



CRC 1369 „Cultures of Vigilance“, LMU München, Project B05 (Christoph K. Neumann)
Two Modes of Vigilance, Two Logics of Prohibition: Spiritual and Social Vigilance of Bektaşî Sufis after the Bans of 1826 and 1925

Call for Papers

Changing Conditions, Changing Discourse: *Bektashis and Other Sufis in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic Turkey, 1826 to 1950.*

Munich, IBZ, Amalienstraße 38, 80799 München

July 21st and 22nd, 2025

The workshop will focus on the Sufi response to the changes in their social and political setting in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey from 1826 to 1950. Its goal is to deepen an understanding of how Sufi communities reacted to a changing environment that brought tightened state-surveillance, prohibitions of Sufi activities, systematic state intervention in and regulation of Islamic endowments (Evkaf), the emergence of a modern public and a new media-scape. A focus will lie to the re-organisation of communication both within and outside of Sufi communities. The Bektashi order may receive special attention as this order was prohibited not only once, in 1925, but also a century earlier, in 1826.

That the Sufi orders by and large survived prohibitions and persecutions cannot only be explained with practices of vigilance, secrecy and state inefficiency, but needs also a comprehension of their intellectual, spiritual and doctrinal reaction, in short: the changes in their discourse and self-expression within the constantly changing socio-political landscape.

Sufi orders are a longstanding topic in the Ottoman studies, present already when matters Turkish were largely regarded a part of Islamic (or, rather, Arabic) philology. This approach has always paid attention to mystical theology, doctrines and rites as well as devotional literature. In recent decades, research has concentrated on institutional change and the social history of Sufism. Relatively neglected have been intellectual reactions to different forms of modernity, active adaption to new legal and social challenges, and cooperative interactions between communities. Likewise, people at the margins of the orders, namely sympathizers without or with only a low-level initiation, or those with a multiple affiliation have rarely been considered.

At the workshop, we will attempt to illuminate the Sufi perspective on changing realities, tracing their transformation through sources such as ego documents, Sufi publications, fictional works, and more. We welcome especially contributions addressing the following questions:

- How did Sufi orders, both as organizations or represented by individual disciples, experience and respond to the aforementioned events and to the concomitant change of discourses?

- In what manner has the format of their communications evolved? How did Sufis share their individual experience within their communities? Which external actors were attracted, which cooperations were established?

The language of the workshop is English. Researchers wishing to take part in this event are asked to send a short CV, a title and a 200-300-word summary of their paper by **March 9th 2025** to Adeliia.Davletova@lrz.uni-muenchen.de.

Train tickets (2nd class) or flights (economy) and accommodation will be covered by the organisers.