and Bektaşis share many ritual practices and belief systems, and as such may be conceived of as a *single* community, the term Alevi-Bektaşi also makes opaque the institutional, social, and geographic differences of both of these groups. A strong emphasis on an Alevi-Bektaşi synthesis may thus be read, according to Dressler, as a means of strengthening a certain Turkish-Alevi agency in the Turkish public sphere by weakening the notion of social and cultural differences between Turkish and Kurdish speaking Alevis in striving for the nationalist quest of unity (25).

Heritage and Determining Diversity

The support for an Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage is in accordance with a discourse that renders Alevism a cultural facet of Turkishness which, in turn, does not principally deviate from Sunni Islam. This specific understanding of Alevism as folklore, "enriching" Turkey's cultural diversity, is affirmed and put into play by the very mechanisms of Cultural Heritage management that include the element in question in the "National Inventory of Cultural Heritage." The inscription signifies specific understandings of difference, but does not clash with the preserving and empowering nature of heritage. On the contrary: It valorizes this understanding of difference,

commodifies it, and renders it true by inscription. The policies of Cultural Heritage thus bear the limiting notion that though it recognizes and celebrates Turkey's and the world's cultural diversity on the one hand, this does not translate into de facto practice on the other. Recognition is thus only granted under the rubric of belonging to a cultural minority that enriches Turkey's cultural diversity, but that is—as heritage—detached from serious political questions such as, for example, religious politics. Ashworth called this aspect of heritage policies "museumification" and "vernacularization": Transforming, for example, the dervish lodge in the city of Hacı Bektaş into a museum makes it into folklore, detaches its subjects and their beliefs from the present, and renders them insignificant in current struggles of political participation and resistance. Heritage as such has the power to signify as unimportant ideas and practices that "could potentially challenge or distract a dominant ideology" (Ashworth 33) or challenge hegemonic demarcations of belonging. Strikingly, although the various shareholder Alevi associations in the making of the ICH vary considerably in their political, religious, and cultural outlook, they nevertheless unite under a common Alevi Cultural Heritage. Even such different actors as the Pir Sultan Abdal Association and the

CEM Vakfı, as only two examples, are listed among the "Concerned Communities organization(s)" in the UNESCO Nomination file (13), although both of them differ in their understanding of Alevism. The former has a rather state-critical, leftist outlook, while the latter represents a form of Alevism within Islam and accords to current Turkish polities (Massicard 49). In order to bring such different actors together, the common Alevi heritage *semah* is also defined and appropriated to the different needs: Distinguishing between *içeri* and *dışarı semah*, the nomination file conceptualizes two ways of reading the ritual sequence: one more secular than the other. It is stated that *içeri semah* should be held in small circles only with faithful people attending, whereas the *dışarı semah* underlines the cultural/folkloristic character of the dance (UNESCO Nomination file 5). The process called "museumification" is thus accompanied by an appropriation which renders the *semah* as representative both for the Alevi-Bektaşi associations and for the Turkish state, to which it belongs as Cultural Heritage.

This perspective challenges the liberal, activating, and empowering notions that Intangible Cultural Heritage brings to bear. Of course it seems that policies of ICH provide "indigenous communities," to use the UNESCO language, with the

agency "to act upon one's own world" (Brosius and Polit 2). UNESCO's discourse on Cultural Heritage provides language, frames of reference, and infrastructure for identity demands and recognition. Yet this very notion of the "self" must be called into question if we are to criticize the paternalistic political practices of representation in the context of an Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage. At this point, it is useful to recall a central element to the kind of political conduct that was analyzed here as governmentality: Rose argues in his *Powers of Freedom* that it is impossible to "counterpose subjectivity to power" (55). Linking practice and the conduct of subjects and government in a web of power relations may also serve to help come to terms with the both empowering and limiting aspects of Cultural Heritage described above. The promotion of a certain kind of cultural diversity, as "domesticated diversity" (Göner 127), accords to this specific form of political conduct: Policies on Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage do not work as a kind of political power that would forbid, deny, or punish a certain form of Alevism by law or coercion. It rather exercises its power via an assemblage of strategies that enhance and activate self-conduct, encouraged by the preserving, safeguarding, and self-directed notion of heritage, along with UNESCO's lan-

guage of empowerment. Massicard points to this very "external and self-folklorization" (130) in the practice of Alevi-Bektaşi identity politics. Indeed, it corresponds with a form of political conduct in which the technologies of government meet the technologies of the self—a form that refers to the "empowering" element of ICH discourse, as it places responsibility on the side of the individual, or the "indigenous communities."

Yet the "vernacular" actors involved in the process are not merely physical bodies that may be imbued with a certain desirable form of conduct, identity, or self-awareness. The selection of *semah* as heritage and its naming as Alevi-Bektaşi heritage underpin political and socio-economic developments "within" the Alevi movement, and which are far older than heritage policies, which additionally were not set in motion by these political programs alone. Yet these interrelated processes of governmental strategies addressing and meeting the technologies of the self are what characterize governmentality as a form of political power.

Analyzing governmentalities of heritage thus allows going beyond an understanding of politics in binaries such as domination and freedom, and also characterizes political power as dispersed among many different agents (Rose 2). It thus enlarges the perspective on minority politics of diversity management in the Republic of Turkey. Göner has characterized these diverse stages and forms of minority politics on Alevis in Turkey as "difference repressive" and "difference blind." In her argument, the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) constitutes the beginning of these modes of thinking about minorities, since the treaty only grants non-Muslim religious groups such as Jews and Christians the status of minorities (112). Turkey's polities, such as the *Diyanet*, thus embody forms of repression in that they represent a Sunni-Turkist idea of the nation. She further argues that European Union (EU) demands of recognizing Alevis as a religious or cultural minority during the negotiations about Turkeys EU membership[8] opened up a new space to articulate and promote Alevism in Turkey, as it invoked a new notion of cultural diversity and minority rights. Although this undermined the former "difference blind" and "difference repressive" nature, Göner also underlines how state policies supported only a certain notion of Alevism—i.e. Alevi-Bektashism, freed of a potentially Kurdish character and the potential of political subversion. This new approach includes "difference but at the price of domesticating" it (127).

Göner's article was published in 2005, long before the politics of heritage came to serve in a way she characterized as the "creative but not repressive nature of the new hegemonic discourse" (130), which is a form of political conduct that relies on a variety of actors and draws on the semantics of enhancement and empowerment rather than repression. In the same way that the EU demands of recognizing Alevism as a cultural/religious minority intersected with national policies and produced a discursive frame of reference, the UNESCO's endeavors to promote Cultural Heritage also possess a certain capacity to enhance citizens and civil groups in efforts to preserve their cultural practices and artifacts. Yet bureaucratic and institutional limits as well as specific governmentalities heavily shape this process, and limit the liberating and empowering nature of such politics. The "creative but not repressive nature of the new hegemonic discourse" quite aptly encompasses the practice of Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage in Turkey, as their heritage subscribes to a notion of alterity promoted by state-loyal institutions.

Concluding Remarks

The politics of Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage in Turkey benefit from intergovernmental endeavors to promote and to safeguard humankind's creativity and diversity. UNESCO provides a discursive frame to

Benjamin Weineck

is a researcher at the Universities of Bayreuth and Heidelberg. He studied Middle Eastern Studies in Mainz, Ankara and Heidelberg where he obtained his MA in Ottoman History in 2013. His current research is focused on both historical and contemporary issues of Alevism and the Alevis' relationship to the Ottoman and the Turkish state.
email: benjamin.weineck@ ori.uni-heidelberg.de

which individual citizens and ("indigenous") groups may refer in order to protect objects and practices perceived to be in danger of extinction. The policies of Intangible Cultural Heritage explicitly address civil and not state actors for their purposes, which various scholars see as a step toward empowering those groups, and undermining formerly state-oriented approaches to monumental heritage sites.

Undoubtedly, such intergovernmental bodies and their politics of Intangible Cultural Heritage may help to promote some form of visibility for vernacular groups, or for other actors and their cultural assets. Though, as this analysis has shown, it is doubtful that these instruments help to raise awareness on the social and political problems faced by these very groups: The recognition of an Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage in Turkey neither translates into legal recognition of Alevism as a group that religiously differs from Sunni Islam, nor does it challenge the homogenizing nationalist discourse with its stress on Sunni-Turkist ideas of nationhood. The specific institutional settings in heritage regimes, in which states remain the most important actors in the carving out of heritage, diversity articulated through Cultural Heritage in Turkey remains "domesticated" in that it is accommodated to the polity and to the requirements of hegemonic sets of knowledge on diversity.

An analysis of the governmentality of heritage reveals the particular political mentalities and understandings of cultural diversity which are embodied in the very policies that promote these values. A form of government that includes these dominant readings of reality harnesses the self-conduct of its population within these discursively drawn lines of possibility. A pursuit of consent to this very order is attained through liberal empowering notions of agency and of safeguarding a heritage perceived to be in danger. Likewise, this form of conduct also heavily shapes ideas of what may be thought and said about Alevi-Bektaşi communities in Turkey: As Turkey's Cultural Heritage, they are perceived of as a folkloric rather than a religious group that may subvert established ideologies. "Recognizing" this heritage is accompanied by forms of appropriation that make this Alevi-Bektaşi ritual representable and recognizable in the first place. The meaning and consequences of this recognition are powerfully prefigured by the very language of UNESCO and by the dominant understanding of pluralism salient in Turkish nationalist discourse. Thus, equipping the nation-state with a central role in the definition of its "vernacular" heritage provides an opportunity to strongly shape and codify the understandings of this vernacular, upon which the

"communities" themselves may act. From this perspective, the assemblage of government produces the very subjects and specific understanding of difference that it comes to represent. The capacity "to act upon one's own world"–as formulated by empowering notions of ICH–may thus be grasped as consent to a prefigured concept of belonging rather than agency. As a result, the recognition of an Alevi-Bektaşi Cultural Heritage fails to translate into the legal-political realm, and turning *semah* into Cultural Heritage maintains its unequal status vis-à-vis Sunni Muslim forms of worship. Attempts to reach an equality of partners in the context of Sunni-Alevi relations, or in any "vernacular politics," thus have to rely on other, less predetermined vocabulary than the liberal empowering notions of intergovernmental actors. A focus on government through enhancement of certain desirable forms of conduct taken up here thus uncovers the power relations between government and subjects, and the inseparable tie between recognition and surveillance.

→

→ **Notes**

[1] The *cem*-ritual is a congregational ritual in Alevi ritual practice. It consists of various sequences, of which the dance sequence *semah* is but one part. For an overview on Alevi rituals, see Langer "Alevitische Rituale"; for an ideal-typical description of the ritual, see Karolewski.

[2] The idea about fostering communities for the sake of governing is aptly termed by Rose in his *Powers of Freedom* as "government through community" (167).

[3] The term "Alevi-Bektaşi" is not mine, but used by various organizations from this spectrum in heritage discourse. See UNESCO nomination file No. 00384.

[4] See, for example, the clear comment of Prime Minister Erdoğan on this issue: "Whichever Alevi I meet says, we were Muslims. The prayer place for Muslims is the mosque. Alevism is not a religion [*din*]. Therefore one cannot compare [Islam and Alevism]. If we made this distinction, why should we divide Turkey? One is a house for prayer; the other is a culture house. *Cem* houses cannot receive the same [financial] assistance that the mosques receive. If there is somebody who wants to support *cem* houses this cannot be hindered" (quoted in Sökefeld 245, highlights and additions there).

[5] After a European Court of Human Rights decision, pupils may be exempt from the lessons. Yet every pupil requires for this a court order in his or her own right, which makes such an exemption both expensive and institutionally lavish.

[6] These are: Alevi-Bektaşi Federasyonu, Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı Genel Merkezi, Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültürve Tanıtma Dernekleri Genel Merkezi, Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği Genel Merkezi, Pir Sultan Abdal 2 Temmuz Kültürve Eğitim Vakfı, Karacaahmet Sultan Eğitimve Kültür Vakfı, Cem Vakfı Genel Merkezi, Dünya Ehl-I Beyt Vakfı, Ankara Cem Kültür Evlerini Yaptırma Derneği, Hüseyin Gazi Derneği, Hubyar Sultan Alevi Kültür Derneği, Hacı Bektaş Derneği, İstanbul Alevi Kültür Derneği, Tahtacı Kültür Eğitim Kalkınmave Yardımlaşma Derneği, Turhal Kültürve Dayanışma Derneği, Gazi Üniversitesi Türk Kültürüve Hacı Bektaş Veli Araştırma Merkezi, Alevilik Araştırma Dokümantasyonve Uygulama Enstitüsü (UNESCO Nomination file13).

[7] *Türkiye'de Dinî Hayat Araştırması*. Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı, Ankara, 2014. I thank the anonymous reviewer for this hint.

[8] In fact the EU has shifted its demands and its language on demarcating difference over the course of time: As Dressler has shown, the EU since 2007 has refrained from defining Alevism as a religious minority, as the questions of Alevism being a religion or a culture, or being a religious tradition within Islam or outside of it, continue to be intensely discussed by Alevis themselves (13).

→

→ **Works Cited**

Ashworth, Gregory J. "Heritage in Ritual and Identity." Brosius and Polit 19-38.

Brosius, Christiane, and Karin Polit, ed. *Ritual, Heritage and Identity: The Politics of Culture and Performance in a Globalized World.* London: Routledge, 2011. Print.

---. "Ritual, Heritage and Identity in a Globalized World." Brosius and Polit 1-18.

Butler, Judith. *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity.* New York: Routledge, 1990. Print.

Coombe, Rosemary J. "Managing Cultural Heritage as Neoliberal Governmentality." *Heritage Regimes and the State.* Ed. Regina F Bendix, Aditya Eggert, and Arnika Peselmann. Göttingen: Universitätsverlag, 2012. 375-87. Print.

Dinçer, Fahriye. "Alevi Semahs in Historical Perspective." *Dans Müzik, Kültür, Folklora Doğru.* International Council for Traditional Music. 20th Symposium Proceedings. Istanbul: Boğazici University Press, 2000. 32-42. Print.

Dressler, Markus. "Was ist das Alevitentum? Die aktuelle Diskussion und historische Traditionslinien." *Ocak und Dedelik: Institutionen religiösen Spezialistentums bei den Aleviten.* Ed. Robert Langer, Hüseyin Ağuiçenoğlu, Raoul Motika, Janina Karolewski. Frankfurt/M.: Lang, 2013. 13-35. Print.

Foucault, Michel. *Die Geburt der Biopolitik: Geschichte der Gouvernementalität II.* Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp, 2007. Print.

---. "About the Beginning of the Hermeneutics of the Self." *Political Theory* 21.2 (1993): 198-227. Print.

Göner, Özlem. "The Transformation of the Alevi Collective Identity." *Cultural Dynamics* 17.2 (2005): 107-134. Print.

Hall, Stuart. "Whose Heritage? Un-Settling the 'Heritage', Re-Imagining the Post-Nation."*Cultural Heritage.* Ed. Laurajane Smith. London: Routledge, 2007. 87-100. Print.

Harrison, Rodney. *Heritage: Critical Approaches.* London: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Karolewski, Janina. "'Ayin-i Cem'. Das alevitische Kongregationsritual: Idealtypische Beschreibung des '*İbadet ve Öğreti Cemi*'." Langer, Motika, and Ursinus 109-131.

Langer, Robert. "Alevitische Rituale." *Aleviten in Deutschland. Identitätsprozesse einer Religionsgemeinschaft in der Diaspora.* Ed. Martin Sökefeld. Bielefeld: Transcript, 2008. 65-108. Print.

Langer, Robert, Raoul Motika, and Michael Ursinus, ed. *Migration und Ritualtransfer. Religiöse Praxis der Aleviten, Yesiden und Nusairier zwischen Vorderem Orient und Westeuropa.* Frankfurt/M.: Lang, 2005. Print.

Massicard, Elise. *The Alevis in Turkey and Europe: Identity and Managing Territorial Diversity.* London: Routledge, 2013. Print.

Merkel, Christine M. "Useable Pasts–Creative Futures: How Normative Recognition Opens New Horizons for Publicly Committed Scholars." Brosius and Polit 55-75.

Motika, Raoul, and Robert Langer. "Alevitische Kongregationsrituale: Transfer und Re-Invention im transnationalen Kontext." Langer, Motika, and Ursinus 73-107.

Rose, Nikolas. *Powers of Freedom: Reframing Political Thought.* Cambridge: University Press, 1999. Print.

Rose, Nikolas, and Peter Miller. "Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government." *The British Journal of Sociology* 43.2 (1992): 173-205. Print.

Smith, Laurajane. *Archæological Theory and the Politics of Cultural Heritage.* London: Routledge, 2004. Print.

---. *Uses of Heritage.* London: Routledge, 2007. Print.

Sökefeld, Martin. *Struggling for Recognition: The Alevi Movement in Germany and in Transnational Space.* New York and Oxford: Berhahn Books, 2008. Print.

Tauschek, Markus. *Kulturerbe: Eine Einführung.* Berlin: Reimer, 2013. Print.

Türkiye'de Dinî Hayat Araştırması. Ankara: Diyanet İşleri Bakanlığı, 2014. Print.

UNESCO. *Text of the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage.* Paris: UNESCO, 2003. Web. 29 April 2014.

---. Criteria. *Criteria and Timetable of Inscription on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.* Web. 29 April 2014.

---. Heritage. *What is Intangible Heritage*? Web. 29 April 2014.

---. Nomination file No. 00384. *Semah, Alevi-Bektaşi Ritual.* Web. 29 April 2014.

Wulf, Christoph. "Performativity and Dynamics of Intangible Cultural Heritage." Brosius and Polit 76-94.