

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS: THE CASE OF
ALEVIS AND SUNNIS IN AMASYA

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ABSTRACT

SOCIAL IDENTITY AND INTERGROUP RELATIONS: THE CASE OF ALEVIS AND SUNNIS IN AMASYA

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The aim of the current thesis was to investigate the relationship between Alevis and Sunnis through the lenses of Social Identity Theory, Social Dominance Theory, and Contact Hypothesis to understand whether they see the current situation stable and legitimate, and perceive discrimination. It was expected that Alevis and Sunnis will differ in ingroup identifications, social dominance orientations, quantity, and quality of intergroup contact, perception of legitimacy and stability, and perceived discrimination against their ingroup. Moreover, the relationship between the dimensions of religious group identification, social dominance orientation, social

contact and legitimacy, stability, and perceived discrimination is expected to differ between groups. The sample consisted of 157 Sunni and 172 Alevi participants living in Amasya, Turkey. Participants completed a questionnaire package including the measures of religious identification, social dominance orientation, social contact, legitimacy, stability, and perceived discrimination. Results revealed that there were significant differences between Alevis and Sunnis in public religious identity, alienated religious identity, opposition to equality, contact quality, perceived legitimacy of the group status, and perception of discrimination directed against ingroup and outgroup. Moreover, religious group identification and social dominance orientation significantly predicted the perception of legitimacy and stability in both Alevi and Sunni groups. Examination of the associations among the major variables revealed that the relationship between perceived discrimination and ingroup identification was slightly stronger for Alevi group compared to Sunni group. The power of group based dominance was stronger than opposition to equality in predicting the perception of discrimination, especially for the Sunni group. Finally, intergroup contact, especially the quality of contact, had a positive effect on intergroup relations. Considering that this thesis is the first attempt to empirically examine the fundamental social psychological processes underlying the Alevi issue in Turkey, findings were discussed on basis of sociological and political aspects as well as previous work in Western cultures.

Keywords: Alevis and Sunnis, Social Identity, Social Dominance, Social Contact, Perceived Discrimination.

ÖZ

SOSYAL KİMLİK VE GRUPLAR ARASI İLİŞKİLER: AMASYA'DA YAŞAYAN ALEVİLER VE SÜNNİLER ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tezin amacı Alevi ve Sünnilerin aralarındaki ilişkileri ve mevcut durumu ne ölçüde meşru ve istikrarlı gördükleri ve kendi gruplarına karşı ayrımcılık algılayıp algılamadıklarını anlamak amacıyla Sosyal Kimlik, Sosyal Baskınlık ve Kontak Kuramları açısından incelemektir. Alevi ve Sünnilerin iç grup özdeşimlerinde, sosyal baskınlık yönelimlerinde, gruplar arası ilişkilerinin sayısı ve kalitesinde, meşruiyet ve istikrar algılarında ve kendi gruplarına yönelik ayrımcılık algılarında farklılık göstermeleri beklenmiştir. Bununla birlikte, dini grup özdeşimi, sosyal baskınlık

yönelimi ve sosyal ilişki değişkenleri ve meşruiyet, istikrar ve ayrımcılık değişkenleri arasındaki ilişkinin iki grupta farklılık göstereceği öngörülmüştür. Araştırmanın örneklemini Amasya'da yaşamakta olan 157 Sünni ve 172 Alevi katılımcıdan oluşmaktadır. Katılımcılar dini mezhep özdeşimi, sosyal baskınlık yönelimi, sosyal ilişki, meşruiyet, istikrar ve algılanan ayrımcılık ölçeklerinden oluşan anket bataryasını doldurmuşlardır. Bulgular iki grup arasında topluluk içindeki dini iç grup özdeşimi, dini iç gruptan uzaklaşma, eşitliğe karşı olma, ilişki kalitesi, algılanan meşruiyet ve iç gruba ve dış gruba yönelik algılanan ayrımcılık değişkenlerinde anlamlı derecede farklılık olduğunu göstermiştir. Hem Alevi hem de Sünni grupta dini iç grup özdeşimi ve sosyal baskınlık yönelimi değişkenleri, meşruiyet ve istikrar algısını anlamlı derecede yordamıştır. Ayrıca, temel değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler incelendiğinde, dini iç grup özdeşimi ve algılanan ayrımcılık arasındaki ilişkinin Sünni gruba göre, Alevi grupta biraz daha güçlü olduğu görülmüştür. Özellikle Sünni grupta, grup temelli baskınlığı destekleme, eşitliğe karşı olmaya oranla, algılanan ayrımcılığı yordamada daha güçlü olduğu bulunmuştur. Sosyal ilişki düzeyinin (kontak) , özellikle ilişki kalitesinin, gruplar arası ilişkiler üzerinde olumlu bir etkiye sahip olduğu görülmüştür. Bu tezin Aleviler yaşadığı sorunların altında yatan temel süreçleri görgül olarak inceleyen ilk çalışma olduğu dikkate alınarak, bulgular hem politik ve sosyolojik yönleri hem de batı kültürlerinde yapılan çalışmalar temelinde tartışılmıştır.

Anahtar kelimeler: Aleviler ve Sünniler, Sosyal Kimlik, Sosyal Baskınlık, Sosyal Kontak, Algılanan Ayrımcılık

To my family

&

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 General Introduction

Alevis and Sunnis constitute the two major religious groups and they live together almost everywhere across Turkey. Despite their common Islamic background, two groups differ in terms of their beliefs, religious practices, and daily living styles (Özalay, 2006). Although the relationships between Sunnis and Alevis have been investigated from sociological (e.g., Koçan & Öncü, 2004) and political (e.g., Gölbaşı, 2008) viewpoints, the nature and current state of intergroup relations and perceptions between these two major religious groups in Turkey are almost left unexamined. This study aims to investigate Alevis and Sunnis from a social psychological perspective, specifically using Social Identity Theory (SIT). Considering that SIT is rich in understanding the perceptions of legitimacy, status differences, social contact, and dominance perceptions as well as perceived discrimination, it was assumed that the interactions between these groups can be analyzed in multiple dimensions. Although SIT has provided the general framework of this study, Social

Dominance Theory and Contact Hypothesis have also been applied in understanding the perception of current socio-structure and perceived discrimination towards Alevis and/or Sunnis. Before explaining the major hypotheses of the study, a literature review of the main theories used in this work and rationale of the study will be presented in the following sections.

1.2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1.2.1 Social Identity Theory

Social Identity Theory (SIT) developed by Tajfel and Turner (1979) has been one of the mostly applied perspectives in understanding intergroup interactions and the status relationships between groups since the late 1970s (Hogg & Abrams, 1988). The key concept of SIT is defined as “that part of an individual’s self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership” (Tajfel, 1978, p. 63). That is to say, in social identity process, members of a group come to internalize group membership to their self-concepts and evaluate themselves and others from the view of their membership in specific groups (Tajfel & Turner, 1986).

Social identification, by definition, is the extent to which people define and label themselves and are viewed and evaluated by others as members of social categories and groups (Ellemers, 1993). SIT suggests that, strong identification with an ingroup make people act in accordance with other members of the group (Tajfel & Turner, 1979).

Society includes different social categories which differ in power and status relations. SIT states that the formation of categories is indispensable since groups have important functions in people's lives, such as fulfilling individual and societal needs for order, structure, and predictability. Social categories are formed through the segregation of people on the basis of nationality, religion, race, class, sex, and so on. It is almost inevitable for these categories to have equal power, prestige, and status. Through the process of categorization individuals not only order, systematize, and simplify the complex network of social groups but also protect, maintain, and enhance the distinction between groups. Through these categorizations people differentiate themselves from other groups rather than striving for similarity between groups (Hogg & Abrams, 1988).

Categorization is the core of social identity processes. Individuals classify others considering their similarities and differences with themselves. Through categorization, the similarities between the self and the members of ingroup are accentuated whereas the differences between the self and the members of outgroup are exaggerated (Hogg & Abrams, 1988; Tajfel, 1982). That is, individuals create a perception that they are identical to other members of the same category and behave accordingly with the category membership. Furthermore, even exploration of intergroup similarities and ingroup dissimilarities do not reduce ingroup favoritism (Tajfel et al., 1971). In such situations, individuals try to establish their distinctiveness from outgroup

members who have similarities with ingroup rather than from those who are perceived as dissimilar.

Tajfel and colleagues (Tajfel et al., 1971) asserted that categorization may drive individuals to behave differentially towards members of ingroup and outgroup even when they gain no benefit from such behavior and even when categorization has little emotional meaning. Also, on the base of categorization, people can favor their group and/or discriminate the outgroup. The authors concluded that, based on over 30 studies, minimal social categorization can cause intergroup discrimination and ingroup favoritism. It was suggested that the initial step of discrimination starts with ingroup favoritism that includes increase of trust, positive regard, cooperation, and empathy to members of ingroup instead of members of outgroup (see for a review Hewstone et al., 2002).

Categorization in a given society leads to the motivation for social comparison between categories. Individuals compare their ingroup with the other (out) groups in order to evaluate their position and to achieve a positive and distinct identity (see Tajfel, 1982 for a review). Through these comparisons individuals realize their group's value and relative status. To put it differently, individuals' conception of group as positive or negative is largely relational in nature and results from the comparison process (Tajfel, 1982). If the outcome of the comparisons are positive, they result in satisfactory social identity (Nezlek & Smith, 2005); if negative, they result in negative social identities that make

unsatisfactory contributions to the concept of the group and individual's self (Tajfel, 1978). Generally, the results of these comparisons for individuals from low status groups are negative. Thus, these individuals may achieve an unsatisfactory social identity following these comparisons.

SIT assumes that people strive for positive social identity; it can be proposed that individuals are motivated to identify with relatively high status groups rather than relatively low status groups. Moreover, SIT suggests that the members of low status groups are more dissatisfied about their membership than members of high status groups. The identification conflict of low status group's members may derive from the fact that their group membership cannot offer them a positive distinctiveness on the basis of this group membership that help them achieve a positive social identity (Ellemers, 1993).

It is worth to apply SIT to better understand the status relationships between Alevis and Sunnis in Turkey. The questions of how these groups perceive their ingroup and outgroup can be explored through SIT. Specifically, under the framework of SIT, Alevis and Sunnis, their ingroup identifications, and discrimination perceptions will be explored. Considering the main assumptions of SIT, it is plausible to argue that, relative to Sunnis, Alevis as the minority group would perceive themselves as more disadvantaged and discriminated against since Sunnis dominate the status relationships with their high level of power.

1.2.1.1 Intergroup Bias

One of the critical assumptions of SIT is the concept of “intergroup bias” which is defined as an individual’s tendency to favor or evaluate one’s own group, its members, and membership (ingroup) more positively than other groups and their members (outgroup) (Tajfel, 1982). It was clearly shown that even when there is no conflict or competition between groups, people still display ingroup favoritism. People can favor their ingroup so as to achieve positive group distinctiveness that will protect, enhance, and preserve the value of their group. Intergroup bias can take the form of ingroup favoritism and/or outgroup derogation. It can be observed through discriminative behaviors toward the outgroup, through prejudiced attitudes, and stereotyped cognitions.

Moreover, conflicts between groups can arise when people with strong ingroup identification seek out positive intergroup distinction. SIT asserts that intergroup bias appears even in the minimal conditions in which groups are randomly constructed with no self interest or no competition for resources (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Mere awareness of some kind of distinction between individuals motivates them to perform discriminative attitudes and behavior (Tajfel et al., 1971). However the question of whether social categorization is enough to differential treatment to the members of outgroup is unclear. Although there exist studies showing that categorizing people into groups even based on trivial factors is enough for creating ingroup bias (e.g. Brewer 1979),

others claimed that mere categorization salience is not a sufficient condition (Mummendey & Otten, 2003).

For the current study, since Alevis and Sunnis have salient categories for many centuries and they compete for resources to some extent, it is expected that rating of Alevis and Sunnis on the attributes of their own groups as well as other group will reflect some sort of intergroup bias. Discriminating outgroup is one of the ways to show intergroup bias and whether these groups show intergroup bias will be explored through the perception of discrimination.

1.2.1.2 The Role of Ingroup Identification on Performing Discrimination

Ingroup identification is central to explain the occurrence of intergroup conflict in addition to incompatible interests of groups. The strength of group identification plays a pivotal role on discriminating attitudes and behaviors. People with high group identification are motivated to act in terms of their membership of a specific group. This identification to group becomes a part of psychological self and inclines normative collective behaviors and beliefs that the group offers. Individuals who feel highly committed to their groups begin to think, feel, and act in terms of the way that the ingroup is reflecting (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). For example, it has been found that people with high group identification are more likely to discriminate outgroup members in terms of their attitudes, behaviors, and cognitive judgments than those with low group identification (Tzeng & Jackson, 1994).

Majority groups discriminate against minority groups to obtain and/or enhance their positive distinct group identities. However, it is not only majority group that discriminates against the minority/disadvantaged group; minority group also discriminates against the majority group. Due to the reason that minorities feel more insecure than majority, they are in need to cope with feelings of insecurity with the intention of improving the fate of their group and achieving a positive social identity (which will in return drive them to discriminate against the outgroup). That is to say, minority groups try to compensate feelings of insecurity by strengthening their positive social identity through discriminating against the majority (Simon et al., 2001).

SIT posits that if an identity threatening situation exists, people try to achieve or maintain a positive distinct identity. Due to the reason that disadvantaged groups feel more threat and insecurity, one possible way to cope with threat is having a strong orientation toward the ingroup. It was found that, perception of discrimination based on one's group membership may make the individual identify with ingroup more strongly and may increase the rejection of outgroup members (Crocker et al., 1991). Correspondingly, ingroup identification of minority group members was found to be stronger than majority group members (Mullen et al., 1992). That is to say, the relative social position of the ingroup determines people's level of identification with their groups; the lower the status of the group, the stronger the connection. Additionally, among

members of low status group, this can result in more negative feelings towards outgroups (Rothberger & Worchel, 1997).

The definition of majority and minority groups is mostly based on the numbers. Groups having numerically more members defined as majority and groups having numerically fewer members are defined as minority (Simon, 1992). Additionally, the status of groups or relative power that the groups hold determines the majority and minority groups, assigning oppressed and relatively powerless group as minority and dominant and powerful group as majority even though the numerical relation is balanced or reversed (Simon et al., 2001).

In the context of Turkey, Sunni group can be seen to have majority status since Alevis are smaller in number and they believe in heterodox Islam deviating from the mainstream. Moreover, it is a shared belief that Alevi group is deprived of some of their needs and demands (Doğan, 2005, cited in Özalay, 2006). Therefore, it may be appropriate to name Sunni group as majority and Alevi group as minority group regarding its potentially negative social and political implications. But, since the members of Alevi group claim that they are not a minority, it will be more appropriate to use disadvantaged group for Alevis and advantaged group for Sunnis.

As suggested by past studies, both Sunni and Alevi groups are expected to discriminate against the outgroup. Besides, the Alevi group can also be expected to have higher levels of ingroup identification to compensate for the negative public opinion attributed by some to their ingroup because there are

some stereotypic beliefs held by some non-Alevis like “the candle went out (mum söndü)” (Shindeldecker, 2006). That is to say, some people have a belief that during Cem, Alevis turn off all the lights and engage in incest relationships and adultery.

1.2.1.3 The Factors Affecting Perception of Discrimination

Ingroup identification also plays a role in the perception of discrimination. Moreover, other social factors, such as the status of the groups may have an effect on groups' perceived discrimination. Perceived discrimination is the frequency of discriminatory occurrences which people experience. The perception of discrimination seems to be the subjective experience among the members of ethnic groups because discrimination often happens ambiguously and it is difficult to establish with certainty (see Major & Sawyer, 2009).

The interpretation of intergroup relations is different for advantaged and disadvantaged group members. Research has confirmed that members of chronically oppressed groups or disadvantaged groups are more likely to perceive themselves as targets of discrimination. Furthermore, they are more likely to label any negative action performed by outgroup members against themselves as discrimination (Rodin et al., 1990). In a series of studies Major et al. (2002) found that compared to members of high status group, low status group members reported greater perceived discrimination. Besides, in another study (Taylor et al., 1996), members of high status group were found to avoid

from any claim of discrimination or to simply deny it. This is most probably associated with greater frequency or severity of encounters with discrimination experienced by the disadvantaged groups. Also, members of low status group are generally aware of the stereotypes and prejudices held by members of outgroup and of the possibility of facing this prejudice (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995). For instance, when low status group members receive negative feedback from outgroup members, they are likely to attribute it to discrimination. Thus, members of disadvantaged group are more vigilant about seeking out discrimination cues while members of advantaged group have a tendency to minimize any cues of discrimination even if ambiguous evidence exists (Feldman-Barrett & Swim, 1998; Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995).

Ingroup identification was found to be one of the most prominent factors determining the differences in perceived discrimination. SIT posits that the value and meaning attached to a particular group varies from person to person (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Strong identification means incorporation of aspects of group into the self concept. Consequently, social perceptions of people who identify strongly with a particular group are determined largely by the group (Smith et al., 1999; Smith & Henry, 1996). To the extent that people identify strongly with a particular group, awareness and sensitivity of being discriminated by others increase. Yet, since members of the same group differ in their group identifications, they also differ in how they interpret group related information (Operario & Fiske, 2001). For instance, individuals with strong

identification with the ingroup perceive prejudice and discrimination more than the group members who identify less strongly with their ingroup. That is to say, the more individuals identify with their groups the more likely they are to make attributions to discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999; Operario & Fiske, 2001). Consistent with these findings, the centrality of group to a person's identity was shown to be an important component. For instance, it was found that among African Americans, people evaluating their race as central to their identity have a tendency to evaluate ambiguous cues as discrimination (Shelton & Sellers, 2000).

Contrary to evidence from a number of past studies, others have claimed that there is a weak relationship between minority group identification and the attributions to discrimination and experiences. Branscombe et al. (1999) found an inverse relationship in which discrimination indeed strengthens minority group identification. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that there is a bidirectional relationship between these variables (Operario & Fiske, 2001). People who identify themselves with their groups perceive their experiences with outgroup members as discrimination and in return, their identification with the ingroup strengthens.

To sum up, past literature suggests that there is a strong link between ingroup identification and performing discrimination against outgroup members as well as the perception of discrimination directed against one's own group by outgroup members. The case of Alevis and Sunnis in Turkey seems to fit the

assumptions summarized above and thus, the relationship between identification and perceived discrimination can be examined in this context. Specifically, in this thesis, the relationship between ingroup identification and perceived discrimination for both Alevi and Sunni group will be explored. Alevis are expected to perceive more discrimination than Sunnis and the correlation between ingroup identification and perceived discrimination is predicted to be stronger among Alevis as compared to Sunnis.

1.2.2 Social Dominance Theory

In order to minimize conflict between competing groups, societies create consensus on ideologies that accept, reproduce, promote, or favor superiority of one group over others (Sidanius et al., 1991). Existing myths defining superior and inferior groups contribute to inequality between groups in many societies. Social Dominance Orientation (SDO) is a personality variable predicting social and political attitudes and a powerful human propensity that justifies and maintains inequality in societies.

SDO is accepted to be one of the main predictors of prejudice towards low status groups (Pratto et al., 1997). Therefore any idea describing groups as unequal shows correlation with SDO (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). There is a strong positive correlation between SDO and attitudes, ideological beliefs, and behavioral patterns that promote inequality between groups such as racism, sexism, nationalism, patriotism, cultural elitism, and conservatism (Pratto, 1999; Pratto et al., 1994; Pratto et al., 1997; Sidanius et al., 1992; Sidanius et al., 1996,

Sidanius et al., 2000; Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). On the contrary, negative correlation exist between SDO and social policies that try to reduce inequalities between nations and foreigners or immigrants, between men and women, between ethnic groups, and between heterosexuals and homosexuals. Hence people with high SDO are assumed to be relatively conservative, racist, ethnocentric, prejudiced, and having little empathy for lower status others (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). In the literature, it was shown that, even in the minimal group experiments, participants with higher levels of SDO showed greater tendency to stay away from members of outgroup or willingness to not to cooperate with them. The desire for distance and to perform uncooperative behavior is related with a preference to dominate others and group boundaries.

It is important to note that members of disadvantaged groups as well as members of advantaged groups may have higher levels of SDO. The association between SDO and prejudice toward disadvantaged groups is positive for members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups. However, this association is strongest for the members of dominant majority (Sibley & Liu, 2010).

Past research on SDO has shown that men tend to display higher levels of SDO compared to women. The difference has been proven to be consistent across situations and cultures by various studies (Sidanius et al., 1991; Sidanius et al., 1994; Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). Similarly, men showed higher levels of racism, ethnocentrism, and anti-egalitarianism than women even after

researchers controlled for the effect of age, education, and political ideology since SDO is widely influenced by such discriminatory ideologies (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). According to Schmitt et al. (2004), women's lower levels of SDO can also be related with the frequency of inequalities they faced. Women experience many cases of inequality that make them disadvantaged and make men privileged.

Both SIT and SDT claim that ingroup identification and SDO predicts the degree of outgroup discrimination (Sidanius et al., 1994). SIT posits that individuals degrade the outgroup so as to maintain positive social identity whereas SDT further postulates that individuals degrade outgroup to maintain their superior group position. Emotional affiliation or high identification with one's ingroup predicts prejudice and discrimination against outgroup just as SDO does. Even in the minimal group experiments, each predicted outgroup discrimination. Also, SDO can be an initial step to determine why some people prefer to identify with their groups while others prefer not to do so and why and how the strength of identification change across situations (Sidanius et al., 2001).

SIT assumes that if the outgroup is placed on equal or lower status, members of the other group show discriminative behaviors towards outgroup even they had no previous contact before. Moreover, it was suggested that across situations and cultures this discrimination is primed by ingroup favoritism rather than outgroup hostility (Brewer, 1979). However, it is important to note

that ingroup favoritism alone cannot explain all types of the discrimination behaviors, such as violence and ethnic cleansing. Although SIT assumes that ingroup bias is inevitable in intergroup interactions, SDT further argues that individuals' level of SDO determines ingroup favoritism, behaviors, attitudes, and evaluations toward outgroup (Sidanius, 1993). The main focus of SDT is that such forms of discrimination that aim to dominate, insult, and oppress outgroup stem from social systems' tendency to create or maintain group based hierarchies (Sachdev & Bourhis, 1985; Skevington, 1981; Turner & Brown, 1978; van Knippenberg & van Oers, 1984). Besides, SDT suggested a number of hypotheses that are not predicted by SIT. One of them is gender difference in SDO and interactive function of SDO on ingroup identification (Sidanius et al., 2001).

In minimal group experiments, it has been found that people who score high on SDO and on ingroup identification tend to be more discriminatory against outgroup. In addition, the correlation between ingroup identification and SDO is stronger in high status groups than in low status groups. In the experimental studies, these two variables were found to be the cause of severe out-group discrimination (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). These findings provided evidence for SDT's claim that higher status groups tend to be more ingroup serving than lower status groups, they are more discriminatory against outgroups compared to lower status groups. This effect is seen when groups try to maintain their hierarchical group relations (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). The tendency to

discriminate and derogate the outgroup increases when the group status is threatened (Crocker & Luhtanen, 1990), especially for members of groups which artificially obtained high status (Levin & Sidanius, 1993).

A specific group membership and the structural context in which these groups are situated shape members' attitudes (Tajfel & Turner, 1986). Therefore, the position of a group strongly affects people's attitudes towards the idea of equality. Equality has different implications for the members of privileged and disadvantaged groups. It is suggested that people favor cultural diversity and group rights if they perceive any possible advantage for themselves (Berry & Kalin, 1985). Intergroup differences in SDO level stem from the differing attitudes of groups towards specific forms of equality.

Equality and hierarchy attenuating myths that promote social equality are beneficial for disadvantaged group because they offer the chance to maintain and express their distinctive identity in society. For advantaged groups, however, equality contradicts with the desire to maintain superior group position since it implies a decrease in status and power. Rather, they prefer hierarchy enhancing myths to protect their privileged position and to show that they deserved higher status. Privileged groups prefer inequality more than disadvantaged groups in order to protect their group's status, power, and identity in the expense of outgroup (Schmitt et al., 2003). In other words, groups evaluate social inequality according to their own group's interests (Oakes et al., 1994). However, because the privileged groups have already the power to define

the current social situation they are relatively more successful at protecting their position (Schmitt et al., 2003).

In sum, the relationship between SIT and SDO seems to be consistent. With the inclusion of the SDO in the current study, the perception of intergroup relations between Sunnis and Alevis can be explored in detail. Thus, the effects of identification, perception of equality, and social dominance on the perception of discrimination for both Alevi and Sunni group can be examined. Given that Sunni group appears to be relatively more dominant in both social and political area, within the framework of SDT, they would show higher levels of SDO. In sum, consistent with the past literature, Sunni group is predicted to have higher SDO levels and the correlation between ingroup identification and SDO and between perceived discrimination and SDO are expected to be stronger among Sunnis.

1.2.3 Socio-structural Variables: Legitimacy, Stability, and Permeability

SIT specifies sociostructural variables, stability, legitimacy, and permeability that interactively influence people's responses to intergroup context, status hierarchies, and strategies to pursue positive distinctiveness (Tajfel, 1981). *Stability* refers to the perceived changeability of the status relations between the low status and the high status groups. *Legitimacy* refers to the degree of justifiability of the status differences between groups. *Permeability* refers to the possibility of leaving the low status group and joining the high

status group (Tajfel, 1978). The perception of sociostructural variables are deeply affected from specific historical, political, and ideological context (Ellemers, 1993; Turner, 1999). That is to say, the social context that people experience determines the perception of legitimacy, stability, and permeability.

Few studies have included all of these three variables in their analyses (e.g., Ellemers et al., 1993) and compared low status group with high status group (e.g., Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008). However, the role of socio structural variables on the selection of identity management strategies for disadvantaged groups has been widely studied (e.g., Mummendey et al., 1999; Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008). Identity management strategies, namely individual mobility and collective action, are conceptualized as reactions to having a socially disadvantaged or low status position. Individuals having negative identities due to their group membership will try to improve their social positions in order to achieve positive identity through identity management strategies rather than self devaluation or self hate. Field studies (Kessler & Mummendey, 2002; Niens & Cairns, 2002) as well as laboratory experiments (Ellemers et al., 1990; Ellemers et al., 1993; Ellemers & van Rijswijk, 1997) revealed the role of the sociostructural variables on the choice of identity management strategies. However, contrary to a disadvantaged group, the focus of an advantaged group is not identity management strategies. Rather, they are more concerned with status protection since membership in a relatively high status group already denotes a positive social identity (Bettencourt et al., 2001).

SIT posits that for low status group members the choice of identity management strategies depends on sociostructural characteristics of intergroup relations. If the existing intergroup structure is perceived as illegitimate, instable, and impermeable disadvantaged group members will notice that there are possible alternatives to change existing intergroup structure. This awareness guide possible collective responses to improve their relatively disadvantaged position of the group. If there are no perceived alternatives, feelings of deprivation lead to acceptance of the current situation or preferences of individual mobility (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). For members of advantaged group, perceived illegitimacy and instability is threatening to their status while stable and legitimate status differences make it easier to claim and justify superiority for high status group members (Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008).

Individuals consider their low social status as acceptable when it seems just. However, when the lower social status is perceived to be illegitimate, people experience discontent from their position. Perception of the situation as illegitimate makes both members of advantaged and disadvantaged groups realize that the existing status structure can be altered (Hornsey et al., 2003). Therefore, perceived illegitimacy of the status differences leads to increased ingroup bias for both low and high status groups (Turner & Brown, 1978). Moreover, it was proposed that if individuals from relatively low status group consider their situation as unfair, they display strong ingroup favoritism to compensate the unfair treatment of their group (Caddick, 1980; Commins &

Lockwood, 1979). This may explain low status group members' tendency to show discrimination devalue outgroup. Similarly, advantaged group members were found to be more biased when they perceive status relations as illegitimate (Bettencourt et al., 2001). If a superior position obtained illegitimately, members of high status groups constantly try to maintain and justify their status through rationalizing their superiority or degrading outgroup (Turner & Brown, 1978). Perceived legitimacy rationalized their reactions to threat coming from outgroups and increases ingroup identification and ingroup favoritism (Bettencourt et al., 2001).

The relationship between ingroup identification and perception of legitimacy and stability has been clearly specified in previous studies. The degree of ingroup identification predicts the preferences for social strategies which are predicted by socio-structural characteristics (e.g., Mummendey et al., 1999).

Research suggested that, for members of disadvantaged group, perceived stability of the current situation enhances ingroup identification whereas instability weakens it (Mummendey et al., 1999). If there is a possibility to enhance the relative status of the group, people are more likely to identify with that group (Ellemers et al., 1993). For instance, Mummendey et al. (1999) studied the relationship between East and West Germans and their findings revealed that there is a positive association between ingroup identification and perceived stability. Similarly, a recent research (Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008)

studying Turkish-Dutch and ethnically Dutch participants reported that the more people perceive the situation as being stable the more they identify with their ingroup.

On the contrary, illegitimate status differentials are found to increase the salience of intergroup differences that in turn increase the level of ingroup bias and ingroup identification for both high and low status groups (Turner & Brown, 1978). SIT assumes that for members of low status groups perceptions of illegitimacy positively affect ingroup identification and enhance it since illegitimacy implies collective injustice. Hence, the perceptions of illegitimacy result in collective action while individuals who perceive legitimate group relations prefer individual mobility strategies. In an experimental study investigating the effects of perception of legitimacy Ellemers et al. (1993) found that perceived illegitimacy of the situation was related with increased in-group identification.

Researchers suggested that the crucial factor is the strength of ingroup identification that determines whether or not people will display individual mobility or collective strategies when striving for status enhancement (Tajfel, 1978; Tajfel & Turner, 1979). Yet, more recently, researchers suggested that independent from ingroup identification, the awareness of illegitimacy of the group status is enough to arouse the aspiration for collective group action.

In sum, evaluations of ingroup, outgroup, and intergroup relations are also affected by characteristics of the structure of social status, that is to say by

perceived legitimacy, stability, and permeability. Among these characteristics, the current study focuses on the perceptions of legitimacy and stability of Alevi-Sunni group relations in Turkey. It was stated that perceptions of the current intergroup structure is different for high and low status groups (Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008). The meaning and implications of sociostructural variables vary as a function of one's own group status in a given society. Legitimate and stable group relations imply security for high status group while it signifies lack of opportunity for collective action for low status group. Therefore, in the current study, the perception of sociostructural variables and their interaction is expected to differ for the Alevi and Sunni group. This thesis further explores the interactive associations of legitimacy and stability with group identification, SDO, and social contact among Alevis and Sunnis living in Amasya. To put it differently, rather than investigating the role of sociostructural variables on the selection of identity management strategies of low status group, the current study aims to compare the stability and legitimacy perceptions of Alevi and Sunni group. Members of superior groups are likely to perceive the allocation of status to be fairer than the members of inferior groups (Turner & Brown, 1978), the Sunni group expected to be perceive status differences as more legitimate. Also, for Alevi group, it was expected that an increase in ingroup identification would be accompanied by increased perception of stability. Contrarily, increased identification in Sunni group is expected to associate with perception

of legitimate social situation. Besides, a negative correlation between legitimacy and perceived discrimination is expected especially for Alevi group.

1.2.4 Contact Hypothesis

Contact Hypothesis is one of the critical social psychological perspectives that help understand the role of contact in group relations (Allport, 1954). Basically, the hypothesis suggests that the contact between different racial and ethnic groups help to reduce intergroup prejudice and promote positive attitudes. It was claimed that the direct contact helps individuals achieve information about outgroup at firsthand that is most probably accurate and reflecting outgroup's values, experiences, and lifestyles. This positive knowledge is assumed to be generalized among all members of the ethnic group and leads to reduction in prejudice between groups.

Although there is no simple and direct relationship between contact and prejudice reduction, contact under favorable conditions tends to contribute changes in the attitudes of the groups while contact under unfavorable conditions may increase already existing prejudice and intergroup tension (Pettigrew, 1998). Allport (1954) defined four optimal conditions that determine the direction of change, namely, *equal group status*, in which both groups expect and perceive equal status within the situation (Riordan & Ruggiero, 1980), *common goals*, (e.g., prejudice reduction between groups requires shared goals, intergroup cooperation) that both groups work interdependently to attain the common goals without intergroup competition (e.g., Bettencourt et al., 1992;

Johnson & Johnson, 1984), and *authority support* that provides explicit social sanction to establish norms of acceptance (e.g., Landis et al., 1984).

Contact Hypothesis has been tested in various group situations. Initial evidence supports the role of Allport's four optimal conditions. Generally, it was found that contact is more efficient if it takes place under favorable conditions (Pettigrew, 1998). In one recent meta-analysis with 515 studies, 696 samples revealed a significant effect size that intergroup contact has significant contributions in intergroup prejudice reduction ($r = -.23$) (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). The findings revealed that effects of intergroup contact can be generalized beyond participants in the immediate contact situation in a variety of contexts and a broad range of groups. Also, the results suggested that the inclusion of Allport's optimal conditions in the contact situation increases the positive effects of intergroup contact. However, these conditions were not found to be crucial to achieve prejudice reduction in intergroup contact. Without Allport's optimal conditions, a meaningful relationship between intergroup contact and prejudice observed. Hence, it was concluded that although these conditions facilitate achieving positive contact outcomes, they should not be regarded as essential, as assumed in the past (Pettigrew & Tropp, 2005). It is important to note that research suggests that unpleasant contact between groups does not reduce prejudice or intergroup bias; rather it may create fear of further contact, causing intergroup anxiety (Islam & Hewstone, 1993).

Recently, researchers are interested in perceived quality of contact (Binder et al., 2009; Islam & Hewstone, 1993). Contact quality (i.e., the favorability of the contact between group members) is as essential as contact quantity in ameliorating the prejudice. For example, contact quality as well as contact quantity was found to be effective on the desire for social distance and negative intergroup emotions (Binder et al., 2009) and has direct negative effect on subtle prejudice (Voci & Hewstone, 2003). Moreover, there are studies reporting that contact quality is a more dominant predictor than contact quantity on the variables of intergroup relations (Brown et al., 2001). However, studies emphasize the importance of increasing the quantity and quality of intergroup contact in the reduction of intergroup bias (Hewstone et al., 2002).

For instance, in a study exploring the role of both contact quantity and contact quality on the perceptions of children towards elderly found that while participants' self-reported quality of contact significantly affects the attitudes towards elderly, self-reported frequency of contact had no significant effect (Schwartz & Simmons, 2001). It was stressed that contact quality is the integral factor in intergroup contact and intergroup attitudes. Another study investigated the relationship between social contact and intergroup threat and intergroup attitudes variables among Americans and Mexicans (Stephan et al., 2000). The results revealed that the reported frequency of contact that the Americans had with relatively lower status Mexicans was not related with their attitudes. Furthermore, Americans' reported quality of contact (equal status, voluntary,

positive, cooperative, and individualized) was found to be related with increased positive attitudes towards Mexicans. Similarly, the attitudes of Mexicans' toward Americans were not affected significantly by the amount of contact they had with Americans. Their attitudes were significantly affected by having favorable contacts with Americans. The findings suggested that contact quality may be more important factor in predicting the attitudes towards outgroup.

The impact of contact may operate differently for advantaged and disadvantaged groups. Research on Contact Hypothesis mostly focused on the attitudes of advantaged/majority groups toward disadvantaged/minority group (Binder et al., 2009). In a meta-analysis including 698 studies, only 51 studies included contact outcomes for both majority and minority group (Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). The results of this meta-analysis revealed that contact effects tend to be stronger for majority group. This difference can be attributed to varying attitudes of minority and majority groups during the contact situation that stem from the status differences between groups. High status group members may avoid displaying discrimination against low status group members, while low status group members are concerned with being discriminated since they are aware of their group's negative stereotypes (Ruggiero & Taylor, 1995). Besides, the four optimal conditions of Allport (1954) are more difficult to work for low status group members (Robinson & Preston, 1976; Tropp & Pettigrew, 2005). Tropp and Pettigrew demonstrated that effects of contact differ for low status and high status groups; varying in

relations to the social status of the groups in question. For low status group, anticipation of devaluation from the majority group would impair the positive impact of intergroup contact which might be effective among members of majority status groups. Therefore, it is important to establish the role of contact on the perception of both majority and minority groups.

For the current study, it is expected that both the quality and quantity of intergroup contact between Alevis and Sunnis would be negatively correlated with the perception of discrimination.

1.2.5 Alevis and Sunnis in Turkey

There are approximately 15 million Alevis in Turkey. After Sunni Muslims, they constitute the second largest portion of the population if it is categorized in terms of “religious culture” (Zeidan, 1995). There is an ongoing debate about the exact number of Alevis. According to most Alevi writers and organizations, they constitute about 30-40 percent of Turkey’s population and some other scholars assert they are about 20 million (Koçan & Öncü, 2004). Yet others believe that Alevi Muslims comprise 10 to 25 percent of Turkey’s population (Erdemir, 2007; Erman & Göker, 2000). It is difficult to determine the exact number of Alevis because they have no typical feature that sets them apart from Sunnis (Shindeldecker, 2006). Moreover, dating from the times of Ottoman Empire, a significant portion of the Alevi population have been subjected to assimilation policies, and they intentionally hide their religious identity because of political and social pressures (Çamuroğlu, 1997). In addition,

originally, Alevis were not known as Alevis. In the Ottoman times, Alevis were assumed to be called as Kizilbash (Turkish: Kızılbaş) (Shindeldecker, 2006). Later, they changed the name Kizilbash when it was associated with bad images such as rebellious unbeliever (Özalay, 2006). The use of the Alevi name which means “a man who is the supporter of Caliph Ali” is quite new (Özalay, 2006). The term Alevi replaced the name Kizilbash after the foundation of Turkish Republic in the 1920s. The changing name of the Alevis implies that the Alevi issue has been complicated.

Alevism can be defined as a culture, rather than a religion, that was shaped by a religious belief (Çamuroğlu, 2008). Alevis constitute a heterogeneous religious community in Turkey and in some other countries like Iran, Iraq, Syria, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, and Albania (Özalay, 2006). In Turkey, Alevis are mostly settled in Central and East Anatolian provinces such as Amasya, Çorum, Yozgat, Tokat, Çankırı, Erzincan, Tunceli, Sivas, Elazığ, Malatya, Adıyaman, Bingöl, Muş, and Kars. However, due to the migration to the more developed provinces and obligatory mobility of being a civil servant, Alevis have dispersed to almost all provinces in Turkey (Shindeldecker, 2006).

Alevis are different from Sunnis in terms of their religious beliefs and practices (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009). The main difference between Alevi and Sunni Muslims is that Alevis interpret Islam and Qur'an in a more mystical and spiritual way and they do not recognize the Sunni caliphs (Özalay, 2006). Alevi Muslims feel loyalty to the line of twelve imams that begins with the fourth

Caliph Ali ibn Abu Talib and to the line of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli (Erdemir, 2005). Although the main ideas of the Islam are accepted and respected, Alevis prefer an alternative way; for instance rather than engaging in daily activity requirements of Islam, most of them prefer peacefully going in Islamic rules. One of the most crucial aspects of Alevi belief is the love of God and the love of other human beings independent from whether they are religious or not (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009).

It appears that the rules in Turkey set by majority, Turkish Sunni population. Generally, Turkey applies Sunni practices in public area, build mosques, eases the pilgrim to Mecca, and print Qur'ans which lead to increases in "public orthodox activity" (Shankland, 2003, p. 15). This tendency displeases Alevis by expanding these orthodox religious activities under the sanction of Directorate of Religious Affairs. Alevis do not give priority to fasting, to praying and worshipping in mosques. Therefore, in Turkey, in which the dominance of orthodox interpretation of religion exists, although it is not accepted by Alevis, they are perceived as a heterodox community (Shankland, 2003).

Most Alevis prefer not to follow the sayings of Qur'an; instead, they emphasize the importance of human wisdom. Moreover, they have adopted different religious rituals; they worship in different holy places, and have distinctive religious heroes (Shankland, 2003). Unlike many Sunnis, most Alevis do not prefer to go to mosque five times a day, do not fast during Ramadan, or

do not go to Mecca (Shindeldecker, 2006). Rather, they follow an alternative way; they have adopted different religious rituals, they worship in different holy places, and have distinctive religious heroes (Shankland, 2003). They visit the tombs of holy people, especially the tomb of Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, and organize meetings in Cem Houses to pray. Besides, rather than fasting in Ramadan, they fast in the Muslim month of Muharrem to mourn for Hz. Hasan and Hüseyin. Their fasting period comprises ten, twelve, or fourteen days (Shindeldecker, 2006). In this mourning fast, in addition to abstaining from eating from rise to set, Alevi also abstain from drinking water (see Erdemir, 2007).

Alevi engage in Cem ceremony that includes religious dance (semah) and music in Cem Houses to worship to God. Cem Houses are apparently different from mosques in such ways that there are no minarets, and ezans are not recited to announce meetings either (Shankland, 2003). Islamic faith is assumed to demand worshipping from women and men in different places; that is to say, they must not be together while worshipping (Horrie & Chippindale, 1990, cited in Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009). So, in mosques, worshipping places for women and men are separated. Contrary to mosques, in entrance to Cem Houses or praying there is no or little gender segregation (Erdemir, 2005). Alevi Muslims prefer to be together during their religious praying. However, the rituals in Cem House are headed by “dedes”, men coming from Imam Ali’s family. Moreover, in Cems, it is not essential for women to wear head scarves or a certain type of clothing. Again, contrary to Sunni prayers (namazs) that are

performed in Arabic, Alevi rituals (prayers) are held in Turkish. Also, Alevi dance as a part of their worshipping that is characterized by turning and swirling performed by both women and men. This dance, semah symbolizes being alone with God (Shankland, 2003).

During the Sunni Ottoman rule, Alevi were punished harshly since they deviated from orthodox Sunni Islamic principles in both faith and practice. Ottoman Empire regarded the Alevi group as a counter culture since Alevi were resisting to sunnification politics of the state. Hence, it was believed that they were posing a threat to the empire. Alevi faced violent acts aimed to harm them during the times of Ottoman Empire because of the oppressive policy of the Empire's towards heterodox communities. Therefore, Alevi welcomed the establishment of the republic and secular reforms that set them free from the pressures of sunnification politics. They hoped that secularism and republic would release them from the religious regime and would provide acceptance. Therefore, they supported Atatürk and the new state (Markussen, 2000). However, in 1925, Atatürk had outlawed the tarikats, the religious sects in the Ottoman Empire that were central to Alevi belief, so as to restrict the role of Islam in the social sphere. This reform was followed by the establishment of Religious Affairs, which represents Sunni Orthodox Islam. Nevertheless, Alevi continued to support Atatürk and his reforms (Özalay, 2006). Though, over the years, the condition of Alevi did not improve (Poyraz, 2005). Moreover, although the state itself did not take a role, violent acts directed towards Alevi

took place after the establishment of Republic. In the year 1978, more than a hundred Alevi were killed in Kahramanmaraş and in 1980 similar events were observed in Çorum (Massicard, 2007) and Sivas (Gölbaşı, 2008).

Alevi community has many problems in political and religious area. In the political area, Alevi claim that upward mobility is difficult for them. For example, Özalay (2006) claims that there are no Alevi governors of any province of Turkey and Alevi assert that they cannot be general managers of public sector organizations. In the religious area, Alevi people complain about the Directorate of Religious Affairs of Turkey claiming that it represents only the Sunni orthodox Muslim population. The services of the Directorate of Religious Affairs concentrate primarily on Sunni citizens. Alevi citizens demand the state to provide services to the Alevi as well as to the Sunni community. The Directorate of Religious Affairs is unsure about the recognition of Alevi, since it makes no regulations for Alevi (Shankland, 2003). Alevi ask for Cem Houses to have the same status with mosques. Alevi pay taxes as much as Sunnis, they expect the state to provide a place for Cem Houses, to provide water and electricity without payment for Cem Houses just like mosques, and they ask for regular salaries for their dedes, in the same way as imams (Shindeldecker, 2006). The denial of Alevi demands by the Directorate of Religious Affairs is taken as a demonstration of the efforts of suppressing their identity (Koçan & Öncü, 2004). Therefore, before these expectations are realized, the Presidency of Religious Affairs in Turkey should admit Alevism as

a different approach to Islam (which has not decided yet whether Alevis are Muslims or not). Alevis also complain about the compulsory religion course in the curriculum because only Sunni beliefs are covered without any reference to Alevis or their beliefs (Özalay, 2006). Contrary to Alevi doctrines, Sunni doctrines are included in the curriculum of the schools (Shankland, 2003). Research reveals that the society also opposes the inclusion of Alevism into the curriculum (Çarkoğlu & Toprak, 2007). The authors revealed that while 86% of the participants supported religious education course in the schools, 34% of the participants reported that teachings of Alevism along with Sunnis should not be included in the curriculum.

It is important to indicate that, although Alevis are sometimes regarded as a minority group both by the state and the people, they reject this minority identity. İzzettin Doğan, the president of Cem Foundation, emphasized that they are not a minority group in Turkey, instead they constitute a major part of Turkish nation, and without being called a minority they demand equal rights with Sunni Muslims (Doğan, 2005, cited in Özalay, 2006). However, Alevis are still perceived as Turkish, secular, patriotic, but still a minority that has not acquired the equal status” (Shankland, 2003).

Alevi issue has been highly debated for almost twenty years due to increased social and political mobilization which are based on ethnic and religious identities (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009). Until recent years, Alevi issue was not debated by the state and there was no academic material about Alevis

and their culture. Starting from the year 1990, there has been an increasing interest on the Alevi issue. Contrary to past years, Alevis started to be more visible in public domain, and they express their identity and their culture in both social and political spheres. They show their ceremonies in public places to make the state recognize their culture (Shankland, 2003). Following these developments, Alevis established many associations and foundations such as Alevi-Bektaşî Federation, and Pir Sultan Abdal Cultural Institution (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009).

It is important to note that beliefs and practices vary among Alevis living in different places of Anatolia; hence, it would be wrong to make absolute statements about Alevis. Though, the current research studies Alevis and Sunnis from a particular area, Amasya. Therefore, the participants constitute relatively a homogeneous group. Also, the categorization between Alevis and Sunnis in Amasya is highly salient that may suggest potential differences in the perception of intergroup relations.

Today, Alevis and Sunnis live together almost in all cities of Turkey. Considering the historical differences reviewed above and the current situation of Alevis as the demanding and relatively disadvantaged group, examination of intergroup relations between these two major religious groups from the perspectives of SIT, SDT, and Contact Hypothesis is expected to provide rich qualitative data in understanding their group relations.

1.2.6 Overview and Hypotheses of the Study

The aim of this thesis is to understand the group perceptions of Alevis and Sunnis through a social psychological perspective applying assumptions of Social Identity Theory, Social Dominance Theory, and Contact Hypothesis. Specifically, this study attempts to understand the religious identifications of these groups and to explore the link between social identification, social dominance orientation, and group contact, whether they see the current situation stable and legitimate, and perceive discrimination. The Alevi group is perceived to be both socially and politically disadvantaged compared to the Sunni group since they are smaller in number and they believe in so called ‘heterodox Islam’. Therefore, how Alevis react to their low status position and how Sunnis perceive their position is an appropriate context for testing SIT. Moreover, this thesis will further the current literature on SIT in several ways. Especially the relative contribution of SIT, SDO, and Contact Hypothesis will be investigated in the context of Alevis and Sunnis. The basic research questions and the hypotheses based on the literature reviewed are summarized below.

1.2.6.1 Definitions of Variables

Current study particularly explores the role of religious identification. Religion often has utmost importance in people’s lives. Believers organize their life around their religious values, beliefs, practices, moral principles, and organizations (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009). Individuals follow instructions of their beliefs including moral principles and obligations. Religious identification

will be measured through three sub-domains as was “the association of identification with the respondents’ feelings towards their religious groups” (Verkuyten & Yıldız, 2009, p. 1122). The first domain was *importance of religious identity* which refers to attributed importance to religious group; the second domain was *public religious identity* which refers to participants’ perception that how others evaluate their group; and the last domain was *alienated religious identity* which refers to negative feelings attributed to religious group.

The role of SDO will also be explored through two domains in the present study. The first domain is *group based dominance* which denotes the desire to subordinate inferior groups and the second domain is *opposition to equality* which represents the desire for inequality between different groups.

The role of social contact in the perceptions of Alevis and Sunnis will be explored through perceived *contact quantity* and perceived *contact quality* which represents the frequency of intergroup communication and subjective experience of the quality of contact respectively.

The perception of socio-structure variables, namely *legitimacy* and *stability* will also be explored in the current study. Legitimacy refers to perceived justifiability of the current situation of groups and stability indicates the degree of future change for a group status.

Perceived discrimination will be explored through three sub-dimensions. *Perceived individual based discrimination* refers to the extent to which

individuals experience personal discrimination based on their group membership. *Perceived group based discrimination* represents the degree to which individuals believe that their group is discriminated against. *Perceived discrimination in marriage* represents the instances of discrimination that the individuals face when they desire to marry with an outgroup member.

1.2.6.2 Differences between Sunni and Alevi Groups

Hypothesis 1: Alevi participants will have higher levels of religious group identification as compared to Sunni participants. However, Sunnis will have higher levels of public religious identity than Alevis. Also, Alevis are expected to have more alienated religious identity as compared to Sunnis.

Hypothesis 2: Sunni participants are expected to have higher degree of the social dominance orientation as compared to Alevi group.

Hypothesis 3: Alevi participants are expected to report lower levels of contact quantity and quality as compared to Sunni group.

Hypothesis 4: Alevis are expected to perceive the intergroup structure as less stable and less legitimate than Sunnis.

Hypothesis 5: Alevi group's perception of discrimination directed against their group is expected to be greater compared to the Sunni group's perception. Similarly, Sunni group is expected perceive greater discrimination directed against their group compared to Alevis.

1.6.3 Relationships between Independent Variables and Dependent Variables

Hypothesis 6: The relationship between dimensions of religious group identification and dependent variables differ between Alevi and Sunni groups.

Hypothesis 6a: For Sunni group, positive associations are expected between ingroup identification and legitimacy, stability, and perceived discrimination for Sunni group; negative associations are expected between ingroup identification and perceived discrimination for Alevi group.

Hypothesis 6b: For Alevi group, positive associations are expected between ingroup identification and perceived discrimination reported for their group; negative associations are expected between ingroup identification and legitimacy, stability, and perceived discrimination reported for Sunni group.

Hypothesis 6c: For both Alevi and Sunni groups, positive associations are expected between public religious identity and legitimacy and stability; negative associations are expected between public religious identity and all discrimination variables.

Hypothesis 6d: For both Alevi and Sunni groups, negative associations are expected between alienated religious identity and legitimacy and stability; positive associations are expected between alienated religious identity and all discrimination variables.

Hypothesis 7: For both Alevi and Sunni groups, positive associations are expected between SDO and legitimacy, stability, perceived discrimination for Alevi group, and perceived discrimination for Sunni group.

Hypothesis 8: For both Alevi and Sunni groups, negative associations are expected between social contact and legitimacy, stability, perceived discrimination for Alevi group, and perceived discrimination for Sunni group.

CHAPTER 2

METHOD

2.1 Participants

The sample of the study originally consisted of 338 participants from Amasya and surrounding towns. Nine of the participants had a large amount of missing values; therefore they were removed from the sample leaving 329 participants for the further analyses. As summarized in Table 2.1, there were two groups of participants in this study, Alevis ($n = 172$) and Sunnis ($n = 157$). The sample consisted of 184 (56.1%) males and 144 (43.9%) females. The Alevi sample consisted of 93 (54.1%) males and 79 females (45.9%) and Sunni sample consisted of 91(58.3%) males and 66 females (41.7%). The average age of the sample was 36.94 ($SD = 11.10$). Of the participants, 58 was living in Amasya (17.7%), 168 in Merzifon (51.2%), 70 in Gümüşhacıköy (21.3%), and 32 (17.7%) in Suluova.

A total of 222 (67.5%) participants reported that they spent most of their lives in a city, 67 (20.4%) in a province, 19 (5.7%) in a village, 15 (4.6%) in a metropolis, and 6 (1.8%) of the participants spent most of their lives in towns. In terms of education, 117 (35.6%) graduated from a university, 143 (43.5%)

graduated from a high school, 33 (10%) graduated from secondary school, and 36 (10.9%) graduated from primary school. Although the difference is not significant, education level of Sunni group was somewhat higher than the Alevi group. Of the participants, 10 (3%) reported their family income as above 5000 TL, 32 (9.7%) reported between 3000 and 5000 TL, 33 (10%) reported between 2000 and 3000 TL, 67 (20.4%) reported between 1500 and 2000 TL, 95 (28.9%) reported between 1000 and 1500 TL, 74 (22.5%) reported between 500 and 1000 TL, and 18 (5.5%) reported under 500 TL. Sunnis reported significantly higher level of family income than Alevis ($F(1, 327) = 7.85, p < .01.$).

Table 2.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample

	Sunni Sample ($n_1 = 157$)			Alevi Sample ($n_2 = 172$)		
	Mean	SD	Range	Mean	SD	Range
Age	35.44	10.62	19-65	38.35	11.39	19-76
Gender						
Female		41.7%			45.9%	
Male		58.3%			54.1%	
Education Level						
Primary School		10.2%			11.6%	
Middle School		7.6%			12.2%	
High School		40.8%			45.9%	
Above High School		41.4%			30.2%	
Place of Residence						
Amasya		19.3%			17.4%	
Gümüşhacıköy		14.5%			28.4%	
Merzifon		51.7%			49.7%	
Suluova		14.5%			3.9%	
Income						
500 TL and under		7.1%			4.1%	
500-1000 TL		19.5%			25.7%	
1000-1500 TL		25.3%			32.2%	
1500-2000 TL		15.6%			24%	
2000-3000 TL		13%			7.6%	
3000-5000 TL		16.2%			4.1%	
5000 TL and above		3.2%			2.3%	
Place lived the longest						
Village		7%			4.7%	
Town		1.3%			2.3%	
City		59.9%			74.4%	
Province		23.6%			17.4%	
Metropolis		8.3%			1.2%	

2.2 Instruments

Participants filled out a set of measures besides the demographic questions. There were two groups of scales in the study. The first group represents the independent variables including Religious Identification Scale, Social Dominance Orientation Scale, and Social Contact Scale. The second group represents dependent variables including Perceived Legitimacy Scale, Perceived Stability Scale, and Perceived Discrimination Scale (see Appendix A).

2.2.1 Religious Identification Scale

Religious group identification was measured by three sub-scales evaluating cognitive and affective components of identification. For these components, two different scales were combined. One of the scales was revised version of Phinney and Ong's (2007) Multigroup Ethnic Identity Measure (MEIM_R) and the other scale was the Turkish form Luhtanen and Crocker's (1992) Collective Self-Esteem Scale (CSE).

Basically, the MEIM_R composed of two subscales; *exploration* measures cognitive component of ethnic identity with three items and *commitment* measures affective component of ethnic identity with three items. The CSE originally composed of four subscales; *importance of identity* includes four items, *private collective self-esteem* includes four items, *public collective self-esteem* includes five items, and *membership esteem* includes four items. Except membership esteem subscale, the scale adapted and translated to

measure Turkish identification in a Dutch study by Baysu (2007). These two scales were combined to measure ethnic identity of Turks and Kurds in Turkey by Çoymak (2009). Çoymak used exploration subscale from MEIM_R and importance of identity subscale from CSE to measure cognitive component of ethnic identity. For affective component of ethnic identity, Çoymak used commitment subscale from MEIM_R and public collective self-esteem subscale from CSE. The end scale consisted of 19 items on a 5-point-Likert-format with 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree*.

A principle component analysis (PCA) was performed to better understand the factor structure of the final scale. Initial solutions with 19 items yielded four factors but the pattern of the factors was uninterpretable and mixed. The screeplot test and the distribution of variances suggested a three-factor solution. PCA with three factors using varimax rotation yielded a clear pattern, only one item (“Most people consider my religious group to be less successful than other social groups”) did not load on any factor since its item loading was below .30 which was the cutoff for loadings.

The three factor structure was found to be highly suitable. It yielded theoretically interpretable results confirming the theoretical distinction between importance of identity and public collective self esteem subscales. *Importance of identity* composed of twelve items (e.g., “I am glad to be a member of my religious group”), *public religious identity* composed of three items (e.g., “others lean on my ethnic group in general”), and *alienated religious identity* indicating

negative feelings about ingroup identity composed of three items (e.g., “sometimes I do not like my religious identity”). The factors explained 54.22% of the total variance. The subscales were found to be reliable with .90, .62, and .61 Cronbach’s alpha coefficients, respectively.

It is important to note that, religious identification does not refer to identification with Islam; it refers to the affiliation with religious sect measuring Alevi participants’ affiliation with “Alevism and Alevi group” and measuring Sunni participants’ affiliation with “Sunnism and Sunni group”.

2.2.2 Social Dominance Orientation Scale

Social Dominance Orientation was measured by using the adapted version of the 16-item SDO scale developed by Pratto et al. (1994). The SDO measures two main domains, namely, *group based dominance* (GBD) with 8 items representing the desire to dominate inferior groups (e.g., “sometimes other groups must be kept in their place”) and *opposition to equality* (OEQ) with 8 reversed items representing a desire for inequality (e.g., “all groups should be given equal chance in life”). The SDO items were rated using 5-point-Likert scales with 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree* with higher scores indicating higher group based dominance and higher opposition to equality. The subscales were found to be internally consistent, the Cronbach’s alpha for the GBD was .81 and for the OEQ it was .91. According to principal component analysis, two factor solution of the scale was valid and the factors explained 54.13% of the total variance.

2.2.3 Social Contact Scale

Social contact between Alevis and Sunnis was measured by 10-item scale using the adapted version of the 10-item Social Contact scale developed by Islam and Hewstone (1993) using appropriate rewording of the items. The scale was measured based on its 2 domains. *Quantitative aspects of contact* consisted of 5 items measuring the frequency of contact with outgroup at a number of formal and informal situations (an example item for informal situations is “how often do you contact with Alevis/Sunnis as close friends?” and example item for formal situations is “how often do you contact with Alevis/Sunnis in formal places like school and job?”) The scale was measured on a 5-point-Likert-format with 1 = *Never* and 5 = *Always* with higher scores indicating more frequent contact with members of outgroup. *Qualitative aspects of contact* including elements of equality, volition, sincerity, pleasantness, and cooperation consisted of 5 items on a 5-point-Likert scale (e.g., “Do you perceive the contact with Alevis/Sunnis as pleasant?”) with higher scores denoting qualitatively better contact. Because there were two groups in the study, items in both of the subscales included both Alevi and Sunni word. Sunni participants asked to regard the Alevis and Alevis asked to regard the Sunnis while answering the item. The subscales were found to be reliable, the Cronbach’s alpha for quantitative aspects of social contact was .83 and for qualitative aspects of social contact was .83. According to principal component analysis, the scale explained 62.2% of the total variance.

2.2.4 Legitimacy Scale

The perception of legitimacy was measured by using a 3-item scale developed by Mummendey et al. (1996) and adopted into Turkish by Baysu (2007). The scale was measured on a 5-point-Likert-format with 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree* with higher scores indicating perception of legitimate intergroup relations. Items were reworded to be consistent with the purpose of this study. For example, legitimacy was covered by items like, “Sunnis do not deserve to be better off than Alevis”. In terms of reliability of the scale one item (“Sunnis deserve to be better off than Alevis”) which reduced the reliability and explained variance was dropped from further analyses. The reliability of the scale with remaining two reversed items was .66. Principal component analysis yielded a single factor representing the perception of legitimacy and the factor explained 74.28% of the variance.

2.2.5 Stability Scale

The perception of stability was measured by using a 5-item scale that was also developed by Mummendey et al. (1996) and adopted into Turkish by Baysu (2007). The scale was measured on a 5-point-Likert-format with 1 = *Strongly Disagree* and 5 = *Strongly Agree* with higher scores indicating perception of stability in intergroup relations. For example, an item for stability would be “status differences between Alevis and Sunnis will remain same in the near future”. Two reversed items (“I think the relations between Alevis and Sunnis will change” and “I think status differences between Alevis and Sunnis

will change in the near future”) which lowered the reliability of the scale and the explained variance were dropped from further analysis. The reliability of the scale with remaining three items was .58. Principal component analysis yielded a single factor representing the perception of stability and the factor explained 54.72% of the variance.

2.2.6 Perceived Discrimination Scale

The perception of discrimination was measured by three sub-scales evaluating *individual based discrimination*, *perceived group discrimination*, and *perceived group discrimination in marriage*. Individual based discrimination and perceived group discrimination subscales were developed by Ruggiero and Taylor (1995) and adopted into Turkish by Baysu (2007). The third dimension, perceived discrimination in intergroup marriage, was added by Çoymak (2009). Because there are two groups in the study, all of the subscales were worded for both Alevi and Sunni groups.

Individual based discrimination subscale includes 4 items for Alevi group and 4 items for Sunni group measuring whether people perceive individual based discrimination. An example for Sunni group is “I feel that Sunnis are not accepted by Alevi people” and for the Alevi group is “I feel that Alevis are not accepted by Sunni people”. Perceived group discrimination subscale includes 6 items for Alevi group and 6 items for Sunni group measuring how often people perceive discrimination about both their group and outgroup in some situations. An example of perceived group discrimination for

Alevis is “are Alevis experience discrimination against, when looking for a job?” and an example of perceived group discrimination for Sunnis is “are Sunnis experience discrimination against, when looking for a job?” Perceived discrimination in intergroup marriage includes 2 items for Alevi group and 2 items for Sunni group exploring perceived discrimination in intergroup marriages for males and females. An example of the item would be “Are Alevi women ever discriminated against when getting married with Sunni men?” and “Are Sunni men ever discriminated against when getting married with Alevi women?” The end scale consisted of 24 items on a 5-point-Likert-format with 1 = *Never* and 5 = *Always* with higher scores indicating greater perceived discrimination.

A principle component analysis (PCA) was performed separately for the subscales worded for discrimination against Sunni group and for discrimination against Alevi group. PCA with three factors using varimax rotation yielded a clear pattern; all of the items loaded on the respective factors. That is, the first four items for the individual discrimination dimension loaded on one factor, following six items for group discrimination loaded on one other factor, and the remaining two items loaded on one factor., three factors explained 64.89% of the total variance for the scale of perceived discrimination against Sunni group and three factors explained 78.16% of the total variance for the scale of perceived discrimination against Alevi group. Cronbach’s alpha for individual based discrimination against Alevis was .92, against Sunnis it was .76, for

perceived group discrimination against Alevis was .92, against Sunnis was .86, for discrimination in intergroup marriage against Alevis was .86, and against Sunnis was .79.

2.3 Procedure

The ethic committee approval was taken from the METU UEAM (Human Participants Ethic Committee) before starting data collection procedure. The questionnaire battery applied by using a snowball sampling followed by a comparison of basic background characteristics (religious group, gender) to make sure that there comparable number of Alevis and Sunnis with a representative variation of demographic characteristics. The participants were approached in different residential areas and public places, such as schools, markets, shopping places and were asked if they would like to participate voluntarily in social groups. Those who agreed to take part in the study filled out the questionnaire by themselves. Researcher responded and clarified the items whenever they raised any questions or needed help. Participants were specifically asked not to write their names to guarantee anonymity and they were assured that their responses will only be used for the research purposes. Participants received no compensation for their participation. Questionnaire administration lasted about 30 minutes. The data collection process lasted about a month.

CHAPTER 3

RESULTS

Prior to analysis, major variables were examined through various SPSS programs for accuracy of data entry and missing values. The number of missing cases per variable was not found over 5%. Therefore, missing values in each variable were replaced by the median value before data were analyzed.

3.1 Descriptive Statistics for the Major Variables in the Study

Before main analyses, a series of One-way ANOVAs were conducted to test the effect of gender on the major variables.

3.1.1 Gender Differences

A series of analyses of variances (ANOVAs) was conducted to see whether there were significant gender differences on the major variables of the study for each group separately. For the Sunni group there was not any gender difference on variables. For the Alevis gender differences found for legitimacy and perceived group discrimination. As seen in Table 3.1., women reported higher levels of legitimacy than men ($F(1, 170) = 11.68, p < .01$). Alevi men

reported higher levels of stability than women ($F(1, 170) = 7.58, p < .01$). For perceived group discrimination, Alevi men reported greater perceived discrimination against their group than women ($F(1, 170) = 4.87, p < .05$). Alevi women reported more individual discrimination ($F(1, 170) = 4.27, p < .05$) and group based discrimination against the Sunni group ($F(1, 170) = 7.84, p < .01$).

Table 3.1 Gender Differences among Study Variables

Variables	Sunnis					Alevis				
	Male		Female		F	Male		Female		F
	M	SD	M	SD		M	SD	M	SD	
Imp. of R.I.	3.72	.84	3.60	.79	.88	3.81	.75	3.67	.93	.94
Public R.I.	3.88	.88	3.85	.68	.03	2.81	.89	2.81	.88	.00
Alienated R.I.	1.88	.94	2.01	.99	.62	2.29	.98	2.26	1.15	.03
G.B. Dominance	2.06	.81	2.09	.87	.23	2.16	.94	2.05	.62	.83
Op. to Equality	2.08	.81	1.99	.91	.39	1.53	.82	1.73	.67	3.04
Contact Quantity	4.10	.88	4.18	.70	.34	4.09	.83	4.03	.78	2.08
Contact Quality	4.54	.60	4.48	.72	.35	3.75	1.06	3.80	.90	.09
Legitimacy	3.17	1.11	3.08	1.14	.26	1.77	1.04	2.37	1.23	11.68**
Stability	3.11	1.04	3.15	.82	.07	3.44	.93	3.10	.65	7.58**
Ind. Disc.: Alevis	1.91	.84	1.98	.87	.25	3.60	1.01	3.39	.89	2.23
Ind. Disc.: Sunnis	1.88	.79	1.90	.69	.04	1.98	.84	2.22	.66	4.27*
Gr. Discr.: Alevis	1.82	.78	1.76	.73	.26	3.46	.86	3.17	.91	4.87*
Gr. Discr.: Sunnis	1.59	.68	1.48	.58	1.13	1.43	.64	1.72	.70	7.84**
Disc. In Marriage: Alevis	3.27	1.15	3.30	1.09	.03	3.53	1.09	3.42	1.04	.45
Disc. In Marriage: Sunnis	3.09	1.24	3.28	1.09	.97	3.54	1.09	3.51	1.09	.04

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Variables: importance of religious identity, public religious identity, alienated religious identity, group based dominance, opposition to equality, quantitative aspects of contact, qualitative aspects of contact, legitimacy, stability, perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevis, perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination: Alevis, perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

3.1.2 Group Differences

Mean differences between Alevi and Sunni groups on study variables were examined by using analysis of covariance (ANCOVA). In ANCOVA, mean differences between the groups on dependent variables were tested after statistically controlling for the effects of gender as the covariate in all analyses.

There were significant differences between the two groups on eight variables out of fifteen major variables. For the subscales of religious group identification, two groups did not differ significantly in importance of religious identity. However, there were significant mean differences on public religious identity ($F(1, 327) = 125.51, p < .001$) and alienated religious identity ($F(1, 327) = 9.57, p < .01$). Sunni group ($M = 3.86$) had higher levels of public religious identity than Alevi group ($M = 2.81$) and Alevi group ($M = 2.27$) had higher levels of alienated religious identity than Sunni group ($M = 1.93$). For the subscales of SDO, although two groups did not significantly differ on GBD, there was a significant difference on OEQ, ($F(1, 327) = 21.38, p < .001$). Sunni group ($M = 2.04$) had higher levels of OEQ than Alevi group ($M = 1.62$).

Two groups did not significantly differ on contact quality. However, Alevis ($M = 3.78$) reported significantly lower levels of perceived quality of social contact than Sunnis ($M = 4.52$), ($F(1, 327) = 64.15, p < .001$). As predicted, there was a significant group difference on legitimacy ($F(1, 327) = 72.59, p < .001$). Sunni group ($M = 3.12$) perceived the current structure as more legitimate than Alevi group ($M = 2.05$). Besides, the two groups differed

significantly on perceptions of individual based discrimination against Alevis ($F(1, 327) = 243.61, p < .001$). Alevis ($M = 3.50$) perceived more individual based discrimination against their group than Sunnis ($M = 1.93$). In parallel with individual discrimination, the mean scores of two groups differed significantly in perceived group discrimination against Alevis ($F(1, 327) = 278.53, p < .001$). The perception of group discrimination of Alevis ($M = 3.33$) was higher than the perception of Sunnis ($M = 1.80$). Moreover, the two groups differed significantly on perceptions of individual based discrimination against Sunnis ($F(1, 327) = 6.07, p < .05$). Contrary to predictions, compared to Sunni group ($M = 1.89$), Alevi group ($M = 2.09$) perceived more individual discrimination against Sunnis. Similarly, compared to Sunni group ($M = 3.16$), Alevi group perceived significantly more discrimination in intergroup marriage against Sunnis ($M = 3.52$), ($F(1, 327) = 8.46, p < .01$).

Examination of Eta Squares which show the strength (size) of the associations suggested that the differences between groups were in large size and the largest differences were observed on *perceived individual discrimination against Alevis* and *perceived group discrimination against Alevis* variables.

Table 3.2 Group Differences among Study Variables

Variables	Sunnis		Alevi		<i>F</i>	Eta ²
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Imp. of R.I.	3.67	.82	3.75	.84	.93	.00
Public R.I.	3.86	.81	2.81	.88	126.60***	.28
Alienated R.I.	1.93	.96	2.27	1.06	9.07**	.03
G.B. Dominance	2.13	.83	2.11	.81	.06	.00
Op. to Equality	2.04	.88	1.62	.76	21.32***	.06
Contact Quantity	4.13	.81	4.00	.81	1.98	.01
Contact Quality	4.52	.65	3.78	.98	62.93***	.16
Legitimacy	3.12	1.12	2.05	1.17	75.54***	.19
Stability	3.12	.95	3.29	.83	2.97	.01
Ind. Disc.: Alevi	1.93	.85	3.50	.96	241.40***	.43
Ind. Disc.: Sunnis	1.89	.74	2.09	.77	5.86*	.02
Gr. Discr.: Alevi	1.80	.76	3.33	.89	282.53***	.47
Gr. Discr.: Sunnis	1.55	.64	1.56	.68	.04	.00
Disc. In Marriage: Alevi	3.27	1.12	3.48	1.06	2.64	.01
Disc. In Marriage: Sunnis	3.16	1.18	3.52	1.09	7.92**	.02

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Variables: importance of religious identity, public religious identity, alienated religious identity, group based dominance, opposition to equality, quantitative aspects of contact, qualitative aspects of contact, legitimacy, stability, perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevi, perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination: Alevi, perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevi, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

3.2 Correlations between Study Variables

Pearson's two-tailed correlation analyses were computed to see the pattern and the strength of the associations between study variables for both the Sunni and Alevi group, separately. Correlations were presented in Table 3.3. Only significant and important correlations are reported below.

3.2.1 Correlations between Variables for the Sunni Sample

As presented in Table 3.3 (below diagonal), For the Sunni group, level of education was correlated significantly with belonging to religious identity ($r = -.26, p < .01$) and with alienated religious identity ($r = -.17, p < .05$). Higher education level was associated with lower ingroup identification and lower alienated religious identity.

There was a negative correlation between public religious identity and perceived group discrimination against Alevis reported by Sunnis ($r = -.18, p < .05$). Also there was a negative correlation between public religious identity perceived individual based discrimination ($r = -.20, p < .05$) and perceived group discrimination ($r = -.23, p < .05$) against Sunnis. Alienated religious identity had positive correlation with both perceived individual based discrimination ($r = .19, p < .05$) and perceived group discrimination ($r = .20, p < .05$) against Alevis.

As expected, GBD was correlated positively with individual discrimination against Alevis ($r = .21, p < .01$), individual discrimination

against Sunnis ($r = .25, p < .01$), group discrimination against Alevis ($r = .31, p < .01$), and group discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .22, p < .01$).

Contact quality was correlated negatively with individual discrimination against Sunnis ($r = -.22, p < .01$), group discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.16, p < .05$), and group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = -.18, p < .05$). There was a positive correlation between perception of legitimacy and individual discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.25, p < .01$).

Furthermore, significant correlations were found between subscales of perceived discrimination. Individual based discrimination against Alevis was correlated positively with individual based discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .50, p < .01$), group discrimination against Alevis ($r = .49, p < .01$), group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .44, p < .01$), and group discrimination in marriage against Sunnis ($r = .43, p < .01$). Individual based discrimination against Sunnis was correlated positively with group discrimination against Alevis ($r = .48, p < .01$), group discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .57, p < .01$), group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .45, p < .01$), and group discrimination in marriage against Sunnis ($r = .39, p < .01$). Perceived group discrimination against Alevis was correlated positively with group discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .65, p < .01$), and group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .45, p < .01$), as well as group discrimination in marriage against Sunnis ($r = .39, p < .01$). Group discrimination against Sunnis was correlated positively with group

discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .35, p < .01$) and group discrimination in marriage against Sunnis ($r = .39, p < .01$). The highest correlation was observed between discrimination in marriage variables ($r = .84, p < .01$).

3.2.2 Correlations between Variables for the Alevi Sample

As presented in Table 3.3 (above diagonal), level of education was significantly correlated with alienated religious identity ($r = .25, p < .01$) and with contact quantity. Higher education level was associated with higher alienated religious identity and more frequent contact. Level of education was also correlated significantly with perceived discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .25, p < .01$) and Sunnis ($r = .24, p < .01$). Higher education level was associated with greater perception of discrimination in marriage.

Importance of religious identity was correlated positively with group discrimination against Alevis ($r = .28, p < .01$), and group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .19, p < .05$). Public religious identity was correlated negatively with individual discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.23, p < .01$), group discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.29, p < .01$), and group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = -.23, p < .01$); and was correlated negatively with group discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .30, p < .01$).

As expected, GBD was correlated positively with group discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .18, p < .01$). Contact quantity was correlated negatively with individual based discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.19, p < .05$) and group

discrimination against Sunnis ($r = -.18, p < .05$). Contact quantity was also correlated with individual based discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.19, p < .05$) and group discrimination against Sunnis negatively ($r = -.18, p < .05$). Contact quality was correlated negatively with individual based discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.39, p < .05$), group discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.40, p < .01$), and discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = -.27, p < .01$).

Besides, legitimacy was negatively correlated with individual based discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.17, p < .05$) and group discrimination against Alevis ($r = -.26, p < .01$). Furthermore, significant correlations were found between subscales of perceived discrimination. Individual based discrimination against Alevis was positively correlated with individual based discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .28, p < .01$), group discrimination against Alevis ($r = .68, p < .01$), discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .39, p < .01$), and against Sunnis ($r = .35, p < .01$). Individual based discrimination against Sunnis was correlated positively with group discrimination against Sunnis ($r = .51, p < .01$), group discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .16, p < .05$), and against Sunnis ($r = .29, p < .01$). Group discrimination against Alevis was correlated positively with discrimination in marriage variables against Alevis ($r = .38, p < .01$) and against Sunnis ($r = .16, p < .05$). Group discrimination against Sunni group was correlated with discrimination in marriage against Alevis ($r = .23, p < .01$). Discrimination in marriage subscales was also correlated positively ($r = .32, p < .01$).

Table 3.3 Correlations between Study Variables

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Education		-.12	-.09	.25**	-.12	-.07	.28**	.10	-.14	-.06	.12	.06	.13	-.11	.25**	.24**
Imp. of R.I.	-.26*		.05	.07	.15*	-.14	-.11	-.19*	-.28**	-.02	.12	-.11	.28**	-.01	.19*	.07
Public R.I.	.00	.36**		-.11	.15	-.03	-.03	.34**	.12	.04	-.23**	.02	-.29**	.30**	-.23**	-.12
Alienated R.I.	-.17*	-.34**	-.26**		.11	.04	.16*	-.10	-.16*	-.13	-.05	-.07	.15	.03	.12	.17
G.B. Dominance	-.15	.10	-.08	.04		.35**	-.05	.00	-.06	.08	.03	.06	.03	.18*	.14	.08
Op. to Equality	-.04	-.02	-.10	-.07	.19*		.16*	.10	.25**	-.19*	-.10	-.07	-.13	.11	.07	.13
Contact Quantity	.08	-.29**	-.02	.11	-.11	-.10		.40**	-.08	.05	-.19*	-.14	-.14	-.18*	.02	.08
Contact Quality	.07	-.13	.16*	.00	-.18*	-.17*	.22**		-.09	-.01	-.39**	-.05	-.40**	.12	-.27**	-.11
Legitimacy	-.03	.12	.03	-.09	-.01	.01	.06	-.10		-.22**	-.17*	.04	-.26**	.14	-.10	-.06
Stability	-.14	.11	.12	.03	.29**	.08	.01	.10	-.13		-.07	.04	-.01	-.14	-.13	-.18*
Ind. Disc.: Alevis	-.04	-.11	-.03	.19*	.21**	.00	.07	.00	-.25**	.15		.28**	.68**	.04	.39**	.35**
Ind. Disc.: Sunnis	.04	.08	-.20*	.00	.25**	.05	-.03	-.22**	-.10	.10	.50**		.10	.51**	.16*	.29**
Gr. Discr.: Alevis	-.08	-.02	-.18*	.20*	.31**	.02	.00	-.16*	-.11	.21**	.49**	.48**		-.05	.38**	.16*
Gr. Discr.: Sunnis	-.04	.04	-.23**	.08	.22**	.05	-.06	-.15	.06	.06	.33**	.57**	.65**		.02	.23**
Disc. in Marriage: Alevis	-.01	-.02	-.01	.10	.15	.03	.01	-.18*	-.04	.18*	.44**	.45**	.48**	.35**		.32**
Disc. in Marriage: Sunnis	-.07	.01	.03	.05	.13	.10	.06	-.10	-.09	.16*	.43**	.39**	.42**	.39**	.84**	

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed). 1: education, 2: importance of religious identity, 3: public religious identity, 4: alienated religious identity, 5: group based dominance, 6: opposition to equality, 7: quantitative aspects of contact, 8: qualitative aspects of contact, 9: legitimacy, 10: stability, 11: perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevis, 12: perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, 13: perceived group discrimination: Alevis, 14: perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, 15: perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevis, 16: perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

3.3 Predicting Socio-structural Variables and Perceived Discrimination

A series of hierarchical regression analyses were run separately for each group to examine the degree of the unique contributions of independent variables in predicting legitimacy, stability, individual based discrimination, group discrimination, and group discrimination in marriage as the dependent variables after controlling for the demographic variables in the first step.

In these analyses, gender and the level of education were entered in the first step, followed by importance of religious identity, public religious identity, negative religious identity, GBD, OEQ, contact quantity, and contact quality variables in the second step.

3.3.1 Predicting Legitimacy

In the first group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion (dependent) variable was legitimacy. The results were summarized in Table 3.4. The results indicated that gender had a main significant effect on the perception of legitimacy for the Alevi group ($\beta = .24, p < .01$) in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, none of seven variables significantly predicted legitimacy. For the Alevi sample, however, the importance of religious identity ($\beta = -.25, p < .01$) and OEQ ($\beta = .24, p < .01$) significantly predicted legitimacy. As the importance of religious identity increases, the perception of legitimacy decreased while as the OEQ increased, the perception of legitimacy increased.

3.3.2 Predicting Stability

In the second group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was stability. The results were summarized in Table 3.4. The results indicated that, gender had a main significant effect on the perception of legitimacy for the Alevi group ($\beta = -.22, p < .01$) in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, only GBD significantly predicted stability ($\beta = .30, p < .001$). Increased GBD predicted higher perception of stability. For the Alevi sample, however, alienated religious identity ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$), GBD ($\beta = .20, p < .05$), and OEQ ($\beta = -.27, p < .01$) significantly predicted stability. Increased alienated religious identity and OEQ predicted lower perception of stability and increased GBD predicted higher perception of stability.

Table 3.4 Variables Predicting Legitimacy and Stability

	Legitimacy				Stability			
	Sunni		Alevi		Sunni		Alevi	
	β	F	β	F	β	F	β	F
Step 1		1.17		7.13**		1.64		4.38*
Gender (1= Men, 2= Women)	-.04		.24**		.04		-.22**	
Education	-.02		-.12		-.14		-.08	
R^2 Change	.00		.08		.02		.05	
Adjusted R^2	-.01		.07		.01		.04	
Step 2		.65		5.58***		2.69**		2.92**
Gender (1= Men, 2= Women)	-.04		.17		.06		-.16	
Education	.00		-.09		-.09		-.07	
Imp. of R.I.	.13		-.25**		.06		-.12	
Public R.I.	-.02		.12		.12		.04	
Alienated R.I.	-.06		-.12		.05		-.16*	
G. B. Dominance	-.01		-.12		.30***		.20*	
Op. to Equality	.00		.24**		.06		-.27**	
Contact Quantity	.11		-.09		.04		.16	
Contact Quality	-.10		.01		.15		-.09	
R^2 Change	.04		.16		.12		.09	
Adjusted R^2	-.02		.19		.09		.09	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Variables: importance of religious identity, public religious identity, alienated religious identity, group based dominance, opposition to equality, quantitative aspects of contact, qualitative aspects of contact, legitimacy, stability, perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevis, perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination: Alevis, perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

3.3.3 Predicting Individual Based Discrimination against Alevis

In the third group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was individual based discrimination against Alevis. The results were summarized in table 3.5. The results indicated that for the Alevi group, education had a main significant effect on the perception of individual based discrimination against their own group ($\beta = .11, p < .01$) in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, GBD significantly affected perception of discrimination ($\beta = .22, p < .01$). Increased GBD predicted greater perceived discrimination. For the Alevi sample, perceived quality of contact significantly affected the discrimination perception ($\beta = -.33, p < .001$). Greater quality predicted lower perceived discrimination.

3.3.4 Predicting Individual Based Discrimination against Sunnis

In the fourth group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was individual based discrimination against Sunnis. The results were summarized in Table 3.5. The results indicated that for the Alevi group, gender had a main significant effect on the perception of individual based discrimination against Sunnis ($\beta = .12, p < .05$) in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, public religious identity ($\beta = -.21, p < .05$) and GBD ($\beta = .22, p < .01$) variables significantly predicted individual based discrimination against Sunnis. Increased GBD and public religious identity predicted greater perceived discrimination. For the Alevi sample, importance of religious identity ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$) and GBD ($\beta = .17, p < .05$) significantly predicted individual based discrimination against Sunnis.

Table 3.5 Variables Predicting Individual Based Discrimination against Alevis and Individual Based Discrimination against Sunnis

	Ind. Aff. Disc.: Alevis				Ind. Aff. Disc.: Sunnis			
	Sunni		Alevi		Sunni		Alevi	
	β	<i>F</i>	β	<i>F</i>	β	<i>F</i>	β	<i>F</i>
Step 1		.24		2.09		.14		2.68
Gender (1=Men,2=Women)	.05		-.10		.01		.12*	
Education	-.04		.11**		.04		.06	
<i>R</i>² Change	.00		.02		.00		.03	
Adjusted R²	-.01		.01		-.01		.02	
Step 2		1.51		5.24***		2.78**		1.95**
Gender (1=Men,2=Women)	.03		-.08		.01		.18*	
Education	-.01		.20		.13		.14	
Imp. of R.I.	-.08		.05		.17		-.16*	
Public R.I.	.05		-.13		-.21*		.02	
Alienated R.I.	.16		-.14		.02		-.11	
G. B. Dominance	.22**		.09		.22**		.17*	
Op. to Equality	-.02		-.04		-.03		-.14	
Contact Quantity	.05		-.08		.06		-.11	
Contact Quality	.01		-.33***		-.15		-.06	
<i>R</i>² Change	.08		.20		.14		.07	
Adjusted R²	.03		.18		.09		.05	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Variables: importance of religious identity, public religious identity, alienated religious identity, group based dominance, opposition to equality, quantitative aspects of contact, qualitative aspects of contact, legitimacy, stability, perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevis, perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination: Alevis, perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

3.3.5 Predicting Perceived Group Discrimination against Alevis

In the fifth group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was perceived group discrimination against Alevis. The results were summarized in Table 3.6. The results indicated that for the Alevi group, gender had a main significant effect on the perception of group discrimination against Alevi group ($\beta = -.15, p < .05$) in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, alienated religious identity ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) and GBD ($\beta = -.29, p < .01$) significantly predicted the perception of discrimination. Increased alienated religious identity predicted greater perception of discrimination and increased GBD predicted lower perceived discrimination. For the Alevi sample importance of religious identity ($\beta = .22, p < .01$), public religious identity ($\beta = -.26, p < .01$), and perceived contact quality ($\beta = -.26, p < .01$) significantly predicted the perception of discrimination. Greater importance of religious identity predicted greater perceived discrimination and greater public religious identity and contact quality predicted lower perceived discrimination.

3.3.6 Predicting Perceived Group Discrimination against Sunnis

In the sixth group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was perceived group discrimination against Sunnis. The results were summarized in Table 3.6. The results indicated that, for the Alevi group, gender had a significant main effect on the perception of group discrimination ($\beta = .20, p < .01$) in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, public religious identity ($\beta = -.23, p < .05$) and GBD ($\beta = .18, p < .05$) significantly predicted the perception of

discrimination. Increased public religious identity predicted lower perceived discrimination and increased GBD predicted greater perceived discrimination. For the Alevi sample, public religious identity ($\beta = .25, p < .01$) and perceived quantity of contact ($\beta = -.22, p < .01$) significantly predicted group discrimination against Sunnis. Greater public religious identity predicted greater perceived discrimination and greater contact quantity predicted lower perceived discrimination.

Table 3.6 Variables Predicting Perceived Group Discrimination against Alevis and Perceived Group Discrimination against Sunnis

	Perc. Gr. Disc.: Alevis				Perc. Gr. Disc.: Sunnis			
	S Sunni		Alevi		S Sunni		Alevi	
	β	F	β	F	β	F	β	F
Step 1		1.55		3.58*		1.65		4.58*
Gender (1=Men,2=Women)	-.03		-.15*		-.08		.20**	
Education	-.07		.11		-.03		-.09	
R^2 Change	.01		.04		.01		.05	
Adjusted R^2	-.01		.03		-.01		.07	
Step 2		3.14**		7.81***		2.20*		4.44***
Gender (1=Men,2=Women)	-.05		-.11		-.09		.18*	
Education	.01		.15*		.05		-.03	
Imp. of R.I.	.05		.22**		.13		-.02	
Public R.I.	-.11		-.19**		-.23*		.25**	
Alienated R.I.	.18*		.09		.07		.10	
G. B. Dominance	.29**		.07		.18*		.11	
Op. to Equality	-.05		-.11		-.02		.06	
Contact Quantity	.04		-.06		.00		-.22**	
Contact Quality	-.11		-.26**		-.07		.20	
R^2 Change	.16		.26		.11		.15	
Adjusted R^2	2.11		.26		.04		.15	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Variables: importance of religious identity, public religious identity, alienated religious identity, group based dominance, opposition to equality, quantitative aspects of contact, qualitative aspects of contact, legitimacy, stability, perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevis, perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination: Alevis, perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

3.3.7 Predicting Discrimination in Intergroup Marriage against Alevis

In the seventh group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage against Alevis. The results were summarized in Table 3.7. The results indicated that, none of the demographic variables had a main significant effect on the perception of discrimination for both Sunni and Alevi sample in the first step. In the second step, for the Sunni sample, perceived quality of contact significantly predicted discrimination in intergroup marriage against Alevis ($\beta = -.17, p < .05$). Greater contact quality predicted lower perceived discrimination. For the Alevi sample, importance of religious identity ($\beta = .18, p < .05$), public religious identity ($\beta = -.16, p < .05$), and perceived quality of contact ($\beta = -.24, p < .01$) significantly predicted discrimination in intergroup marriage against Alevis. Increased importance of religious identity predicted greater perceived discrimination and increased public religious identity and contact quality predicted lower perceived discrimination.

3.3.8 Predicting Discrimination in Intergroup Marriage against Sunnis

In the eighth group of hierarchical regression analyses, the criterion variable was perceived group discrimination against Sunnis. The results were summarized in Table 3.7. The results indicated that, none of the demographic variables had a significant main effect on the perception of discrimination for both Sunni and Alevi sample in the first step. Similarly, in the second step, none of the variables had a significant effect on the perception of discrimination in intergroup marriage reported for Sunnis.

Table 3.7 Variables Predicting Perceived Discrimination in Intergroup Marriage for Alevi and Perceived Discrimination in Intergroup Marriage for Sunnis

	Disc. In Intgr. Marriage: Alevi				Disc. In Intgr. Marriage: Sunnis			
	S Sunni		Alevi		S Sunni		Alevi	
	β	F	β	F	β	F	β	F
Step 1		.02		5.50**		.86		5.32**
Gender (1=Men,2=Women)	.02		-.03		.09		.01	
Education	-.01		.24		-.07		.24	
R² Change	.00		.06		.01		.06	
Adjusted R²	-.01		.05		.00		.05	
Step 2		.95		5.40***		.81		2.62**
Gender (1=Men,2=Women)	.00		.00		.08		.01	
Education	.03		.29***		-.05		.25**	
Imp. of R.I.	-.01		.18*		.01		.10	
Public R.I.	.06		-.16*		.07		-.07	
Alienated R.I.	.10		-.01		.04		.08	
G. B. Dominance	.13		.15		.10		.05	
Op. to Equality	-.01		.09		.09		.15	
Contact Quantity	.03		.05		.09		.04	
Contact Quality	-.17*		-.24**		-.09		-.11	
R² Change	.06		.17		.04		.07	
Adjusted R²	.00		.19		-.01		.08	

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

Variables: importance of religious identity, public religious identity, alienated religious identity, group based dominance, opposition to equality, quantitative aspects of contact, qualitative aspects of contact, legitimacy, stability, perceived individual affective discrimination: Alevi, perceived individual affective discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination: Alevi, perceived group discrimination: Sunnis, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Alevi, perceived group discrimination in intergroup marriage: Sunnis.

In sum, results of these analyses revealed that in the Alevi group, importance of religious identity significantly affected legitimacy, individual discrimination against Sunnis, and discrimination in marriage against Alevis. For Sunnis, importance of religious identity did not have significant effect on the prediction. Among subscales of religious identification, public religious identity was significantly associated with Sunnis' perception of individual and group discrimination against their group and Alevis' perception of group discrimination for both their group and Sunni group and discrimination in marriage against Alevis. The relationship between public religious identity and perceived group discrimination against Sunni group was negative. However, for the Alevi group, the relationship between these variables was positive. Alienated religious identity significantly predicted perceptions of stability for the Sunni group and Alevis' perceptions of group discrimination against their group.

Among subscales of SDO, compared to OEQ, GBD more strongly predicted outcome variables. For both the Alevi and Sunni group, GBD was found to be predicting perceptions of stability and individual discrimination against Sunni group. In addition, for the Sunni group, GBD predicted individual discrimination against Alevi group and group discrimination against both Alevi and Sunni group. For the Sunni group, GBD predicted perceived discrimination against both ingroup and outgroup whereas for the Alevi group it predicted perceived discrimination against outgroup. OEQ was only significantly predicted perceptions of legitimacy in Alevi group.

Contact quality also strongly predicted outcome variables compared to quantity of contact. For both the Alevi and Sunni group, contact quality significantly predicted perception of discrimination in intergroup marriages against Alevi group. Also, in the Alevi group, contact quality significantly predicted individual discrimination against their own (Alevi) group. Contact quantity predicted only Alevi's perception of group discrimination against their group.

CHAPTER 4

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this thesis was to examine ingroup and outgroup perceptions of Alevis and Sunnis and compare them in a specific setting in Amasya. The results of the current study were discussed for each set of analyses considering the relevant literature.

4.1 Descriptive Information for the Major Variables in the Study

4.1.1 Group Differences

In general, mean differences between Alevis and Sunnis were in expected direction. For religious identification scale, findings have shown that, although the difference was not significant, consistent with literature, Alevis attributed more importance to their religious group than Sunnis. To put it differently, as a disadvantaged group, Alevis' level of ingroup identification was slightly higher than the Sunni group. However, consistent with past literature and predictions, Sunni group had significantly higher levels of public religious identity; relative to the Alevi group. Also, the size of this difference was considerably large indicating that Alevis perceive Sunnis as evaluating their group negatively, contrary to Sunnis who

perceive Alevi as evaluating their group positively. Besides, Alevi reported significantly higher alienated religious identity than Sunni, suggesting that, compared to Sunni, Alevi had more negative feelings about their group. The findings suggest that compared to the Sunni group, Alevi group feel a relative discomfort because of their religious identity. Results implied that although Alevi are highly attached to their ingroup, their group identity does not offer them a positive social identity; compared to the Sunni group Alevi were more dissatisfied about their membership. The lower scores in the public identity scale may indicate that Alevi perceived themselves as in a disadvantaged status in the public settings. These findings may stem from the fact that Alevi may not feel free to express their group identity since they may face prejudice from Sunni when they declare and perform their religious practices. Differences between the perceptions of these major ethnic groups on the subscales of ingroup identification suggest that Alevi's religious identity should be acknowledged by public, especially by Sunni.

Although Alevi and Sunni were expected to differ on the SDO subscales, there was no significant difference between Sunni and Alevi group members on GBD; both of the groups reported low levels of GBD indicating desire to dominate outgroups. It is reasonable for Alevi to have low levels of GBD since they have been suffering from group based dominance. Yet, for Sunni, low levels of GBD may stem from the group relations in the specific field settings. Research about SDO revealed that attitudes towards inequality may vary in respect to the specific inequality in question (Schmitt et al., 2003). Though, groups differed significantly on

OEQ that implies a desire for inequality between groups. Sunni group's level of OEQ was higher than the Alevi group. To put it differently, although Sunnis had reported similar GBD and OEQ levels, Alevis reported lower levels of OEQ than GBD. It can be argued that since Alevis have been suffering from institutionalized inequality, they may be more intolerant to inequality than GBD compared to Sunnis. The obtained difference was moderate in effect size suggesting that although Sunnis may not support inequalities in society, they are more tolerant to inequality since existing inequalities have no disadvantage for their group. Correspondingly, it was shown that individuals prefer inequality between groups if it privileges the ingroup and oppose to inequality if it disadvantages the ingroup.

The quantity of contact with members of outgroups reported by Alevis and Sunnis was similar to each other. However, two groups significantly differed on the quality of contact; compared to Sunnis, Alevis perceived the quality of intergroup contact significantly dissatisfying. It appears that although Alevis and Sunnis have frequent contact with each other; Alevis evaluate the contact as less satisfying. The difference may suggest that contact between Alevis and Sunnis apparently has different meanings. This may stem from the fact that Alevis and Sunnis held different types of stereotypes about each other. Compared to Sunnis, Alevis, as a relatively disadvantaged group, may be more concerned about the equality between groups during the contact. Besides, obtained effect size was large indicating that this is a very critical difference in their intergroup relations that should be examined in future studies regarding their effects on other aspects of relationships. The largest

mean difference was observed in the item asking whether they perceive the two groups as equal in intergroup relations. Contrary to Sunnis, Alevis reported that Alevis and Sunnis were not equal in social relationships. This may stem from the fact that, Alevis constitute the relatively disadvantaged group that expects a “genuine” equality in perceived group status.

The difference in the perception of legitimacy was also in expected direction. Compared to Sunnis, Alevis perceived significantly lower level of legitimacy. The observed difference has a large effect size indicating that whereas Sunnis perceive current situation and intergroup differences as a “just status”, Alevis do not perceive the status as legitimate. Alevis’ perception of legitimate intergroup relations may derive from the fact that they belong to a group which has problems in social and political area. Although they are citizens of the Republic of Turkey and pay taxes, they do not receive some rights that the Sunni people have. Sunnis’ perception of legitimate intergroup relations may derive from the fact that most Sunni participants rejected the idea that there is an Alevi issue in the society. During data collection, they further indicated that Sunnis do not regard Alevis as members of different sect hence the division of Alevis and Sunnis is meaningless. This difference in the perceptions implies that although these two groups have frequent contact with each other, they still have difficulty in taking the perspective of each other, namely outgroup. For stability, the groups did not differ significantly, both Alevis and Sunnis reported high perceptions of stability. It seems that while Sunnis perceive the group relations and the status of the groups are both legitimate and stable; Alevis perceive

that the current group relations are illegitimate yet stable in future, suggesting that Alevis do not expect these differences will disappear in future. As an advantaged group, Sunnis' perception of stability would be expected, however, as a disadvantaged group, Alevis' high perception of stability may suggest that Alevis have internalized currently existing inequalities and their expectation for change in future is relatively low.

Significant group differences were obtained in perceived discrimination except for perceived group discrimination against Sunnis and perceived discrimination in intergroup marriage against Alevis. The differences in the perception of discrimination were especially greater for the subscales measuring discrimination against Alevis. In all of the discrimination subscales, Alevis reported greater perceived discrimination. The results showed that, in general, members of the Alevi group were more likely than members of the Sunni group to report that they have been victims of discrimination based on their religious identity. Compared to the Sunnis, Alevis have greater perceptions of discrimination directed against them in both individual and group level. Obtained large effect sizes suggest that they systematically perceive more discrimination. In addition, contrary to their ingroup perceptions, Alevi group's perception of discrimination against the Sunni group, in both individual and group level was low. However, results suggested that, in both individual and group based discrimination, Sunni participants reported low instances of discrimination against Alevis and Sunnis. To put it differently, Sunnis' perception of discrimination did not change for Alevis and Sunnis. This may suggest that Sunnis

perceive two groups relatively equal and there is little group segregation in society.

Yet, these results showed that even though Sunnis claim that Alevis are not subject to discrimination, Alevis report high levels of discrimination. In brief, these differences imply a large divergence in the society regarding the perception of discrimination against Alevis which have implications for intergroup communication.

As it was stated earlier, the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey largely represents the Sunni beliefs and practices. Alevis may already have reactions to these politics that increase the perception of discrimination in public area since institutional norms do not recognize Alevi identity. Also, greater perception of discrimination of Alevis may have stemmed from their sensitivity to any cues of discrimination. Past research has suggested that the members of disadvantaged group attribute negative treatment of outgroup members to prejudice rather than making attributions to more internal, global, and stable causes (Crocker & Major, 1989). Attribution to discrimination increases especially when people have high levels of identification with their group. Therefore, greater perception of discrimination of Alevis may stem from their tendency to attribute any negative treatment to discrimination as well as their higher identification with the ingroup. In the Sunni group, lower discrimination perception can be attributed to their tendency to minimize cues of discrimination. In other words, Sunni people may avoid from any claim of discrimination in order to emphasize that two groups are equal and they are not discriminating against Alevi group. In addition, it is important to note that the perception of discrimination may have been influenced by increases in group

salience during data collection. Alevis, to show their relatively disadvantaged position, may have overstated their subjective experiences of discrimination.

Interestingly, Alevis' perception of individual based discrimination against Sunnis is higher than the Sunni group's perception. SIT assumes that compared to the advantaged group, members of the disadvantaged group feel more insecure and in order to recover these feelings and to achieve a positive social identity they discriminate against advantaged group members (Simon et al., 2001). Thus, Alevi group may discriminate against Sunni group so as to satisfy their needs for positive distinctiveness and to achieve a positive identity in the society. Furthermore, research has shown that if members of the disadvantaged group perceive current situation as illegitimate, they may tend to perform discriminatory behaviors and attitudes that are usually performed by members of the advantaged group (Turner & Brown, 1978). Therefore, greater discrimination perception of Alevis against Sunnis may also be attributed to perceived illegitimacy of the situation.

Although Alevis and Sunnis significantly differed on the majority of variables, results revealed that both of the groups agreed that Alevis and Sunnis experience discrimination reciprocally in intergroup marriages. These results are similar with the results of a study conducted by Çarkoğlu and Toprak (2007) revealed that almost half of the participants, mostly amongst Sunnis, reported that they would oppose their son and daughter marrying with a Muslim from another sect. It can be argued that outgroup exclusion in marriage is high for both Sunnis and Alevis. Although Alevis appear as a relatively disadvantaged group, their attitudes

towards intermarriage are the same with Sunnis or they may give even more reaction to intergroup marriages. This finding is different from the previous findings by suggesting that the advantaged group also perceived discrimination. Generally, past research on intermarriages focusing on interracial (e.g., Fu, 2008) and interethnic (e.g., Tolsma et al., 2008) marriages showed that intermarriages are often interpreted as low status group's success, social acceptance, or maximization of gains. It is the only disadvantaged group who face discrimination in intermarriages since intermarriages usually imply the permeability of the group boundaries in which a member of disadvantaged group is incorporated into relatively advantaged group (Song, 2009).

Given the historical and social context of Alevi and Sunni, these groups may have different reasons to oppose to intergroup marriages. For advantaged group members, intermarriage may undermine the positive distinctiveness of their identity because of accepting a disadvantaged group member as equal to their status. For disadvantaged group members, existing literature suggested that groups having relatively disadvantaged position may regard intergroup marriages as a way to assimilation rather than integration of groups (Song, 2009). Alevi may oppose intermarriages to protect "Alevi identity" since if an Alevi woman marries with a Sunni man, from now on, the woman is not considered as Alevi and the offspring of this couple will be accepted as Sunni. Moreover, compared to Alevi, Sunnis are as more religious and more likely to use headscarves (Çarkoğlu & Toprak, 2007). Marriage of an Alevi woman with a Sunni man may be evaluated as the woman is

going to wear a headscarf. Alevis may also oppose intergroup marriages to prevent their daughter to wear a headscarf. Consistent with literature, during the data collection, some Alevis emphasized that intermarriages simply imply assimilation of Alevis. Besides, although both Alevis and Sunnis agree that Alevis face discrimination in intermarriages at a high rate, the groups differed in the perception of discrimination in intermarriages against Sunni group. That is to say, Alevis observed more discrimination than Sunnis in intermarriages. Therefore, Alevis can be considered as having more closed boundaries compared to the Sunni group; they oppose intergroup marriages more than Sunni group as an Alevi *dede* indicated “even the two worlds can come together, but Alevis and Sunnis still cannot be together”.

In sum, these findings revealed significant differences between Alevis and Sunnis that might influence their relationships with each other. Although these results shed some light to the group relations of Alevis and Sunnis, further studies are definitely needed to better understand the intergroup dynamics and their implications such as the implications of perceived discrimination.

4.1.2 Gender Differences

According to SDT, men and women would be expected to differ in group based dominance (GBD) and opposition to equality (OEQ). However, the results of Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) did not yield significant gender differences on GBD and OEQ. These results were similar with the results of another study conducted in a

Turkish context (Schuller et al., 2010). The authors found no significant difference between men and women on SDO.

SDT proposes “invariance hypothesis” suggesting that men have higher levels of SDO than women even the effects of cultural or situational factors were controlled (Sidanius et al., 1994). However, Foels and Pappas (2004) revealed that contrary to the invariance hypothesis, social factors influence SDO levels of men and women; SDO levels may vary as a function of socialization. Similarly, it was found that specific forms of inequality determine men’s and women’s levels of SDO (Schmitt et al., 2003). Women may have higher levels of SDO compared to men if the specific inequality favors women over men. Besides, it was suggested that people think about specific groups in mind when they fill out SDO scales (Schmitt et al., 2003).

Currently existing inequalities are more accessible when filling a scale and individuals’ feelings about inequality were strongly determined by the type of inequality. Regarding the current study, participants may have responded scales with reference to thinking inequalities between Alevi and Sunni groups because they were requested to answer a religious identification scale before the application of SDO scale. Therefore, for the Alevi group the indifference, or men’s low levels of SDO, can be attributed to Alevi participants’ avoidance from stressing dominance of some groups over others and from desiring inequality. For the Sunni group, the absence of gender differences or men’s low SDO levels may be attributed to Sunni participants’ avoidance to appear as performing domination or discriminatory attitudes towards Alevis in a social context. That is to say, currently existing social conditions may

have prevented individuals from freely expressing their thoughts about group relations.

Alevi women perceived the current situation as more legitimate than Alevi men. On the contrary, Alevi men perceived the current situation as more stable compared to women. Although gender differences were not significant, men reported greater importance of religious identity than women. Considering the literature about the socio-structural variables, Alevi women's higher perception of legitimacy, and lower perception of stability than Alevi men may stem from their lower identification with their group.

Alevi men, compared to Alevi women, perceived more group discrimination against their group. It can be argued that this difference could be rooted in men's higher levels of mobility in both social and educational spheres compared to women. Men meet and interact with more people compared to women. That is to say, merely interacting with outgroup members may bring perceptions of discrimination. On the contrary, Alevi women compared to Alevi men reported significantly more perceived discrimination against Sunni group at both individual and group levels. There is a common belief that compared to men women have greater capacity to understand others and focus on others' experiences, that is to say, women have higher levels of empathy (Toussaint & Webb, 2005). Women's perceptions of more discrimination against Sunnis may have stemmed from their higher levels success in perspective taking compared to men. Future studies should explore the dynamics of these gender differences using in-depth analyses.

4.2 The Relationship between Variables

4.2.1 Level of Education and Study Variables

Education level had a negative impact on ingroup identification of Sunni group. As Sunni people become more educated, their attachment to ingroup decreases while their negative feelings towards the ingroup increases. Education provides an opportunity to meet more people and these new acquaintances may undermine the categorization of individuals that reduce the salience or the importance of the Sunni identity. In other words, since Sunnis constitute the mainstream society that does not face the threat of assimilation, this may decrease their identity salience.

Education level had a positive impact on alienated religious identity of Alevi group. As Alevi people become more educated, their negative feelings towards the ingroup increases. The new acquaintances during the education may increase instances of discrimination and their group identity may become less satisfying. Correspondingly, Alevi participants who have a college degree reported the highest group discrimination while participants who graduated from primary school reported the lowest. For Alevis, increased education level seems to sensitize them for possible discrimination more, and thus, they perceive greater group discrimination. Although there is no immediate argument to this finding, it would be plausible to argue that individuals have the opportunity to meet outgroup members during education. Because Alevis constitute a relatively disadvantaged group, they feel the threat of assimilation. Hence, as they encounter with “others” their group membership

becomes more salient that increases group identification. SIT suggests that individuals with high ingroup identification perceive more discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999; Operario & Fiske, 2001). Therefore, in addition to actual instances of discrimination that the members of outgroup perform, individuals make more attributions to discrimination.

Similarly, Alevi participants having a college degree reported more perceived discrimination in intergroup marriages against both Sunnis and Alevis. In Amasya, people generally prefer to marry with an ingroup member. This trend may become unusual as they go other cities for education. College education provides the opportunity to meet with others and as people encounter with outgroup members they may wish to marry an outgroup member even though their family may oppose. Their experiences of discrimination in intergroup marriages may stem from increased instances of intergroup marriages.

4.2.2 Ingroup Identification and SDO

Although the association between SDO and ingroup identification was expected to be stronger in the Sunni group compared to the Alevi group, the relation between these variables was found to be weaker for Sunnis compared to Alevis. The non-significance of relationship between SDO and ingroup identification in Sunni group may stem from the fact that members of majority group try to appear as nonprejudiced and fair-minded individuals regardless of their beliefs and attitudes toward a specific minority group (Shelton, 2003). Given the historical relationship between Alevis and Sunnis in Turkey and existing beliefs that Alevis are relatively

disadvantaged in the society, it is highly possible that during the application of the scales members of the Sunni group may have concerned with portraying a non-discriminative image. Furthermore, although the relation between SDO variables and ingroup identification was not very strong for the Alevi group, the significance of relationship could be reflecting the tendency to enhance their group's relative value. To put it differently, even members of the disadvantaged groups may have the motivation to have highest priority and value in society, and may desire to dominate others. Besides, since Alevis constitute low status group, they are unrestricted to express their thoughts about domination compared to the Sunni group since Sunnis are aware of the fact that if they perform any act of mistreatment or dominance, they would be evaluated as discriminating Alevis.

4.2.3 The Correlates of Perceived Discrimination

Consistent with past literature, significant correlations between ingroup identification and perceived discrimination was obtained. Specifically, for Alevis, positive correlations between importance of religious identification and perceived discrimination against both group and intergroup marriages were obtained. Results were in line with the assumptions of SIT that strong identification with ingroup brings increased perceptions of discrimination (Branscombe et al., 1999). However, for both Alevi and Sunni groups, public religious identity was negatively correlated with discrimination perception. Overall, findings showed that if people consider outgroup members as evaluating ingroup positively, their perception of discrimination against ingroup and outgroup decreases. Conversely, for the Alevi

group public religious identity correlated positively with perceived group discrimination against Sunni group. As individuals become confident about others' positive regard, they may accept that others also perceive discrimination. Taken as a whole, it can be suggested that, public religious identity is more predictive than importance of religious identity in reducing the perception of discrimination. SIT underlines the role of ingroup identification in the perception of discrimination. Results of the study supported this assumption of SIT to some extent. However, results suggested that people are more concerned about "how others evaluate their group" rather than their ingroup identifications. Furthermore, SIT also suggests that there may be bidirectional relationship between these variables (Operario & Fiske, 2001). This may imply that increased perceptions of discrimination may reduce people's level of public religious identity, while importance of religious identity still remains stronger.

GBD was correlated positively with perception of discrimination especially in Sunni group; increases in GBD level was related with increased perceptions of discrimination against both ingroup and outgroup. For the Alevi group, GBD was positively correlated with perceived group discrimination against Sunni group. The results were in line with the past findings in SDT literature suggesting that members of both advantaged and disadvantaged groups with higher levels of SDO perceive greater discrimination (Sidanius & Pratto, 1993). Regardless of the status of the ingroup, SDO may drive individuals to perceive and even perform discrimination

towards members of outgroups. This finding highlights the importance of SDO in predicting discriminatory outgroup behavior.

Contact between Alevis and Sunnis was correlated negatively with perceived discrimination. For the Alevi group, the frequency of contact was related with decreased perceptions of individual based discrimination against their own group and group based discrimination against Sunni group. Contact quality also was related with decreased perceptions of discrimination. For the Sunni group, as the quality of contact increased, the perceptions of group based discrimination against their own group and discrimination in marriage against Alevi group decreased. Similarly, for Alevis, contact quality was related with decreased perceptions of discrimination against their own group. These findings imply that contact between groups, especially qualitative contact, can reduce intergroup conflicts, and provide the conditions for an enhanced relationship between Alevis and Sunnis.

4.3 Regression Analyses

4.3.1 Predicting Socio-structural Variables: Legitimacy and Stability

Obtained results revealed that the importance of religious identity and OEQ significantly predicted perception of legitimacy in the Alevi sample. OEQ was positively associated with legitimacy while importance of religious identity was negatively associated. None of the predictors were significantly related to perception of legitimacy for the Sunni group. GBD significantly predicted higher levels of stability perception for both Alevi and Sunni sample. Alienated religious identity and OEQ also significantly and negatively predicted perceptions of stability within the

Alevi sample. The results were in line with the past findings in SDT literature suggesting that people with high SDO are more conservative and would prefer unequal relationships between groups (Sidanius & Pratto, 1999). Furthermore, these results signify that Alevis who have highly affiliated with their groups perceive the current group relations as unjust and Alevis who have negative feelings about their group perceive the current group relations as unstable.

The overall pattern of the results indicated that the power of independent variables on socio-structural variables is relatively weak. Past research investigating legitimacy and stability from SIT perspective mainly focused on the role of these socio-structural variables on selection of identity management strategies. Rather than as a predictor, ingroup identification was regarded as a mediator between legitimacy, stability, permeability, and identity management strategies (e.g. Mummendey et al., 1999). Besides, past studies explored the role of socio-structural variables on ingroup identification (e.g., Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008). However, this study took a new insight to this relationship by testing whether ingroup identification, SDO, and social contact predict legitimacy and stability responses of two groups of participants. Most research on the socio-structural variables correlational in nature, it is possible that group identification affects the perception of intergroup structure (Verkuyten & Reijerse, 2008). Past research demonstrated that ingroup identification is both a determinant of evaluation and behavior and product of intergroup relations (Doosje et al., 2002). Although it is not possible to determine the direction of causality between these variables in a correlational study, there is evidence that these variables

associated significantly. Additional evidence on these variables is needed to discover the causal relationship between these variables.

4.3.2 Predicting Perceived Discrimination

One of the major concerns of the study was to investigate the role of ingroup identification, SDO, and social contact on the perception of discrimination. Current study supported the literature and predictions to some extent. Obtained results showed that individual differences in the endorsement of identity, SDO, and social contact affect the likelihood that individuals will perceive themselves and others as victims of discrimination.

4.3.2.1 The Role of Ingroup Identification

Systematic differences were found between Alevi and Sunni samples in the perception of individual and group discrimination. Importance of religious identity significantly predicted greater perception of group discrimination and greater perception of discrimination in intermarriage among the Alevi group but not among Sunni group. Moreover, in the Alevi sample, importance of religious identity significantly predicted perceived individual based discrimination against Sunnis; highly identified Alevis perceived Sunnis to be less discriminated. In other words, for the Alevi group, increased ingroup identification significantly predicted increases in discrimination perception for their group and decreases in discrimination perception for the Sunni group.

Public religious identity significantly predicted perception of discrimination in both Alevi and Sunni groups. If individuals think that members of the outgroup regard their own group positively, they report less discrimination directed against their own group. Similar pattern was observed among Alevi participants for perceived discrimination in intermarriage against their group; increases in public religious identity predicted decreases in the discrimination perception. In addition, Alevi group's high public religious identity positively predicted group discrimination against Sunnis.

Besides, for the Sunni group, alienated religious identity that implies detachment from the ingroup, significantly predicted perception of discrimination against Alevis. It appears that, Sunnis who do not feel positive about their ingroup accepted that Alevis experience instances of discrimination.

Considering these findings, it can be argued that Alevis are more ingroup oriented and their affiliation with ingroup shapes the way they evaluate their surroundings and intergroup relations. These findings are consistent with SIT's suggestions that the ingroup identification of disadvantaged group members should be stronger compared to advantaged group members. Besides, since Alevis are aware of the fact that they constitute relatively disadvantaged group they are more sensitive to discrimination. The literature on the perception of discrimination suggests that the greater the degree of subjects' ingroup identification, the greater the degree to which they tend to perceive discrimination to the ingroup (Branscombe et al., 1999). Consistent with past studies, the results illustrated that high identification with

ingroup drive individuals to perceive discrimination for their group and not for other group. Moreover, the results suggest that if individuals perceive members of outgroup as regarding their group positively, they perceive less discrimination. In addition, high affiliation with ingroup prevents people to take the perspective of outgroup; if people feel detachment from their group, they observe others as to be discriminated. Results suggested that it is not only ingroup identifications of people that determines the discrimination perception. Individuals are also concerned with how others evaluate their ingroup. Alevis may believe that, Sunnis evaluate their group as in “inferior status” and show little respect. Therefore, in order to reduce perceptions and actual instances of discrimination, it is important to enhance outgroup perception of individuals.

4.3.2.2 The Role of Social Dominance Orientation

GBD and OEQ were predicted to influence the perception of discrimination especially for the Sunni group. Results revealed that although the effect was found to be stronger for the Sunni group, there was no significant effect of OEQ on perceived discrimination. GBD has more predictive power compared to OEQ in the perception of discrimination especially for the Sunni group.

For Alevi group, GBD significantly predicted individual discrimination against Sunni group; increased GBD of Alevis was related to greater discrimination perception against Sunnis. Although this finding is difficult to interpret, it is plausible to argue that members of the Alevi group may feel themselves free to indicate that they are discriminating members of the Sunni group. For members of

disadvantaged group, it may be easier to accept that they discriminate outgroup compared to members of the advantaged group. Discriminatory attitudes of the disadvantaged status groups may be evaluated as ingroup favoritism while discriminatory attitudes of the advantaged groups evaluated as unacceptable. In addition, Alevis may perceive their group and their religious culture as superior to the Sunni group. Although they are perceived as relatively disadvantaged group, they may believe that their practices and beliefs are more sincere and may think that they are better off as compared to Sunnis since they perceive themselves as are more secular and less conservative (Çarkoğlu & Toprak, 2003). Therefore, Alevis with high levels of GBD may tend to perform more discriminatory behaviors against outgroup more than those with low levels of GBD.

SDO was expected to influence Sunnis' perceptions of discrimination that Alevis experience and the results revealed that GBD significantly predicts perceived group and individual discrimination against Alevis. That is to say, the more Sunni individuals possess GBD, the more discrimination they perceive against the Alevi group. However, similar with perceived discrimination against the Alevi group, unexpectedly, Sunnis' level of GBD was also related with perception of discrimination directed against their group. As suggested by past studies the meaning of experienced discrimination differs for high and low status groups (Kobrynowicz & Branscombe, 1997). SDT suggests that advantaged group members may believe that their group should be favored in the distribution of resources. Therefore, compared to low status groups, high status groups may get extremely frustrated if they feel that

they have been mistreated in the distribution of resources or in social relations (Shorey et al., 2002). Thus, they attribute their failure or any mistreating behavior to a potential (and possible intentional) discrimination. The authors therefore claim that individuals from high status group having high levels of SDO perceive more discrimination directed against their group. Hence, for the current findings, the significant relationship between perceived discrimination and GBD may have stemmed from the fact that Sunnis perceive their group as superior compared to Alevis and any cues of mistreatment may have resulted in feelings of discontent.

4.3.2.3 The Role of Social Contact

Consistent with the previous studies (e.g., Pettigrew, 1997), the current study showed that intergroup contact positively influences intergroup relations and the effect was stronger for qualitative aspect of contact. Contact quantity significantly related to Alevis' perception of group discrimination against Sunnis. Alevis experiencing frequent contact with Sunnis perceived decreased discrimination against Sunnis.

Contact quality significantly predicted Alevis' perception of individual and group discrimination against their group. That is, increased quality of contact was related with decreased perception of discrimination. Contact quality predicted also perceived discrimination in intermarriages. Increased contact quality associated with decreased perceptions of discrimination in intermarriage against the Alevi group. In other words, both Alevis and Sunnis who experience qualitative contact with outgroup, evaluated Alevis as perceiving less discrimination in marrying with

outgroup members. Consistent with these findings, past research has shown that contact between outgroup members makes individuals more tolerant to intergroup marriages (Tolsma et al., 2008). As the results suggested increased knowledge about outgroup is not enough for intermarriages. This stems from the fact that, marriage between different groups is accepted as the most concrete level of contact implying an integration of groups since through marriage an outgroup member becomes a close relative (Tolsma et al., 2008). Lower rates of intermarriage in a given society indicate that individuals still maintain strong ethnic identities (Song, 2009). On the contrary, higher rates of intermarriages can be interpreted as individuals from different groups do not regard social and cultural differences as strong barriers to marriage or integration of group and the boundaries between the groups are permissible.

The pattern of relationship observed among contact quality and perceived discrimination is important for several reasons. Consistent with past research (Brown et al., 2001), findings illustrate that is not the amount of contact, what is crucial is the experienced subjective quality of the contact even in reducing the discrimination in intergroup marriages. However, the effects of contact were predicted to be more influential for advantaged group relative to disadvantaged group. Yet, in the present study, quality of contact was more influential for the disadvantaged group. Past research suggests that intergroup contact is shaped by both individual differences and societal norms (Pettigrew, 1998). Groups that already have conflict avoid contact and resist positive effects from it. Therefore, since the present study was a field study

with no experimental control, Sunni participants may have restricted and undermined the effect of intergroup contact because of existing intergroup conflicts. Furthermore, although effects of perceived discrimination on perceived quality of social contact were not investigated in the current thesis, it is plausible to argue that high perception of discrimination may make individuals evaluate intergroup contact as less qualitative and less satisfying. In Alevi group, the evaluation of contact as less satisfying compared to the Sunni group may stem from higher instances of perceived discrimination.

4.4 Limitations of the Study and Suggestions for the Future

There were also a number of limitations of this study that should be considered in interpreting the findings and in planning future research. The first shortcoming of the study is the selection of sample. As mentioned before, participants were selected on a haphazard snowball selection method, without a randomized and representative sample. Therefore, these findings should be replicated in more representative, randomly selected sample for testing their external validity.

One of the limitations of the current research is that data were collected only with quantitative methods which were adopted from different inter-ethnic group relations. Qualitative measurement methods, such as in depth interviews, should be used in examining Alevi-Sunni relationships and the quantitative measures can be developed on the basis of these in-depth interviews. The differing and specific nature of the Alevi and Sunni relationships from other inter-racial or inter-ethnic group

relations need more specific measurement tools that include both quantitative and qualitative measures.

Another shortcoming of the thesis is its reliance on correlational analyses. Although predictions were theoretically-based, the direction of the effects can only be suggestive. Thus, future studies on Alevi and Sunni should also utilize other methods, such as longitudinal or experimental designs to assess the direction of causality and enhance the generalizability of the findings.

As aforementioned above, group difference between Alevi and Sunni are relatively more salient in Amasya than other cities. During the data collection, group salience may have increased since participants were asked to indicate whether they belong to Sunni or Alevi group. Therefore, the effects of group salience should be considered in interpretations of research. Further studies should try to eliminate the effects of group salience or should apply implicit testing methods to measure the perceptions of intergroup relations more objectively.

The major aim of the study was to explore the group perceptions of Alevi and Sunni through a social psychological perspective. Alevi and Sunni are believed to have a conflict and the current study shows that Alevi feel themselves as discriminated against. As compared to Sunni group, Alevi face the disadvantage of being a member of Alevi group and feel inequality between Alevi and Sunni. The process of conflict resolution between Alevi and Sunni may begin with the investigation of the intergroup relations and attitudes by identifying the current problems of the groups.

4.5 Contributions of the Study

A recent study on the “perceptions of social inequalities in Turkey” (Çarkoğlu & Kalaycıoğlu, 2010) showed that Alevis face discrimination that limits their access to resources such as housing, education, employment, and medical care. Besides, participants of the study reported that in a number of areas, members of the Alevi group are made to admit less than they deserve because of their religious group membership. Additionally, similar with results of the current study, compared to Sunni participants, Alevi participants perceived more discrimination for their group in many domains of social life. The authors concluded that the most crucial problem of Turkey is “inequality in society” that needs to be resolved. Therefore, through investigating Alevis and Sunnis, the current research draws attention to one of the perceived inequalities in Turkey. Although this study is an initial attempt to examine Sunni and Alevi relationships from a social psychological perspective, the contribution of this study should be evaluated within a general social context including the sociological, political, and historical implications.

Özalay (2006) indicated that the real problems of Alevi community should be identified in order to solve the Alevi issue in Turkey. The current study provided data regarding the possible problems of Alevis'. Alevi participants reported that they perceive a relative inequality in the society and discrimination based on their religious group identity.

This is the first psychological study in Turkey examining both Alevis and Sunnis together taking into account mutual intergroup discriminations. Although a

number of Alevi associations have called for political interventions for solving their social problems and demands, both political decision makers and psychologists remain relatively insensitive to this issue and Alevi problems in general. In previous studies, Alevis and Sunnis were studied separately in either sociological (e.g., Koçan & Öncü, 2004) or political research (e.g., Gölbaşı, 2008). The noteworthy contribution of the present study was to include both Alevis and Sunnis together, rather than relying on the perceptions one group. Investigation of both Alevis and Sunnis provided comprehensive view of intergroup relations. In conclusion, this study contributed to the current literature addressing a social problem from a social psychological perspective including the contemporary theories, namely the theories of social identity, social dominance, and social contact.

Being the first psychological study to investigate and compare Alevis and Sunnis, findings in the present study provided some evidence for assumptions of SIT and gave further credibility to SIT. It was indicated that SIT is a useful tool to understand intergroup relations, outgroup perceptions, intergroup structures, perceived discrimination, and minority-majority group relations in the context of Alevis and Sunnis in Turkey. In addition, although most of the assumptions of SDT were not supported, obtained evidence revealed that SDO is an important tool in predicting discrimination perceptions and desire for hierarchical and unequal intergroup relations in a Turkish context. The study also contributed to Contact Hypothesis literature. Contact quality was proven to be an effective predictor in

enhancing intergroup relations. Obtained information is important for policy makers and authorities in Turkey to solve the “Alevi” issue.

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APPENDIX A

The Questionnaire Package

Gönüllü Katılım ve Bilgilendirme Formu

Sayın katılımcı,

Bu araştırma Orta Doğu Teknik Üniversitesi, Psikoloji Bölümü'nde, Prof. Dr. Nebi Sümer'in danışmanlığında yürütülen, Gülçin Akbaş'ın yüksek lisans tezi çalışmasıdır. Bu tez kapsamında Sünniler ve Aleviler dikkate alınarak sosyal gruplar arasındaki ilişkiler sosyal psikolojik bakımdan incelenmektedir. Bu çalışmada her soruya vereceğiniz yanıt son derece önemlidir. Lütfen anketin başındaki bütün açıklamaları dikkatlice okuyarak size en uygun gelen cevabı işaretleyiniz. Ankette yer alan soruların doğru veya yanlış bir cevabı yoktur, önemli olan sizin ne düşündüğünüz ve ne hissettiğinizdir. Sizden kimliğinizle ilgili hiçbir bilgi istenmemektedir. Vereceğiniz bilgiler kimlik bilgileriniz alınmadan tamamıyla gizli tutularak, yalnızca araştırmacılar tarafından, grup düzeyinde değerlendirilecektir. Çalışmadan elde edilecek sonuçlar sadece bilimsel amaçlı olarak kullanılacaktır. Ankete katılım tamamen gönüllülük esasına dayanmaktadır. Çalışmada sizi rahatsız eden herhangi bir soruyla karşılaşırsanız ya da ankete devam etmek istemezseniz anketi yarıda bırakabilirsiniz. Veri toplama ve analiz sürecinin sonunda elde edilen bulgularla ilgili tüm sorularınız cevaplandırılacaktır.

Yardımlarınız ve katılımınız için teşekkür ederiz.

Çalışma hakkında daha fazla bilgi almak için; Sosyal Psikoloji yüksek lisans öğrencilerinden Gülçin Akbaş (E-posta: gulcinakbas@yahoo.com) ile iletişim kurabilirsiniz.

Bu çalışmaya tamamen gönüllü olarak katılıyorum ve istediğim zaman yarıda kesip çıkabileceğimi biliyorum. Verdiğim bilgilerin bilimsel amaçlı yayımlarda kullanılmasını kabul ediyorum. (Formu doldurup imzaladıktan sonra uygulayıcıya geri veriniz).

Tarih

İmza

----/----/-----

Gruplar Arası İlişkilerde Algılar: Alevi ve Sünnilerin Grup Algıları Üzerine

Bir İnceleme

1- Doğum tarihiniz: _____

2- Cinsiyetiniz: Erkek Kadın

3- İkamet ettiğiniz şehir: _____

4- Mesleğiniz-işiniz nedir? _____

Lütfen, aşağıda yer alan soruları cevaplandırırken size en uygun gelen cevabın yanındaki kutucuğa çarpı (☒) işareti koyunuz.

5- Eğitim Düzeyiniz:

Okuma-Yazma Biliyor

İlkokul mezunu

Ortaokul mezunu

Lise mezunu

Üniversite mezunu

Yüksek Lisans/Doktora

mezunu

6- En uzun süre yaşadığınız yer:

Köy

Kasaba/Belde

İlçe

İl

Büyük Şehir

7- Evinize giren ortalama aylık gelir miktarını belirtiniz. Yaklaşık olarak:

500 TL ve altı

500-1 000 TL

1000-1500 TL

1500-2000 TL

2000-3000 TL

3000-5000 TL

5000 TL ve üzeri

8- Dini bakımdan aşağıdaki seçeneklerden hangisi sizi en iyi tanımlayan ifadedir?

Sünni

Alevi

Diğer (lütfen belirtiniz) _____

RELIGIOUS IDENTIFICATION SCALE

Aşağıda dini mezhep gruplarına ilişkin farklı ifadeler yer almaktadır. İfadelerin doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. Size en uygun gelen seçeneği (rakamı) 1'den (kesinlikle katılmıyorum) 5'e (kesinlikle katılıyorum) kadar derecelendirilmiş ölçek üzerinde daire içine alarak belirtiniz. Lütfen ölçekte bulunan tüm ifadeleri değerlendiriniz.

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1.Kendi dini mezhep grubuma karşı güçlü bir bağım var.	1	2	3	4	5
2.Dini mezhep grup üyeliğim benim için iyi anlamlar taşır.	1	2	3	4	5
3.Dini mezhep grubumun altyapısını daha iyi anlamama yardım eden şeyleri sık sık yaparım.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Kendi dini mezhep kimliğimden rahatsızlık duyduğum zamanlar olur.	1	2	3	4	5
5.Dini mezhep grubumun tarihini, gelenek ve göreneklerini keşfetmek için zaman harcarım.	1	2	3	4	5
6.Kendimi dini mezhep grubumun tipik bir örneği olarak görürüm.	1	2	3	4	5
7.Dini mezhebimden gurur duyarım.	1	2	3	4	5
8.Dini mezhep kimliğim kim olduğumun önemli bir parçasıdır.	1	2	3	4	5
9.Bazen dini mezhep kimliğimden hoşlanmıyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
10.Dini mezhep grubumun bir üyesi olmaktan memnunum.	1	2	3	4	5
11.Dini mezhep kimliğimin bana zarar verdiğini düşündüğüm zamanlar olur.	1	2	3	4	5
12.Genelde dini mezhep grubum diğer insanlar tarafından iyi/olumlu görülür.	1	2	3	4	5
13.Diğer dini mezhep grubundan olanlar benim dini mezhep grubuma saygı gösterirler.	1	2	3	4	5
14.Diğer insanlar, dini mezhep grubumdaki insanların kötü olduğunu düşünürler.	1	2	3	4	5
15.Dini mezhep grubum hakkında daha çok şey öğrenmek için sık sık başkalarıyla sohbet ederim.	1	2	3	4	5
16.Genelde dini mezhep kimliğimden memnunum.	1	2	3	4	5
17.Eğer birisi dini mezhep grubum hakkında kötü bir söz söylerse benim hakkımda kötü söz söylemiş demektir.	1	2	3	4	5
18.Dini mezhep kimliğim hakkında kendimi iyi hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
19.Çoğu insan, dini mezhep grubumdaki insanların genelde diğer gruplardan daha az başarılı olduğunu düşünür.	1	2	3	4	5

SOCIAL DOMINANCE ORIENTATION SCALE

Aşağıda, toplumda bulunan her türden gruplara (sosyal, siyasi ya da dini gruplar) ilişkin ifadeler yer almaktadır. Bu ifadeler herhangi bir duruma ya da görüşe dayanmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla hiçbirinin doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. **Sadece sizin nasıl düşündüğünüz ve algınızı önemlidir.** Sizin görüş ve düşüncenize karşılık gelen seçeneği (rakamı) 1'den (kesinlikle katılmıyorum) 5'e (kesinlikle katılıyorum) kadar derecelendirilmiş ölçek üzerinde daire içine alarak belirtiniz. Lütfen ölçekte bulunan tüm ifadeleri değerlendiriniz.

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1.Bazı gruplar diğerlerinden daha değerlidir.	1	2	3	4	5
2.Grubunuzun istediklerini elde etmek için bazen diğer gruplara karşı güç kullanmak gereklidir.	1	2	3	4	5
3.Bazı grupların hayatta diğerlerinden daha fazla şansa sahip olması kabul edilebilir bir şeydir.	1	2	3	4	5
4.Hayatta istediğini elde etmek için, bazen diğer grupların üstüne basmak gereklidir.	1	2	3	4	5
5.Eğer bazı gruplar yerlerinde kalsalardı, daha az sorunumuz olurdu.	1	2	3	4	5
6.Bazı grupların üstte bazı grupların ise altta olması belki de iyi bir şeydir.	1	2	3	4	5
7.Daha alttaki gruplar kendi yerlerinde kalmalıdır.	1	2	3	4	5
8.Bazen diğer gruplar kendi yerlerinde tutulmalıdır.	1	2	3	4	5
9.Eğer tüm gruplar eşit olabilseydi, iyi olurdu.	1	2	3	4	5
10.Grup eşitliği idealimiz olmalıdır.	1	2	3	4	5
11.Tüm gruplara hayatta eşit şans verilmelidir.	1	2	3	4	5
12.Farklı grupların koşullarını eşitlemek için elimizden geleni yapmalıyız.	1	2	3	4	5
13.Gruplar arası sosyal eşitliği arttırmalıyız.	1	2	3	4	5
14.Eğer farklı gruplara daha eşit davransaydık daha az sorunumuz olurdu.	1	2	3	4	5
15.Gelirleri daha eşit kılmak için çabalamalıyız.	1	2	3	4	5
16.Toplumda hiçbir grup baskın olmamalıdır.	1	2	3	4	5

SOCIAL CONTACT SCALE

Aşağıdaki ankette ait olduğunuz mezhebin diğer mezhep grubuyla ne düzeyde iletişimde olduğunu anlamak için bazı sorular sorulmuştur. Bütün sorularda “Sünnilerle/Aleviler” ibaresi bulunmaktadır. Şayet Sünni mezhebe aitseniz, sorulardaki “**Alevilerle**” kısmını dikkate alarak; şayet Alevi mezhebe aitseniz, sorularda “**Sünnilerle**” kısmını dikkate alarak cevap veriniz. Soruların doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. Sizin görüş ve düşüncenize karşılık gelen seçeneği (rakamı) “Hiç”ten “Her Zaman”a giden 1 ile 5 arasındaki uygun gördüğünüz rakamı daire içine alarak belirtiniz.

Örneğin, Sünni mezhebine aitseniz birinci soruyu “Ne sıklıkta Alevilerle okul/iş gibi resmi yerlerde iletişim halindesiniz?” şeklinde okuyunuz. Şayet Alevi mezhebine aitseniz aynı soruyu “Ne sıklıkta Sünnilerle okul/iş gibi resmi yerlerde iletişim halindesiniz?” şeklinde okuyunuz.

CONTACT QUANTITY

	Hiç	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
1. Ne sıklıkta Sünnilerle/Alevilerle okul/iş gibi resmi yerlerde iletişim halindesiniz?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Ne sıklıkta Sünnilerle/Alevilerle komşu olarak iletişim halindesiniz?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Ne sıklıkta Sünnilerle/Alevilerle yakın arkadaş-dost olarak iletişim halindesiniz?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Ne sıklıkta Sünnilerle/Alevilerle resmi olmayan/özel konuşmalar yapmaktasınız?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Ne sıklıkta Sünni/Alevi tanıdıklarınıza ev ziyaretine gitmektесiniz?	1	2	3	4	5

CONTACT QUALITY

1. Sünnilerle/Alevilerle olan ilişkilerinizde iki tarafın da eşit olduğunu hissedermisiniz?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Kesinlikle Eşit

Kesinlikle Eşit Değil

2. Sünnilerle/Alevilerle ilişkilerinizi gönüllü olarak mı yoksa istemeden/mecburi olarak mı sürdürüyorsunuz?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Tamamıyla İstmeden

Tamamıyla İsteyerek

3. Sünnilerle/Alevilerle olan ilişkiniz yüzeysel mi yoksa tamamen içten midir?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Tamamıyla Yüzeysel

Tamamıyla İçten

4. Sünnilerle/Alevilerle olan ilişkinizden keyif/memnuniyet duyar mısınız?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Kesinlikle Memnun Değilim

Kesinlikle Memnunum

5. Sünnilerle/Alevilerle olan ilişkiniz rekabete mi yoksa işbirliğine mi dayanır?

1.....2.....3.....4.....5

Rekabete Dayanır

İşbirliğine Dayanır

SOCIO-STRUCTURAL VARIABLES

Değerli katılımcı, aşağıda Alevi ve Sünni mezhep gruplarına ilişkin farklı ifadeler yer almaktadır. Bu ifadeler herhangi bir duruma ya da görüşe dayanmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla hiçbirinin doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. **Sadece sizin nasıl düşündüğünüz ve algınız önemlidir.** Sizin görüş ve düşüncenize karşılık gelen seçeneği (rakamı) 1'den (Kesinlikle katılmıyorum) 5'e (Kesinlikle katılıyorum) kadar derecelendirilmiş ölçek üzerinde daire içine alarak belirtiniz. Lütfen ölçekte bulunan tüm ifadeleri değerlendiriniz.

LEGITIMACY SCALE

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
1.Sünniler Alevilerden daha iyi durumda olmayı hak ediyorlar.	1	2	3	4	5
2.Alevilerin Sünnilerden daha kötü durumda olması haksızlıktır.	1	2	3	4	5
3.Sünniler Alevilerden daha iyi durumda olmayı hak etmiyorlar.	1	2	3	4	5

STABILITY SCALE

	Kesinlikle katılmıyorum	Katılmıyorum	Kararsızım	Katılıyorum	Kesinlikle katılıyorum
4.Önümüzdeki yıllarda Aleviler ve Sünniler arasındaki ilişkilerin aynı şekilde kalacağını düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
5.Aleviler ve Sünniler arasındaki mevcut ilişkilerin değişeceğini düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
6.Aleviler ve Sünniler arasındaki mevcut ilişkiler kolay kolay değişmeyecektir.	1	2	3	4	5
7.Yakın gelecekte Aleviler ve Sünniler arasındaki statü farklılıkları aynı kalacaktır.	1	2	3	4	5
8.Yakın gelecekte Aleviler ve Sünniler arasındaki statü farklılıklarının değişeceğini düşünüyorum.	1	2	3	4	5

PERCEIVED DISCRIMINATION

Bu bölümde sizden Aleviler ve Sünniler hakkında bir takım ifadeleri değerlendirmeniz istenmektedir. Bu ifadeler herhangi bir duruma ya da görüşe dayanmamaktadır. Dolayısıyla hiçbirinin doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. **Sadece sizin nasıl düşündüğünüz ve algınız önemlidir.** Sizin görüş ve düşüncenize karşılık gelen seçeneği (rakamı) 1'den (hiç) 5'e (her zaman) kadar derecelendirilmiş ölçek üzerinde daire içine alarak belirtiniz. Lütfen ölçekte bulunan tüm ifadeleri değerlendiriniz.

INDIVIDUAL BASED DISCRIMINATION

	Hiç	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
1. Alevilerin Sünniler tarafından kabul görmediğini hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Sırf Alevi oldukları için bazılarının dalga geçilmeye ve kötü muameleyle maruz kaldığı olmuştur.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sırf Alevi oldukları için bazılarının toplumdan uzaklaştırıldığı ya da bazı gruplara giremediği olmuştur.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Sünnilerin Alevilere karşı olumsuz olduklarını hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Sünnilerin Aleviler tarafından kabul görmediğini hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Sırf Sünni oldukları için bazılarının dalga geçilmeye ve kötü muameleyle maruz kaldığı olmuştur.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Sırf Sünni oldukları için bazılarının toplumdan uzaklaştırıldığı ya da bazı gruplara giremediği olmuştur.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Alevilerin Sünnilere karşı olumsuz olduklarını hissediyorum.	1	2	3	4	5

GROUP BASED DISCRIMINATION

	Hiç	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
1. Türkiye’de Aleviler iş ararken ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Türkiye’de Aleviler ev ararken ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Türkiye’de Aleviler sokakta ya da alışveriş yaparken ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Türkiye’de Aleviler okulda ya da işyerinde ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
5. Türkiye’de Aleviler oturdukları mahallelerde ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
6. Türkiye’deki Aleviler kendi kültürlerini yaşarken ayrımcılık yaşıyorlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
7. Türkiye’de Sünniler iş ararken ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
8. Türkiye’de Sünniler ev ararken ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
9. Türkiye’de Sünniler sokakta ya da alışveriş yaparken ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
10. Türkiye’de Sünniler okulda ya da işyerinde ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
11. Türkiye’de Sünniler oturdukları mahallelerde ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
12. Türkiye’deki Sünniler kendi kültürlerini yaşarken ayrımcılık yaşıyorlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5

DISCRIMINATION IN INTERGROUP MARRIAGE

	Hiç	Nadiren	Ara sıra	Sık sık	Her zaman
1. Türkiye’de Alevi erkekleri farklı mezhep gruplarıyla evlilik yapma konusunda ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
2. Türkiye’de Alevi kızları farklı mezhep gruplarıyla evlilik yapma konusunda ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
3. Türkiye’de Sünni erkekleri farklı mezhep gruplarıyla evlilik yapma konusunda ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Türkiye’de Sünni kızları farklı mezhep gruplarıyla evlilik yapma konusunda ayrımcılık yaşarlar mı?	1	2	3	4	5