

(Developmental Paper for the consideration of EDI 2019)

**Discrimination of Muslim minorities at work in Muslim majority countries:
the case of Turkey and Pakistan**

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Abstract

In the context of increased incidents of religious sectarianism in Turkey and Pakistan, two Muslim majority countries, this paper explicates the religious discrimination that Muslim minorities face at work. First, we examine religious diversity in both countries, and explore the identity and agency of religious minorities at work. We then draw on 17 interviews each with individuals from Muslim minority groups in Turkish and Pakistani workplaces, we demonstrate how religious discrimination is experienced in the context of a country (i.e., Turkey) where the secular system is under considerable strain and a country (i.e., Pakistan) where Islamic egalitarian principles enshrined in the national constitution have patchy implementation. The study reveals religiously inspired bias (Turkey and Pakistan), fealty or bias (Turkey) and Takfiri extremism (Pakistan) as significant mechanisms by which intrafaith relations are shaped and religious ties serve as both a privilege and a disadvantage. Thus, the study uncovers a number of invisible constraints, which deteriorate the agency of religious minorities at work. We theorise what happens to religious equality at work when a secular or egalitarian system is challenged by a particular interpretation of religion.

Keywords: Pakistan, religion, religious diversity, religious minorities, sect-based discrimination, Turkey

1. Introduction

Religion is one of the most controversial concepts in social science, and it seems that there is no consensus on its definition. While Max Weber refuses to define religion (Morris, 1987),

Durkheim, in his well-known definition, frames religion as “a unified set of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things, that is to say, things set apart and forbidden, beliefs and practices which unite into one single moral community, all those who adhere to them” (1964:37). This definition can be regarded as a functional one that explains what religion does in economic and social life. It is worth noting that Durkheim takes religion as being both belief and practice, and he considers all religions true in their own fashion. Therefore, believers of any particular religions can be considered as a group of people who share the same beliefs. In 19th Century evolutionary thought, religion was considered as an early human condition before modern science, law and politics emerged, and it was thought that religion will gradually lose its importance with the advent of industrial society. However, this hypothesis was not supported with the subsequent developments which show that religious diversity retained some of its organising significance in social and economic lives in advanced societies (Fox, 2000) and continued to serve as an inspiration for organisational forms and source of conflict at work and in wider society.

Religious diversity takes multiple forms, including confessional differences such as Muslims, Christians, Jews, agnostics and non-believers, and sectarian differences such as Sunni and Alevi Muslims, Orthodox, Catholic and Protestant Christians and Sephardic Jews in the case of Turkey, and Sunni Barelvi or Sufi, Sunni Deobandi, Salafi/Wahhabi and Shia Muslims in the case of Pakistan. In this paper, we focus on the largest Muslim minority group in Turkey, which is Alevis, representing about 15-25% of total population or 15-20 million people (Carkoglu, 2007), and Shia Muslims in Pakistan (10-15% of total population) who constitute the second largest Shia population (20-30 million) in any country after Iran. Alevi Muslims are predominantly of Turkish ethnic origin and they adopt a secularised interpretation of Islam compared to Sunnis (Carkoglu, 2007; Dressler, 2008), conducting their prayers in Turkish instead of Arabic and practising a liberal approach to gender equality among followers. These

two approaches set Alevis historically apart from Sunni Islam which is the sect of the the ruling elite in Ottoman and modern day Turkey. Shia Muslims of Pakistan are ethnically as diverse as Sunni Muslims, follow the Jafari school of jurisprudence (or fiqh) and constitute the second largest Muslim sect in Pakistan, after Sunnis.

While there are no Alevis in Pakistan, and only a small percentage of mainstream or Twelver Shias (4%) is in Turkey, there are some important similarities in Twelver Shias and Alevis. Not unlike Twelver Shias, Alevis consider the Prophet Muhammad's descendants (12 Imams) as holy, they see them as philosophic leaders. Alevi means "follower of Ali", while Shia means "party of Ali". Both Alevis and Twelver Shias attribute great significance to the 12 Imams, with a unique importance given to Ali, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. When it comes to religious structure and principles and practices of Islamic sharia, there are significant differences between Twelver Shias and Alevis with Alevis more inclined to Sufism. An important commonality between Alevis and Shias is their historical persecution and massacres at the hands of Sunni rulers over several centuries, right from Afghanistan and Pakistan to Egypt and from Hejaz to Turkey. That's why it will be interesting to understand the state of discrimination and work related challenges facing Alevis and Shias in Turkey and Pakistan respectively.

Drawing on 17 qualitative interviews each with rAlevi and Shia workers in Turkey and Pakistan respectively, we theorise the interplay between the deterioration of secular or egalitarian ideals in the macro-political context and its ramifications for the religious minorities at work. In order to do this, we contextualise religious diversity at work and in the wider society in Turkey. Using Bourdieuan concepts of habitus, capitals and the field, we frame the agency of religious minorities at work. We illustrate how the minority status constrain the agency of religious

groups at work, in particular in the context of a deteriorating secular stance in the macro political context.

2. Understanding Religious Diversity and Agency of Religious Minorities at Work

Globalization has engendered a world with diverse encounters of ideas, cultures and beliefs among people who were isolated from each other before (Castles, 2002). Sociological explanations also emphasize the importance of cultural and social capital in this process. Cultural capital refers to the knowledge of societies; and social capital is as a concept that “encompasses a range of thinking around norms and networks; the values and resources that both result in, and are the product of, socially negotiated ties and relationships” (Cheong et al., 2007: 25).

Within the globalization context, individuals need to integrate into new societies and new lives through attending schools, universities and transferring to work force of immigrated countries (Messarra and El-Kessar, 2010). For example, the United Kingdom, Canada, France and United States have many diverse cultures, ethnicities and religions as identities due to getting immigration from other countries. Thus, one of the challenging issues in the world can be seen as workforce diversity. Robbins and Judge (2007: 17) define workforce diversity as “heterogeneous of organizations in terms of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, and inclusion of other diverse groups”. According to Day (2005), religiously diverse organizations might face interpersonal conflicts and misunderstanding between employees due to having some bias to each other. For that reason, organizations must consider these differences in order to have employee retention and productivity.

Religion has an important role to have a feature that gives power to individuals for controlling their destiny (Johnson, 1997). However, religion has been ignored because of its nature. The

nature comes from “being an acquired property consisting of a set of beliefs that can be dynamic” (Cromwell, 1997: 169). Therefore, instead of using the term of religion, the concepts of spirituality and community has been used due to having less contested concepts (Harvey, 2001). Another reason of avoiding to use of religion is because of the logic which claims workplaces are secular entities like states and politics (Hicks, 2002). Therefore, the concept of spirituality has been premised instead of religion, because “religion is institutional, dogmatic and rigid; spirituality is personal, emotional and adaptable to an individual’s needs ” (Hicks, 2002: 380). Even if the concept of spirituality has been mostly used instead of the concept of religion, they are related to workplace, because the effect of religious obligations on employees through refusing to do some tasks can be seen in the workplaces (Bouma et al., 2003). Refusing to drive car by Hutterites, refusing to work in a brewery by Muslims and refusing to work on abortions by Catholic theatre nurses can be given as examples of this situation.

Diversity includes two ethical notions of prejudice and tolerance. Prejudice can be defined as improper negative valuation of a group of individuals (Allport, 1950). Recent studies regarding religion and prejudice have inconsistency due to having different claims on the relationship between religion and prejudice. For instance, some studies show that religion is a factor to reduce prejudice, and some other studies claim opposite (Hunsberger and Jackson, 2005; Jackson and Hunsberger, 1999; Hood et al., 1996; Batson and Burris, 1994). Even if such conflicts exist in the literature, prejudice and tolerance for religious diversity can be seen in the society, because if a society has discrimination against agency of religious minorities, prejudice instead of tolerance can be mentioned in that society (Reimer, 2008).

The importance of religious diversity and the need of managing it come from visibility of religions. According to Tanenbaum Factsheet (2011), there are 10 bias sign with regard to religion that is indicated in table 1.

Table 1: Visibility of Religion

<u>Signs</u>	<u>Explanation</u>	<u>Sign</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Attire	Some religions have dressing rule such as Hijab for women in Islam.	Network Groups	Some employees may want to include some Non- Governmental Organizations which are religion oriented.
Devotion	Some religions require daily praying, so in work days, company should give this right to employees. However, atheist employees may not be comfortable if quite room is used for praying.	Prayers	Public prayers can occur in the workplaces. So, this increases visibility of religion.
Diet	Some religions have dietary rules, so employees can expect company to respect their beliefs and creating food option with regard to their beliefs.	Ridicule	Jokes or even more subtle statements about an employee’s religion may be perceived as insulting by the recipient.
Holidays	In United States, holidays are based on Christianity. However, non- Christians will use their own days for religious holidays.	Scheduling	Demanding for rescheduling of working hour is possible. For example, Muslims can demand it in Ramadan time.
Icons	Some employees may want to use some icons or objects related to their religion. So, in some situation, companies have strict rules about icons related to religions in the workplace.	Socializing	In social meeting, if alcohol exists in the meal, a Muslim employee may leave out the meeting, so s/he can miss networking opportunities and s/he cannot have happy hour after work.

Source: adapted from Tanenbaum Factsheet (2011:1-8)

Human society based on work and religion (Harpaz, 1998), and research related to work and religion are not a new issue (e.g Weber, 1930; McClelland, 1961). The relationship of both concepts can be especially seen between Protestant Work ethic which “lay at the root of the development of capitalism and industrial work organizations” (Parboteeah et al. 2014: 121) and the advancement of modern rational capitalist system (Weber, 1978; Weber, 2004). Such relationships not only exist in Christianity but also in some other belief system such as Islam and business (Arslan, 2001; Author, 2009). From the sociological lens, religion is a social institution, which has a power to effect wide range of societal life through its feature of norm setting as regards behavioural prescriptions (Parboteeah et al., 2008). Thus, these norms create an environment that makes an obligatorily feeling to respect such norms. However, the agency

of religious minorities has an important role in the society, because beliefs can create a discriminative behaviour to the agency of minorities. Historically, until the late 20th century, social sciences considered secularization paradigm with regard to religious discrimination. The paradigm premised that religion has a decreasing importance in the public, so it will disappear (Fox, 2000). However, religious diversity created a reassessment of this theory and the premises changed to an increasing role of religion in the public sphere (Fox, 2013).

Fox (2000) posits three religious factors that are related to discrimination. The first is that religious worldview of majorities can be challenged by minority groups. As such, minorities can be recognized as a threat to beliefs of majority group. The second is religious legitimacy which is defined as “the extent to which it is legitimate to invoke religion in political discourse” (p. 427). In this respect, even anti-religious ideologies like Marxism and Atheism accept the power of religion. So, Fox (2000) argues when religious legitimacy increases, this will create legitimacy for discrimination against agency of religious minorities. The third is that religion inflates emotions, thus majority groups can have a discriminative behaviour against agency of religious minorities.

The previous discussion highlights religious factors related to discrimination for religious minorities. Yet this literature remains quite about the resources and power of religious minorities. Instead the literature often considers them as rather weak actors, and victims of their circumstances. For understanding agency of religious minorities we turn to Bourdieu’s theory and its unique usefulness in order to understand religious minorities’ agency in the context of our research.

A Bourdieuan Approach for understanding agency of religious minorities at work

There has been recent attention to Bourdieu in the field of organizational studies (Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2005; Golsorkhi et al., 2009; Kerr and Rabinson, 2009) as using social structures and

dispositions of individuals for indicating spaces for agency. Particularly, he considers individual resources, strategies and activities within a contextual approach: organizational or macro (Al Ariss et al., 2013). This consideration brings an agency and structure discussion which is called as relational perspective (Schirato and Webb, 2003). In order to show this perspective, he describes mainly three constructs which are field, capital and habitus.

A social field is “a patterned set of practices within a broader social space, which suggests competent action in conformity with rules and roles” (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011: 23). Playing in this field has been created through specific set of capitals which give power to player (Bourdieu, 1977; 1986). Thus, fields are shaped by social practices of their actors (Chudzikowski and Mayrhofer, 2011). Also, Bourdieu (1998) explains habitus as:

Generative principles of distinct and distractive practices- what the worker eats, and especially the way he eats it, the sport he practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them are systematically different from the industrial owner’s corresponding activities. But habitus are also classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and division, different tastes. They make distinctions between what is good and what is bad, between what is right and what is wrong, between what is distinguished and what is vulgar, and so forth, but the distinctions are not identical. Thus, for instance, the same behaviour or even the same good can appear distinguished to one person, pretentious to someone else, and cheap or showy to yet another (p.8).

Habitus and field are linked to each other. Therefore, field shapes habitus, and habitus shapes field as shaping actions through reproducing field (Crossley, 2001). As a third construct, Bourdieu mentions three kinds of capital which are economic, social and cultural capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

Social capital includes the social relationship which provides accessing to necessary resources in a society, and also this situation brings accessibility of economic capital as accumulated human labour. In addition, actors of social capital have opportunity to attain direct access to economic resources such as protected markets, subsidized loans and investment tips (Portes, 2000). On the other hand, cultural capital encompasses professional and educational

qualification (Al Ariss et al., 2013). Bourdieu also defines symbolic capital which can be considered all forms of capital in different contexts (Ozbilgin and Tatli, 2005). When we consider all types of capital, Bourdieu also makes a contribution as using conflict perspective to the study of religion. According to him, religion is a power source over individuals, groups and organizations (micro-meso-macro level). Bourdieu uses the term of religious power as a religion capital; because he writes,

Depends on the material and symbolic force of groups and classes the claimants can mobilize by offering them goods and services that satisfy their religious interests (Bourdieu, 1991: 22)

Bourdieu evaluates three major theories of religion which is premised by Durkheim, Weber and Marx. Based on the Durkheim's *Elementary Forms of The Religious Life*, Bourdieu mentions sociology of religion must be taken into consideration as a dimension of sociological knowledge. As such, religion can be understood as an instrument which provides communication and knowledge (Dianteill, 2003). According to Bourdieu (1990-stanford), Weber introduces political economics of religion, so this brings opportunity for Bourdieu to create the concepts of religious and cultural capital. Lastly, Bourdieu considers Marx's notion of ideology. This ideology includes following: "religion assumes a political function of conserving social order" (Dianteill, 2003: 532). Based on the Rey (2007) interpretation, for Bourdieu, God is socially constructed illusion, and religion creates an understanding which considers individuals as sanctified humans in order to provide social domination in terms of intervening life order (Gozyaydin, 2014). To summarise, Bourdieu uses religion as a metaphor when he creates his studies. Consideration of field, habitus and capital with this metaphor provides a different aspect for religious minorities. Within the Bourdieuan Perspective, in order to have a broad discussion and explore more detailed knowledge on agency of religious minorities, in the next section, before presenting our empirical evidence, we briefly introduce the Turkish context regarding religion with using an historical perspective.

Conceptualising Workplace Discrimination and Religion

Based on the United Nations' International Labor Organisation (2015), workplace discrimination has been defined as "any distinction, exclusion or preference made on the basis of race, colour, sex, religion, political opinion, national extraction or social origin, which has the effect of nullifying or impairing equality of opportunity or treatment in employment or occupation." The literature demonstrates that the definition of UN-ILO is limited to visible discrimination instead of adopting a broader conceptualisation of workplace discrimination that includes other types of discrimination such as subtle, interpersonal discrimination and microaggressions (Shen and Dhanani, 2015; **Cheung et al., 2016**). Also, the definition does not focus on social identity characteristics. For this reason, our research considers workplace discrimination in conjunction with both the inside and the outside of the organisations.

History of intra-Islam differences and the genesis of Muslim minority persecution

Turner (2002) notes that mainstream Western commentaries on Islam typically fail to consider the heterogeneity of contemporary Islamic belief. They ignore that recent resurgence of Islamic radicalism has been challenged by several liberal intellectuals in Islam (Othman, 1999), and that not Islamic sects subscribe to post-9/11 radicalism. Indeed, there are different sects within Islam where each follows different interpretation and sharia (Nasr, 2007).

Shia Islam (also known as Shiite Islam) is the second largest branch of Islam, after Sunnism. The demographic breakdown between the two denominations is difficult to assess but Shias are generally estimated to constitute between 10 and 15 per cent of the

world's Muslim population (1.59 billion). According to Pew (2009), there are between 154 million and 200 million Shia Muslims in the world today. Most Shias (between 68% and 80% of their global population) live in four countries: Iran, Pakistan, India and Iraq. Iran has 66 million to 70 million Shias; Iraq, India and Pakistan each are home to at least 16 million Shias. In four countries - Iran, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Iraq - Shia Muslims make up a majority of the total population, whereas in Yemen they represent 45-50% of the population and in Lebanon they constitute the largest faith group (Pew, 2009). Shias are a sizable minority in Turkey (Alevi), Afghanistan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Nigeria and Tanzania.

Sunnis are divided into Hanafi, Shafei, Maliki and Hanbali schools of jurisprudence. There is also a Salafi (or 'Wahhabi') school that does not follow a specific school of jurisprudence. The majority of Sunnis across the world follow the Hanafi, Shafei and Maliki schools. Salafis and Hanbalis are in majority only in Saudi Arabia and UAE but remain dominant in the Muslim world due to their active promotion of Salafi (Wahhabi) ideology, generously sponsored by the petrodollars.

Most Shias belong to the Twelver sub-sect (Ithna Asharis or Imamis) and the rest are divided between Ismailis, Zaidis, Alevi and other groups. Sunnis are a majority in most Muslim communities in Southeast Asia, South Asia, Africa, and part of the Arab world. Shias constitute a significant percentage of the population in the Middle East including Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Yemen, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia (Eastern Province) and Kuwait.

Although both Sunni and Shia share their belief in the Oneness of God, the Quran and the finality of the Prophet Muhammad, and both sects practice five prayers a day and fasting in Ramadan, there are some difference in religious practice and customs, often related to jurisprudence.

The historical background of the Sunni–Shia split lies in the schism that occurred when the Prophet Muhammad died in the year 632, leading to a dispute over succession to the Prophet as a caliph of the Islamic community. The dispute became further pronounced when Muawiya, a governor of Syrian province waged a war against Ali (Sunni Muslims’ fourth Caliph and Shia Muslims’ first Imam).

In contrast to Sunni Muslims who focus on the teachings of the Prophet Muhammad and his companions (Sahaba, particularly the first four Caliphs), Shias adhere to the teachings of the Prophet and his family and descendants (who are referred to as the Ahl al-Bayt).

The succession to the Prophet is one of the main contentious issues between Sunnis and Shias. Shias hold particularly critical views about those companions of the Prophet who in their view, violated Ali’s right to succeed the Prophet or fought with him and other members of the Prophet’s family. In contrast, most Sunnis treat all companions of the Prophet worthy of respect notwithstanding their treatment of the Prophet’s family. However, Sunnis’ views on the Umayyad Caliph Yazid (son of Muawiya) whose forces slaughtered Prophet Muhammad’s grandson Imam Hussein in 680 AD are divided between those (dominant majority) who out-rightly condemn Yazid and a very few hardliners within some hardline Salafi/Wahhabi and Deobandi communities who consider that both Imam Hussain and Yazid were right. However, Imam Hussein remains a central and most revered character in contemporary Shia and Sunni Sufi ideology and ritual practices of the Ashura of Muharram.

After Muawiya took over as a caliph (661 AD) (although most Sunni Muslims do not consider Muawiya to be a part of the Rightly Guided Caliphs), Shia persecution became institutionalized and systematic, and continued throughout the Umayyad Caliphate (661-

750 AD). Throughout Islamic history, Shia Muslims have been on the receiving end of autocratic Muslim caliphs and rulers. Hoyt (1975) notes that Yazid (ruled 680-683) ruled Arabia, Iraq, and Persia through a secret service of 4,000 men. “The main purpose of these 4,000 was to unmask the Shiites, and bring them to justice, which in this case meant death. So, while peace seems to reign in Damascus, the western half of the empire was soon bathed in blood” (Hoyt, 1975: 28-29).

Shia persecution also continued during the Abbasid caliphate (750-1258). The Abbasid caliphs who ruled from Baghdad imprisoned and killed Shia Imams (the Prophet’s descendants) and encouraged eminent Sunni clerics or ulama to define Sunni orthodoxy and contain the appeal of Shia Islam. Shias were attacked during Ashura mourning processions of Muharram, often killed or imprisoned. Shia clerics were killed, shrines ransacked and homes of ordinary Shias torched. This pattern was repeated throughout the centuries. The Shias were usually treated as the enemy within and were the first to come under suspicion if there was an internal or external threat to the ruling Sunni establishment (Nasr, 2007: 52-54).

The Shia were able to gain power through the Fatimid Caliphate (909-1171) but their power was short-lived. The next notable Shia power emerged in Iran in the shape of the Safavid rulers (1501-1736). The Safavids faced rivalry by the Ottoman Sunni Caliphs (1299-9122) who put Shias to the sword in Anatolia, Turkey. Thousands of Shias were massacred in the Ottoman Empire, including the Alevis in Turkey, the Alawis in Syria and the Shia of Lebanon (Nasr, 2007: 65-66).

In the last two hundred years, major incidents of Shia persecution and violence have been reported in Saudi Arabia (by the Wahhabi or Salafi warlords, clerics and rulers), Iraq (by Saddam Hussain), Afghanistan (by Emir Abdur Rahman in the late 19th century and more

recently by the Taliban since 1990s) and Syria and Iraq (at the hands of the ISIS from mid-2000s to date).

Religious differences between these two sects become usually intensified during power struggles, such as the Bahraini uprising, Syrian uprising, or the 2003 Iraq War. Anti-Shia hatred persists to this day from Pakistan to Yemen, Afghanistan to Iraq, Indonesia to Egypt, and is a major element of sectarian frictions throughout the Middle East.

3. Understanding Religious Diversity in the Turkish Context

In Turkish political history, until 1946, Turkey had a single party, the CHP (Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi- the Republican People's Party). After 1946, DP (Demokrat Parti- The Democrat Party) was established, and DP attained position of ruling party in 1950 due to party's efforts for expanding their popular base, including religious conservatives. Transition to a multi-party system from one party system occurred through changing mainstream politics as Islam (Pak, 2004). Based on the policy of DP, the role of religion increased both in school and in the lives of individuals (Yavuz, 2003). However, after a decade, military intervention ended DP because of having unconstitutional practices and violation to secularism (Pak, 2004). Interestingly, even if Turkey is a Muslim majority country, also the structure of the state and military interventions made discrimination against citizens of the country through intervention daily life of Muslim people (Sezer, 1993). It shows that at the beginning of multi-party system of Turkey, the religion was an important concept in the country in terms of two perspectives. First one is that Islamic thought of people recognized state as making discrimination against Muslims; and second one is that state recognized Islamic practices as a violation of both the state structure and secularism thought. Consequently, state has been criticized by some groups (e.g. Mazlumder) of Turkey. Religious Discrimination Report of Turkey (2010) which was created

by Mazlumder criticizes state in terms of making discrimination in following areas: intervention to religion by secularism, creating directorate of religious affairs as a state monopoly, education, revoking nomenclature (like *hafiz*, *mullah*), revoking election of religious leaders, intervention sermons in Friday Praying by State, prohibiting to establish cemaat (Islamic community) foundation, ended political parties because of having an Islamic thought. In addition to this national context, Turkey is also important in international context.

Turkey has been considered as a bridge country between Europe and Asia, The West and Middle East or Western and Islamic civilizations (Soysal, 2004). This consideration comes from the perspective of geographic location of Turkey. In another perspective, historically, Turkey was the first country which has the transition of an Islamic empire to a modern secular nation state outside Europe. “It is also the first and only Muslim country to have achieved candidature for EU membership” (Gol. 2009: 796). According to Huntington (1996), Turkey is a ‘torn’ country that “has a single predominant culture which places it in one civilization but its leaders want to shift to another civilization” (Huntington, 1996: 138) rather than a bridge country which is “ an artificial creation connecting two solid entities but is part of neither. When Turkey’s leaders term their country as a bridge, they euphemistically confirm that it is torn ” (Huntington, 1996: 149). In the study of Gol (2009), shifting civilizations has been mentioned in three assumptions regarding Turkey. First one is conflict between being pro-Western orientation country and willingness to shape country as an Islamic State; because AKP has been seen as a party try to provide pro-western orientation, however future decisions with regard to European Union will show their real desire either positive or negative for western civilization. Second one is perception of redefinition of civilization identity will cause protests such as protest meetings (Cumhuriyet Mitingleri) between April and May 2007 in Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir. Third one is definition of civilization. For example, if western civilization is understood as a geo-strategic and ideological way, there will be no obstacle for Turkey, however if western

civilisation is defined in terms of religion and culture, this will be an obstacle for Turkey for being a westernized country in the civilization thought. Gol (2009: 802) examines AKP which is a ruling party that uses Islamic card as follow:

The AKP is not the first party to play the ‘Islamic card’ in Turkish politics. Since 1950 both right-wing and religious parties have used the religious factor for their own ends. The AKP learned from the mistakes of its predecessors: the National Salvation Party (Milli Selamet Partisi, MSP) under the leadership of Necmeddin Erbakan in the 1970s; the Welfare Party (Refah Partisi, AKP), again under Erbakan’s leadership, in the 1980s and 1990s; the Virtue Party (Fazilet Partisi, FP) and the Felicity Party (Saadet Partisi, SP) which were established after the 1997 ‘postmodern’ coup.

Even if Islamic perception in political parties have a great importance to be a ruling party, economic stability and achievements have also been considered by voters, because SP didn’t have any success to play Islamic cards, AKP also was strong in terms of economic results like decreasing inflation, economic stability and economic growth (Alkan, 2007; Tran, 2007). Namely, both Islamic cards and economic growth is indicator of being a ruling party in Turkey.

As stated in the historical political context of Turkey, Religion has very important role in the country, and even if majority of Turkey consists of Muslims, the structure of state and thought of secularism creates a discriminative environment for them. However, when we mention religious diversity, it includes many religious groups. In this country which makes discrimination against majority of people in terms of politics and intervention to real life, understanding the role of agency of religious minorities also has a great importance. Therefore, after introducing historical context of Turkey regarding its own problem about religion, we introduce religious minorities’ problems in different fields in order to create a general perspective. Table 2 summarizes discrimination field and determined cases in Turkey for religious minorities.

Table 2: Discrimination Cases of Turkey

Discrimination Field	Number of cases	Discrimination against ...
		- “Alevi” in the Ramadan time because of not fasting.

Employment	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dr. Muslum Dogan who was dismissed from profession because of having a willingness to improve quality of community clinic in the Alevi's town. - During recruitment process, asking candidates whether they believe in God and their opinions on certain religious groups. This is claimed by a parliamentarian. - An employee of hospital because of being an "Alevi". A hospital manager assaulted to this employee. - Muslim women as prohibiting 'Hijab'(headscarf) for entering any governmental exams in Turkey. Also, the photos in the application form have to be without 'hijab'.
Education	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Muslim women as prohibiting 'Hijab' for entering courses. - Protestants as being given obligatory religion course in the school. - "Alevi" as being given course in the school. - Ateists being given compulsory religious in the school. - Ateists who were assaulted through belittling of "Alevi" beliefs - Individuals who change their religion from Islam to another belief as assaulting them.
Accessing Goods and Services	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - "Alevi" as not giving status of house of worship to their praying facilities by government - Individuals who do not want to mention their beliefs as writing their name to the personal ID card. - Muslim women as prohibiting 'Hijab' for the application from of discounted transformation forms in Izmir. - Christians as prohibiting missionary activities. It is a violation of freedom to explain religion.
Verbal and Physical Assaults	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Religious Minorities (assassination attempt) - Religious Minorities (threatening by phone) - Religious Minorities (cursing) - Religious Minorities (being battered)

Adapted from Kayabas and Kutkut (2011) and Association of Protestant Churches

In Table 2, we indicate discrimination fields, number of cases and categorization of cases based on the studies of Kayabas and Kutkut (2011) and Association of Protestant Church. As stated

in table 2; they define four fields of discrimination as employment, education, accessing goods and services, and verbal and physical assaults. In the employment area, determined cases are mostly related to Alevism. However, in the research assistant case, it is about believes in God; therefore the case is related to atheism. In the education field, cases are mostly related to “Alevi” women who wear hijab, and Protestants. However, the verbal and Physical assaults are only for religious minorities.

Even if there are four different categories related to religious discrimination in table 2, all fields include dimensions for workplace. Especially, the categories of education, and accessing goods and services have feature of employment. Verbal and physical assaults can be also seen in the workplaces. In order to have deep insight, we adopt qualitative in-depth interviews to understand religious minorities at workplaces; because the reports and studies that make assumptions with regard to religious minorities and discrimination usually omit the real-life experience of individuals, and different perspectives to the topic itself. This approach helped us to understand how religious minorities construct their own reality in the given context.

Turkey in many minority reports and Internet forums has been considered as a country that makes discrimination against religious minorities. However, the main reason of this perspective comes from modernization process of Turkey. Historical root of Turkey based on Ottoman Empire, and the empire had a patrimonial system due to having a sultan regime. Therefore, Turkish modernist movement recognized Ottoman era as primitive, reactionist, traditionalist, despotic and superstition. Thus, since the beginning of the modern republic, Turkey was positioned as nationalist, secular and modern country (Somel, 1998; Kolukirik, 2008). However, modernization process of Turkey ignored religious minorities and the state wanted to control religion. Article 24 in the constitution of Turkey brings limitation of religion and controlling it as follow:

Everyone has the freedom of conscience, religious belief and conviction. Acts of worship, religious rites and ceremonies shall be conducted freely, as long as they do not violate the provisions of Article 14. No one shall be compelled to worship, or to participate in religious rites and ceremonies, or to reveal religious beliefs and convictions, or be blamed or accused because of his religious beliefs and convictions. Religious and moral education and instruction shall be conducted under state supervision and control. Instruction in religious culture and morals shall be one of the compulsory lessons in the curricula of primary and secondary schools. Other religious education and instruction shall be subject to the individual's own desire, and in the case of minors, to the request of their legal representatives. No one shall be allowed to exploit or abuse religion or religious feelings, or things held sacred by religion, in any manner whatsoever, for the purpose of personal or political interest or influence, or for even partially basing the fundamental, social, economic, political, and legal order of the State on religious tenets.

In this paper, article 14 has been used as listed restrictions regarding religious freedom. Therefore, if any practices of any religious groups violate the Article 14 which includes “prohibiting violation of indivisible integrity of State with its territory and nation, and endangering the existence of the democratic and secular order of the Republic based on human rights” (Constitution of Turkey: 6), The State takes precautions regarding these practices. Therefore, it is easy to make discrimination against religious minorities based on interpretation of any legal authorities in the state with regard to any practices of religious minorities.

4. Understanding Religious Diversity in the Pakistani Context

Historically, Shia in South Asia faced persecution by some Sunni rulers, clerics and Mughal Emperors which resulted in the killings of eminent Shia scholars like Qazi Nurullah Shustari

(1549-1610, also known as Shaheed-e-Thaalis, the Third Martyr) and Mirza Muhammad Kamil Dehlavi (d. 1819, also known as Shaheed-e-Rabay, the Fourth Martyr) who are two of the five important martyred clerics of Shia Islam. Shias in Kashmir have faced massacres in the past few centuries. Plunder, loot and massacres which came to be known as Taarajs virtually devastated the community between 15th to 19th century during which the Shia habitations were plundered, people slaughtered, libraries burnt and their sacred sites desecrated. Sheikh Ahmad Sarhindi (1564-1624, known as Mujaddid Alf Sani), Shah Waliullah (1703-1762) and Shah Ismail (1779-1831) played a key role in aggravating anti-Shia sentiments in local Sunni rulers and populations in India. Afghanistan's Pashtun ruler Ahmad Shah Durrani Abdali (1722-1772), who invaded India upon the invitation of Shah Waliullah, especially targeted and killed Hindus and Shia Muslims. The sectarian sentiments became further institutionalized in the shape of the anti-Shia literature and fatwas (religious decrees) issued after the establishment of the Darul Uloom Deoband, the first Deobandi madrasa that was founded in 1866 by Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi. In Saudi Arabia, the anti-Shia and anti-Sunni Sufi sentiments became institutionalized in the shape of the Wahhabi movement of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792) and the subsequent ascendance of the Saud family to power.

Some of these anti-Shia sentiments were also inherited when Pakistan came into being in August 1947. The founder of Pakistan, although himself a Shia Muslim, was denied a state funeral led by a Shia cleric. His state funeral was led by a Deobandi cleric, a Sunni sub-sect that remains vehemently anti-Shia and anti-Sunni Bareilvi.

Pakistan is a Muslim majority country with 97% Muslim population. Shias make up between 10 and 15 per cent of the Muslim population of Pakistan, with a population estimated to be between 17 and 26 million. Majority of Sunnis comprises Barelvi (Sufi) Muslims whereas Deobandi and Wahhabi (Salafi or Ahl-e-Hadith) Muslims constitute less than 20 per cent of Sunni Muslims (HRCP, 2012).

Although Shia in Pakistan are scattered throughout the country, there are certain areas where Shias constitute majority population, e.g., Gilgit-Biltistan, Kurram Agency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) and significant presence in certain areas of Jhang, D.I. Khan, Quetta and Layyah. Shias of Pakistan belong to almost all ethnic backgrounds including but not limited to Punjabi, Pashtun, Sindhi, Baloch, Urdu speaking, Hazara, Gilgiti etc.

Assimilation and subtle persecution

In government census and other national surveys, usually no data is collected on sect basis. All Muslim sects including Sunni and Shia with all of their sub-denominations are categorized as Muslims. There is a tendency to suppress and deny Shia identity and assimilate them with Sunni Muslims. For example, in the Objective Resolution, the preamble and integral part of Pakistan's national constitution, there is a commitment to the Sunni Islamic principles of the Quran and Sunnah, but no affirmation is made to the Shia Muslims' belief in Ahl al-Bayt (the Prophet's family and descendants). Similarly, Islamic laws of General Zia-ul-Haq (1977-88) were clearly tilted towards the Deobandi and Salafi traditions of Islam. In the mainstream media and literature, usually the Sunni practices of Islam, e.g., methods of prayer, are presented as 'normal' and 'mainstream' and on TV channels, the calls for prayer are broadcast as per Sunni tradition. In the literature of

Deobandi and Salafi/Wahhabi madrassas and social media, it is common to find hate speech against Shia Muslims because of their beliefs. Anti-Shia groups such as Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP), currently operating as Ahle Sunnat Wal Jmaat (ASWJ) and Rah-e-Haq Party freely operate and spew venom against Shia and Sunni Barelvi or Sufi Muslims with impunity.

Anti-Shia violence

Since mid-1980s, a systematic violence is evident against Shias in the aftermath of the Saudi-Iranian political tensions which were played out in the garb of sectarian differences and the role of colonial powers such as the US and UK in promoting and exploiting these tensions cannot be ignored. Before 1980s, there is evidence of low intensity violence against Shias such as in Their Sindh (1963) and in Karachi (1970s).

From mid-1990s, incidents of violence became more frequent and intense against Shias and Sunni Barelvis or Sufis. Data on target killings and persecution is cited in reports of HRCP, HRW, Asian HRC, Amnesty reports etc.

According to the US Department of State's Country Reports on Human Rights Practices, Shia Muslims in Pakistan "faced discrimination and societal violence" (US 11 Mar. 2008, Sec. 5), as well as "significant discrimination in employment and access to education, including at government institutions" (ibid., Sec. 2.c; ibid. 19 Sept. 2008, Sec. 2). Country Reports 2007 further states that Shia Muslims "were the targets of religious violence" (ibid. 11 Mar. 2008, Sec. 2.c). The International Religious Freedom Report 2008 indicates that

some Sunni Muslim groups have published literature calling for violence against Shia Muslims (US 19 Sept. 2008, Sec. 3). Freedom House (2008) states that Shia Muslims (along with Christians and Ahmadis) are targeted by extremist groups in Pakistan. According to INTERFACE, a Pakistani agency which promotes the profession of teaching and provides teachers to a variety of educational institutions in Pakistan (INTERACE n.d.) and the International Religious Freedom Report 2008, students at the Punjab University (PU) in Lahore have reported that some teachers and administrative officials have been "discriminating among students on religious and political grounds" (ibid. 19 May 2008; US 19 Sept. 2008, Sec. 3). One student was reportedly denied a room in the university's hostels because he was a Shia Muslim (INTERFACE 19 May 2008; US 19 Sept. 2008, Sec. 3). An Inter Press Service News Agency (IPS) article states that Shia students at PU "were prevented from attending congregational prayers" behind Sunni prayer leaders and that Shia students would pray separately after the Sunni students had completed their prayers (27 Sept. 2008). The IPS article further indicates that, in August 2008, "six Shia students were expelled from PU hostels for insisting on joining congregational prayers" (27 Sept. 2008). According to the IPS article, the PU university administration later stated that the students will be readmitted if they relinquish their demand to pray with the congregation or with Shia prayer leaders (27 Sept. 2008) (IRBC 2008).

Since mid-1980s, the country has been witnessing anti-Shia violence and bloodshed. The term 'sectarian violence' is misleading as it suggests equal incidents and scale of violence between Sunni and Shia and also ignored the common Deobandi Takfiri identity of the extremist groups who are not only attacking Shias but also Sunni Barelvis, Sunni Sufis, Christians, Ahmadis and other communities. Sectarian militant groups have gained so much strength that it seems almost impossible to control their terrorist activities (Pakistan

Blogzine 2012). According to Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP) a total of 313 people of the Shia sect were killed in eight months (January to August 2012). Ninety-six people were targeted in Balochistan and 52 in Karachi. Similarly, the situation in Gilgit and Parachinar is no more different with 38 and 53 killings respectively (HRCP 2012). According to unofficial statistics, more than 19,000 Shias have been killed due to their faith in the last two decades in Pakistan.

The Shia Muslims of Pakistan have relentlessly been attacked in various ways by the Jihadi and religious militants many of whom were bred and raised during the 1980s. While the first major incident of the massacre of Shias in Pakistan took place in 1963 in Therhi, Khairpur, these killings took the form of systemic killings only during and after General Zia-ul-Haq regime (1977-1988). Since mid-1980s, Shias belonging to all walks of life and all ethnic backgrounds have been targeted and killed in every possible way, at every possible place and area in Pakistan. Religious scholars, doctors, lawyers, educationists, government officials, other professionals, shopkeepers, vendors and students, all have been targeted in one way or the other for the mere reason of them being Shia. Shias have been attacked in religious processions, they have been dragged off the buses and slaughtered, they have been targeted on their way to pilgrimage, they have been subject to attacks on their way to schools or workplaces, they have been gunned down while offering prayers and they have been attacked while performing their regular daily business. They have been killed in all parts of the country from Kurram to Karachi and Quetta to Chilas. It must be noted that those who are killing Shias are also killing moderate Sunnis including Sunni Barelvis, Sunni Sufis and moderate Deobandis and moderate Salafis. Majority of Pakistani Sunnis have rejected the Takfiri (excommunicating and violent) terrorists of Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan (SSP) and allied groups who are killing Shias, Sunni Sufis, Ahmadis,

Christians and other persecuted groups. It is, therefore, inaccurate to present Shia genocide as a Sunni vs Shia sectarian issue. However, the scale and intensity of target killing of Shias due to their faith remains highest; Shias remain the most target killed community in Pakistan. Given that Shias of all ethnic backgrounds are being killed by Jihadi-sectarian groups (LeJ, ASWJ, Taliban), it is inaccurate to misrepresent Shia genocide as an ethnic (e.g., Hazara specific) issue. The term sectarian violence is equally problematic as it suggests as if Sunni and Shia are killing each other.

Shia Muslims in Pakistani organizations

Generally, there is a lack of research and empirical data on the persecution and discrimination of Shia Muslims in Pakistan. There is no authentic figure of Shia Muslim employees in formal sector of employment. One reason for this could be that there are no such policies in place in Pakistani organizations where it is compulsory to mention or declare Muslim sect. Also, official labor force survey does not include Muslim sect information in terms of division of labor statistics.

Thus, very few insights on organizational experiences of Shia employees are available. It is almost impossible to obtain access to research studies related to Shia Muslim employees in Pakistan as to date no international or local study is available. One particular news article was about a Shia Muslim (Hazara ethnicity) male employee of armed forces. In this article, Mateen (2012) describes the following account:

‘Major Shafaat died a sad broken man. Abandoned by his institution. Betrayed by childhood friends. Forsaken by his hometown. His only fault was to have been born different. A man with a flat nose and chinky eyes. An ethnic Hazara (Shia Muslim).

Many Shia Muslim employees have been killed while they were travelling to work or at work. For example, in 2001, Shaukat Ali Mirza, the managing director of Pakistan State Oil (PSO), was shot dead in the port city of Karachi (BBC 2001). Similarly, in October 2003, seven Shia Muslims were shot dead and seven others wounded when a bus carrying employees of the Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Organization (Suparco) for Friday prayers was ambushed by armed men on the Hub River Road (Geocities 2003). Other professions include medical doctors, university lecturers and lawyers in particular (more details of target killing of professional Shia Muslims can be retrieved from Amnesty International).

The situation of anti-Shia violence inside and outside organizations is a unique case in current scenario. Many civilians and a few security personnel have been particularly targeted because of their allegiance to Shia sect of Islam. For example, in January 2008, Taliban over ran a post Pakistan army (Frontier Constabulary) abducting many soldiers. Later, they segregated Shia soldiers and killed them after brutal torture. The dead included eight Shia FC personnel, whom the militants killed by slitting their throats. (Daily Times, 2008).

According to Shia activists, an account also corroborated by mainstream media, a retired Pakistan army soldier has been trying to seek attention of the army authorities to properly investigate the death of his 21-year old son (a soldier in Frontier Constabulary FC) while on duty at a security post in Bajaur Agency in October 2011 (The News, 2012). Mohammad Ilyas, who retired as a Lance Naik on December 11, 2001 after serving for 18 years in the Army Supply Corps of the Pakistan Army, stated that he and his family don't believe that his young son, Tasawar Hussain, committed suicide as claimed by his colleagues at the FC's Ismail Post in Bajaur. "There was no reason for him to commit suicide. He had a reasonable job and had got married only three months before he died," he stated. Hailing from Chakarkot Bala village located on the Kohat-Hangu road in Kohat district, Ilyas recalled that he was told by the FC authorities that his son was critically wounded on October 16, 2011 in the suicide bid and was taken to the Agency Headquarters Hospital in Bajaur Agency's headquarters, Khar, where he succumbed to his injuries. "According to my information and the doctor's report, Tasawar Hussain was shifted to the hospital four to five

hours after he was injured. He was hit from a distance of seven metres in the back. He was taken shirtless to the hospital and his shirt which was part of his FC uniform wasn't presented during the probe in an attempt to remove any evidence of the incident," Ilyas reported. According to Ilyas, his son had phoned his bride of three months a day before he died that some of his colleagues belonging to Kurram Agency and part of the Thall Scouts unit deployed at the Ismail Post were harassing him and he also named the persons who would be responsible if something happened to him (The News, 2012).

The above discussion suggests that Shia Muslims in Pakistan are facing persecution and discrimination. However, this persecution is not investigated in the workplace context.

5. Research Method

Our analysis in this research is based on 34 interviews that we conducted as part of study of religious diversity in the context of Turkey and Pakistan. The interviews aimed to show the perspectives of Muslim minorities. In Turkey, the interviews were conducted with the employees of a wide range of organizations that are actors in the diversity field through their attitude with regard to religious minorities. It was difficult to find religious minorities in Turkey. Therefore, we used a snowball sampling technique. We firstly communicated with "Alevi" (a Turkish Shia sect with more secular leanings) Associations as actively working on discrimination regarding religious minorities in Turkey. The Turkish sample belong to "Alevi" minorities. Even if "Alevi" claim that Islam and Alevism are linked to each other in some thought, many people in Turkey recognizes them as a religious minority as it is stated in discrimination studies regarding "Alevi" because their religious practices and some thoughts are much different from Sunni Islam. Thus, this point has been recognized as a critical issue by Sunni Muslims and they approach to "Alevi" individuals as a religious minority. Also, based on the International Social Survey Programme Report (2015), the religion of the population

comprises Sunni Muslims (91.3%), other Muslims (6.2 %), Christians (0.2 %) and no religion (2.3%). Alevi individuals are considered in the section of other Muslims.

Data were generated on employees who work in both private and public organizations. Because of the sensitivity of the issue, all participants did not accept to give the name of organizations, their occupations and names in this research. The interviews were conducted face to face when possible, and over the skype in some situations. The interview schedule consists of questions that explore employees' perspectives regarding working process in the organization, communication with manager, discrimination perception, understanding discrimination, governments' policies to religious minorities, and workplaces for religious minorities. In order to have rich insight, we created sensitizing questions in the interview schedule (Corbin and Strauss, 2008). These types of questions have been used for diagnosing existing problems and situations regarding religious minorities, and to provide accuracy of knowledge in relation to religious minorities in Turkish context. The interviews lasted between 30 to 40 minutes and voice recorded.

In Pakistan, interviews were conducted with 17 Shia Muslim employees. Respondents were approached through personal networks of the authors and also through social networks such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Interviews were conducted both face to face and online. The online method was helpful in view of the geographical spread of the Shia population and the sensitivity of this topic. Another advantage of the online method was its ability to provide access to individuals who would be difficult, if not impossible, to reach through other channels (Garton, Haythornthwaite, & Wellman, 1999; Wellman, 1997).

We did not record names of our participants or their organizations. Any identifiable details from responses were amended to mask individual and organizational identity. Snowball sampling was used and the respondents were asked to spread the word only to Shia Muslim acquaintances

who met the three parameters: Shia Muslims, formal work experience, lives in Pakistan. Indeed, the results show that the method adopted proved to be more inclusive, allowing a reach across all areas of Pakistan.

14 of the interviewees had a graduate degree or higher qualification. Only three of them were female. Nine of the interviewees were married.

NVIVO, qualitative analysis software has been used for producing codes and creating themes. For the analysis of data, theoretical sampling approach of Corbin and Strauss (2008) was used. This sampling is a concept driven approach for data. It provides relevant concepts regarding problems and situations that we want to diagnose, thus theoretical sampling provided to explore the concepts in each interview. The main difference between snowball sampling and theoretical sampling is focus point of approaches. Snowball sampling indicates how we reached our interviewees, and theoretical sampling indicates how we analysed data.

6. Findings

As it is observed from Table 3, which indicates characteristics of the Turkish participants in our study, 17 “Alevi” participated in the study. The participant age range in Turkey spanned from 22 to 51, and all interviewees are from Istanbul and Izmir, two well-known industrial cities in Turkey. In terms of education, the interviewee attainment levels ranged from high school diploma to the Bachelor degree. Many of the participants worked in the public sector; however, some participants worked in the private sector as well. The positions of employees are in the lower or middle classes in the organizations.

In Pakistan, data on age and occupation was not collected. 3 out of 17 interviewees were female while all of them were Shia and more than 2/3rd of them had a work experience of between 1 and 20 years.

Table 3: Participants in Turkey

Table 3: Participant Characteristics

Interview #	Occupation	Year of Experience	Education	Age	Gender	Religious Background
INT 1	Trainee/Management	2	Bachelor	26	Female	“Alevi”
INT 2	Accountant	12	Bachelor	34	Male	“Alevi”
INT 3	Musician	1	Bachelor	25	Male	“Alevi”
INT 4	Cook	26	High School	46	Female	“Alevi”
INT 5	Trainee/Advertisement	2	High School	22	Female	“Alevi”
INT 6	Officer in Public Adm	16	High School	37	Male	“Alevi”
INT 7	Officer in Public Adm	11	Bachelor	36	Female	“Alevi”
INT 8	Teacher	12	Bachelor	34	Female	“Alevi”
INT 9	Finance Manager	11	Bachelor	38	Male	“Alevi”
INT 10	Officer	27	High School	51	Male	“Alevi”
INT 11	Marketing	10	Bachelor	34	Male	“Alevi”
INT 12	Officer in Ministry	2	Bachelor	26	Male	“Alevi”
INT 13	Officer in Ministry	3	Bachelor	25	Male	“Alevi”
INT 14	Shipman	1	Bachelor	24	Male	“Alevi”
INT 15	Officer	21	Bachelor	44	Female	“Alevi”
INT 16	Worker	7	High School	27	Male	“Alevi”
INT 18	Organizator	3	Bachelor	25	Female	“Alevi”

The findings of our study are organized in two themes: first, bias and invisible barriers for agency of religious minorities; second, political approaches to agency of religious minorities.

Bias and Invisible Barriers for Agency of Religious Minorities

In this section, our focus is on the scope for agency shaped by the extant field of religious diversity. Based on qualitative data, we indicate how our participants constructed their agency. We observed that religious minorities engaged with the barriers they faced and attempted to resist the structure of inequality. We have reached this theme towards the following codes: favouritism, difficult to find job, unfavourable perception regarding “Alevi” , avoidance to provide employment, avoidance to communicate, unfair treatment, and unfair promotions.

In the diagnosing process of field for agency of religious minorities, we faced a number of interviews, which complains regarding current understanding of religious minorities and barriers related to workplace and promotion. Participants discussed invisible barriers in micro, meso and macro level of society. Micro level includes interpersonal relations and communications, meso level includes organizational level of understanding about minorities, and macro level includes government policies regarding religious minorities. A 26- year- old “Alevi” management trainee in the private sector recounted:

When people learnt that I am “Alevi” origin as a religious belief, they walked away one step from me. They also judged my beliefs. This is obviously a bias. Therefore, in Turkey it is really difficult to live as an “Alevi”. I feel that I faced with social exclusion. So, this indicates that people are not open minded in Turkey (Interviewee 1, Female).

In Pakistan, some respondents shared their experience where a hostile environment during the Islamic month of Muharram [mourning period for Shia Muslims]:

“One officemate didn't know that I am a Shia and told me that Shias do wrong things at Sham-e-Ghareeban [the night of mourning on the 10th of Muharram] that's why they shut down lights. That's when I told him that I am a Shia and you should avoid fake allegations.” (male, Sindh, >1 year work)

There are many responses which reveal how Shia Muslims face hostile environment at their workplace yet not in a position to complain about it. Some respondents felt uncomfortable when colleagues asked cynical questions about Shia beliefs and related rituals. There was a view that some of the Sunni colleagues were either ill-informed or chose to remain politely silent.

‘Most of them remain politely silent. A few remain curious and ask strange, at times offending, questions about Shia beliefs and rituals.’

‘Anti-Shia remarks are more common by frank Sunni colleagues and bosses who are perhaps not ill-meant but are surely insensitive.’

Social exclusion is one of the indicators of being biased. In the micro level of society, religious minorities try to avoid declaring their origin of religion, because whether a person does not mention about his/her religion, She/ he is recognized as Sunni Muslim. An “Alevi” Participant who works in the marketing field comments this situation as follows:

I am an “Alevi” citizen of Turkey. I had discrimination in a public dormitory in Elazig. I went to there in Ramadan time for my job, and I did not fast. People in dormitory learnt that I am “Alevi” and they stopped their friendship. I was alone, and after that problem, I decided not to say that I am “Alevi”, because people in Turkey accept you as Sunni Muslim if you do not express yourself in another belief. However, sometimes I need to bear some indignities (Interviewee 13, Male).

In the micro level, agency of religious minorities faced with discrimination in the real life experience. Unfavourable attitudes towards religious minorities also creates distrustful social environment. Therefore, for the occupations, it is really difficult to find a permanent job for religious minorities. Sometimes, in the recruitment process of a business can have a discriminative behaviour related to names of the people. An “Alevi” Officer who has 27 experiences emphasizes this claim as follows:

When I applied my today’s job, some of my friends were not hired, because their names were Ali and Huseyin¹. This was a primitive approach. Now, everything is still same. Society could not accept us as a part of them (Interviewee 10, Male).

Micro level encompasses bias regarding religious minorities, and these biases creates some invisible barriers in the meso-level of society. We use the term of invisible barriers; because in

¹ Ali, Hasan and Huseyin are the common names used by Alevi people.

the both regulations and legislations, there are not a possibility of discrimination against any minorities in Turkey. This situation creates invisible barriers for the agency of religious minorities. As it is stated, religious minorities do not prefer to say their beliefs in public. However, in some circumstances, the beliefs are visible and some people can be known as a member of religious minorities. A 44- year- old “Alevi” state officer in the public sector recounted:

In my organizations, my colleagues and upper level management know me as an “Alevi”. I did not see any discrimination against me, however even if there is no discrimination against me, I am not happy and I feel that I am excluded; you know why? Because I work very hard, but always management gives their appreciation to other people. I feel myself invaluable, and I am losing my expectation for being promoted (Interviewee 15, Female).

In Pakistan, the findings indicate the extent to which the anti-Shia stereotypes and hostilities are permeating in the workplace and are resulting in anti-Shia discrimination. The respondents shared examples of discrimination or hostility in their workplace by employers, managers, colleagues or customers due to their Shia beliefs or practices?

The societal discrimination does not seem to stop once Shia Muslims leave education and wider society and step into profession life. Majority of respondents faced some kind of discrimination (68%) at workplace however most of them faced subtle or refined hostility (47%) while some faced blatant anti-Shia remarks (21%).

“My office colleagues often used anti-Shia jokes with me.” (male, Sindh, >1year work)

Another respondent (a university lecturer) shared his experience where a hostile environment was created for him during the month of Muharram:

‘I worked in Zakariya University where University teachers who lived with me in teachers' hostel used to play Haq Nawaz Jhangvi's [a hardline Deobandi cleric, founder of a banned terrorist outfit Sipah-e-Sahaba Pakistan or SSP] anti-Shia cassettes during Muharram and otherwise.’

I have been told that all I believe in is rubbish and that I need to be guided to the right path. I have come across people who have made fun of the way I pray...

Always silly questions like, why you guys join prayers, why you need a sajdagah [earthen tablet to be used in prayer), why do you do Ziaraat (salutation of the Prophet and Imams) and the best one is do now Shias go to Iran for their Hajj?

Majority of Sunni Muslims, at least where I lived, studied or worked, were very tolerant of sectarian differences. In late 1980s and mid 1990s this started changing when I saw quite a few colleagues being radicalized by anti-Shia ideology. Almost all of those who are anti-Shia also happen to be anti-Ahmadi and anti-Barelvi.

Religious minorities can diagnose discrimination against them, because in theory legislations and regulations are enough to protect rights of agency of religious minorities. However, in some cases, protection has not been provided due to having a primitive perspective regarding religious minorities.

In the public sector positions, legislations and regulations must apply to all people equally. However, sometimes it is possible to witness people who have managerial role in the public organizations can decide subjectively for hiring and/or promoting, and consequently there are invisible barriers for agency of religious minorities. In the macro level, government tries to provide some prevention and discourses regarding the rights of religious minorities. However, either government policies may not be understood as sincere or discrimination has been seen only in the society because of perspectives with regard to agency of religious minorities. We

explain discrimination against religious minorities in these two ways. Following discourses of interviewee will make a clear understanding regarding these two options.

Discrimination is not related to government, it is related to Sunni Muslims. They educate their children like the enemy of religious minorities, so this is all about society. However, when Mr. Erdogan was Prime Minister of Turkey, followers of him hissed the “Alevi”, because Mr. Kılıçtaroğlu² was “Alevi”. But some others speech of Mr. Erdogan stresses unitary rather than discriminative behaviour in terms of religious minorities. (Interviewee 18, Female).

This section indicates understanding of agency of religious minorities in the micro-meso- macro level of society. Biases and invisible barriers dimension of this study is emphasized. The next dimension is about political approach to agency of religious minorities. Following section considers a macro approach to agency of religious minorities.

Political Approaches to Agency of Religious Minorities

This section includes political approach of Turkish Government with regard to religious minorities. This is a macro approach for this study. In terms of politics, “Alevi” and other minorities have criticized governments in terms of house of prayer, domination of Sunni religious groups, promotions, positive discrimination in some situation for some group of agency of religious minorities and pejorative implementations. We have reached this theme towards the following codes: Compulsory religious courses in state schools, assimilation policy of government, considering Cemevi as a cultural centre, barriers of promotions in state organizations, abusing religious groups by government, discrimination against religious minorities for promotions in state organizations, dominance of Sunni religious groups in government.

One of the main problems for “Alevis” is house of prayer. For “Alevi”, the problem is Turkish government do not considers *cemevi* (house of prayer for “Alevi”) as a house of prayer. *Cemevi*

² The leader of main opposition party. He has also Alevi religious background.

has been considered as a cultural centre. A 38 year- old Alevi finance manager mentions the situation as follows;

Mosque cannot be considered as a house of prayer for “Alevi”; because it is only for Sunni Muslims. We (“Alevi”) have *cemevi* as a house of prayer. Turkish government accepts it as a culture centre. It is wrong and this mistake will go on (Interviewee 9, Male).

In Pakistan, there was also a discourse of unity between Sunni and Shia sects visible while blaming certain extremist groups within Deobandi and Salafi/Wahhabi communities for violence against Shias, Sunni Sufis, Christians and other groups.

Despite these offensive remarks by some insensitive colleagues, there was a tendency among the respondents not to blame the Sunni Muslims overall. Instead there was evidently a unity discourse towards Sunnis while separating the extremist or fanatic Deobandi Takfiri and Wahhabi groups from the majority of peaceful and tolerant Sunnis.

“Sunnis are absolutely brothers to us. Even many Sunnis that I know, join the Ashura procession for mannat (religious vows) and faith. Only Takfiri Deobandis (SSP or ASWJ) are responsible for this violence. The kill both Shias and Sunnis.”

Another important political approach of government is to make positive discrimination regarding some Sunni Islamic circles. We do not claim that such a situation exists, however understanding of current approach of Turkish government is that the government gives privileges to certain religious groups.

Even if Sunni religious groups have dominance on the sectors, Turkish government also has some policies related to agency of religious minorities. Participants of this research claim that government has some policies regarding agency of religious minorities. Some “Alevi” claims

that Government pays money some “Alevi” opinion leaders in order to support government policies. A 26 year old “Alevi” participant tells this situation as follows:

All governments which were ruling party in Turkey had concerns to be re-elected. Therefore, they gave money to “Alevi” Grandfathers in order to support their ideologies. This money was a salary for “Alevi” Grandfathers. Then, governments tried to impose their ideologies to “Alevi” through some grandfathers (Alevi leaders) (Interviewee 12, Male).

In Pakistan, some responses indicated the agency of interviewees in dealing with religious harassment at work:

Only because they knew I was capable of answering back, they refrained from direct remarks.

It works both ways. In at least two of my jobs, the interviewer was a Shia Muslims which (I suspect) might have worked in my favor. Other than that, majority of Sunni Muslims as well as Shia Muslims are very open and tolerant of each other. There are a few bigots always there but they usually keep their mouth shut in the workplace. Subtle anti-Shia remarks are more common by close friends and colleagues.

“Alevis” are well known religious minorities in Turkey. As it is indicated in this study, general perspective of society is to make an assumption that A Turkish person is Muslim; so it is unacceptable to be “Alevi” and Turkish. Today’s political conditions show that Justice and

Development Party as ruling party has a conservative ethos that promotes Islam; also the party considers the votes of Muslim majority. On the other hand, society is another important criterion for agency of religious minorities. Consequently, discrimination against religious minorities is not just the fault of ruling party. The role of majority and understanding regarding religious minorities is also crucial in order to evaluate the current situation of religious minorities in the Turkish context.

7. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this paper, religion and sect appears to be an influential factor in diversity management in the workplace. Thus, we provided understanding of issues and challenges as well as agency of religious minorities in different perspectives which are societal and political. Societal perspective encompasses bias and invisible barriers for religious minorities. As in the political discourse, discrimination and othering against any minorities is strictly prohibited by the constitutions of Turkey and Pakistan, yet is a common phenomenon. Therefore we have used the concept of invisible barriers. However, in the daily life, invisible barriers against Muslim minorities exist which have been created by certain influential Sunni individuals and groups (such as by hardline Deobandi and Salafi/Wahhabi communities). At the societal level, due to biases against religious minorities, some people avoid to hire and promote them at work or such Muslim minorities face hate speech, persecution and violence. This situation is highly recognized by Muslim minorities. With respect to the political dimension, our findings indicate that the rights of religious minorities and their concerns have not been considered by the government. Instead of taking those concerns into account, the government appears to be using the problems of religious minorities for political gain. Additionally, our findings contribute the discussion around political and societal aspects of religious minorities, by building a conceptual understanding of religious diversity and agency of religious minorities. In particular, we understand how agencies of religious minorities show

resistance against discrimination. It appears that two major strategies come to frontline: hiding one’s religious identity, and engaging in politics. Therefore, better legislation and follow-up seem crucial to improve the rights of religious minorities in the workplace.

Table 1. Low and high roads to religious diversity

LOW ROAD TO RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY	HIGH ROAD TO RELIGIOUS DIVERSITY
Biased attitudes	Synchronicity (acausal coexistence)
Acts of bias	Legal and voluntary regulation of inclusion
Discrimination	Multiculturalism
Bias motivated violence	Acts of kindness
Genocide	Inclusive attitudes

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