THE FRAGMENTATION OF ALEVILIK AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CASE OF GAZI MAHALLESI: THREE CEMEVIS, THREE FREE SPACES

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Title: The Fragmentation of Alevilik as Exemplified in the case of Gazi Mahallesi: Three Cemevis, Three Free Spaces

This thesis scrutinizes the fragmentation of Alevilik as exemplified in the case of Gazi Mahallesi and three Cemevis. From a wider perspective, the Alevis have organized their own identity movement since the 1980s which has a fragmented characteristic. Cemevis emerged as a result of this fragmented movement within the same fragmented characteristic. The thesis analyzes the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik over the Cemevis.

Gazi Mahallesi was chosen to conduct fieldwork. The existence of three Cemevis in the neighborhood which addressed this fragmented character as a case study. However, the reason for Gazi's unique situation required the analysis of Cemevis within the framework of "free spaces". Therefore, It argues the existence of three Cemevis in the neighborhood indicates the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik. However, their ways of construction were intrinsic to the neighborhood which caused to analyze as free spaces.

This study involves an extensive review of the current literature on Alevilik, and analysis of the many conversations and about the 20 in-depth interviews conducted by using participant observation method in Gazi Mahallesi and the Cemevis as well. This study aims to present the fragmented characteristic of the three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi and its unique position as well.

Keywords: Alevilik, Cemevi, Fragmentation, Gazi Mahallesi, Free Spaces.

Atatürk İlkeleri ve İnkılap Tarihi Enstitüsü'nde Yüksek Lisans derecesi için Nur Sinem Kılıç tarafından Mayıs 2015'te teslim edilen tezin kısa özeti.

Başlık: Aleviliğin Parçalanmasının Gazi Mahallesi'nde Örneklendirilmesi: Üç Cemevi, Üç Özgür Alan

Bu çalışma Aleviliğin parçalanmasının Gazi Mahallesinde bulunan üç Cemevi ve üç özgür alan üzerinden örneklendirmektedir. 1980'lerden sonra Aleviler parçalı bir karaktere sahip olan kendi kimlik hareketlerini örgütlediler. Cemevleri de bu parçalı hareket sonucu olarak yine aynı şekilde parçalı bir yapıyla ortaya çıktı. 1990'lar Cemevlerinin kamusal alanda görünürlük kazanması açısından önemli bir tarihtir ve tezde de Aleviliğin parçalı yapısı Cemevleri üzerinden incelenecektir. Bu anlamda, Gazi Mahallesi alan çalışmasının yürütülmesi için seçildi. Aleviliğin parçalı yapısına işaret eden mahalledeki üç Cemevinin varlığı örnek olay olarak incelenmiştir. Fakat Gazi Mahallesi'nin de özgün yapısı Cemevlerinin *"free spaces"*/özgür alanlar çerçevesinde incelenmesini gerektirmiştir. Bu yüzden, tez mahalledeki üç Cemevinin varlığının Aleviliğin parçalı yapısına işaret etmesini savunuyor . Ancak yapılış yollarının mahalleye özgün olması da onların *"free spaces"*/özgür alanlar olarak incelenmesine yol açıyor. Bu çalışma Alevilik üzerine geniş çaplı bir literature değerlendirmesi, ve aynı zamanda Gazi Mahallesi ve üç Cemevinde yapılan konuşmalar, yaklaşık 20 derinlemesine görüşme ve katılımcı gözlemci metodunun yürütülmesini içermektedir. Şöyleki, bu çalışma Aleviliğin parçalı yapısının kendine özgü bir pozisyonu olan Gazi Mahallesindeki üç Cemevi üzerinden sunulmasını amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: Alevilik, Cemevi, Parçalanma, Gazi Mahallesi, Özgür Alanlar.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the *Alevis* and their fragmented situation in the case of three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi which are also considered as "free spaces." This study shows that the Alevis have been fragmented position historically, and within the historical flow their fragmentation has been reinforced by different actors and events. Moreover, since the reorganization of the *Alevi* movement, which is called the Alevi Renaissance also has fragmented characteristic. Although I discuss the fragmentation issue, I do not discuss it deeply in the thesis. I prefer to give historical explanation about its condition with the presupposition of its fragmented characteristic. Therefore, I do not focus on the reasons for the internal or external dynamics of this fragmented movement. I aim to show the fragmented position of the movement in my field in which Gazi Mahallesi and three *Cemevis* are located.

I choose Gazi Mahallesi because the majority of population in the district is Alevi. However, I only had information about its demographic and political structure and it was not very satisfying. Because of that I started a preliminary field study in Gazi Mahallesi, before starting on the research project. Focusing on the neighborhood provided me necessary information about it. For instance, I discovered the existence of three cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi during my fieldwork which I had not known about. Moreover, I also noticed the Alevi and political characteristic of the neighborhood which influence each other.

Contrary to popular belief, Gazi Mahallesi had not been studied in the academic realm in detail. Therefore, I felt the need for an ethnographic exploration and establishment story. After this fieldwork, I realize that both the fragmented

characteristic of *Alevilik* and the demographic and political structure of the neighborhood have influence on the establishment of the three Cemevis in Gazi.

Within these two impacts, I decided to explain these three Cemevis by applying the concept of "free spaces" which was used by Evans first, then developed by Polletta. According to Polletta's definition,

> free spaces are small-scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization.[1]

This definition seems to be appropriate to explain Cemevis' position and establishment stories. Moreover, three structures of "free spaces" which are "transmovement, indigenous and prefigurative" also make easy to analyze the Cemevis and their differentiations.

In the first chapter, I will give a historical background of the Alevis in the Ottoman Empire and the Republic of Turkey. This chapter provides historical references about the Alevis, and mostly I utilized Massicard, who also discusses the fragmented position of the Alevis mainly in the political realm. After that, Yalçınkaya and Çamuroğlu are the second most important sources in this chapter, because their studies and ideas support my own argument. And also, Seval Yılmaz and her thesis which also helps me during the identification process of the concepts of *Alevilik*, *Cem* and *Cemevi*.

Even though I utilized several sources and studies, most of them examine the transformation or spiritual meaning of Alevilik, Alevilik and modernization, urbanization and Alevilik, and the original or historical position of Alevilik. However, my main claim is the fragmented position of Alevilik, thus Massicard is

[1]Francesca Poletta and Kelsy Kretschmer, "Free Spaces," *The Wiley-Blackwell Encyclopedia of Social and Political Movements* (2013), p.1.

one of the most important sources for this thesis. To sum up, I argue that the heterogeneous characteristics of the Alevis have been reinforced by a great degree of marginalization, suppression, assimilation and discrimination throughout the history in political, social, economic and cultural life. Moreover, I claim that after the 1990s, the Alevis started to form an Alevi movement, and the Cemevi has become a physical expression of this movement. Hence, in the first chapter, I also explain Cem and Cemevi as well.

In the second chapter, I present the neighborhood by writing its establishment process, as a history of the neighborhood, and also my own observations and experiences regarding it. This chapter can be seen as a first step of my fieldwork and empirical study, because the construction of three Cemevis in one neighborhood is not only related to the fragmentation of Alevilik, it is also related to circumstances and constitution of the neighborhood.

At the beginning, I chose Gazi Mahallesi, because of its majority of Alevi population. Moreover, I considered the reason for the three Cemevis was the population of the neighborhood. However, after my fieldwork and interviews, I saw that the neighborhood and its political, cultural, historical, economic and social characteristics of influenced the emergence of the Cemevis.

In the first section of this chapter, I will begin with the history of Gazi Mahallesi. When I was collecting information about the history of Gazi, I could not find enough written sources in the official unit. Therefore, I decided to collect information from people who had witnessed to the establishment process of the neighborhood. The *Muhtar* is the most important source for this section, because both his own experiences and official position. Moreover, the 60-65 year old people who live in the neighborhood have been there from the beginning, and were

significant sources to conduct this section. I conducted 6 in-depth interviews with people who are approximately 60-65 year old, but also I conversed with people from the neighborhood as informal interviews.

The second section of the chapter presents ethnography about the neighborhood. This section begins with my account of what I saw and experienced in the neighborhood, and attempts to represent how the people of Gazi prefer to present themselves. I aimed to put people and my interviews at the center of this study, as well as represent how I perceived them and the neighborhood. I categorized aspects of the neighborhood, such as being from Gazi, the accessibility of the neighborhood and people, the political atmosphere, a powerful leftist organization and its control over the neighborhood and so on, but I mainly filled these categorizes with the opinions of people in the neighborhood. I considered conducting in-depth interviews for this section, but I decided to ask open-ended questions to make it easy for the people of Gazi.

The last chapter provides the analysis of my fieldwork in light of the theoretical and historical background chapters. In this analysis, I explain the three Cemevis within the framework of "free spaces," which provides a theoretical base for the Cemevis. I argue that the three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi demonstrate the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik. However, at the same time, they are located in Gazi and thus it has some influences on their structure. In the light of the conditions, I consider to present establishments and existence within the "free spaces" concept and its three structures, transmovement, indigenous and prefigurative. Consequently, I argue that three structures help to explain already fragmented conditions of these Cemevis like, ideological differences among actors, their relations with the people

from Gazi, their positions within the national level movement, and their claims over the neighborhood.

In the beginning of the last chapter, I analyze the concept of "free spaces." After that, I explain the three Cemevis one by one by chronological order. After introducing Cemevis and the reasons for their fragmentation, I will examine the issues on which Cemevis have different perspectives by indicating their reasons in detail within the framework on "free spaces." For this chapter, I conducted in-depth interviews with the heads of the Cemevis, and some members of board of managements, yet I conversed with people who participate the activities in Cemevis.

The conclusion chapter consists of the arguments of the thesis which were discussed in the main chapters.

Methodology

Before starting my fieldwork, I considered how I was going to get into the neighborhood, and how I was going to contact with people. I was an outsider, and did not know the neighborhood very well. Thanks to my advisor, M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu's suggestion, I started to look for a connection. Soon afterwards, I met a person from Gazi Mahallesi. He was quite helpful to me throughout both in my preliminary research period and the fieldwork.

I conducted preliminary research in November-December 2014 by interviewing some people from the neighborhood. Moreover, I visited Gazi twice to observe its conditions and characteristic with my connection and once with my advisor, M. Asım Karaömerlioğlu. Besides that, Deniz Yonucu recommended a preliminary study in the neighborhood and she said that before starting my research,

I had to meet and converse with those people to be familiar with them. Therefore, my preliminary research I familiarized to the neighborhood, and also I decided the central point of my thesis. I had not know the existence of the three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi. After my preliminary research I decided to conduct my research about them.

I decided to conduct my fieldwork in Gazi Mahallesi because of its large Alevi population. Afterwards, the numbers of the Cemevis compelled me to analyze them in order to understand the fragmented characteristic of the Cemevis. When I decided to research the Cemevis. I went to the Cemevis to conduct the participant observation method. There were three Cemevis and I spent on four months on the research, from the beginning of January 2015 to the end of April 2015.

I considered interviewing people in the second month of my observations, but I could not find sufficient time to meet with them and I just did half of my interviews during this process. Actually, the deficiency of time was not the only reason to prevent my interviews; another reason was the political atmosphere of the neighborhood. Many researchers had problems access their interviewees, but I confronted the problems in order to access the neighborhood. There were three or four demonstrations in the neighborhood every week. I was lucky to enter the neighborhood before they started, because after that buses do not work inside the neighborhood. Sometimes, the intensity of the demonstrations was not so high, and I was able to continue my research. However sometimes, the intensity of the demonstrations was extremely high, and I could not have survived in the neighborhood as an outsider. The condition of the demonstrations and their intensity are mostly related to the political agenda of Turkey and the latest issues have increased the police violence and volume of demonstrations.

After March, I did not visit the neighborhood. Once I visited but I could not reach the Cemevi because the demonstration was in front of the Cemevi and my connection did not suggest to me go there. In addition to that, my interviewee also told me not to go there that day because he was not able to enter the Cemevi as well.

Except for the accessibility of the neighborhood, I did not have any problem in finding participants. During my research, I realized that they needed and wanted to express themselves, not only the directions of the questions, but also for their own desire. Thus, I decided to make them comfortable to express themselves and ask open-ended questions.

Briefly, my research is based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with almost 20 people in Gazi Mahallesi I had also conversations with many people in the neighborhood. Additionally, the preference of this technique by most of the studies about the neighborhood also compelled me to employ the semi-structured in-depth interviewing technique and participant observation.

Finally, this research does not claim to be representative, because I could not interview everybody in the neighborhood. Because of some difficulties accessing the neighborhood, I had to restrict the number of interviews except for my conversation with people. Therefore, everything was an experience for me; I learned many things in the neighborhood, but also I learnt something else when I failed to reach there. In spite of the difficulties or deficiencies, I believe that this research represents the fragmented characteristics of Alevilik in Gazi and three Cemevi cases.

CHAPTER TWO

ALEVILIK, CEM AND CEMEVİ CONCEPTS FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

This chapter examines the concepts helps which are used throughout the research rather than giving a theoretical framework. There are three concepts which are needed during writing this thesis and have to be defined and explained in order to be understood, Alevilik, Cem and Cemevi.

I planned this chapter in three sections, and these sections aim to define and explain these three concepts. However, defining some concepts has problems that I confronted during the writing process. First of all, people are not familiar with the concepts of Alevilik, Cem and Cemevi, and these led me to definition issue, but when definition gives an idea about the concepts, it also draws a narrow and limited framework. Therefore, any definition is becoming the definition of researcher. In this sense, I attempted to find various definitions from various sources, but again I have to indicate that it can be a limited explanation.

Alevilik

As I mentioned above, I will explain three center notions for conceptual framework in this chapter. Alevilik will be the first and the main concept to explain. For this section, I planned to divide this issue into two parts. In first part, I try to give an extensive and various definitions which are derived from sources, authors and Alevi dedes. After that, beyond to its definition, I am going to give a historical

background to understand its dynamics, transformations and social and cultural positions within this perspective.

The Various Definitions of Alevilik

Alevilik is a concept which is hard to understand and difficult to settle its boundaries.[2] First, the notion which makes up as Alevilik comes by the unification of various subgroups. Hence, Alevilik is used as an umbrella meaning that involves all of them. Therefore, "Alevi" is an umbrella term to explain heterodox groups which have different rituals and beliefs in reality.[3]

Here, Bruinessen emphasizes the inclusive and pluralist meaning of Alevilik. Definitions can be differentiated according to the interpretation of authors regarding origin of Alevilik, its philosophical meaning, or the authors' positions on its identical formation, even its mystical discourse for life and the relation between human beings, God, nature relations.

Therefore, there is no agreement on the characteristic of Alevilik. Authors define it from different perspectives. According to Massicard:

> Some define Aleviness (Alevilik) as a religious phenomenon –as the true Islam, or a branch of Islam tinged with Shi'a elements and Turkishness, as a religion in its own right, or even as the essence of secularism. Others see it as a primarily political phenomenon-which can range from a philosophy of struggle and resistance against injustice, to a tolerant way of living or even as the epitome of democracy. Yet others emphasize its shamanistic (Turkish) or Zoroastrian (Kurdish) elements in order to define Aleviness in accordance to ethnic aspects.[4]

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[2]Elise Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması* (İstanbul; İletişim Yayınları, 2007), p.17.

[3]Martin Van Bruinessen, *Kürtlük, Türklük, Alevilik: Etnik ve Dinsel Kimlik Mücadeleleri,* trans. Hakan Yurdakul (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2000), p.117.

[4] Elise Massicard, *The Alevis in Turkey and Europe: Identity and Managing Territorial Diversity* (London: Routledge, 2013), p. 4.

So, as I mentioned at the beginning the difficulties in defining Alevilik. Within this perspective, in spite of the many definitions, most authors and researchers prefer an interpretation of Alevilik regarding its original and spiritual meaning. One of these definitions comes from Zelyut. According to him, Alevilik means the partisanship of Ali and is also core of Islam.[5] Support for this definition belongs to Bal, who says that the practices and rituals of the community prove that Alevilik is not heterodox, because its moral rules, norms and values and oral explanation show its characteristic.[6]

Orhan Türkdoğan approaches Alevilik from historical perspective. According to him, as a response to the Islamization and Arabization practices of Emevis, Turkish people adopted the Shi version of Islam from Iran because of its tolerant and love-based position. They mixed this belief and their traditional cultures and they came up with Alevilik. [7] Thus, Turkdogan sees Alevilik as a phenomenon of Turkification.

According to Şener, Alevilik has three sources. First, like the expanding of Islam, the knowledge about the injustice which was experienced by Ali influenced like spread of Alevilik in Anatolia. Second, Anatolia is located at the center of migration movements, and it has experienced different beliefs and religions and Alevilik contains a piece from this variety. And last, it was influenced the old beliefs

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[5] *Rıza* Zelyut, *Öz Kaynaklarına Göre Alevilik* (İstanbul: Karacaahmet Sultan Kültür ve Tanıtım Derneği Yayınları, 2002), p.120.

[6] Hüseyin Bal, *Sosyolojik Açıdan Alevi-Sünni Farklılaşması ve Bütünleşmesi* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1999), p.55.

[7] Orhan Türkdoğan, *Alevi-Bektaşi Kimliği* (İstanbul: Timaş Yayınları, 2004), pp.523-524.

in Anatolia.[8] Therefore, Şener tenders that Alevilik is a unification of various cultures, beliefs and religions to us.

In addition to this, Gölbaşı says that Alevilik is a belief system which is developed when the old Anatolian religions and cultures in which were brought by migrants and also Turkish culture. Therefore, it is an interpretation of Islam which is special to Anatolia. Also it means that "followers of Ali."[9]

Instead of historical and religious based on explanations, some others try to define Alevilik within a framework is related to what it means and what it expresses more than its origin. In this sense, even though Fuat Bozkurt discusses the meaning of Alevilik as "followers of Ali," it does not mean that Alevis follow Hz. Ali or Sunnis follow Hz Mohammed. After all, he states that, Alevilik is a philosophy of life more than just a religion. So it contains rules of life and expresses a lifestyle.[10]

Yalçınkaya starts his definition with a dictionary explanation, and adds that "Alevilik is a general name of political and faithful groups which is based on Hz. Mohammed's Ehl-i Beyt and so Hz. Ali and his family with love and partisanship."[11] He continues that, the reason for the variety of the definition for Alevilik is related to its own configuration. Alevilik is a syncretic phenomenon and thus, it is emerged by the unification of practices of diverse beliefs and religions. Besides that, it has a heterodox formation and so it can be seen as a part of other religions, because it does not have certain rules and frameworks.[12] Briefly, it is also the core point of Yalçınkaya's claim. From this point, he prefers to define Alevilik with a universal

[8] Cemal Şener, *Alevizm* (İstanbul: BDS Yayınları, 1996), p.126.

[9] Haydar Gölbaşı, *Alevi-Bektaşi Örgütlenmeleri* (İstanbul: Alev Yayınları, 2007), p. 41.

[10] Fuat Bozkurt, *Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinde Alevilik* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitapçılık, 2000), p.7.

[11] Ayhan Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte Toplumsal Kurumlar ve İktidar* (Ankara: Mülkiyeliler Birliği Vakfı, 1996), p.12.

[12] Ibid., pp.11-17.

meaning and position, because of its gnostic, syncretic and mystic frameworks. Therefore, Islam, old Turkish culture or other components of Alevilik are just a flowers in this universal garden.[13]

The notion of Alevilik is not as old as Melikoff thinks. According to Turkologist Melikoff, it has launched to be called Alevilik a heterodox Islamic sect in the beginning of the 19th century.[14]Kızılbaşlık responded the meaning until that time. Alevilik has been used as an umbrella term in 19thcentury and it started to involve various meanings within itself.

Until here, I attempted to give various definitions about the notion of Alevilik. Authors have different opinions on the reasons of the variety as well. Whereas Massicard indicates the reason that is based about on different political positions, Yalçınkaya says that it is related with the nature of Alevilik. Bruinessen's definition also supports Yalçınkaya's interpretation. According to Bruinessen eclectic formation of Alevilik causes these definition varieties.

When I use Alevilik here as a notion, I know that this notion has some problems, because it is the name of a group that emerged by people. Hence, a certain definition cannot be expected for Alevilik as a constant material, because it has dynamics. And also its definition changes accordance with time and space regarding the transformation of people and taking position of the context. Actually, this floating position results from the nature of Alevilik, and also it was an order of Hz. Ali for the Alevi people. Moreover, Yalçınkaya says that the characteristic of Alevilik is based on its adaptation of time as well.[15]

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[13]Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte,* p.25.

[14] Ibid.,p.33.

[15]Ibid., p.211.

In this sense, I am going to pass the second section of this part, because even I mention about all definitions, it will still be insufficient Hence, after this chapter, I am going to explain historical processes of the Alevis. This section is important to understand today's the Alevis, because they constituted themselves during all these historical processes and transformation of their position during all, these processes.

The Alevis and Alevilik in Historical Process

This part follows the historical formations and experience of Alevilik from the Ottoman Empire to contemporary Turkey. However, before beginning I have to emphasize that this part does not aim to explain a complete history of Alevilik and it also does not have any concern to do it. According to Massicard, the Alevis have not been in the official history, and they have been melted in the "nation-building" pot which ignores human diversity. However after the 1980s, the Alevis begin to speak about themselves and they attempted to write their own history.[16] Here, I am not going to rewrite Alevi history. It is not the aim of this research, nor is it necessary to do it. I am going to sum up the studies written after the 1980s within the perspective of the main point on the research.

The studies I used for this part were done after the 1980s. However, they have varieties. For example some of them explain only Alevi history (Şener) or they explain at transformation of Alevilik from a historical perspective with the influence of some dynamics like globalization, urbanization, and modernization. (Subaşı, Yılmaz, Nail, Yılmaz, Seval). The necessity of historical background for this

[16]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*, p.29.

research is both historically and contemporarily to show that the Alevis cannot be discerned as a single identity or a homogenous group. Namely, Alevilik is an "umbrella concept" that includes overall differences which are also affected by several sources and give various reactions to conditions historically.

Historical Background

In this part, the historical background which will be explained from the Ottoman Empire to nowadays. However, it cannot claim that this explanation will contain every individual of this group. Because of the original condition of Alevilik, a general historical background could not be written. As Massicard writes, "There is not 'one' history of the Alevis, but various shared constraints and features, as well as many other mainly local trends."[17]

Therefore, Alevis have differed both in their reactions to conditions and their strategies from Ottoman Empire to nowadays. Like the varieties of definitions of Alevilik mentioned above, the historical background also has these variations. In addition to this, history and the historical events also causes fractionations. In order to understand the general perspective, historical background will start with an explanation of the origin of Alevilik. After that, the Ottoman Empire and conflictual situation with the Alevis will be analyzed. The next part will contain Republican period from early republican period to 1980 coup d'état. Eventually, historical background will be ended with the explanation of the 1980s-the 1990s–even the 2000s-.

[17]Massicard, *The Alevis*, p. 11.

The Ottoman Period

Many researchers and authors agree that Alevilik has a history that could not be explained from a single perspective or could not be reduced to just one point either, as I mentioned above. However, there are some common points, i.e the origin of the name of this group. Before using the name of Alevi for this group, Kızılbaş was in the beginning of the 16th century.[18]Kızılbaş means "redhead" and it derives from the colour of the helmets of soldiers who mostly lived in rural areas and had a nomadic life-style.[19] In addition to that, because these soldiers were the followers of the Safavid Empire and Kızılbaş also means a partisan of this state.

Therefore, Alevilik and Kızılbaşlık are two concepts which can be used interchangeably because there is no difference between their meanings. At the beginning of this chapter, I explained the definition of Alevilik. Nevertheless, another explanation is necessary to understand the position of Alevilik and Kızılbaşlık in history, another explanation is necessary. According to Subaşı, Kızılbaşlık is the historical identity of Alevilik.[20] Hence, the meaning of Kızılbaş for the Ottoman Empire was used as *zındık*/atheist, *Rafızı*, *Şia* and *mülhit*/nonbeliever.[21] As a result, whereas Kızılbaş meant something positive for the Safavid Empire, it had a negative meaning for Ottoman Empire. Moreover, it has to be understood as a normal process for conflictual situation which will be introduced for the next part.

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[18] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.140.

[19] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya Alevi Hareketinin Siyasallaşması*, p.31.

[20] Necdet Subaşı, *Alevi Modernleşmesi: Sırrı Faş Eylemek* (Ankara: Kitabiyat, 2005), p. 85.

[21] Ahmet Yaşar Ocak, *Türk Sufiliğine Bakışlar: Türkiye'de Tarihin Saptırılması Sürecinde* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları,1996).

The Tradition of Conflict with the Power

The Ottoman Empire and the Alevis had a conflictual, problematical and uneasy relationship. Especially, this conflict continued as Alevi uprisings to destroy the state since the 16th century.[22] Therefore, these uprisings caused confrontation of two different worlds -Alevi and Sunni- in the historical and social framework of the Ottoman Empire.[23] In this differentiation, the Alevis were marginalized in Ottoman society, but they were getting more integrated to the Safavid Empire. Both this polarized image and also Alevi uprisings increased the political tension.[24] Moreover, the Safavid and Shah Ismail had direct influence on these uprisings, and they lead most of them. For Kızılbaş, being cooperating with the Safavid in what Yalçınkaya terms the "fight for political sovereignty" [25] against the Ottoman Empire was not a problem or political opportunism. The Safavid Empire was not a foreign state for the Alevis, they saw it as their own state.[26] Therefore, when the Alevis were isolated and being marginalized in the Ottoman Empire, they were getting close to another state and it caused problems between these two states and made them more polarized to each other.

For political reason, these two states were religiously polarized as well. This situation influenced the Kızılbaş-Alevis more than any parts. When Ismail declared

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[22] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.146.

[23] Ibid.,p. 147.

[24] Surayia Faroqhi, *Anadolu'da Bektaşilik*, trans. Nasuh Barın (İstanbul: Simurg Kitapçılık, 2003), p.27.

[25] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.148.

[26] Ibid.,p.149.

Twelvers Şia[27] in 1501 as an official religious of the state, the Ottoman Empire developed an against strategy and formulated the Sunni Islam as the central ideology of the state.[28] Afterwards, the Ottoman Empire identified its own subject meaning Sunni, and its non-subject-means Alevi- and it used an oppressive method for non-subjects in order to improve its new ideology. These oppressive methods proceeded with violence systematically. Namely, the state assigned ulemas to fatwa against the Alevis. To illustrate, Müftü Nureddin Hamza declared a fatwa like "To kill the Kızılbaş subject is seen as a religious duty and obligation. Moreover, their properties, wives and children can be seized by murderers."[2930] Kızılbaşlık represented as a heterodox group and the state formulated strategies in accordance with its own ideology. So, massive arrestment, deportations and massacre were happened as a result of this ideology.[31]

The Kızılbaş problem started with the Ottoman-Safavid conflict, but it was not solved with the triumph of the Ottoman Empire. It means that the Ottoman Empire produced policies for the Alevis in the conflict period, but these policies continued after the solution of conflict and became a permanent behavior of the state. Therefore, after the defeat of the Safavid, the integration of the Alevis to the Ottoman society might have been expected, but instead the marginalization of the Alevis accelerated.

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[27] On İki İmamcı Şiilik

[28] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, p.32.

[29] Kızılbaş *taifenin kadir ve mülhid sayılıp öldürülmesinin vacip ve farz olduğunu bildireni hatta öldüren ricallerin mallarının, kadın ve çocukları öldürenlerin hakkıdır.*

[30] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.149.

[31] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, p.33.

Consequently, the Ottoman Empire did not end its Sunni orthodox state ideology after the defeat of the Safavid although it was emerged against Safavid threat. So, it caused to continued to the exclusion of the Alevis from the state and society. Both the exclusion and defeat of the Safavid made the Alevis feel insecure. They became introverted and settled their own boundaries. These circumstances were conducted to their marginalization from society.[32] When the Alevis were kept away from political power, their relations with the system were almost absent. This legitimated their illegal position as well, because the Alevis were getting away and isolated from the Ottoman Empire in the political, religious and social aspects.[33] Both for center, and also the Alevis themselves, that they became marginal. According to Massicard, from a quotation of Rodison, "pluralism within the hierarchy" defines the structure of the Ottoman Empire, in this unequal condition, marginalization and isolation of heterodox group-in the perspective of the system-was inevitable.[34]

The Alevis migrated to remote and obscure place in order to run away from oppressions. However, this secret and isolated lifestyle also caused the fragmentation of Alevilik within itself, because when they moved away from the system, they also moved away from each other. Therefore, Alevilik became a fragmented society which is composed of local groups.[35] After the conflicts with the Ottoman, the Alevis decided to dissolve this tension and they created an isolated lifestyle.[36] Eventually,

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[32] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, pp.37-38.

[33] Krisztina Kehl-Bodrogi, *Kızılbaşlar-Aleviler*, trans. Oktay Değirmenci and Bilge Ege Aybudak (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayıncılık, 2012), p.23.

[34] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, p.39.

[35] It means that the Alevis moved away each other and their secret life also caused to dissociation from each other. There were a lot of Alevi who were living away to each other without awareness.

the Alevis were located at the bottom of the Ottoman state system, which was centered orthodox Sunni Islam as an ideology. Massicard writes that "In concrete terms, Ottoman repression gradually affected all Shi elements in the Empire, shifting from a matter of security to one of ideology."[37] Therefore, this process produced suspicion and insecurity for the Alevis about the state.[38]

In a few words, in Ottoman period, the Alevis were seen in history stage, but at the end of the time course the Alevis became marginalized and introverted. This is the most general statement for the whole Alevi groups, because this heterogeneous group followed an independent historical process from each other, as mentioned above. Some old religion like Zoroastrianism, and Manichaeism, some political movement like babailik, religious *tarikats* like *Haydarilik* and *Kalenderilik*, esoteric movements like Hurufilik had influence over Alevilik in many different aspects, and also had contribution to it.[39] Therefore, the heterogeneous formation of Alevilik, and the historically marginalization process caused consolidation of the fragmentation of Alevilik.

Another general statement is that the Alevis have always pursued conflictual relations with the Ottoman Empire. As seen above, this conflict arose from political tension or different religious orientations. However, the most important reason seemed to be the Alevis' position in Ottoman society, which was being at the bottom of it. All these issues were reasons for the conflict and struggle between these groups. This condition continued as a tradition, but the Alevis' secret and isolated life made it invisible.

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[36]Necdet Subaşı, *Alevi Modernleşmesi,* p.39.

[37] Massicard, *The Alevis,* p. 13.

[38] Nur Vergin, *Din, Toplum ve Siyasal Sistem* (İstanbul: Bağlam Yayıncılık, 2000), p. 79.

[39] Subaşı, *Alevi Modernleşmesi,* p.100.

From Early Republican Period to the 1980s

The Transition Period

A state policy caused the Alevis' marginalization. Another one can revitalize it. Therefore, with the changing dynamics of empire, the Alevis were discovered in the Tanzimat period, and after that, the marginalization process turned to assimilation process. With the influence of the centralization and modernization process, the Alevis were tried to be integrated to society and assimilation policy accompanied to it. As Massicard writes, "the center sought to integrate the heterodox within the official religion, principally by building mosques and sending imams to Alevi villages."[40] These efforts started with construction of mosques in Alevi villages and continued with the nationalist ideas of Young Turks (1908-1918). According to Massicard:

> The Young Turks replaced it with a more tolerant religious attitude. And so it was during the late nineteenth (19th) century that Alevi specificy was first implicitly recognized, with policies being directed at hem for the first time since repression. Although this did not result in any higher profile for the Alevis, it did further their assimilation.[41]

Therefore, the Alevis were being transformed into a national colour during the last period of the Ottoman Empire, and it gained speed in the early Republican period.[42]

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[40] Massicard, *The Alevis*, p. 17.

[41] Ibid.,p.17.

[42] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* Baki Öz, *Kurtuluş Savaşında Alevi-Bektaşiler* (İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2007), Seval Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri Kurumsallaşmasının Alevi Kimliğine Etkileri ve Karacaahmet Sultan Dergâhı Üzerinden Bir Alan Analizi" (MA thesis Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi, 2011).

The Early Republican Period

The Alevis found out how to live and marginal during the Ottoman period. Hence, when the republic was declared, the state elite confronted a secret group which also escaped to being assimilated. However, at the same time, this group was a non-Ottoman component according to Ottoman's own discourse. That's why the Alevis could be the most important part of the new state, because they had wanted to elude the Ottoman Empire and its tradition which was multi linguistic, multi religious and multi nations . In other words, the Alevis were the most appropriate material to build the new state; nevertheless they had to be monitored and had to be adjusted based on the ideology of the new state. This ideology remarked that millet constitutes the state, but the meaning of "millet"[43] has not got the same meaning as Ottoman period.

Thus, the state aimed to give a new meaning to "millet" with the separation of religion and the state, and then it reinforced and unificated the formulation of the Kemalist nationalism and secularism.[44] As Massicard writes "The aim of the Turkist, and then of Mustafa Kemal and his disciples, was to 'rediscover Turkish authenticity beneath the Islamic cultural veneer'."[45]

During this new state formation process, the Alevis were given a crucial role. Since, the state elites wanted to use Turkish nationalism instead of Islam when they

[43] Ottoman millet system is based on the religion of its subjects.

[44] Seval Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri Kurumsallaşmasının Alevi Kimliğine Etkileri ve Karacaahmet Sultan Dergâhı Üzerinden Bir Alan Analizi," p.72.

[45]Massicard, *The Alevis,* p. 18.

tried to homogenize the state.[46] After that, these groups started to look for some core points in their history and culture, and then they confronted the Alevis as an Anatolian culture. So, they started to identify Alevilik with Turkishness.[47] Additionally, the Kemalist elites blamed the Ottoman Empire as a backward country because of Islam. That's why Alevilik was rediscovered in the sense of modernism and progressiveness for their religious rituals which are being together with women and men. However, the Kemalist elite did not establish the state according to the Alevi's lifestyle or culture. They just used the some points which can be proper for the new state. In this sense, when they legitimized some points of Alevilik, they ignored others. This hypocrisy caused contradiction between the new state and the Alevis. Hence, the contradictory tradition since the Ottoman Empire continued again here. As Massicard writes,

> When the nationalist looked into the pre-Islamic past and the popular culture of Anatolia, they came across the Alevis and immediately assimilated them with Turkishness… To their eyes, Aleviness represented not just a Turkish form of religious practice, but a modern one, too, opposed to Sunni Islam, which was stigmatized as being Arab and backward.[48]

Another most important reason to increase contradiction was the state attitude about secularism. The state defined secularism out of its ordinary meaning. According to the Turkish state, religion had to be monopolized by the state. Moreover, Turkish secularism did not recognize the equality between the religion or the sects; on the contrary, it was formulated to externalization of Alevilik from

[46]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.42.

[47]Ibid., p.43.

[48]Massicard, *The Alevis*, p. 18.

religion. Alevilik was not emphasized or supported for the development of the country, but Sunni was embraced by the state to resist its backwardness.[49]

The Kemalist regime did not bring any change to the Alevis in the case of the conflictual situation of them with the state. However, the ideas or anticipations about the change from the republic that provided cooperation with the Alevis and Kemalist elite[50] and it was perceived that there was an alliance between the Alevis and the Kemalist. However, the idea of alliance could not be said certainly, because the Alevis as a heterogeneous group could not give the same reaction to the situation. Therefore, a general statement cannot be made about the Alevi attitude about the Kemalist period, like they were the biggest supporter of them, or they were not. Actually, there was not a political attitude for the Alevis in this period which means that there was not an Alevi attitude.[51] Thus, being Alevi could not cause this contradiction, the main issue was related to that how they could exist. The problem was the existence of the Alevis, and the Kemalists seemed to solve the existence problem and just because of this the Alevis started to trust the state.[52]

During the early Republican period, a new homogenous and integrated nation-state was aimed to be established, and this state anticipated to involve every component. One of them was the Alevis, who had lived heterogeneously within themselves and separated from the state for centuries.[53] As mentioned above, instead of their separate conditions, they were an important component for the state with

[49]Ibid., p.46.

[50] Subaşı, *Alevilik,* p.130.

[51]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.52.

[52] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.158.

[53] Seval Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri Kurumsallaşmasının Alevi Kimliğine Etkileri ve Karacaahmet Sultan Dergâhı Üzerinden Bir Alan Analizi," p.40.

their original characteristics like being non-Ottoman. This perception has influence even today, and some the Alevis identify themselves as Turkish primarily.[54] Even though they were exposed to inequalities in religion, they held on to possibility which is being a part of the state. That's why they gave their permission to be seen and used as a balance mechanism against the Ottoman Empire and its Islam understanding by the state. [55]

The Alevis started to be seen in society in two cases which were used by the state, nationalism and secularism. However, did this visibility really represent Alevilik, in spite of the filter and framework of the state? The answer of this question could be the topic for another study, thus the historical background will be continued with a new period without the answer.

After the Early Republican Period

After the early Republican and single party period, the Alevis were interested and related with different issues than conflict with the state. They no longer lived in rural areas as a secluded group. They were going to participate in the mobility of migration, industrialization and urbanization. According to Massicard, Alevilik is a lifestyle which contains groups in rural areas with its religion, culture, and norms. For some historical reasons, Alevilik has not experienced the social differentiation and specialization which are intrinsic to a religion by a central organization.

After the migration from the rural areas to urban areas, Alevilik was moved to the public sphere with its unorganized disposition, and it still causes problems in

[54] Ibid.,p.42.

[55] Ibid.,p.43.

its classification. [56] This statement says several things about Alevilik and also gives a general perspective for the overall historical background. From this point of view, the Alevis who had been established in rural area and then isolated from central and social opportunities, started to participate in society after the 1950s by migration and urbanization especially.

From now on, Alevilik, is mentioned above, is like it is in rural areas. In addition, most of the population lived in rural areas in the Ottoman Empire or in the early republican period. Later on the "relatively" visibilities of the Alevis started to be part of the society. Moreover, they had the huge part of the migrated population as oppose to their isolation for many years. [57]

Migration and Urbanization Processes

Here, I am going to give explanation about the migration and it social results in terms of the Alevis without analyzing migration deeply. First, the migration process led to a sort of dissolution in Alevi society, which emerged based on rural conditions because of the changing environment. In other words, the rural population and traditional rituals were disintegrated because of the migration, by reason of rural population established the traditional rituals and vice versa.[58] Therefore, even the Alevis needed a watcher[59] and a leader /*dede* during their worship in rural areas. Urban life brought dissolution inevitably. When they were hiding in their

[56] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.19.

[57] Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri," p. 53.

[58] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.53.

[59]Secret characteristic of Alevilik.

homogenous Alevi villages, they had to be more secret in urban and it caused dissolution in one hand.

Migration also included the dedes. They migrated to urban areas to find a new income sources, and so the Alevis lost their leaders. According to one interviewee who was also a dede told his family's story. His father and grandfather was also dede, but they had not done this duty. He says that his grandfather was a dede in Sivas and he had been a peasant at the same time, and thus he could overcome these two conditions together. However, it became hard after his migration to İstanbul, because he needed to find another job to survive. In addition, his son-father of my interviewee did not do *dedelik* for the same reasons. Therefore, my interviewee was the third man of this family and he was doing dedelik in a Cemevi. When I asked him if he needed a job, he answered me that he was unemployed but maybe if he found a job, he could not continue his duty as dede but there was no problem for now. [60] Briefly, as Massicard writes,

> spiritual leaders were no longer able to officiate amongst the entirety of their flock, who were too dispersed now. They therefore had to find another source of revenue and work, and this resulted in a corresponding drop in their religious authority.[61]

Second, urbanization after migration provided not exactly integration but minimization of the marginalization. In this sense, during the early Republican period and after, transformations in the education, transportation, the economy and industry induced the migration, and then the Alevis left to being and living marginal, and so they started to articulate with the center. [62] According to Subaşı, during the

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[60]O.D., interview by the author, tape recording, İstanbul, Turkey, 15 August 2014.

[61]Massicard, *The Alevis,* p. 25.

[62]Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri," p.45.

articulation process, the Alevis confronted with the Sunnis who are out of their space.[63] When the Alevis were organized within their own group, they put Sunnis out of this organization as "stranger/foreigner," and in addition to position of Sunnis provide identification for the Alevis as well.[64] Therefore, the Alevis were able to articulate with the center with the group consciousness, and it also led them to living together in certain neighborhoods, like Gazi Mahallesi. That's why, Gazi and similar ones are called "Alevi neighborhood."

Therefore, urbanization provides confrontation of differences which occur in urban spaces and migrants.[65] However, according to Massicard, these differences among people with the ideological differences can cause polarization and disintegration at the national level, and during the late the 1960s and the 1970s people were the polarization deeply.[66] Therefore, while urbanization provides the recognition for different parts of each other, it also forces them into a new lifestyle and at the same time causes polarization, disintegration, and assimilation.[67]

The Convergence with the Left

With the 1960s, the Alevis also found chance to become actor in the political realm. After the long isolation period, they met with left politics during the urbanization process. This encounter was reciprocal. It also provided benefits for both side. In other words, leftist organizations found a huge grassroots, also the

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[63] Necdet Subaşı, *Öteki Türkiye'de Din ve Modernleşme* (İstanbul: Vadi Yayınları, 2003), p. 16.

[64] Murat Okan, *Türkiye'de Alevilik* (Ankara: İmge Kitabevi, 2004), pp.28-33.

[65] Nail Yılmaz, *Kentin Alevileri: Reşadiye, İkitelli Örneği* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005), p.136.

[66] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.59.

[67] Nail Yılmaz, *Kentin Alevileri: Reşadiye, İkitelli Örneği* (İstanbul: Kitabevi, 2005), p.136.

Alevis found a political place for themselves. This reciprocity was not only about the political opportunism or common interests; it was also related to being the natural allies on the ideological base.[68] For instance, the Alevis existence demands and their expressions of them, logic, and action styles can be seen as proof to closeness with left.[69]Even that, they were grounded on their historical references to here, and so they could justify being a part of Marxist organization. According to Bruinessen, the Alevis re-define the historical rebels and resistance and they try to describe it as a center of the traditional grassroots movement, rebellion, and pursuit of freedom. [70]

Leftist groups also tried to find common points, and legitimation with Alevilik. Therefore, they sought some inspirational issues from the Alevi tradition. For instance, the resistor position of the Alevis to every kind of power from Hz. Ali, its tradition of resistance, also making an analogy between the color of revolution "red", and Kızılbaşlık were used by leftist organizations to refer likeness with Alevilik. [71]

When the Alevis established a crucial togetherness with Marxism in order to avoid from marginalization, leftist groups created an alliance for both the reference in Alevi tradition and also local grassroots. Massicard writes that,

> This process of convergence was reciprocal. Left-wing movements felt that the Alevis were their allies. The Alevis were, for their part, like the Kurds more open to the Marxist message, on the whole, due both to their relative underdevelopment and their position as a minority.[72]

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[68] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.59.

[69] Subaşı, *Alevilik*, p.276.

[70] Bruinessen, *Kürtlük*, p.120.

[71] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.60, Subaşı, *Alevilik*, p.276.

[72]Massicard, *The Alevis*, p.29.

Therefore, migration in one the hand and relations with the left on the other hand resulted in fragmentation and differentiation for the Alevis both in the mindset and practices.[73] Heterogeneous/fragmented structure of Alevilik has been mentioned already, and meeting with various phenomena and actors causes more fragmentation. Moreover, also the fragmented condition of leftist organization in Turkey can also influence the Alevilik.[74] Briefly, being a member of a leftist organization precluded to being Alevi in that time. Moreover, all these circumstances reinforced the fragmented situation of Alevilik once again.

Politics from the Multi-Party Period to the 1980s

After the sociological issues of the Alevis in historical development, I am going to analyze political picture. Here I am going to stress the election behaviour of the Alevis, and their relations with legal political parties.

In the first election of the multiparty system, the Alevis tended to use their voted for the Democrat Party[75]. There are lots of reasons for this behavior, but in first place most of the Alevis were still living in the rural space, and the DP had a claim over the rural population. Therefore, Massicard emphasizes that the Alevis voted for the DP because of their economic concerns more than those of their identity concerns, because they believed that the improvement power of the DP over the economy.[76] Moreover, rural and peasant supported politics of the DP and its

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[73] Subaşı, *Alevilik*, p.277.

[74] The last sentence can be issued for another research, but according to my observations, it is also has an important influence over it.

[75]DP (Demokrat Parti: Democrat Party)

[76]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.54.

promises an influenced on many Alevis, and thus, they had a part in the political success of the DP after the elections.[77] Beyond the economic reason, DP represented the opposition side after the long term of single party, and the Alevis found a place in this realm as well. However, this alliance did not continue very long time, because the Alevis' expectations did not overlap with the DP. The most important reason was that the DP started to use Sunni *tarikats* to find new voters. Therefore, the Alevis stopped supporting the DP with the 1960 coup d'état, and after that they turned to RPP one again. [78]

I do not claim that all the Alevis had the same behavior during this period. However, the Alevis remained "unreactive" to many political parties during and after the multi party period. In this context, the Alevis should not be seen as a whole and homogenous group in term of their voting behavior, and also they should not be seen as passive political actors. For instance, the Alevis and left alliance showed itself in the national political realm, and TİP *(Türkiye İşçi Paritis)*[79] had 3 percent portions of votes 1965 elections and they entered with 15 "representatives" to the assembly. Moreover, TİP enhanced its national portion in Tunceli, Kars, Yozgat, where the Alevi population had majority.[80]

Besides that, the Alevis founded their own political parties in 1966, and it is an important point to show that they were not passive political actors. According to Massicard, these were the first movements for the identity politics of the Alevis, because they started to be shown in public sphere with their publications, and also actions. In addition to that, university students, intellectuals, and after that workers

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[77] Subaşı, *Alevilik*, p.268.

[78] Yılmaz, *Kentin Alevileri,* pp.102-103.

[79] Labour Party of Turkey

[80] Yılmaz, *Kentin Alevileri,* p.103.

and civil servants noticed their differentiation from others, and discrimination by others and so this helped to shape this term as well.[81] Therefore, the TBP[82] *(Türkiye Birlik Partisi,* Unity Party of Turkey) was founded as a consequence of this period in 1966 which was the first Alevi political party. Massicard writes that this was "the first party with an Alevi slant, the TBP was founded in 1966. The Alevis organized themselves politically before the Sunnis did."[83]

As a result, the heterogeneous and fragmented situations of the Alevis represented that they should not be perceived as a unit on their voting behaviors, because they became supporters of various political parties. Except for their heterogeneity, they also influenced through urbanization process after the migration period and leftist organizations too. Therefore, both their historical characteristic and new conditions have place on the Alevis to their present situation. [84]

My aim was to give a general explanation and summary of political and social issues from the Alevis' perspective until the 1980s. To sum up, the Alevis had contradictory relations with power/*iktidar* . This relation caused the isolation and marginalization of the Alevis from society. Moreover, after the migration period and the 1960s, the Alevis started to meet with leftist groups, which provided new practices to the Alevis, yet also they reinforced the fragmented situation of Alevilik. Eventually, all these processes removed the problem of existence for the Alevis, but it also raised a new problem for the Alevis which was that how they were going to exist. This question is explained in the next part.

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[81]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.56.

[82] Türkiye Birlik Partisi, to more specific information; see: Güler and Ertan.

[83]Massicard, *The Alevis*, p. 27.

[84] This is going to be elaborated in the empirical chapter as political experiences in the neighborhood case.

From the 1980s to the Present[85]

The 1980 coup d'état aimed to stop politicization by closing the political parties and destroying the organizations and also by massive arrest. An estimated, 650,000 people were arrested, and hundreds were killed suspiciously in this period.[86] Moreover, many the Alevis were involved this violence because of their alliance with leftist organizations. This period brought silence to the social realm and relatively the Alevis were affected by it. After all, the Alevis had started to disengage with their own identity because of the alliance with the leftist and after the coup d'état, and social silence caused them to forget the Alevi identity and existence in the public space.[87]

However, the Alevis have started to rediscover themselves in what is called "Alevi Renaissance" at the end of the 1980s and especially beginning of the 1990s[88]. They emerged in a new period which included mobilization (as Massicard) and redefinition themselves (as Yalçınkaya). I can explain this period also as a renaissance and appearing in public space by making visible themselves. However, the most important point is that they did not want to be seem as the backyard of a political movement they want to be in charge and an actor on their own movement.

The Alevis decided to mobilize their own movement, but it did not provide unification among them because of the reason which was explained in previous

[85]This chapter does not involve the history of massacre against Alevis, but the two of them are going to be explained in empirical chapter not deeply, but briefly. Because there are several research about the massacres, but this study does not aim to analyze them.

[86]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya,* p.69.

[87] Reha Çamuroğlu, "Alevi Uyanışı," *in Alevi Kimliği*, ed. T.Olsson, E. Özdalga, C. Raudvere, trans. Bilge Kurt Torun (İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı, 1999), pp.96.

[88] Ibid.,p.96.

pages, and thus, they created a new and complex image of Alevilik.[89] Therefore, the pluralist problematic for the definition of Alevilik re-emerged in the Alevi renaissance. According to Yalçınkaya,

> the 1990s is a date which Alevilik is transformed into an elephant. When Alevilik is transformed an elephant, everybody became blind as looking a light. People tried to define Alevilik how they see, but they forgot the definition which is done by Alevis themselves.[90]

When we look at the Alevis definition of themselves it is not different from others, because today's the Alevis fragmented situation shows that it has not been able to provide a common ground for them to define themselves or create the movement.[91] Today, there are many Alevi associations and publications which are related with their fragmented situation of them from the beginning to until now. However, maybe the most and unique common point is that they were evolved into emerged a new movement and struggle without any expectation from other parties, either legal politics or others.

The Alevi renaissance or the rediscovering of Alevilik did not happen suddenly. According to researchers, three important cyclical situation causes to that. The first one is the dissolution of Eastern bloc, the second one is rising of the political Islam, and the last one is the Kurdish movement.

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[89] Ibid.,pp.98-99.

[90] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.205.

[91] Beginning of the chapter in the section of "various definition of Alevilik".

Reasons for the Alevi Renaissance

First of all, the dissolution of Eastern bloc caused disappointment for the Alevis, because the Alevis had strong relation with leftist and socialist organization for many years. Therefore, after the dissolution and disappointment led the Alevis to define themselves as "Alevi." After that, they started to blame and criticize themselves for putting being Alevi into the background, which they saw it as a mistake.[92] However, the relation among the Alevis and leftist organizations provided experiences for the Alevis even though they saw that it was a mistake. Thanks to these experiences, which are like organizational tactics and militant skills, they enable them to benefit. [93]

The second reason was the rise of political Islam is another reason to influence Alevi renaissance. The revitalization of Islamic movements has always caused panic and fear for the Alevis in Turkey. According to Shankland, "in the early Republican period, the Alevis gave up their conflictual relation with the state and tried to integrate with the center because of the secular behavior of the state."[94] Therefore, the claim is that the rise of the political Islam had a crucial impact and impulse on increasing the number of Alevi associations in the 1990s. Moreover, 1993[95] can be seen as a milestone, because it also consolidated this traditional tension among the Sunnis-Alevis.[96] Namely, the rise of political Islam induced many

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[92] Çamuroğlu, *Alevi Uyanışı*, p. 97, Subaşı, *Alevi Modernleşmesi*, p. 175.

[93]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, p.79.

[94] David Shankland, *Alevis in Turkey: Emergence of a Secular Islamic Tradition* (London: Roudledge, 2003), pp. 1-2.

[95] 93 Sivas Massacre will be explained in the last chapter.

[96]Çamuroğlu, *Alevi Uyanışı,* pp.98-99.

traumatic things and fear for the Alevis. Opposed to this traditional tension, the Alevis tried to generate some reaction like hiding in the Ottoman period, the integration tendency in the Republican period and mobilization and struggling with their own identities in the 1990s.

The third reason is the Kurdish movement. The Alevis are not only Turkish in term of ethnic base. They had also a Kurdish section within themselves. Therefore, after the Kurdish movement, the Kurdish-Alevis needed to choose their own side and some of them started to identify themselves as Alevi.[97] In other words, the Alevis had to identify themselves separately from the Kurdish movement. In addition to that, those two movements, political Islam and Kurdish movement, influenced the Alevis not only in the case of action and reaction, but also influenced the Alevis as an example of the movement. Because of the visibility of these two movements in the public and political spheres caused revitalization of the Alevis there as well.[98] In spite of the interaction of the movements, the Alevis have different opinions from the Kurds. For instance, they are not as fragmented as the Alevi movement, and they mobilized their movement around a central actor. In contrast to that, the core point of the Alevi movement derives from the plurality of actors and their contradiction with each other.[99]

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[97] Ibid.,p.98.

[98] Subaşı, *Alevi Modernleşmesi*, p. 182.

[99] Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, p.98.

Beginning of the Alevi Renaissance

Before discussing about the fragmented structure of the Alevi movement/renaissance, the starting point has to be explained. According to Massicard, in the beginning, an Alevi group from Germany emphasized the unnecessity of hiding for the Alevis in 1988. The next year, they organized an Alevi culture week with many supporters from all around the Europe and so they achieved visibility of the Alevis in the public sphere. As a consequence of this organization, they published an Alevi declaration, demanding recognition.[100]

After the inception, the struggle and movements of the Alevis which aimed to provide their visibility in public sphere increased. Many associations and foundations developed a framework for this movement. Thus, *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Tanıtma Derneği* (Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture and Information Association) and *Hacı Bektaş Veli Anadolu Kültür Vakfı* (Hacı Bektaş Veli Anatolian Culture Foundation) can be seen as the primary organizations founded in 1991. *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* (Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association) had been founded before these two organizations, but it gained its power and supporters in the mid the 1990s. After that, *Ehl-i Beyt Vakfı* (foundation) was founded in 1994, and the Cem Vakfı (foundation) was followed in 1995.[101]

From the beginning of the research, I claimed the heterogeneity of Alevilik in a historical context. Some events which the Alevis confronted at different time and space also consolidated the fragmentation of Alevilik until today. The reason why the different approaches and definitions of Alevilik by different associations led to its

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[100] Ibid.,p.77.

[101] Ibid.,pp.98-100.

fragmentation in society, and also made it the characteristic of the Alevi movement. Cultural (Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Tanıtma Derneği and Anadolu Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Vakfı), political (Pir Sultan Abdal Derneği) and religious (Ehl-i Beyt ve Cem Vakfı) perspectives of these organizations are blamed for weakening the movements, but instead of this discussion, it has to be seen in the nature of Alevilik. They can consolidate the fragmentation, but also it is difficult to say that the Alevilik or Alevi movement is a united case. [102]

Eventually, the Alevis have fragmentation from their beginning to today. There are a lot of reasons to provide this characteristic of theirs. Therefore, this section aimed to show the historical points of this fragmentation in many cases. Before continuing with my empirical case and fieldwork, I have to mention about both the Cem and Cemevi with their definitions and also historical developments. Therefore, all these concepts and historical explanation will be analyzed in the case of three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi particularly.

Cem

In this part describe the Cem practice, which is the most known ritual of Alevilik. However, before the explanation of Cem, I have to mention a discussion related to the definition or identification of Cem. This discussion is continuing between two groups, the first one includes researchers who are studying about Alevilik, and members of the second, who are heads of associations, dedes, or head of the Cemevis.

[102] Ibid.,p.100.

According to the first group, the most unique, divine thing is the human being who is a representation of God in Alevilik.[103] Moreover, God is a secret treasure that wants to be known and creates humans. People are created with love, for love.[104] In this sense, there is no divine worship or space, because every place is divine for them in which they can come together. In addition, Cem cannot be seen as worship and that's why the Cemevi is not a temple. However, this should not be understood as humiliation or not be seen about its divinity. It is all about the nature of Alevilik and the definition is related to it.

According to Yalçınkaya's definition, because of the religious origin of Alevilik, it should be defined within the general religious framework. Therefore, worship which is the most apparent characteristic, becomes the first phenomenon to explore with Alevilik within this framework.[105] In other words, the differentiation of the definition of Cem is derived from the identification of Alevilik.

The other approach is that Cem is a form of worship and so the Cemevi is a temple. This opinion is supported by the heads of Cemevis, the dedes and the heads of Alevi associations. Moreover, Cemevi and Alevi associations have publications in order to mention about teach Alevilik to the young generation and identify the Cem as a form of worship. For instance, this sentence is quoted from one of these publications;

> Alevi-Bektaşi are doing their worship in Cemevis with applying 12 services. This can be understood in a way that, Muslims have mosques, Christians have churches, Jewish and Assyrians have synagogue, and Alevi-*Bektasi* have Cemevis for their worship.[106]

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[103] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.79.

[104] Esat Korkmaz, *Alevilik ve Aydınlanma* (İstanbul: Pencere Yayınları, 1997), p.270.

[105] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.79.

[106] Lütfi Kaleli, *Akıl ve Bilim Der Alevilik (Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği Eyüp Şubesi Alevilik Ders Kitabı*) (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2011), p.265.

Although Cemevis will be introduced in the next section, it is impossible to explain Cem and the Cemevi without each other, because according to these ideas, the divine ritual is Cem and its divine space is Cemevis in the case of Alevilik.

The reason for these different identifications and positions are related to different identification of Alevilik and its multifaceted situation as discussed above. Thus, the confusion and uncertainty is about the definition of Alevilik, and it causes to be identified with some certain norms, like Cem, differently. In other words, these definitions and identifications are related to the position of the movement. The Alevi movement which has started after the 1990s chose "faith" as their center. Namely, the Alevis did not discountenance this motive to be organized. On the contrary, they supported it. For instance, the movements which tried to be organized with political consent like political parties did not find the expected support.[107] For the Alevis, the faithful bases of the movements is really powerful, and even it is derived from here. Although researchers mention about the unholy of Cem or Cemevis, these have important meanings for the movement. In this sense, Cem's origin, functions, components and types will be included and introduced in the next section.

The Origin, Functions, Components and Kinds of Cem

This thesis does not follow one perspective such as, identify Cem as worship or as the basic institution and ceremony of Alevilik. Here, I try to give space to two different ideas. Instead of certain definitions, a general explanation will be introduced with its origin, functions, components and types.

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[107]Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, pp.210-211.

The Origin of Cem

The dictionary definition of Cem means gathering together and being unique. However, even this meaning refers to its religious meaning it also has a spiritual meaning too. The Alevis believe that Cem is derived from practices of "*Kırklar*" which is a community.

According to some sources, "Kırklar" included 40 people like, Hz. Ali, his family and with some others who were unknown exactly. There is no certain information about this issue obviously, yet these refer to the story are related to the "storytelling" tendency of Alevilik. Moreover, when Alevilik is identified, it needs a source, so "Kırklar" is given this base for it. This tendency is associated with oral tradition of Alevilik which is not based on a divine book. This tradition and faith keeps alive itself with oral tradition. Therefore, Cem is derived from a sort of oral explanation of "Kırklar." Lütfi Kaleli provides us a general explanation of "Kırklar" as a result of the interviews with many dedes. In addition, even though the "Kırklar" is not a concrete community, this story represents that it is as a concrete one.

Moreover, there are some spiritual points of this story because it includes some symbols which are important for Alevilik and also its date, which starts with the Prophet Mohammad's ascension. According to story, Prophet Mohammed encountered a lion during his ascension. The lion has a hidden meaning for the Alevi people, because they make an analogy between the lion and Hz. Ali. This is one symbol between Alevilik and "Kırklar." Afterwards, Hz. Mohammed wants to enter a room, and he knocks the door. The people who were behind the door asked him, "Who are you?" And he said, "I am the Prophet Mohammed." They said "You

cannot come here with your title. You have to leave all of your titles outside of this room."

This story includes other symbols about Cem, because it explains that how people can enter through Cem's door. After the entrance of Prophet Mohammed without his title, he asked them who they were and they said, "We are the Kırklar, and all of us are oneness."[108]

Beyond this story, Cem also has roots from Asia Minor. According to Eröz, the ceremony of Cem has originated in Turkish festivals which were performed according to Uygur traditions by the Oguzs. Moreover, the Cem is the one of them which can reach to today.[109]

Therefore, Cem can result from old Turkish traditions or based on some spiritual stories and symbols. Because of lack of the written sources or exact judgments, I was not make a certain definition of this ceremony. Even though I do not aim to make a concrete and certain definition of Cem, I would like to explain its functions, because they can be observed and no need a source to explain it.

The Functions of Cem

Basically, the rituals and practices of Cem are derived from these two stories which were introduced above. One of the most important things about this issue, this ritual and practices is that they are not described in a book. They live because of the oral tradition. Besides that, the Cem has also included different points, because Cem aims to rule many precepts to people. It is because Cem has an integrative and

[108] Lüfti Kaleli, *Akıl ve Bilim Der Alevilik (Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği Eyüp Şubesi Alevilik Ders Kitabı)* (İstanbul: Can Yayınları, 2011) and Seval Yılmaz "Türkiye'de Cemevleri" pp. 73-75.

[109] Mehmet Eröz, *Türkiye'de Alevilik ve Bektaşilik* (İstanbul: Otağ Yayınevi, 1977), p.305.

solidarist position in society. Because, Cem provides a sort of unification and harmony among the community, which makes coexistence easier.

At the same time, it has a meaning for individuals, because they need the Cem to reach the truth. For individuals, Cem provides transparency for the individual, and the individual can share his or her private and everyday life with his/her community. This transparency leads to question the individual's life. In other words, the Cem is a place which helps to investigate both people each other and individuals themselves.[110]

It has also functions as a judicial body, because it questions and acquits. These process aims to make a person moral and a proper human being, and that's why they do not care the body cleaning for their rituals, the cleaning of soul and self is more crucial than everything. Hacı Bektaşı Veli, the important figure of Alevilik, told his Makalat that "A person who does not clean his/her heart and self, person's worship is not accepted."[111]

There are some components to be able in order to process functions of Cem. These components which are consent, 12 services, sacrifice/lokma, and semah will be introduced in the next section.

The Components of Cem

The first component of the Cem is consent. Cem has a position which provides a coexistence among people, because it has a way of organizing people's everyday lives and spiritual lives. Consent ensures coexistence and supplying social

[110] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p. 79.

[111] Hacı Bektaşı Veli, *Makalat.*

harmony. The consent can be the first and the most significant factor for Cem, because people have to give their consent to each other to participate in and/or leave the Cem.

Another component of Cem, which is called the 12 services and will be discussed in the next section, need to gain consent for their ability to do their duties. When dede gains consent from community, other servants need consent from dede.[112]

Before the Cem, the dede asks all the participants whether they give their consent to each other. If everybody gives consent to each other, the ceremony can start, yet if they do not, it means that there is a problem and Cem cannot be started until the problem is solved.[113] Therefore, the main point of the consent practice is to make people live in harmony. People who are on the outs of someone or have problem with each other, can handle the problem in the Cem.

Beyond the social meaning of the consent practice, it has a meaning on the individual level. The individual meaning of consent is regarding with person him/herself, because at the beginning a person needs to gain his/her consent. Even though everybody in the community gives their consent for this person, he/she has to question his/herself. He/she needs to ask whether there is anything wrong with his/her family or society and nature. If there is a wrong, the person needs to fix this problem after self-criticism. That's why, Cem is a mechanism which provides for the accountability of individuals in their personal and everyday lives.

The services during the Cem are called "the 12 services," participants discharge them as voluntarily who are also called servant. Every servant has different name which is regarding with its service. These names can change from one region

[112] Yılmaz "Türkiye'de Cemevleri" pp.75-76.

[113] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.78.

to another among the Alevi people, yet my attempt is to find the most common names for these roles.

The first is *Mürşid* this is also called dede who executes the Cem and is the head of the Cem. *Guide/Rehber* helps dede and leads members of the Cem how they can behave during Cem. Observer/*Gözcü* observes Cem to make sure there is no problem and provide its calmness. *Çerağcı* provides lightning for Cem. *Zakir* leads semah and sings gülbenks for Hz. Ali and prays like *tevhid* etc. *Süpürgeci* is responsible to cleanliness of space. *Meydancı* chooses people who whirl semah. *Niyazcı* prays for animal before to sacrifice it. After that, *Niyazcı and Sofracı* portion out to sacrifice as lokma for people. *Kapıcı* observes the houses of people who come to Cem. *Peyikçi* informs people about when Cem happens. *Sakacı* distributes water, sherbet, and sometimes wine during Cem.[114]

The 12 services were also derived from the Kırklar, because today they represent the duties of Kırklar. For instance, Mürşid/dede in Cem represents Hz. Ali, because Hz. Ali was also in the same position with Kırklar. Also being a descendant of Hz. Ali is one of the most important essentials to be a dede. In other words, the Alevis believe that dedes are "Seyyid", which means that they share the same bloodline with Hz. Mohammad and Hz. Ali.[115] Nevertheless, coming from Hz. Mohammad and Hz. Ali's blood is not enough to be a dede, because as mentioned above, they still need to gain the consent of the community to perform their role.

Briefly, the 12 services works together with the consent mechanism and it provides to organize Cem. The 12 services are also indispensable for Cem like consent practice, because the execution of Cem and distribution of tasks depend on

[114] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.78, Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevlerinin" p. 75.

[115] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.70, Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevlerinin" p. 92, Korkmaz, *Alevilik ve Aydınlanma*, p.90.

them. In the next section, another indispensable component of Cem will be introduced, which is *semah*.

Semah is one of the indispensable components of Cem. It is point of the 12 services as explained above. Like in Cem, individuals are alone in semah, but they could not practice it alone. Since, semah is also a practice which is done by the community. In addition, semah does not have a random meaning but a spiritual meaning. Semah is likening to a human being's life loop, such as; existence of human being, its process in the life and its end. Bozkurt writes that

> When God wanted to come to be known and create the universe, God ordered "to be" with its powerful sound. Increase a holy song. This song divided into 12 episodes. These 12 episodes generated 4 games. These are: *çark, raks, muallak,* and *pertav*.[116]

This is quoted from Kuran by Bozkurt, and this makes a similarity between human life and semah. In other words, there are four sections/games in life if it is considered as eighty years. In the first twenty years, it is çark, from the first 20 years to 40 years; life can be called in the raks section. From 40 to 60 is *muallak,* and in the last section, pertav is played.[117] In this sense, semah has quite spiritual and universal meaning in Cem. Moreover, Yalçınkaya claims that, semah is also not worship; it is a translation of historical events to reality and truth.[118]

Cem has many other components except consent, the 12 services and semah. However, I choose these three to discuss in this chapter and I try to explain Cem within these three concepts. Insofar, Cem can be understood just in one kind, but it has different kinds which of them have been done at certain times, or for certain

[116] Bozkurt, *Çağdaşlaşma Sürecinde*, p. 43.

[117] Ibid.,p.44.

[118] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.81.

reasons. These are "*Görgü* Cem*i*, İrşat Cem*i*, Abdal Musa Cem*i*, *Nevruz* Cem*i*, *Yol Kardeşliği/Musahiplik* Cem*i, Koldan Kopan* Cem*i."*

The Types of Cem[119]

İrşat Cemi: As I mentioned above, Alevilik does not have a written tradition it updates itself with its oral tradition. Therefore, learning Alevilik from a book is not possible for the young generation, and that's why they can only learn it from oral explanations or with observing the practices. In this sense, the İrşat Cemi (a Cem to enlighten the young) is a Cem to teach rules of Alevilik, behaviors and practices of Cem, prays, relationship between people to young girls and boys. Therefore, Alevilik always is reproduced and transferred to coming generation.

Koldan Kopan Cemi: Cem and its problem-solving mechanism are discussed above. In this sense, Koldan Kopan Cemi (criminals and *düşküns* are tried) works as a people's court. It provides solutions for social problems, and punishment for criminals. The dede has to apply the decision of the majority in the Cem. This decision is valid for everyone as well.

Musahiplik/Yol Kardeşliği Cemi: This research does not give place to explanation of *Musahiplik*, but here it needs to be clarified briefly. *Musahiplik* exists to ensure mutual support, such as those consecrating of the "fraternization" of two families.[120] This practice actualizes within the Cem and it is called Musahiplik Cemi. Thanks to Musahiplik Cemi, the two families emerge from a road fellowship. It provides solidarity between these two families after their unification.

[119] AABF, 2012-2015, Cem *Nedir?*, http://www.aabf-inanc-kurumu.com/bolge-inanc-kurullari-2012-2015/Cem-nedir/.

[120] Massicard, *The Alevis*, p. 16.

These Cems which are performed a spesific reason, now I am going to explain others which are executed in certain times.

Abdal Musa Kurban Cemi: (In general meaning, the Alevis are sacrificing animals during this Cem) Abdal Musa is a significant figure for the Alevis. He is one of the followers of Hacı Bektaş Veli. For Cem, it is executed in Thursday night, and it is especially common in the Aegean and Mediterranean part of Anatolia. This Cem functions to provide coexistence in society, to solve problems among people etc.

Görgü Cemi: (One of the most important practices in Alevilik) *Görgü* is a ritual in the Alevilik, and it is practicing during Cem. It can be translated as "seen" by dede and community. Because görgü makes a person transparent in front of the community and he/she is questioned. Görgü is important because people need it to enter to Cem, being Musahip, getting married, at least being a member of the community.[121][122]

Therefore, Cem has social and spiritual functions and meanings for the Alevi community. I try to introduce its roots and meaning within the general framework. When Alevi people organize their communities according to their own rules, Cem works as a control mechanism for the application of these rules. Nowadays, Cem is not executed like explained above, but its main mechanism still works which are consent, the 12 services, semah and *kurban*. It can be seen as a certain judgment, but according to my observation in the Cemevis in urban space, people can still practice these four. Before the explanation of contemporary Cemevis condition, Cemevis has

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[121]Alevi Kültür Merkezi-Köln, *Alevilikte Cem ve Kuralları*, http://www.Alevi-koeln.de/Alevitentum/Alevilik-bilgileri/63-Alevilikte-Cem-ve-kurallar%C4%B1.html.

[122] I used only two internet sources to explain the kinds of Cem. The reason of that the deficiency of written sources of the Cem and its out of room position in academia. Therefore, to getting information about them I mainly benefited from internet sources and also interviews which are done with Alevi dedes.

to be analyzed. In this section, Cemevis will be explained with its historical conditions, meanings and positions.

Cemevi

In the previous sections for this chapter, I mentioned about Alevilik and the Cem as their conceptual meaning and also I analyzed the historical background of Alevilik from the Ottoman Empire to the contemporary period briefly. Thus, for this section the last concept is "Cemevi" for this research which I will explain within its conceptual meaning and historical development. The definition of Cemevi will be discussed first, and after that its historical development will be examined in the case of rural and urban context. Eventually, I consider to discuss the contemporary positions of Cemevis in urban case in order to give an introduction to my empirical study of Gazi Mahallesi.

The Definition of Cemevi

Cemevi consists of the two words which are "Cem"+ "*ev*" and means that a house of gathering in Turkish. As I mentioned in the previous section, "Cem" means "crowd, gathering, meeting and community" and "*ev*" means house. Cemevi means a place for Alevi people to gather in order to perform their religious/spiritual rituals Cem.[123]

Beyond its dictionary meaning, Çamuroglu suggests to look at meaning from the perspective of Alevilik. The Alevis believe that God is everywhere, and that's

[123]Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevlerinin", p. 65.

why their practices are free from the restriction of space and time. Moreover, he says that everyday life[124] is a way of worship for the Alevis. They do not need a certain space or time to do it.[125] This perspective rises after the discussion of whether "are the Cemevis are places of worship?" [126] This research does not aim to answer or conclude this question, yet the coming parts of this section can give some clues about it. However, if the heterogeneous conditions of the Alevis are considered again, the varieties of condition, definition and interpretation of Cemevis make more sense. Therefore, I consider to represent Cemevis without any certain identification which is also impossible.

To understand the position of the Cemevi for the Alevi faith and its historical organization, it has to be analyze in two case like; rural and urban perspective. This research is more interested, even totally, in the urban case, but to understand the today's position and transformation of Cemevi, its origin need to be considered. Even though I do not aim to show the transformation of Alevilik and Cemevi like other studies[127] rural Cemevis have to be understood the meaning, status and position of the urban one.

Rural Cemevi

Actually the title of this part has contradiction with what I am going to explain here, because according to researcher's claim that there was such a place

[124] It is explained in "Cem" section more specifically.

[125] Reha Çamuroğlu, *Günümüz Aleviliğinin Sorunları* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1994), pp.67-69.

[126] I did not prefer to call Cemevis are a place of worship or not, I just want to give some certain definitions and discussion to elaborate this concept.

[127] see: Yılmaz, Subaşı, Güler

called as Cemevi in rural area. For example Çamuroğlu writes out that rural Cemevis are places to practice Cem in biggest places or in a big room of a house within a village. This place or room can be owned by a villager, or it might be a common ownership in village.[128] Further to that, Yalçınkaya writes that the Alevis does not need any space to do their rituals, because everyplace can be used for rituals where they can come together.[129]

Therefore, definition shows that Cemevi does not exist in rural life of the Alevis. In other words, it is not related to the traditional Alevi faith. Most probably, there was a place to practice their rituals, but it does not have to be called Cemevi. This might seem surprising because Alevilik is usually considered rural-based faith. However, the most important institution of this faith "today" exist in their life. Hence, it displayed shows that it is related to urbanization and the context of movement. That's why, the Cemevi will be explained in the urban case as well.

Urban Cemevi

With the 1990s, Cemevis started to show up in urban areas whereas it differs from rural areas within its complex structures in a stable space.[130] As seen above, urban Cemevis have different meanings and structures and even buildings comparing to rural one. Therefore, from this perspective, the constitution of urban Cemevis and their progress will be considered for this part. After that functions and positions of Cemevis are going to will be analyzed.

[128] Çamuroğlu, *Günümüz Aleviliğinin*, p.70.

[129] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p. 80.

[130] Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevlerinin," p.65.

The Process to the Emergence of the Cemevi in Urban Space

When I mentioned about rural Cemevis, I emphasized the absence of Cemevis. Therefore, there has to be some reasons to the emergence of Cemevis in urban space, because it was not related to the traditional Alevilik. In addition, the absence of Cemevi in the rural space was a result of the Alevi faith itself. However, after the transformation of faith and tradition with migration and urbanization[131] the Alevis started to produce new practices in accordance with their new formation.

Nevertheless, these two concepts are not enough to explain the occurrence of Cemevis. To illustrate, Yılmaz writes that in the migration, the Alevis performed their Cem practices in their homes secretly. Approximately 30 years later from this period Cemevis began to be constructed.[132] Even though these two concepts are important for construction of Cemevis, there were some other reasons for the rise of them such as organizational movements of Alevilik, and re-definition and rediscovering efforts.[133]

As such, the construction/emergence of Cemevis cannot be considered apart from Alevilik at whole. Just as the heterogeneous condition of Alevilik, its practices and concepts have different stimulation points. All of the reasons explained in the previous section can cause differentiation of the reasons for the establishment of Cemevis. The common point is that the Cemevi is a new concept for Alevilik which is started to be discussed and issued during and after the 1990s. In the historical

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[131] This process was explained in the first section of this chapter.

[132] Ibid.,p.67.

[133] Çamuroğlu, *Günümüz*, p.249.

process, Cemevis have not been considered in the Alevis everyday life and practices before the 1980s.[134]

The emergence of Cemevis cannot be attributed to just one reason and that's why I am going to discuss the reasons within the two parts. First, I will analyze the influence of migration and urbanization on the Cemevis' construction. Second, I will explain the Cemevis as a result of the re-definition movements of Alevilik. [135]

First, migration and urbanization have dramatic transformation in traditional Alevilik. It has caused requirements of new, urban expressions inevitably.[136] As discussed above, the "rural Cemevis," Alevis do not need a place to practice the Cem. However, in cities it is a problem because Alevis need a space to perform their practice and also fulfill their social and religious needs.

Moreover, instead of the flexible meaning of the space in rural areas, fixed meaning of the space has been emerged with the 1990s in the cities. This transformation can be explained as "the Alevis were looking for a place to do their practices and rituals during their urban life and after that they generated Cemevis for their needs."[137] These needs are important for Alevis' everyday lives, such activities as sacrificing animals, contribution of lokma*s* and practicing Cem. The Cemevis - emerged as a result of practical reasons in urban spaces. According to Massicard's interview with the manager of the Okmeydanı Cemevi, he told that "We were attentive to responsed to the people's needs. People can hold their funerals, Cem

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[134] Cemal Şener, *Alevilik Olayı: Toplumsal Bir Başkaldırının Kısa Tarihçesi* (İstanbul: Ant Yayınları, 1998), p. 45.

[135]However, I insist that these two are not enough to explain the reason to emergence of Cemevis separately. Each Cemevi has their own reasons and ways, but to give a general explanation, I am going to mention about two important and huge influential reasons. In addition, I am going to explain that in my empirical chapter in the case of three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi more specifically.

[136] Nail Yılmaz, *Kentin Alevileri,* p.140.

[137]Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevlerinin" p.67.

rituals, sacrifices, and distributing lokma*s* here."[138] I confronted the same reasons during my fieldwork.

However it is a reduction, because it has a more complex meaning behind it which is going to be elaborated as a second reason. Even if the influence of migration and urbanization could be ignored, there are some other factors led to the emergence of Cemevis. As a second reason, organization and mobilization of Alevis as a group will be explained. In the 1990s the Alevis started to re-organize, was explained above.Within these organization movements, Alevilik was re-defined and they need some new institution, like the Cemevis.

As I mentioned above, the 1990s are important to understanding the establishment of Cemevis and the Alevi movement. The reason why is especially after this period, the Alevis started to identify themselves as being Alevi. Yalçınkaya states that Alevilik was "something" for every political wing, from left to right. While one group defines Alevilik as a core Islam, others claim that Alevilik represents secularism and civilization. However, Alevilik does not mean Alevilik within these explanations, because it is forced to be something except Alevilik. The importance of the 1990s began here, because the Alevis started to define, understand, and explain themselves from their own point of view.

According to Yalçınkaya, " the Alevi people fed their understanding of *hakikat/*truth with other adverse parties and vice versa. However, they wanted to be recognized with their own identity and freedom."[139] For instances, in the 1990s, many associations were established[140] to keep the Alevi culture alive. These were

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[138]Massicard, *Türkiye'den Avrupa'ya*, p.296.

[139] Yalçınkaya, *Alevilikte*, p.208.

[140] This is explained in first section.

organized within the motivation of the Alevi belief and that's why, they contributed to establish Cemevis and places like them.[141] With this movement, it was attempted to redefine Alevilik, and after that requirement of a space emerged.

The Cemevis occurred because of migration, urbanization, and re-organization of the Alevilik movement in the 1990s. These are all of the reasons, but they have important impact on it. The basic aim of this research is not related to the emergence of the Cemevis, yet I need to explain them briefly to understand why they exist. The main issue for my thesis is observing the fragmented position of Cemevis, which is also related with the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik. Therefore, the fragmental position of Alevilik caused the fractionation of movements and the emergence of the Cemevis in the 1990s.

Functions and Positions of the Cemevi

Here, I am going to give a general explanation about function and position of Cemevis. Because of the fragmented status of the Cemevis, each has different function and position in Alevi society. Nevertheless, Cemevis have a general understanding for the Alevis in the mind of Alevis, and general responsibilities in some common issues such places to practice as Cem rituals, provide togetherness, use the Cemevi for sacrificing, distributing *lokmas*, and funerals means overlapping needs of Alevis.

Basically, Cemevis provide togetherness for Alevi community, because the Alevis can come together in Cemevis during their practices. The Alevis gather in the

[141]Ibid., p. 210.

Cemevis, which provides awareness of each other as well. [142] Thanks to this cooperation and solidarity also arise among the Alevis. For instance, Cemevis can identify the poor, and people can support students with scholarships or give supplementary lessons to students who want to enter university. Additionally poor families are identified and can receive help.[143] Cemevis not only act as a charity organization. They also supports the socialization of Alevis with the organization of concerts, symposiums, picnics and massive demonstrations/political events.[144] In other words, Cemevis have a central role in collecting people and mobilize them. When Cemevis achieve gathering people, they also provide socialization of the Alevis. Therefore, Cemevis represent a central position for the Alevis and they also provide a new way of life out of individualization by supporting collectiveness and togetherness. [145]

Cemevis also have an image for the Alevis, because they represent that the existence of the Alevis in a physical way. Yalçınkaya writes that the Alevis had an existence problem, but after that it transforms to how they are going to be exist. In this perspective, Cemevis become a way of expression for the Alevis themselves. Space has a symbolic meaning to prove the power of a group or individual, and also this meaning of space unifies people.[146] Moreover, people have a relationship with

[142] Erdal Yıldırım, "Cemevleri ve Cemevlerinin Dini ve Toplumsal Fonksiyonları," *AIBU Journal of Social Sciences*, Vol.12, (Autumn 2012), p.172.

[143]Ibid.,p.172.

[144]Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri," p.91.

[145]Ömer Kara, "İstanbul'da Alevi Vakıf ve Dernekleri," (MA thesis, Marmara Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, 2003) p. 45, Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri," p.91.

[146] Yıldırım, "Cemevleri," p. 167.

space. They benefit from it in order to re-identify themselves, and when space represents identity, it also provides continuity of identity.[147]

The last general points about the function of Cemevis can be explained as overlapping needs. For instance, the Cem is the most important and basic ritual of the Alevis, and Cemevis are used to perform and to respond to this need in the first place. Therefore, Cemevis become a space for Alevi people where they can come together and perform their collective rituals.[148]

The practice of sacrifice is based on a story of the Prophet Ibrahim and its sacrificing wow for his son.[149] Sacrifice has a place both in the Sunni faith and Alevi faith, but the Alevis make sacrifices their wow not only in the Sacrifice *Bayram*, but also anyday except for during the twelve day in Muharrem as Sunnis do. Moreover, the most important issue is the distribution of *kurban* to everybody in the community equally.[150]

Lokma has a crucial situation for the Alevis, because it refers to sharing understanding in the Alevi faith. Therefore, when they share their food, fruit or any kind of food and they call it "lokma."[151]

Alevi funerals are different from Sunni funerals in terms of their practices during and after funerals. For instance, after the funeral, relatives of dead person want consent from the community and thus, they have to come together within a special Cem practice.[152] During my interviews, I witnessed this issue mostly, because

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[147] Ibid.,p.167.

[148] Ibid.,p.170.

[149] Yılmaz, "Türkiye'de Cemevleri," p.77.

[150] Ibid.,p.77.

[151] Eröz, *Türkiye'de Alevilik*, p. 303.

before the building of the Cemevis, funerals were a problem. Sunni imams do not accept their dead, and people have to do that in their gardens, in the case of Gazi,. Therefore, after the emergence of Cemevis, the Alevis become able to perform their funerals in their own way.

The Alevis have requirements for practicing their faith, and the emergences of Cemevis met this need. When the Alevis live in rural areas, they could not need a stable space for their needs. However, when they migrate to cities, they could not find a place to come together. In this point Cemevis are emerged to response their needs with the rising of Alevi movement in the 1990s.

This chapter provided a definition of Cemevis, their process of emergence and function from a general perspective. It was noted that every Cemevi has its own case. I will analyze and discuss the case of Gazi Mahallesi.

From this point of view, I claim that Alevilik has a fragmented condition and this fragmentation influences everything in this faith and organization. The Cemevis are one of the most important examples to observe this situation of Alevilik.

In the next chapter, my aim is to show this fragmented situation in the case of three Cemevis in one neighborhood. First, I am going to analyze their building process and then functions in the neighborhood and after that I am going to explain the reason why they have fragmented. Together with this presupposition, some particular reasons which are derived from the neighborhood will be explained. That's why before to continue explanation of three Cemevis, I am going to explain the Gazi Mahallesi with its historical background and ethnography.

[152] İsmail Kaygusuz*, Alevilikte Dar: Darın Pirleri* (İstanbul: Alev Yayınevi, 1993), p. 81.

CHAPTER THREE

GAZI MAHALLESI

As mentioned above, this study examines the Alevi fragmentation in general and its indications in Gazi Mahallesi within three Cemevis in particular. First of all, Gazi Mahallesi and its history of construction will be analyzed in this part. This neighborhood was chosen to be the subject of this thesis due to its social, political and religious status. Gazi Mahallesi is an Alevi district for some, a Kurdish district for others, and also a leftist district for still some others. Sometimes these three definitions are used to define for the neighborhood. Today, Gazi is the most beautiful place for most people who are living there and also a place where they feel a sense of belonging. However, Gazi Mahallesi, for people who do not live there, is perceived as a totally different world and dangerous place.[153]

To Present Gazi

Today, Gazi Mahallesi is a part of Sultangazi municipality. Until 2008, it was a district in İstanbul-Gaziosmanpaşa municipality. This separation and unification is not a first for Gazi Mahallesi. Likewise, It has been through these processes throughout its historical development.

Firstly, Gazi is located in Atatürk Çiftliği which was a place designated for Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself. In 1973, Atatürk Çiftliği started to be called Gazi Mahallesi. Gazi comes from the name of "Gazi" Mustafa Kemal. When this neighborhood gained its political and legal status its name was changed. After the population boom around the area as well as the unmanageable status of the

[153] The definition or identification of Gazi Mahallesi will be explained in next section more deptly.

neighborhood have entailed a division for Gazi Mahallesi, and it became Gazi Mahallesi and Zübeyde Hanım Mahallesi in 1984. This new establishment was also named after Mustafa Kemal`s mother.

Afterwards, these two neighborhoods were separated again, and Gazi Mahallesi had become "Gazi, Yunus Emre, 75.yıl[154] and Zübeyde Hanım."[155] In other words, Gazi is not a legal bureaucratic name of the place analyzed in my thesis. Rather, it's the name that represents a place that is preferred by its inhabitants. According to Perouse this shows the conflict between administrative unit and people's everyday life.[156]

What the Gecekondu Literature Says?

It is crucial that first Gazi`s construction process and historical development need to be understood before Gazi's social profile. This process has similarities with other neighborhoods. Actually, the history and story of Gazi are the same on 1 Mayıs, Küçük Armutlu, and Kuştepe so on.[157] However, there are also important differential points in this story which will be explained further within the context of "*gecekondu* literature."

After the Second World War, Turkey was confronted with migration process from inside of Anatolia to big cities, like İstanbul, Ankara, and İzmir. Population growth and agricultural modernization have contributed to big cities becoming

[154] It comes from the republic 75th anniversary.

[155]Jean-François Perouse, *İstanbulla Yüzleşme Denemeleri: Çeperler, Hareketlilik ve Kentsel Bellek (*İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları, 2011), p.71.

[156]Ibid.,p.80.

[157]The other gecekondu neighbourhoods.

attraction centers. According to İlhan Tekeli "until 1949 there were only 5000 gecekondu in Istanbul, but after the migration this number increased."[158]

1928-1960 is the first phrase of gecekondu literature and Ekmel Zadil[159] conducted the first study about issues concerning gecekondus in 1949. Actually, in 1950-the 1960s, both the state and the republican elite tried to conduct a planned urbanization. However, an unplanned urbanization already been created by both population growth and migration. Another issue is that political elite did not prevent the unplanned urbanization due to political concerns.[160] Therefore, this situation turned into a vicious circle which couldn't have been stopped. In this period, Zeytinburnu district emerged as the oldest gecekondu district.[161]

The second period of the gecekondu literature, which is also known as the booster period of gecekondu construction, occurred between the 1960s-1980s. Many districts emerged during this period. Those neighborhoods have the same stories in general perspective, but also they have different points as well. So, Gazi Mahallesi, 1 Mayıs Mahallesi and some others are an examples of this period. Mostly, working class people inhabited in these subsequent districts, because these places emerged after the industrialization period of Turkey.

Between the 1980s-2000s is the third phrase of the gecekondu literature which has explained as the transformation process from gecekondus to flats. Tansı Şenyapılı who is an urban planner, is one of the first scholar conducting a study

[158] İlhan Tekeli, "Türkiye'de Cumhuriyet Döneminde Kentsel Gelişme ve Kent Planlaması", p.4

[159] Ekmel Zadil was a student of Gerhard Kessler who was also a research assistant in Istanbul University. The name of his study is "İstanbul'da Mesken Meseleleri ve Gecekondular."

[160] Political concern means that voting expectations from these district in return.

[161] Deniz Yonucu, "A Story of Squatter Neighbourhood: From the Place of the "dangerous classes" to the "place of danger," *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*, Vol.52, (2008), p.50.

entitled *"Cumhuriyetin 75. yılı, Gecekondunun 50. yılı"* regarding this issue.[162] Even today, this phase is an ongoing process for many neighborhoods that gecekondu*s* and flats concurrently exist in these districts.

The history of Gazi Mahallesi is not only a story about gecekondu district but it is also about cultural, social and religious networks and identity of Gazi. However, the construction of Gazi Mahallesi has similarities with the urbanization and migration process of Turkey. The construction of the districts is unique for each of them, but in macro perspective they have shown similarities. Therefore, from this point of view, the facts regarding the history of Gazi Mahallesi within its general and unique aspects will be further explained.

History of Gazi Mahallesi

First Settlers

Gazi Mahallesi is located in a place which was called Atatürk Çiftliği until 1973. Mustafa Kemal was owner of this place, but he allocated this land for Muslim Bulgarian migrants. According to Cevat Geray, between 1923-1938, 180,979 Bulgarian immigrants[163] migrated to Turkey. The state designated places for their settlement. The Atatürk Çiftliği was one of those settlements.

However, it did not take a long time, because Bulgarian immigrants mowed away from this neighborhood. When discussed this issue with Muhtar[164], he said that

[162]Tansı Şenyapılı, *Cumhuriyetin 75.yılı, Gecekondunun 50.Yılı,* pp.301-302.

[163]Cevat Geray,"Urbanization in Turkey," *Siyasal Bilgiler Fakültesi Dergisi,* no.XXIV, 1970.

[164]The Muhtar of Gazi Mahallesi-Nevzat Altun- gives me many inspiration points and thanks to him, I can reach the formal and also informal information. Formal information comes from his status, but he also provides to me informal information, because he has an agency to establishment of Gazi Mahallesi, because he has been living there since 1970.

"we did not know why they left here, but their graves prove they were here." Although the Muhtar claimed that this land was allocated to Bulgarian immigrants by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, Perouse said another story about this neighborhood.[165] He started the history of Gazi Mahallesi in the 1950s, "Gazi born in the beginning of the 1950s, with the settlement of Muslim immigrants from Bulgaria by the state. They were located in a periphery which is in European side of Istanbul."[166] Even the unclear date of Bulgarian settlements, they were the first to settle this place.

Essential Components Arrived

However, today, the identity of Gazi Mahallesi cannot be understood with this beginning. For this reason, the historical development of the migration from different parts of Anatolia will be further explained in order to shed some light into this matter. In this sense, Gazi Mahallesi emerged at the end of the 1960s with migration from rural to urban areas. This migration has started from Black Sea region, but it was limited. A certain number of people came from central Anatolia and eastern parts like Tokat, Sivas, and Dersim (Tunceli, Elazığ, Erzincan). Actually, people had come from different places to Gazi, and Muhtar said that people of Gazi came here from 81 cities of Turkey, but he also added that the majority of them were Alevi inhabitants.

The essential elements of Gazi are Alevi inhabitants for consisting the majority of the population in this area, and they came late the 1960s and early the 1970s. This gives us a clue about the identity of the neighborhood. In addition, according to the explanation of sociologist Alim Arlı; "migration is not just a

[165]Nevzat Altun, interview by the author, İstanbul, Turkey, 10February 2015.

[166] Perouse, *İstanbul'la Yüzleşme,* p.78.

movement of replacement, at the same time it is a movement of social and cultural transformation."[167] I mean, the migration of Bulgarians or Black Sea people did not have any influence on the neighborhood, but the Alevi people emerged and defined the identity of Gazi.

Therefore, the history of Gazi Mahallesi started in late the 1960s and early the 1970s with the migration of Anatolian Alevis. Actually, this history has a similarity with other gecekondu narratives and also urbanization reasons. The standard one tells us that many people came to İstanbul in order to find jobs, because agriculture was not enough to earn their life. Ruşen Keleş says that "there are some push factors for peasants to migration; such as lack of productivity, modernization of agriculture, inadequate land and income."[168] In addition to this, industrialization was a pull factor for migrants. According to Keleş, "between the years of 1950-1965, rural population was decreasing from 84 percent to 75 percent, when urban population increased from 8 percent to 12 percent."[169] These pull and push factors tell us something about the reason why people come İstanbul. It had-actually still has-attraction for people to migrate here.

Another issue is about that how did these people come here and that how did they construct their houses? Şükrü Aslan explains the story of the district of 1 Mayıs; "it is shaped by settlement efforts which is based on informal networks."[170] People followed each other to come İstanbul. For example Muhtar said that; "we were 5 brothers and all of us come here and this is a general story for everyone in here. I

[167]Alim Arlı, "Cumhuriyet Döneminde Türkiye'de Şehirleşme ve Gecekondu Araştırmaları," *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi,* vol.3 no.6, 2005, p. 289.

[168] Ruşen Keleş, *Türkiye'de Şehirleşme, Konut ve Gecekondu* (İstanbul: Gerçek Yayınevi, 1972), p.37.

[169]Ibid.,p.38.

[170]Şükrü Aslan, *1Mayıs*, p.87.

mean everybody followed each other, like a brother, a relative or a *hemşehri*." Therefore, people who were migrated to Gazi Mahallesi followed a connection, and they created a network with these relations. After they arrived, they started to construct a house for themselves, because they came to empty lands.

Therefore, people came to the neighborhood and then they built their houses with collective work. The migration network and collective construction have a similarity with many gecekondu neighborhoods. During the formation of district of 1 Mayıs, people constituted an association[171] and they participated in this process with their agencies. Gazi Mahallesi was also the product of the same process. Again the explanation of Muhtar, he said that

> Everybody constructed this neighborhood, I did, he did, and my mother did. We were young at that time and we did not work only our construction, we helped others too, and also they helped to us. This neighborhood emerged with a collective work, solidarity and togetherness.

Besides that, leftist groups also had important contributions to this process, because they helped people with the construction by applying their own experiences and theoretical backgrounds. Şükrü Aslan mentions about an urban planning process in his book that professors came to neighborhood in order to help its planning with their students who were members of the leftist groups.[172]

I could not find any documents about Gazi Mahallesi and its history, but I interviewed people who witnessed to construction process like Muhtar and the head of the Cemevi. Two of them said the same story, leftist group helped us, even they did not share the same way[173], and head of the Cemevi added that "you could not see

[171] Halk Komitesi.

[172] Ibid.,p.119.

[173] There is no only one fraction even in that time in Gazi Mahallesi,Muhtar mentioned about three of them that helped people to construct their home.

this kind of a broad street anywhere of İstanbul, they helped us to do that within a plan." The another important point of this influence of leftist group is that people have sympathy to them even today and this is one of the reason why leftist groups are powerful in Gazi.

Another important issue about the Gazi Mahallesi is that the neighborhood was not the first settlement for immigrants. Immigrants kept migrating other parts of İstanbul after that they came to Gazi. Their first place was also a gecekondu neighborhood, but they could not find a land to construct their own, and they chose another place with empty lands like Gazi. Muhtar said his own story,

> We came Istanbul, Eyüp first, but after that like a year later, we came to Gazi Mahallesi to construct our home, and also there were many people in Gazi like us. Many people were the Alevis that came from Anatolia. We found where we belong.

This is an important anecdote for me to understand that what makes different Gazi from other neighborhoods. To come here for empty land is a practical reason, but there are some other reasons to settle here such as similarities among neighborhood and rural area, and Alevi historicity[174] which define their sense belonging to the neighborhood.

The Reasons to Choose Gazi

Similarity between rural area and neighborhood is the most important reason why immigrants to choose this region. Because they can use their rural experience, feeding animal, cultivation, during their orientation process to urban, and new living space. In other words, they did not attempt to become urbanized; they needed to

[174] I really appreciate Deniz Yonucu and her support, thanks to her and our discussion make possibıle this conceptualizing.

survive in the urban. One of my interviewers mentioned this similarity between his village and Gazi Mahallesi and he said that, "I easily got used to living here, because it was green like my village and also there were people from my village. Owing to these things, I did not miss my village as much, and I feel like I belong here like I used to belong my village."

In accordance with my own observation, today Gazi Mahallesi does not solely consist of a shantytown; many people are living in flats. However, the place which is called the last station -end of Gazi Mahallesi- has shantytowns from the first immigrants. Nowadays, these shantytowns are rented by new immigrants who are cultivating their yards and that also have chicken coops in their gardens. Therefore, new immigrants and previous ones have been replaced and the position of neighborhood which is between rural and urban is reproduced by this replacement. This is a reason to choose this place for immigrants, but also continuity of this attitude is entailed unplanned urbanization.

According to sociologist and anthropologist Mübeccel Kıray, similarity and unclear distinction between rural and urban area is related with unorganized condition of neighborhoods.[175] Moreover, like the claim has been made by Keleş, "it does not mean that urban spaces become rural,"[176] this is just about being in between rural and urban. One of my interviewers has stated that he did not perceive himself as a city-dweller or as a villager but somewhere in the middle.

The other reason why I chose this region pertains to the Alevi historicity which was mentioned by almost everybody. The Alevi immigrants who came from their villages to remote places, and their villages also located like this kind of a place.

[175] Mübeccel Kıray, "Azgelişmiş Ülkelerde Metropolitenleşme Süreçleri," 75. Yılda Değişen Kent ve Mimarlık (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), pp.99-101.

[176] Keleş, *Türkiye'de Şehirleşme*, p.41.

Historically, the Alevi people chose places which were either in the wilderness and remote or an area between two mountains due to fear and a need of preservation.[177] These sorts of concerns became important factors for them in terms of choosing their new life spaces. Afterwards, they constructed their spaces. As a matter of fact, people did not construct neighborhood only, they also improve their belonging, solidarity and coexistence along with this process. According to Hakan Yücel,[178] and his quotation from Depaule, "neighborhood is a source for identity, and it involves spatial symbols and codes. Therefore, people produce the space with their style and existence."[179]

Namely, Gazi Mahallesi emerged as a neighborhood after this process and then met with its identity. Migration and construction process have similarities with others, but the uniqueness of Gazi is its identity and continuity of it. Many things have changed after the 1980s, but the configuration and atmosphere of Gazi hasn't change. When they had missed their hometown, now Gazi became their hometown.

Transformation Period from Gecekondu to Flats

As mentioned above, Gazi Mahallesi has been confronted with a transformation process after the 1980s, and actually between the years of 1985-1988[180] due to the acquisition of ownership certificate for their gecekondus. Then the transformation has started. According to Keleş, these ownership certificates are a

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[177] This issue is explained in chapter 1.

[178] He is a scholar who makes his PHD about Gazi Mahallesi.

[179]This is a quotation from Hakan Yücel's presentation about Gazi Youth.

[180]Perouse, *İstanbul'la Yüzleşme*, p.80.

way of legitimizing for gecekondu properties[181] and the state legitimize the de facto issue. Like the third phase of gecekondu, transformation from gecekondu to flats is also a common issue in Gazi. Today, in the backstage and last station of the neighborhood have gecekondus in a large space, because they do not have ownership certificates. One of young person from Gazi claimed that, "people want to live in a flat and also they wanted to earn money from rent, because if they give their gecekondu to a building contractor, they will gain three more houses."[182]

NewComers: Non-Alevi Kurdish People

After the 1980s and transformation period, in the 1990s, Gazi experienced another migration period from eastern and south eastern parts of Anatolia. The evacuation of Kurdish villages was the reason for this migration, and especially many Kurdish people came from Şırnak to Gazi. Although there was not a spatial-ethnic/religious or spatial-hometown related settlement in Gazi, after the 1990s Kurdish people chose the same place to settle. Today, people said that, Kurdish people live there. [183] Even though I referred to them as Kurdish people, the Muhtar and other people from Gazi Mahallesi refer to them as Shafii.[184] Older Alevi settlers created this identification according to their position. They do not perceive them as Kurdish people, but as Shafii and this has been emphasized strongly.

[181]Keleş, *Türkiye'de Şehirleşme*, p.117.

[182] E.K. interviewed by the author, noted in notebook, 10 January 2015.

[183] They lived in Zübeyde Hanım neighbourhood.

[184]It is a sect of Islam.

The Latest Migrants; The Syrians

After all these local migration, Gazi has received refugees from Syria. Syrians are newcomers to this neighborhood and this is not a strange situation for Gazi, it is a common occurrence in Turkey. In Gazi`s case, there is not a certain number[185]. The Muhtar tries to have them registered by providing subsidization to them. This is also important for the history of Gazi Mahallesi, because the Syrians have created new perspective for the Alevis. After this migration, they have realized that there are Alevis in other countries.

Finally, I attempt to mention about the every historical moments about Gazi Mahallesi, because all of them had an influence on its identification as well as where Gazi stands today. Collectivity, the support of the leftist groups, coming from rural areas and being Alevi are the important issues that establish the neighborhood. Moreover, their confrontation with Kurdish and non-Alevi or faced with non-Turkish Alevi people are also crucial points to understand Gazi Mahallesi as a whole.

Today, I cannot say that Gazi Mahallesi is a gecekondu slum, but nor can I say that there are no gecekondus in Gazi. It is a whole another world for people who live there, because being a member of the neighborhood is an identity. This identity has been established with all of items mentioned above. However, being Alevi is an essential requirement for becoming a member of this neighborhood. Because all newcomers are identified by this aspect. Even the leftist groups that reestablished their political position through this identity, because they know that Alevi discourse is advantageous in this particular neighborhood.

[185]Approximately 300 people.

In final point, I analyzed Gazi Mahallesi of which historical development explained above within the Alevi identity perspective. After the historical establishment of neighborhood, I will explain my observations of Gazi Mahallesi from an ethnographic perspective.

Ethnography of Gazi Mahallesi

In this part of the research, I analyze Gazi Mahallesi by means of the ethnographic method. When I talked about my research's field to my classmates, friends, and even the professor, many of them gave the same reaction. "How are you going to get there?" I was really surprised by that question, because they were all influenced by the belief of Gazi Mahallesi in which has emerged as a dangerous place. After that, I gave people some credit, because all they know about Gazi has been taught by the media. When I was looking at the newspapers, Gazi was shown as a violent and dangerous neighborhood. I cannot claim that Gazi is the most peaceful place.

However, the image of danger and fear does not represent Gazi Mahallesi either. People identify places such as Gazi, Okmeydanı, Küçük Armutlu with what they are not familiar with as dangerous places. For instance, Yonucu mentions that people became aware of Gazi Mahallesi after the Gazi Ordeal of 1995.[186] She adds comments from journalists "This place is a separate world. Is here Istanbul?.. Is here

[186] "There had been clashes between the police and Alevis, demonstrators in the Gazi neighborhood of Istanbul, where mostly low-income Alevi people live, in March 1995. In the evening of March 12, unknown gunmen riddled five coffee houses which the Alevis frequent, with bullets, killing one and wounding numerous people. The next day, young people of Gazi neighborhood took to the streets in protest, and they were soon reinforced by different groups that came to support the people of Gazi. That night the police shot one demonstrator. The rioting continued the following days and the police, who went completely out of control, shot into the crowds and killed another 15 persons." (quoted by Yonucu from Durai 1995:5).

inside Istanbul?" [187][188] Unknown and different places are identified in a negative meaning which can be also understood by the question I once was "how are you going to get there?"

However, I examine Gazi Mahallesi from its ethnographer perspective. I do not praise or criticize it. I spent more than four months in the neighborhood, collecting plenty of information, experiencing the place and observing both everyday life and extreme events. In the light of these experiences, I was confronted with the issue how to represent Gazi Mahallesi in my research. It is not only a subject to my research, but also it is a subject with its all dynamics. Therefore, within this contradiction, I decided to describe all my experiences and observations about Gazi Mahallesi. I put the residents at the center of this research through the qualitative research technique. It would provide me, as a researcher, with the chance to hear the residents' positions and identification of their own living spaces.

Besides that, the identification of Gazi is a problem for me, because it does not fit the slum, ghetto or gecekondu literature completely. Even though it has similarities with gecekondu literature, I could not identify it as a gecekondu neighborhood. The identification of Gazi as a slum does not fit either.

According to Doğu, "in the shortage of resources and incomes, migrant were forced to build their own environment where they tried to adapt to urban nature of cities whilst retaining strong ties with villages."[189] Likewise, Doğu adds that "forming their illegal homogenous communities, slum dwellers are excluded from

[187] Milliyet, 15 Mart 1995.

[188] Yonucu, "A Story of a Squatter," p. 3.

[189] Tuba Doğu, *In Search For Upgrading Slum Settlements in Turkey: Sustainable Housing Strategies in Low-income Communities* (Saarbrücken: LAP, 2012), pp.7-8.

many of the attributes of urban life that are critical to full citizenship."[190] Moreover, she writes that "living in a gecekondu is mostly problematic, as sanitary facilities are poor and basic municipal services are lacking due to their illegal formations."[191]

In the light of this information, I claim that Gazi cannot be understood within the framework on slum literature. I mean, Gazi can confront with many difficulties, but the reason for the lack of transportation or exclusion do not only related to its settlement character. I argue that its condition is mostly regarding with characteristic and position of the neighborhood such as its political atmosphere, demographic structure. At the same time, I also could not argue that Gazi is excluded from the city.

Namely, it should not be understood as a ghetto which as Wacquant writes "can be characterized ideal-typically as a bounded, ethnically uniform socio spatial formation born of forcible relegation of a negatively typed population to reserved territory."[192] Moreover, Wacquant adds that "first, one must stress that the ghetto is not simply a topographic entity or an aggregation of poor families and individuals but an institutional form, that is, a distinctive, spatially based, concentration of mechanisms of ethno racial closure and control."[193] Therefore, Gazi can be seen as a ghetto easily because of its demographic and isolated position, yet I follow Wacquant's warning which is that "one must resist the tendency to treat the ghetto as

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[190]Ibid.,p.8.

[191] Ibid.,p.9.

[192]Loic J. D. Wacquant, *Urban Outcasts: a comparative sociology of advanced marginality* (Cambridge: Malden, MA: Polity, 2008.) p.49.

[193] Ibid.,p. 49.

an alien space, to see it only what deviates from common norm, in short exoticize it."[194]

As a result of that, I realized Gazi is a unique case and the slum, gecekondu or ghetto literatures do not provide a comprehensive identification for the neighborhood. Therefore, I analyze Gazi Mahallesi as a unique case and represent it with my own observations and experiences.

However, I try to scrutinize Gazi Mahallesi from an ethnographer perspective, and I do not aim to praise or criticize to it. I spent more than four months in the neighborhood, and I collected information, experienced the neighborhood, and observed both everyday life and extreme events. In light of these experiences, I confronted an issue which is like how am I going to represent Gazi Mahallesi in my research. It is an object for my research, but also it is a subject with its all dynamics. Therefore, within this contradiction, I decided to describe and indicate all my experiences and observations about Gazi Mahallesi, but I put the residents at the center of this research through the qualitative research technique. It would provide me, as a researcher, with the chance to hear residents' position and identification for their own living spaces.

My research is based on mostly informal interviews with the people of Gazi. Although I conducted the semi-structured in-depth interviews with certain people, I also benefited from people from neighborhood, like owners of shops, with women in the shopping, with a young in a cafe, who I encounter with them on my fieldwork. I have felt necessity for hear people's own voice and narrating, that's why for the ethnography chapter, I asked open-ended questions. However, the most of them were as a conversation between me and a dweller of Gazi.

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[194]Ibid., p.49.

After the research period, I decided to transmit Gazi Mahallesi within some specific categories which are also help to understand of its characteristic. That's why in first place, I choose to identify the meaning of "being from Gazi," and then difficulties in the accessibility of people and neighborhood, the political atmosphere of Gazi and the meaning of Gazi as a living space will be explained.

Being from Gazi[195]

Before explaining my experience with Gazi, I had confronted with a problem how am I going to call Gazi? It is a neighborhood that doesn't maintain any common characteristics with others we already know. It has its own way of life with political atmosphere, demographic structure, and their lifestyle. I cannot say that Gazi is outside of Istanbul, but I also cannot say it is inside it. The reason why is that Gazi has a different culture, there is a common understanding like "being from Gazi." I asked my interviewees how they define or explain the neighborhood. Almost all of them said the same thing "whatever I say, you cannot understand the feeling to being from here."

Actually, there is not one thing to define the "being from Gazi" phenomenon, and probably, all of the other parts of this section contain information regarding this matter. For people who are from Gazi the meaning of "being from Gazi" is something to cannot be understood by an outsider. However, "being from Gazi" represent sense of belonging to the neighborhood and creates a collective feeling among the people.

[195] "Gazili olmak".

Therefore, “being from Gazi” is a large concept for this section and I would like to ended it here, because the following parts have an influence over it and also refer to it. I mean, the meaning of “being from Gazi” can be inferred throughout the section.

The Accessibility of People and the Neighborhood

Before starting my fieldwork, I conducted a preliminary research in the neighborhood by visiting it, meeting and talking with the people. After the preliminary research, I realized that they shape their own life there as a community life and they do not want to open it up to outsiders, unless it is needed. Because of the “being from Gazi” phenomenon, they think that nobody can understand their life or position in society. The most difficult thing for me was being an outsider, because my interviewees were not open to me due to my position. However, if you have a connection from the neighborhood, they can be more open to you. Thus, the first thing I had worked on concerning the solution to this problem was to finding a connection from the neighborhood. Thanks to my connection, I was provided to access many places and people.

Actually, there is another issue before to access to people from Gazi, which was access to Gazi Mahallesi. I went to Gazi with two buses or *dolmuş*[196] from various major neighborhoods of Istanbul (Mecidiyeköy, Taksim, Eminönü, Beyazıd). There are plenty of options for commuting there, but many times the buses do not

[196]A transportation vehicle which is smaller than bus, and bigger than a taxi.

travel through the neighborhood.[197] Many times I had to walk with other people from the entrance of Gazi to my destination.

The buses do not travel into the neighborhood, because of political activities. I asked about the situation to a driver and he said that nobody wants to work in Gazi Mahallesi. There is political activity occurring every other day and İETT[198] sends them a text message in order to warn the bus drivers. The message is clear and says that there is a protest in the neighborhood. If a driver enters and the bus is damaged, he has to pay for it. He added that, no drivers want to take the risk. Therefore, during my all field work, I can access to Gazi rarely by bus. Even though there is not protest and demonstration, busses do not enter the neighborhood. The text message was enough warning for drivers to stop their bus by the entrance of Gazi.

Political Atmosphere

After my procedural problems, the political atmosphere which is a determinative characteristic of Gazi will be analyzed. First of all, Gazi is known for its political situation. As discussed above, there has been active leftist organizations in Gazi since it was established. Almost all of the leftist political organizations in Turkey have branches there. From the establishment of the neighborhood there has been an intense political atmosphere there.

The political situation, activities, expressions, agendas, and variety, of the neighborhood can be seen clearly from the walls on the streets. From the entrance to the last station, every wall, main or side ones, is used as a space for leftist

[197] The busses stop in the entrance of the Gazi, and people have to walk from there to even the last station which takes almost 30 minutes.

[198]The central transformation secretary of government.

organizations to write their slogans, mottos and emblems.[199] In my first visit, I walked around the neighborhood thoroughly. I felt like I was walking in an open-air exhibition about the leftist political organizations. From the entrance to the last station, red flags are put in every one meters in the streets. Big posters, big flags of leftists groups, their slogans with their emblems were all over the walls visually representing the political atmosphere of Gazi.

The contents of posts and street writings changes according to the political agenda of the organizations or agenda of Turkey or world politics. They post or write on the wall for their traditional events, or current issues.[200] For instance, a person from Gazi said that "the inhabitants of Gazi can feel the sorrow of people who are from even the other side of world. Because we have responsibilities to people."In addition to that, the reason for this was shown as people like to resist, because they have nothing to lose; moreover, they feel themselves as others of other[201].

In addition to that, I asked the older dweller of Gazi about the reason for the political atmosphere, and he said that

> People established the neighborhood themselves;[202] there were no water, electricity, or other facilities. We had to walk to our jobs or to the city centers in order to find a bus. The state did not provide them to us, we had to create new ways for transportation. We made demonstrations to demand facilities and transportation. These were our basic needs, and today our new generations demanding for their own basic needs; freedom. They saw their parents, and listened to their stories, now they are doing the same things.

[199] I am going to put pictures from the neighbourhood in Appendix.

[200]One of the most interesting wall posting was related with both Gezi uprising, Berkin Elvan and Gazi Ordeal together. *Gazi'den Gezi'ye direnişte, Berkin Elvan ölümsüzdür!*

[201] Çağıl Kasapoğlu, "Gezi Eylemleri Gazi Mahallesini Nasıl Etkiledi? http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2013/06/130608_gazi_cagil_izlenim.

[202] This is a similar story with gecekondu literature which is also explained in the first section of this chapter.

In other words, experiences are passing from the older generation to younger one, but also the new changes and demands reinforce the political atmosphere. Relations among generations and experience sharing preserve the neighborhood's characteristic as well.

The influence of leftist organizations is seen every part of the neighborhood. This political atmosphere and sensibility of issues are causing people to protest every other in this neighborhood. I have observed just a few protests in Gazi, and they were not the same with protests in Taksim, or Kadıköy. People protest their demands in these two centers generally with posters and slogans. Even when the police try to stop demonstration, they do it just two or three "Toma." However, In Gazi, there is a widespread understanding that the level of police violence in this neighborhood is much higher than in similar demonstration incidences elsewhere in the city. In order to resist against the police violence, activists started to use the real weapons against the police. One of inhabitant from Gazi said that, actually they did not use weapon, but they improve their methods which are using real weapon to resist the police power. An article in the newspaper mentions about the methods of police

> People are watching the demonstration in Gazi Mahallesi on TV, can easily realize that it is not the police that protestants fight against on the streets. Police interventions are done by "Toma" and "Akrep"-which are vehicles-. These vehicles are used in order to destroy barricades, and as a proof of their power trip. This claim can be seen unreal, but you can learn the details from the inhabitants.[203]

Political atmosphere does not only determine the date or style of protests but also influence the name of the places. There are two conditions regarding this issue. One of them is that the local municipality denominates the places with the important figures for Alevi history. For instance they denominated the forest entrances as Aşık

[203]Eren Gürleyük, "Gazi Mahallesi'nde Bir Garip Akrep." http://blog.radikal.com.tr/turkiye-gundemi/gazi-mahallesinde-bir-garip-akrep-62073.

Veysel, or Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli to protect the places against the damages may have been caused during protests. For instance, a youngster who is a member of leftist organizations mentions about their action against to municipality's action. She said that

> Municipality created a forest in the neighborhood and then it has been privatized. We decided to destroy the baffle gates, but there were three entrances for the forest. They denominated two of them with the important figures of Alevi history. We did not prefer to destroy the first two, but we burnt the third one.

On the contrary, people also do not prefer to use the name which is denominated by municipality if they do not like. That's why they call Gazi Mahallesi for all of the neighborhoods.[204] In addition to that, they do not prefer to utilize the name of the bus station which was assigned by the government.[205]

Another issue is related to the places where the protests start and where they go. There are three main points to them which are called as old police station, the new police station and the Cemevi which is located in the center of the neighborhood. According to my observation, people choose old police station to start their demonstration and then they aim to reach new one.

The location of the old police station is the entrance of the neighborhood, and the new one is close to last bus stop on the main street in the neighborhood. That's why; people want to declare themselves and their demand throughout the neighborhood. However, many times they cannot reach their destinations, because mainly police would establish a block.

Therefore, demonstrations and political violence emerge at the center of the neighborhood, which is in front of the Cemevi. I do not know why, but one of my

[204] This is mentioned in history of Gazi Mahallesi.

[205]For instance, the name of a bus station is changed after the murder of Özgecan Aslan. (see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murder_of_%C3%96zgecan_Aslan).

interviewees said that "we believe that Cemevi is ours even we do not go there. We have done many demonstrations inside and outside of the Cemevi. If something is happens outside of the Cemevi, we know that we can go inside immediately." Also, I found out the same things during my interview with the Muhtar. He said that in 1995, people gathered outside of the Cemevi. Moreover, people staged hunger strikes inside the Cemevi.

When I referred to people, I do not mean every person in Gazi since not everybody participates in the protests. However, storeowners and inhabitants show their support to demonstrations. For instance, when there is a planned demonstrations, members of the leftist organizations usually inform the storeowners, and they close their stores to show their support. Even during the unplanned demonstrations, storeowners close their shops. It may be interpreted as if the storeowners are afraid of the protests, but it is actually a way of showing their support to them.[206]

I was also curious about the behavior patterns and reactions that the inhabitants of Gazi Mahallesi experience, because, living in a neighborhood with a political violence and its ramifications must have been annoying for these people. When I had conversations- not interviews- with women from the neighborhood, I was told that they believed the protests were only to protect their neighborhood. “We are living with the police all the time. If our youngs do not resist, we will feel the oppression much more.” One of them added that

> we all know to living in another place can be easier, but we established a neighborhood here which is representing us, and our culture. That’s why demonstrations are not annoying for us, but we know that we annoy the state and the government.

[206]According to interviewee’s comment.

Another attitude of the dwellers during the demonstrations change is that they do not lock their doors. The reason of that if the demonstrators need some things and somewhere to hide, they can find a door. [207]

Above, I discussed the life in Gazi, but also there is another side of it like being from Gazi outside of Gazi.

Being from Gazi in Outside

This issue has important impact on their youth during job interviews. Both in the newspapers and also in my findings based on interviews, people said that they will not have a chance find a job, if companies ever look into their addresses. One of them explained that "We all know that we won`t get the jobs because of our addresses. That's why we use the counterfeit addresses or other people`s addresses who live outside of Gazi. Another remarkable example is that one of my friend who is living in Gaziosmanpaşa -a neighborhood with no relation with Gazi- and during her interview for the ministry of finance in Ankara, interviewers asked her whether she lived in Gazi Mahallesi. Although she explained the difference between her neighborhood and Gazi, they were not convinced and she felt that she lost the job solely because of this. This shows that bureaucrats in Ankara, managers in companies are very aware of this neighborhood as a dangerous place.

Therefore, being from Gazi has a meaning both inside the neighborhood and outside as well. Obviously, the outside meaning causes discrimination against people. Job interviews are one of them, and other things is people's behaviour against a person from Gazi. When I was studying in a district library, one of the

[207]Çağıl Kasapoğlu, "Gezi Eylemleri Gazi Mahallesini Nasıl Etkiledi?" http://www.bbc.co.uk/turkce/haberler/2013/06/130608_gazi_cagil_izlenim.

personnel is from Gazi Mahallesi. I did not speak with him, but I witnessed to conversation among workers. The manager of library was asking the addresses of other personnel's.[208] When the personnel told his address, others started to ask questions, "How can you live with terrorist?" After they continued, if you can live with them, you can be like them and so on. I realized that they were working together for a long time, and they also knew that where he is from. I decided that he confronted the same questions and reaction all the time. I just witnessed one of them.

These are just a few examples from outside of Gazi for Gazi inhabitants. However, these and others make me think about that Gazi people created their own living space in Gazi Mahallesi. Many of interviewees said that they feel themselves safe in Gazi more than any places. Therefore, they want to save here as how it is. Because of that the most terrifying thing for them is not police or political violence. They feel fear from the urban transformation. The urban transformation issue comes up every year, and after that people come together to protect their neighborhood. It has not occurred until now, but even its rumor seems enough to gather people together. According to them, preserving the neighborhood means that preserving their living space.

Gazi as a Living Space

As discussed above, people have emerged a living space in Gazi in their own ways. So the most important finding about this issue can be seen its cafes.[209] There are almost 10 cafes in the neighborhood I visited all of them. In the first place, their political atmosphere is obvious because mainly each belong to one of the leftist

[208] I do not know why it is exactly, but I think it needed to prepare a list.
[209] There are also kıraathane or beer pubs, but these cafes have resemblance with cafes like in Taksim and Kadıköy.

group. People can easily reach the publications of leftist organizations, which are full of information about the political activities of them.

Besides that, I asked the some owners of cafes, why they had opened their cafe in Gazi. One of them said that Gazi people like to come together, but they could not find opportunity to go out Taksim, Beşiktaş, or Kadıköy, because they are both expensive and far away. Therefore, he had decided to open a cafe which people can come together, have fun, performing their activities also benefiting from art branched of cafes etc. He was from Gazi, I felt a responsibility to the people of Gazi. When cafes provide opportunities for people to come together, they also provide other activities like watching films, learning to play instruments, or access to books from here. There is no cinema, theatre or library in the neighborhood. The cafes give places for them. They organized movie nights, courses to play and instrument.

Eventually, Gazi has a different place in Istanbul with both its political atmosphere and living spaces. I feel that the research is not enough to explain what I observed, experienced in Gazi and also read the news about it. One of my interviewees said that

> There is a neighborhood culture in Gazi, but not the its well-known meaning. We are weaking up with the sound of police helicopter frequently, and we feel the power and coldness of the state with a huge police station and also the biggest Turkish flag in Turkey. Seeing three water cannon vehicles in a day is a typical day for Gazi. Moreover, we have lived with that since we were born. When we were child, we organized our games as one side of police and the other side is revolutionaries, and also we had changed the roles another day to not cause to injustice among us.

These sentences are coming from a young from Gazi. He shows that how different is Gazi, and how they create it. When I visited the neighborhood in first place, I felt its condition with its streets, closed shutter of banks[210], name of places,

[210] In weekends banks are closing its shutter to protect themselves damages from demonstrations. Moreover, even in the weekday, if there is demonstration day shot down. That's why people has to

access trouble, political atmosphere and demonstration style of people. After I realized that, if there is something like “being from Gazi,” these conditions and structure have powerful influence over it. People are living within these circumstances and all of those are shaped their identity. Therefore, “being from Gazi” means that living within the Gazi.

save cash in their pocket, because they could not find any ATM or bank in weekends and sometimes in weekdays.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE FRAGMENTATION OF ALEVILIK AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE CASE OF GAZI MAHALLESI: THREE CEMEVİS, THREE "FREE SPACES"

Above, I argued that Alevilik should not be understood as a homogenous group, because it has a fragmented structure from beginning to contemporary circumstances. Many things influence over its fragmented characteristic which has caused to reinforce its fragmentation and transformation consistently.

The one of the most important transformation and innovation for Alevilik is Cemevi which has emerged mainly after the 1990s.[211] Many scholars and authors claim that the Cemevi is a new concept and invitation for Alevilik and it is not related to its traditional condition. According to Massicard, the Cemevi is the physical space for Alevi identity after the 1990s. In addition to that, the Cemevi does not have a standard meaning. Like the heterogeneity of Alevilik, Cemevi has a diversified meaning in terms of ideological, structural and representational bases.

Therefore, this chapter will involve the meaning of the Cemevi in the case of Gazi Mahallesi with three Cemevis which also represents the fieldwork of this study. These are going to be analyzed both by interviews and also observations in the field. The main goal for this chapter is that presents my fieldwork in Gazi Mahallesi and three Cemevis in the sense of their divergence points, and also within Polletta's "free spaces" framework. Namely, Gazi and these three Cemevis are a signal in order to prove the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik, because they are located in one neighborhood and also represent different positions.

[211] There are also Cemevis before that time, but the 1990s are of utmost importance to enhance the number of Cemevis in Turkey.

Besides that, Cemevi means something for the Alevi movement, and also it provides visibility and space for the Alevis. Thus, Cemevi has to be understood in a general concept apart from the fragmented meaning. From this perspective, I decided to use the concept of "free spaces" which is contributed by Evans and elaborated by Polletta. The concept enables to explain the Cemevi and its meaning for the identity and also it provides to understand the fragmented position. Therefore, before explaining my interviews and observation regards with the field, I am going to explain the concept of "free spaces."

Free Spaces[212]

The concept of "free spaces" is used in the social movement literature. I am not going to explain whole social movements' literature, but I am going to use "free spaces" as a concept in order to identify Cemevi. However, in the first place I have to mention about the problem of this concept, because according to Polletta and Amenta, "new approaches bring dangers and also analytical problems as well. For instance, scholars still employ concepts such as "free spaces" and "identity" in vastly different ways." [213] Therefore, "free spaces" has to be considered as a new concept, and also should be understood with its different meanings by scholars.

There are a lot of divergence and ambiguity over the meaning of free spaces such that, authors variously describe them as subcultures, communities, institutions, organizations, and associations which are different referents. Polletta writes that,

> Evans and Boyte represent them as physical spaces; however, Scott maintains that linguistic codes that are opaque to that power are as much a

[212]I would like to thank Baran Alp Uncu who recomended this concept to me.

[213] Jeff Goodwin, James Jasper, Francesca Polletta. *Passionate Politics: Emotions and Social Movements* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), pp.303-304.

> free space as is a physical site of resistance. Farrell says that the 1950s Beat Movement created free spaces in print and performance, Robnett describes the grassroots one-on-one recruitment activities that were dominated by women in the civil rights movement as a free space, and Gamson calls "cyber-space" a "safe space."[214]

Actually, this circumstance is beneficial for me, because also the Cemevi does not have one definition. Variety of definitions both for free spaces and Cemevi makes the explanation possible on my side.

According to Polletta's definition that "free spaces are small-scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization."[215] However, first of all, Sara Evans used the term in her 1979 Personal Politics,

> "Free spaces," along with " protected spaces," "safe spaces," "spatial preserves," "havens," "sequestered social sites," "cultural laboratories," "spheres of cultural autonomy," and "free social spaces" different names for the same thing have appeared regularly in the work of sociologists, political scientists, and historians of collective action.[216]

This concept was also used again by Sara Evans and Harry Boyte in 1986 and according to them,

> particular sorts of public places in the community, what we call free spaces, are the environments in which people are able to learn a new self-respect, a deeper and more assertive group identity, public skills, and values of cooperation and civic virtue. But simply, free spaces are settings between private lives and large scale institutions where ordinary citizens can act with dignity, independence and vision.[217]

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[214]Francesca Polletta, ""Free Spaces" in Collective Action," *Theory and Society*, Vol.28, (1999), p.5.

[215] Francesca Polletta, Kelsy Kretschmer, "Free Spaces," *The Wiley-Blacwell Encylopedia of Social and Political Movements.* Edited by David A. Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam (Blackwell Publishing, 2013), p.1.

[216] Polletta, ""Free Spaces" in Collective Action,", p.1.

[217] Sara Evans and Boyte, *Free Spaces: The Sources of Democratic Change in* America (New York: Harper and Row, 1986), p. 17.

With influence of interactive relations among people within a community, "free spaces emerged and supply the activist networks, skills, and solidarity that assist in launching a movement." [218] Actually, free spaces have a double-edge impact on mobilization of people such that "free spaces were created by movements and also free spaces precede the movements with different roles."[219]

In some cases, "free spaces can be generated in places where are empty of hegemonic ideas, but that are full of counter-hegemonic ideas or potentially counter hegemonic ones." [220] Free spaces should not be considered only as a free from government control. They could also be emerged within the government surveillance where "people do need some freedom in order to formulate, plan and organize opposition they are usually able to find it."[221] Namely, "all regimes and societies have free spaces, " but they have different settings.[222]

In addition to that, free spaces have several structures and dimensions in a collective action. For instance that "small size, intimacy and the rootedness of free spaces in long-standing communities seem to be common themes."[223] Hence, Scott adds that "generally speaking, the smaller and more intimate the group, the safer the possibilities for free expression are."[224] However, brief, Polletta cited that she identifies them within a three structures such as "transmovement, indigenous and

[218] Polletta, "Free Spaces", p.1.

[219]Ibid.,p.1.

[220]Ibid.,p.1.

[221]Ibid.,p.1.

[222]Ibid.,p.1.

[223]Polletta, ""Free Spaces" in Collective Action," p.6.

[224]Ibid.,p.6.

prefigurative"[225] characteristics. These three are useful in order to understand what free spaces are and their motivations during and after a mobilization.

In the first place, she writes that "transmovement structures are the halfway houses described by Aldon Morris, the abeyance structures by Verta Taylor, the movement midwives by Christian Smith, and the movement mentors by Bob Edwards and McCarthy."[226] Polletta explains that activists are linked across "a wide geographic area, have contacts in a variety of organizations, and are often veterans of past movements." [227]

Therefore, transmovement structure of free spaces provides its connection with other movements with its extensive contacts position and also makes emergence of mobilization with the former experiences capable. For instance, "transmovement groups may provide funding for emerging movements and for activists pursuing militant tactics or a radical agenda, as well as legal advice and communication contacts."[228] Because of its transmovement structure, free spaces also could not be considered as homogenous characteristic. They can preserve different ideological background or maybe mobilization tactics from previous one.

Indigenous structure is the second one in order to identify free spaces. In the first place, the indigenous group is a community but not organized in an oppositional character. However, "these groups have focused on their political, social and economic isolation from dominant institutions and the density of their associational ties. "[229] However, "their strongly integrated networks, communication resources,

[225] Polletta, ""Free Spaces" in Collective Action," p.8.

[226]Ibid.,p.9.

[227]Ibid.,p.9.

[228]Ibid.,p.10.

[229]Ibid.,p.11.

solidarity incentives and commonality of interest are necessary to develop a radical challenge."[230]

Calhoun adds that

> actually members of traditional communities can normally be considered as conservative but only when their "interests" such as their families, friends, customary crafts, and ways of life are threatened by rapid social changes or when such changes "put old goals within reach".[231]

Therefore, "their centrality to people's daily lives equips indigenous groups to recruit a first wave of participants, develop leaders, and formulate mobilizing frames in a familiar idiom. "[232] In other words, the local codes and intimate relations in the indigenous groups provide a collectivity and make possible emerging free spaces easier than other groups.

Prefigurative structure of free spaces is explained as a third one. This structure emerged within the ongoing movement as an "autonomous zones." The main importance of this structure is that providing a symmetric society or organization within the mainstream one. [233] For instance, according to Polletta;

> prefiguration are created in movements that are already underway, they do not play a role in identifying the political opportunities that precede mobilization. However, they help to sustain members' commitment to cause and prove launching pads for "spin-off" organization or movements based on new identities and associated claims.[234]

Briefly, these three structures provide to precede mobilization and enable to establish free spaces. For instance, transmovement structure enables to organizational

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[230] Ibid.,p.11.

[231]Ibid.,p.11.

[232]Ibid.,p.11.

[233] The most important example of this structure is identified as women's only spaces in the European new social movements.

[234]Ibid.,p.12.

tactics and financial, technical and even legal sources for it. Moreover, indigenous structure provides wide mobilization thanks to the intimate and density of relations. Lastly, prefigurative structure applies the mainstream model with its alternative ways.

Until here, I have given explanation of what free space is mostly in accordance with Polletta's argumentation. After that, I am going to analyze the Cemevis within this concept also with my interviews and observations. I claim that, the Cemevis emerged as a free space for the Alevis. Furthermore, both their establishment and mobilization motives can be seen within "free spaces" concept, because this is going to be proved as the fragmentation of the Cemevi as well.

Therefore, first, I am going to explain each of the Cemevis with their establishment stories, and secondly, I am going to discuss each of them with the structures of "free spaces" which are transmovement, indigenous and prefigurative attitudes.

Gazi Eğitim Ve Kültür Foundation (Gazi Cemevi)

Gazi Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı, Gazi Education and Culture Foundation is the first Cemevi which emerges in Gazi Mahallesi. Firstly, I have to say that this Cemevi is not called by its official name as Gazi Eğitim ve Kültür Vakfı. Both people and its administration unit prefer to use Gazi Cemevi instead since it emerged in 1993. This expression has a meaning like claiming that it is the first and the most influential Cemevi in the neighborhood.

There are two different opinions about construction of Cemevis, especially Gazi Cemevi. The first one is related with the 1993 Sivas (Madımak) massacre[235], and my interviewee said that

> There was not any organizational movement or Alevi organization before '93. Moreover, they did not create an Alevi identity, and meaning of being Alevi even if they were Alevi. However, after 1993, people realized that they are Alevi, and there is something like being Alevi. This massacre mobilized people to claim their own right and show their own identity and existence against any discrimination and danger. As a result of these threats, Cemevis began to emerge as a space for their identity and declaration of their existence. Gazi Cemevi is just one of them.[236]

Thus, this opinion claims that the Alevis discerned their existence and identity, and after that they mobilize around Cemevis. On the other hand, the second opinion argue that Cem is the one thing for the Alevis, but Cemevis are created by others, like the state, the governments, because it hasn't placed in Alevi faith. When I asked that why they thought in this way, they told me

> Look! We are sitting and conversing here[237] and so we are practicing Cem. That's why we do not need a place. We can do it where we want. I do not say that we have to destroy the Cemevi, but I attempt to say this Cemevi emerged for a reason. The date of emergence is important to understand this reason because it coincided with the rise of Kurdish movement. The state, the government and the other units of them did not want to see the cooperation of the Kurds and the Alevis, thus they divided them with construction of Cemevis.[238]

After my interviews with people, these two opinions arose in the case of Gazi Cemevi. However, these opinions represent people's ideological background and identification. Even though the second one seems like ignoring people's own will, after that he adds his own observation during the construction of Gazi Cemevi. He

[235] http://www.turkeyemergency.com/2009/the-sivas-massacre/

[236] C.Z., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2015.

[237] It was a focus group interview and there were five people except me.

[238] H.Ö., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2015.

said that "when we heard about the construction of Cemevi, we became happy. We hugged each other, crying." Namely, even though people believe that there are different reasons in construction of Cemevi, they felt themselves happy and hopeful. Thus, they required to support it. "We were sacrificing animals and performing semah before the construction started."

Despite the different opinions, Gazi Cemevi was welcomed by the neighborhood. No one knows who started the process or pioneered of the construction. However, it became a symbol and a goal for the neighborhood.

> Gazi Cemevi means something for this neighborhood. It was the first initiative and the neighborhood felt that they could have their own place. In first place there were 15,000 people going to Cemevi. Suddenly, people said that the Cemevi will be destroyed, and then approximately 50,000 people gathered in front of the construction in order to protect it.[239]

The meaning of the Cemevi is derived from its representative position for the neighborhood, and thus it is named by people as Gazi Cemevi. Besides that an interviewee said that

> Every Alevi people in Turkey monitored the process. This Cemevi means not only something for the neighborhood, but also something for all Alevi people. This is because during the construction of Gazi Cemevi, this neighborhood and the Alevis faced another massacre. In 1995 this Cemevi was not finished yet, we just finished the first. Therefore, people knew that maybe this Cemevi is a symbol, but 17 people died for it. [240]

This explanation shows that how people understand Gazi Cemevi in the first place. Even though it did not agree with board of management, or their relations with the state, they knew that Gazi Cemevi is their own space.

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[239] O.A., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2015.

[240] 17 people died in the Gazi ordeal.

Gazi Cemevi emerged as a branch of *Hacı Bektaşi Veli Kültür Vakfı*, and its legal status is a foundation. There is a head of the foundation and also members. The head of the foundation is also practicing as a dede in the Cemevi.

The Cemevi is located in the middle of the neighborhood with its four floors. The first floor is used as a kitchen and a dining hall. Approximately 100 people can sit in this place and eat their lokma. There is also a garden in the same floor, and here is used for funerals.

The Cemevi also provides English, maths and other courses for students as supplementary lesson for their school. In addition, they provide other courses such as guitar, ballet, piano, *bağlama* and painting. Services of the Cemevi are provided free of charge. The second and third floors are used for these activities. Moreover, there is a big room for practicing Cem on the third floor. The fourth one is the administration floor and also has a library, and a conference room.

The Gazi Cemevi was established in 1993 and after that its struggle started. Even though people believe the first or the second reason which I explained previously, the Cemevi emerged as a result of a mobilization and it still continues today inside the Cemevi.

Obviously, the Gazi Cemevi is the first "free spaces" for the neighborhood. According to definition of free spaces, "free spaces are small-scale settings within a community or movement that are removed from direct control of dominant groups, are voluntarily participated in, generate the cultural challenge that precedes or accompanies political mobilization." [241] However, I argue that today the Gazi Cemevi causes its own "free spaces" inside the Cemevi. Namely, after its 22 years, it produces new spaces both inside and outside.

[241]Polletta, "Free Spaces", p.1.

Before that, I would like to analyze the construction of Gazi Cemevi as a free space. First, Gazi Cemevi is the first experience for the neighborhood, and also it emerged at the very beginning of Alevi movement in the 1990s. However, it also gained an important support from other movements and many activists, owing to its first experience and also symbolic meaning.

> The construction had an importance for the neighborhood, but also for the other people. It can be seen as a first experience for Alevi identity, and the movement. Therefore, not just the Alevis, the many people came and supported the construction of the Cemevi. There were leftist organizations, political parties, and even businessmen who supported us. Other organizations supported and helped us during the legal process with their experiences and also rich people donated money, or construction materials.[242]

The Cemevi seems to be in the center of different movements both with their experiences and supports. However, the most important structure for the Cemevi is commonality of interests of the neighborhood residents. In spite of the Alevi population majority of the neighborhood, there was not a Cemevi for them. Therefore, an idea of a Cemevi provided collectivity of people.

> People needed a Cemevi in order to practice their rituals and at least for their funerals. Thus this Cemevi were welcomed by happiness. Everybody helped the construction and after that they brought carpets, curtains, and also many staffs from their homes to the Cemevi. People felt that here is their own space.[243]

The people of Gazi are always welcomed a Cemevi, will be seen other cases as well, but Gazi Cemevi has a special meaning for the people. It is because it is the first Cemevi. That is where people find a space for their needs which also fulfills their needs the first time.

The indigenous character of the neighborhood and also the meaning of the being from Gazi were explained in the second chapter. According to the second

[242] A.H., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 December 2015.

[243] O.A., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2015.

chapter, people of Gazi started a life in the neighborhood and they want to sustain it. Being Alevi is the most important local code for the neighborhood and the Cemevis have crucial position in this code. Therefore, intimacy, integrated networks and solidarity among people are helpful in the construction process of the Cemevis, as they were shown in Gazi Cemevi firstly.

With the first feature of the neighborhood, early experience in the Alevi movements did not give it a place to produce an alternative meaning within the mainstream Alevi movements. However, it provided a meaning, an alternative and an "autonomous zone" for the Alevis. In the 1990s, the Alevis started to organize movements based on their own identities: being Alevi. It means that they do not want to be a part of any other movements, because they want to organize their own identity movements as being Alevi. According to Massicard, "Certain Alevis, considering that left-wing organizations were not defending their specific point of view despite major Alevi involvement in them, turn away from these organizations and set up new one to defend their 'own interests'."[244]

In the light of this information, Gazi Cemevi creates an autonomous space for the Alevis after their identification for their own interests. Therefore, it creates its prefigurative structure with Alevi identity within the other movements. However, after its 22 years, it produce new spaces both inside and outside, because it became a mainstream Alevi foundation. It seems that fragmentation characteristic of Alevilik is not limited with the three Cemevis in the neighborhood, but also there is a fragmented situation inside Gazi Cemevi.

According to most of my interviewees Gazi Cemevi is symbol for the Alevis. However, this symbol is in the line of fire because of its administration unit and its

[244] Massicard, *The* Alevis, p. 38.

member's attitudes. For instance, membership of the Cemevi is restricted by administration. Namely, they do not allow everybody to be a member.

> Elections are done in order to choose administration every two years, but we do not know who are going to vote for them. Candidates decided who can be a member and use their votes. There are two or three opponents' members of administration, but they are not able to do everything. Membership of foundation is determined by administration and mostly they allowed their own relatives, because they know that they are going to vote for them. [245]

Another interviewee adds that "people of Gazi do not have place in administration." After that, I asked that if people did not have place in the Cemevi, how the Cemevi could accept the guerillas' funeral. Because the administration states that the Cemevi is not a backyard of any other leftist organizations. They laughed and one of them said that

> They have to accept. People do not have a place in administration, because they do not want, and do not care. If they cared, they would take it already. I told you, here is a symbol and people use that as they wish. They have already used the Cemevi according to their needs. They make funerals for their dead, and distribute lokma in their memory.

Therefore, people have already created their own space within the Cemevi. They know that they do not have to agree with the administration, because the Cemevi is their own space, or they created their own space within the Cemevi.

Beside that, two other Cemevis emerged as alternative to Gazi Cemevi. Against the mainstream position of Gazi Cemevi, these two emerged in their own free spaces. These two Cemevis will be analyzed in the coming parts, but briefly, they do not believe in the fragmented position among each other. All of them agree that "we are the same." This statement is their first claim. However, they expressed their ideas in our second interviews and a member of SGPSAC said that, "the members of Gazi Cemevi's administration come from the same city, Sivas, so we

[245] H.Ş., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 April 2015.

could not find a place for our practices and claims. We needed to create a new place to express ourselves." The claim of Sultangazi branch of PSAKD (Gazi Şehitleri[246]Cemevi)'s head also supports the idea of fragmentation and he adds that "Cemevis are belong to people, so if our people want to provide control over Gazi Cemevi, we can do it. Thus, nobody can pretend to be owner of Cemevis."

In brief, the construction of Gazi Cemevi was welcomed hopefully and happily by people. Moreover, they symbolize here as their own space. However, after its 22 years, people transformed their relations with administration and they still protect their symbol within their autonomous position inside the Cemevi. Even though, some of them still believe the symbolic meaning of the Cemevi, they prefer to construct also their own spaces to perform their alternative space. The first one is Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi and the second one is Sultangazi Pir Sultan Abdal Cemevi emerged as an alternative space.

Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi[247]

Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi was established as a branch of Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği (Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association) in 2009. Actually, the Cemevi was not established as a building, but there is just a small building for administration and classes for children. People practiced their Cem rituals in a tent located across the street. According to G.F, they are going to start construction of a new Cemevi instead of the tent.

> We finished the discussion about our new Cemevi. We did not decide its construction just with administration but we discussed it with people of Gazi.

[246] Martyrs of Gazi

[247]People are using the name of Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi and also Gazi Şehitler Cemevi, because of their political position they lay claim to people who died for their political ideologies.

> We asked their ideas about a Cemevi. After that, a group of engineers and architects drew a project for Cemevi.

He also explained the necessity of the new Cemevi in the neighborhood, and he said that "actually the construction of a Cemevi is not the main purpose. The purpose is to provide the sustainability of the faith: Alevilik." In other words, this Cemevi claims that other Cemevis do not represent the essence of the faith and also the neighborhood. Thus, the Cemevi and its members of administration said that "we established the Cemevi as an alternative to others and also to represent the neighborhood."

Additionally, representation of the neighborhood is a significant issue for the Gazi Şehitler Cemevi and even their name proved their position in the neighborhood.

> We named our Cemevi as Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi, because we would like to represent the neighborhood and also correspond to its identity and sense of belonging. We believe that this Cemevi indicates the morale of resistance of the neighborhood, and the meaning of being with the oppressed against tyrants. Moreover, the Cemevi is a memorial in order to remind people who were killed and sacrificed themselves for their beliefs.[248]

Not only does this name represent the identity or the memory of the neighborhood, but also a tradition. Namely, the organization of the Cemevi is based on the motto of "being with the oppressed against the oppressor's persecution." This is a tradition in the Alevi faith according to M.K. He also asserted that

> We have to embrace people who sacrifice themselves within this tradition. You know, Imam Hüseyin is an important symbol for the Alevis. He is a symbol of resistance, justice and hope. Today, Berkin Elvan became a symbol like Imam Huseyin. He gives hope to people, because he did not ask for mercy. Thus, these people are important for us and for our faith and traditions.[249]

[248] G.F., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 30 November 2014.

[249] M.K., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2015.

They believe that Alevilik can exist today thanks to these people from Imam Huseyin to Belkin Elvan that made sacrifices to keep society together. Thus, they aimed to embalm these people in their own space; in the Cemevi. For instance, they named a class as Berkin Elvan classroom, and the other is Sezgin Engin.[250]

As I said before, there is no building which is used as a Cemevi in Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi, but they are performing their rituals in a tent. However, they are going to start construction of the Cemevi after a while. I would like to learn process how they can find a land and also their meetings with the municipality. G.F. explained the process and he described about their determined attitude in order to take the place where it is already used by them with a tent.

> We established the neighborhood. We constructed our houses, streets, parks. We established a life and an identity, belonging in the neighborhood. Namely, the neighborhood is our space. They -municipality- identify us as occupants. I thought that why I should have already occupied a place which is already mine or ours. We needed a place, because the Cemevi became a requirement. We went to municipality and we told them we are owner that place and you are going to give the place to us. Firstly, they offered to make a tender (He laughed). We have already paid our taxes, and they never returned to us. Moreover, we are going to give money to take our own place. It was an unacceptable offer. We rejected this and after 3 years from negotiations, we gained the place without a tender. In legal records, we are seen as tenants but it is a nominal issue. We pay just 100 TL for a month. This is a result of our determination, struggle and organized characteristic.[251]

Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi has a different construction story, because it identifies itself before establishing the Cemevi. The components of the Cemevi and the Cemevi itself existed before the building. Actually, G.F. claims that this association was established in 2009, but we have been here since the neighborhood was established. Therefore, as I mentioned before, Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi's components claim that the

[250] Berkin Elvan was killed by police. During the Gezi protest in 2013, Berkin Elvan was killed in Okmeydanı, and similarly Sezgin Engin was killed by police in 1995 Gazi Ordeal. They were both the same age, and the cemevi represents their immortality in the name of the classrooms.

[251] G.F., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2015.

Cemevi represents the neighborhood. Thus, they do not have limitation to their participants.

When I asked that there is an understanding in the other Cemevis and they said that people from Sivas were participating in the Gazi Cemevi, and people from Tokat and Amasya participated Cem in the SGPSAC. So, can we classify the participants of this Cemevi? Is there any certain group coming here for Cem ritual, or something else? He laughed and then stated that

> According to our understanding of Alevilik, human is in the center of the faith. We believe in human beings. Furthermore, Cemevi is a space for this faith. Everybody can come through this door (he pointed the door). Who can say that only certain people can participate in our Cem? No one, if you identify yourself as an Alevi. Everybody can participate here; everybody can call him/herself as a human being. We have 150 students, and about 60 of them are Safi. It does not change anything, because they are coming here to learn something. [252]

Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi also emerged as a unique case like other two Cemevis. Their ongoing construction process, claim about the representation of the neighborhood, and understanding of Alevilik put the Cemevi in a unique situation. However, they have also some other points which make them different from others. These are going to be explained within the framework of "free spaces" more specifically.

First, the organizational structure of the Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi declares its position and relation with a leftist political organization. The head of the Cemevi did not say their relation with this leftist organization explicitly, but he said that they were a part of *Halk Meclisi*[253] (People's assembly), because they the assembly also

[252] G.F., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 April 2015.

[253] Halk Meclisi (People's assembly) is a sort of organization which also refers toanother leftist organization in Turkey. This organization has huge impact on the neighbourhood, and also they believe that they represent people of Gazi, and thus they have a voice forabout the neighbourhood. Because they are acting for people ofGazi.

represented their ideas. Moreover, it supported the identity of the neighborhood like them.

Relation with the leftist organization and providing support are utilized by the Cemevi. To illustrate that, the project of the Cemevi was drawn by another organization which is also a component of the Halk Meclisi. This organization is called the *Halkın Mimarları ve Mühendisleri* (People's Engineers and Architects).

Additionally, teachers give lectures to children in the Cemevi voluntarily. These teachers are also a member of an organization which is called the *Halkın Öğretmenleri* (People's Teachers). Apparently, this name can be associated with the Halk Meclisi as well, because all of these organizations have the same direction and followers of the same ideological perspective.

Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi emerged as a branch of a national level of Alevi organization *(Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği),* further to that the Cemevi emerged and organized within the other movement as well. According to G.F.,

> Our relation with Halk Meclisi represents our own identity. Constitutionally, Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi is an association, but this is just for legality. This could not restrict our organizational structure and relations with others. We are here, because people want. We are here owing to organizational structure of Halk Meclisi.

In the light of information, Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi shows its transmovement structure according to Polletta with its relations with Halk Meclisi and its other organizations. These organizations support the Cemevi both its establishment process and also its functional issues. Therefore, Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi emerged as a free space with its relations with other organizations. Moreover, their accumulation of knowledge and experience provide an advantage for their establishment.

Second, Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi claim that it represents a sense of belonging to the neighborhood. Therefore, sharing the meaning and identity of being from Gazi,

integrated networks among people, collectivity and solidarity relations of people and commonality of interest provide to emerge this Cemevis. Actually, the reason for the construction of the Cemevi is associated with characteristic of the neighborhood.

Being from Gazi and the influence of the identity of neighborhood can be analyzed in the construction of the other two Cemevis. However, this identity does not only provide construction of the Cemevi, but also construction provides representation of the neighborhood. According to G.F.

> Obviously, Gazi is a different place. There is an identity, sense of belonging which emerged by people as well. Therefore, people created this Cemevi because of this identity and sense of belonging. Furthermore, the neighborhood has a memory, and many events remain in memories. This also reinforces the sense of belonging.

The Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi emerged as a result of identity of Gazi, but it can observe other Cemevis as well. The Cemevi represents a position which is different from others. This position establishes with memory of the neighborhood. Memory becomes a local code and shared experiences for people of Gazi.

As I said before, the Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi established as an association, but people were practicing Cem rituals in a tent. Now, they are constructing a building.

> We are going to the poorest people in the neighborhood. We know that they are going to support here, because they know that this Cemevi is their own space. Do you know why we are going to start from the poorest ones? Because, they are the only and the real owners of this neighborhood.

Briefly, the Cemevi is supported by people, because it has a possessive and inclusive claim about the Cemevi. They assert that people are owner of the neighborhood, and also they are owner of the Cemevi.

Third, Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi and its relations with Halk Meclisi emerge its organization structure different from other Cemevis. When the head of the Cemevi explained their position in the neighborhood, he said that

> We believe that we cannot do anything within the corrupt system. The other two Cemevis are moving inside the corrupt system. However, this behaviour contradicts with Alevi faith. Political parties and their candidates are coming to the Cemevis. These people are parts of the corrupt system. If you support Pir Sultan Abdal's aphorism; "Right wheel does not work in the corrupt system."[254] you should not support the people of this system. And yes, this Cemevi is an alternative, because we are criticizing others' behavior.

Their most important claim that construction of a Cemevi is not a matter, the matter is that providing the sustainability of the Alevi faith.

In other words, the Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi emerged as an alternative place in the neighborhood. Moreover, its Alevi understanding and position in the neighborhood provide to establish an "autonomous space" for people.

> We are alternative yes, the lessons not only help students in school but also in life. They also help to students in their life, not just in the school. We aim to educate our children as a good person. Because we have to be that person before being an Alevi, a Sunni, a Kurd or a Turk.[255]

Namely, my interviewees from the Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi pointed out that three Cemevis are spaces of people. Moreover, the only reason of their existence is people's demand. However, their close relations with Halk Meclisi make Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi a unique case in the sense of transmovement structure of free spaces concept. Besides that, their claim about the neighborhood and understanding and practicing of Alevi faith also put the Cemevi in a different place in the neighborhood.

[254] Bozuk Düzende Sağlam Çark Olmaz.

[255] B.Ö., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 9 March 2015.

The Sultangazi Pir Sultan Abdal Cemevi (SGPSAC)

I conducted my fieldwork in Gazi Mahallesi in order to observe Alevilik and its representation in a neighborhood. As I said before, I realized that the fragmentation and fragmented position of Alevilik in Gazi Mahallesi with the three Cemevis. Sultangazi Pir Sultan Abdal Cemevi is the last one of this fragmentation process in the neighborhood.

First, SGPSAC was established in 2009 just as an association in a small place. The aim of the association was construct another Cemevi in the neighborhood. When I asked the reason why they needed another Cemevi, they had already one, he[256] said that,

> 60 percent of Gazi population is Alevi, and one or two and even three Cemevis cannot fulfill the requirement of people. Additionally, each Cemevi has their own participants and generally people from Sivas are going to Gazi Cemevi, people from Tokat-Amasya-Ardahan are coming to our Cemevi. Namely, number of population or people's own desire led us to establish another Cemevi. [257]

In between 2009-2010, members of association started negotiations with local governments -municipality and others-. Consistently, these people made demands on the local governments, and according to their explanation, municipality delayed and ignored their demands. I asked that what your demand was, she answered that,

> We said that we want a place to construct our Cemevi nothing more, because we also know that they would not give more. We just wanted a place not to be seen as occupants, because one way or another we would construct our Cemevi. We -people from Gazi- demand that, we were performing our rituals in the house of uncle H. because he has a huge room. Moreover we were washing deads in our gardens. Cemevi became a requirement for us.

[256]F.Ç., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 15 November 2014.

[257]H.Ç., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 7 December 2014.

Namely, some people who do not prefer to participate other Cemevis -the reason of different origins of them mainly- require a new one and thus their ambition led them to construct it. This struggle launched with establishment of an association, and negotiate with municipality to provide a legal land. However, the municipality and other units of local governments do not respond them properly. When F. explained their negotiations, he mentioned their last one,

> We went to municipality for negotiation and we repeated our demand. Even though they know our demand, we said it again. We needed a place to construct our Cemevi, please show us a place. We did not ask any subsidization, just we needed a place. Afterwards, we understood, they did not answer us properly. And we decided to end our negotiations and we told that "If you do not answer us until 5 p.m, we are going to construct our Cemevi." We were waiting in our small place where we used as an association building, and time was elapsing. We told that we are going to wait until 5 p.m, and at 5 p.m municipality did not respond our demand once again. It was the last time, because we were decisive and wanted to construct our Cemevi. Therefore, we had some money and of course it was not enough and we owed to seller. Nevertheless, we bought some briquettes that could be used to construct 10 square meters.[258]

Members of association endeavored to gain a place not to be seen as occupants; however, local government did not see them as respondents. At the end of the negotiation process, people acted according to their own will. The neighborhood is important over this process, because they have some traditions such as occupying land in order to construct their home, or struggling to realize their demands. Actually, these local customs were applied during construction of the all Cemevis, and SGPSAC became the last example of them.

I interviewed people, sometimes one by one, but sometimes I learnt many things in my group conversations. For instance, when people explained the night when they constructed the Cemevi, they also added that they donated their own properties to Cemevi. Namely, when they looking for a place to construct Cemevi, they did not occupy only an empty land, they also used their own lands.

[258] F.Ç., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 February 2015.

My interviewees were very excited and enthusiastic to explain the story of construction night and thus, getting some information was difficult for me. Since, they determined some important points and issues about the Cemevi, they mostly wanted to express them. Moreover, they are in the center of this research and thus I am going to explain their own expression. There are some expressions for that night such as; "I could not see the street because of people, there were thousands of people." Or "We decided to construct Cemevi just as 10 people, but we became so much more." And "I was aware solidarity of this neighborhood, and yes I knew that they will come and help us to construct the Cemevi. I was right to believe in my neighborhood"[259]

Besides that, I asked people who were not member of the association in order to learn how they heard about the construction of the Cemevi. According to answers this was a snowball issue, because everybody heard from his or her neighbors, relatives, acquaintance, or friend. When I asked people, they said,

> I was sitting at home and watching TV. I heard noise and people were talking in front of the apartment. I asked them what happened, they said that people were going to the last bus stop to construct a Cemevi. Then, my phone rang and a friend of me said that we were going to the last stop to help people were you coming? I thought that I was an Alevi, even I do not go to the Cemevi, I have to help people of my neighborhood.[260]

Therefore, people started to gather the place where the Cemevis constructed and maybe everybody did not help construction, but they showed their support for the construction of the Cemevi.

Nevertheless, inhabitants of Gazi constructed a small place they identified as a Cemevi. The reasons are repeated by a member of the SGPSAC such as number of

[259]Some neighbourhood residents.

[260] E.S., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 February 2015.

population, requirements of people, and requirements of expression that what people want. Moreover he adds that,

> We gathered around a goal which emerge a Cemevi to overlap people's needs. During this process, people do not leave us alone. Therefore, we created our unique story, because we did not utilize the source of national level Alevi organizations, or any political party. We realized everything with the support of people.[261]

The SGPSAC is not a member of an Alevi association. In generally, the Cemevis emerged as a branch of these associations, like other two Cemevis in Gazi, but this one follows its independent position. Actually, the Cemevi represents the people's will, and thus they could not find an appropriate association for their identification. However, according to one of my interviewees' claim, many associations want this Cemevi's membership in their own organization because of the people's support.

Besides that, construction of Cemevi is a problem, because of its illegality, and its representation of struggle against the authority in Turkey. Most of Cemevis deal with courts and cases. The SGPSAC is just one of them, and it still has a case. Even though it is recognized as a "Cem and culture house" by the commission of the municipality, it still struggles with the judicial process.

The reason for the case is about environmental pollution. Namely, the Cemevi causes pollution and thus it has to be demolished. Even though the Cemevi is recognized, their struggle and trial continues. Additionally, trials do not happen without violence, because police attack people by tear gas who attempt to enter the courtroom. I attended one trial in March, and the judge did not allow people to enter the courtroom. He allowed only the head of the Cemevi and members of the association. Z.B. explained the situation;

[261]F.Ç., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 7 December 2014.

> We constructed the Cemevi with all these people and thus they have right to participate the judicial process. However the state and its police power prevent us, because they are afraid of our power and support. After all, they changed our previous judge, she also supported our claim, at least she listened to us moderately.

Judicial process continues, and people struggle against it also with people's support.

Until here, I have described the establishment of the SGPSAC with explanation of witnesses of the process. After this, I will show this Cemevi within the "free spaces" concept to illustrate how they are applied the structures such as transmovement, indigenous and prefigurative. Even though I claim that all three Cemevis as "free spaces", both the reason for the fragmentation of Alevilik and the reason for different implementations of "free spaces" represent the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik.

I can claim a general statement about all these three Cemevis: all of them utilize the previous movements. Namely, people's experiences from previous movements and their heritage from them such as organizational networks, tactics of movement and also militant culture. Therefore, people have experience about organizational movements, and they can easily apply their tactics and methods during the construction of SGPSAC.

This is an indication for transmovement structure of "free spaces". People who participate in my interviews and conversation in the SGPSAC exactly fit this concept, because many of them have experience about the organizational movements.[262] They are also aware of his situation, because one of them said that,

> I was in a struggle before the 1980s -even me and my wife met a protest and then we get married (laughing). - Most of my friends are also in the same situation, and we utilized our experiences from the previous movement. Additionally, our background, and our organizational networks not only provide experiences, but also provide people sources. In other words, our old

[262] Most of them were a member of a leftist organization before 1980 coup d'etat.

> friends and our previous networks-mostly leftist organizations- supported us during the construction process. [263]

Relations with the other organizations show the transmovement characteristic of the construction process. These relations also provide advantage, because after the construction process the Cemevi confronts a demolition order. Even though the people of Gazi already know how to resist police because of the political atmosphere of the neighborhood, they still need people's source and support. According to a member of the Cemevi, "this Cemevi constructed by people of Gazi, but it is also protected by these people and by members of other organizations."

Therefore, when people constructed the SGPSAC, they utilized from their previous experiences and also their networks with other movements. Other movements support them even today in their judicial process by supplying legal services. In addition, the SGPSAC is a unique case because of its independent position from other national level Alevi organizations. Even though this independency makes them vulnerable in some conditions, such as lack of support and economic deficiency, support for other organizations and their human resource seem to close the gap.

The meaning of the statement which is "this Cemevi constructed by people of Gazi" explains the indigenous structure of the Cemevi. Namely, the people of the neighborhood constructed this Cemevi. The reason is that people and their common and local codes -like being Alevi- motivate them in order to launch a movement.

Briefly, they require a space in which belongs to them. Moreover, they define belongingness with being Alevi and being from Gazi. This structure mobilizes people to construct their own spaces. Additionally, being from the neighborhood and

[263] F.Ç., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 7 December 2014.

integrated network, solidarity and close relations provide the construction of SGPSAC in the neighborhood.

> We were expecting support of people, of course. However, we surprised the number of people, because there are already two Cemevis in the neighborhood. We thought that people do not care for another one, but they cared. They showed the soul of the neighborhood. They proved the meaning of belonging to somewhere.[264]

The construction night was not planned previously, it was a sudden incident. However, people could participate and become aware of the process because of their integrated networks and mainly neighborliness relations. Besides that, integrated networks are not limited by neighborly relations. People are also relatived to each other.

In the case of the SGPSAC, the indigenous structure of "free spaces" can be seen integrated networks among people, being from Gazi and being Alevi. Their concerns which are derived from those things also lead people to create their own spaces. Even though they already have two Cemevis, they have spinned off a new one.

The construction of a new Cemevi illustrates the prefigurative structure of "free spaces". It means that they create an "autonomous space" from other Cemevis and also they create an independent space from other Alevi organizations and associations. In other words, within a mainstream movement, like within national level Alevi organization or in this case the Gazi Cemevi which emerges a mainstream or inclusion and also it is an ongoing movement, the SGPSAC creates its own way and its own autonomous zone.

The SGPSAC creates its own space not exactly based on new identities, but associated new claims. Besides that, it provides a symmetric society or organization

[264] Z.B., interview by the author, not recorded, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 February 2015.

within the mainstream one. This is an alternative meaning or way to mobilize the movement. They do not redefine Alevilik, but they redefine the ways of organization.

> We are different from all other Cemevis, I can easily claim that, because we are independent from national level Alevi organizations. We have our own name without being a branch of an organization. Additionally, we have our own flag[265] which represents our independency from other organizations.

Therefore, ways of organizations of the SGPSAC creates an alternative and symmetric space within the ongoing movements and organizations. Even though they do not aim to organize a mainstream movement, they claim to be different and an alternative within them. Additionally, I could not mention about a mainstream movement for the Alevi organization because of its fragmented characteristic. However, some cases like the SGPSAC also consolidate the fragmentation and create its own ways within the fragmented movements.

One Neighborhood and Three "Free Spaces"

I conducted my fieldwork on the three Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi in order to research fragmentation of Alevilik. In first place, I anticipated that the existence of three Cemevis was associated with the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik. However, I realized that this situation is also related with the neighborhood itself. Therefore, I attempted to analyze these three Cemevi within the framework of "free spaces" concept in order to understand and explain the existence of the Cemevis.

Each of them is identified as a free space within their own authenticity. Polletta's three structures of free space concept -transmovement, indigenous and prefigurative- are applied differently. One of them applies transmovement structure more effectively, whereas other applies prefigurative structure. However, the

[265] see in Appendix

indigenous structure is the most common one among three of them, and it is related with the neighborhood and its characteristics.

The concept of "free spaces" is associated with social movement literature. Moreover, Polletta argues that "free spaces were created by movements and also precede the movements",[266] but I did not analyze the role of free spaces as an initiator of movements. Thus, I do not analyze the concept within the social movement literature.

Briefly, the construction of a Cemevi is important for an Alevi neighborhood. However, construction of three Cemevis is another issue to be analyzed. Thus, I attempted to analyze construction of these Cemevis with their processes and reasons. Therefore, I used the concept not an initiator of a movement, but as a result of a movement or people's incentives in Gazi.

[266] Francesca Poletta, Kelsy Kretschmer, "Free Spaces," *The Wiley-Blacwell Encylopedia of Social and Political Movements.* Edited by David A. Snow, Donatella della Porta, Bert Klandermans, and Doug McAdam (Blackwell Publishing, 2013), p.1.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

According to many scholars and authors, the Alevis are considered as a heterogeneous group Alevilik has been an umbrella concept from the Ottoman Empire to the present. I argue that this is a fragmentation and many things, issues, events have caused the consolidation of the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik.

I conducted my research in Gazi Mahallesi, where Alevi people mostly live. Its Alevi population and also the number of Cemevis contributed to my observation in terms of the fragmentation issue. Even though the fragmentation of Alevilik was observed in three Cemevis, it was not enough to explain the reason and establishment of the Cemevis.

In the first place, I anticipated to explain the existence of the three Cemevis with the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik. However, I realized that the characteristic of the neighborhood had influenced the construction of the Cemevis. Therefore, the political atmosphere, the sense of belonging and identity of neighborhood became important to explain their existence of Cemevis. From this perspective, I consider to analyze the Cemevis within the framework of "free spaces."

I argued that Alevilik and the Alevis exist within the fragmented characteristic. To explore it, I chose to analyze the Cemevis in Gazi Mahallesi. My main concern was to investigate the points of the fragmentation among these three Cemevis. Additionally, I study this subject from the perspective of "free spaces" which provides to explain the construction process of the Cemevis.

Throughout the thesis, I presented the historical background of Alevilik and the conceptual meaning of Cem and Cemevi. I give a place to Gazi Mahallesi. Gazi is a unique neighborhood and must be explained through its establishment process, history, identity, and characteristics. I analyzed the Cemevis as a "free spaces" in order to combine the reasons for both fragmentation of Alevilik and the existence of these three Cemevis in Gazi.

Historically, during the Ottoman period, the Alevis lived in isolated rural areas. Therefore, the Alevis had an isolated life style from the central power and also from each other. This was the first step to consolidate the fragmentation. After that, the Republican period was an inception for the Alevis, because they became visible in the eyes of the state. Additionally, most of the Alevis started to approach the state.

In the 1950s and the 1960s, the interaction with the state and interaction between Alevis and others increased because of migration and urbanization. These processes influenced the Alevis differentially. Education, political environments and convergence with leftist organizations were the most important reasons to reinforce the fragmentation once again among the Alevis.

This process continued at the end of the 1970s. After that, the military coup of 1980 put an end to this process. However, it also ushered in another period. The 1980s are significant for identity politics, because many groups organized around their own identities. This trend also influenced the Alevis, who mobilized their own identity politics in the late 1980s, and mainly early the 1990s.

The Alevi movement and its organizational situations mainly started in the 1990s. In other words, the 1990s are important to the Alevis both on the national level organization and also the local one. However, each organization acted

separately from the others. Therefore, the characteristic of the Alevi movement was fragmented like its own characteristic.

After the rise of the Alevi movement, the Cemevis emerged as the spaces of this movement. They represent the existence of the Alevis and the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik in the public space. Therefore, they were crucial to study for the thesis in order to analyze their situations.

There are three important points and figures of this thesis, Alevilik and Cemevi are two of them. The last one is Gazi Mahallesi. I chose the neighborhood, because of its Alevi majority. After that, I encountered the identity of Gazi, which is expressed by the most of the interviewees. Gazi's political atmosphere, ideological background of people and people's lifestyle emerge this identity. I only represent the Alevi identity of the neighborhood, although there is a variety of people in the neighborhood.

I chose to explain one side of this variety: Alevilik. Even though, Alevilik has variety within itself, I prefer to represent its fragmented situation. Actually, heterogeneity of the neighborhood, or coexistence of this variety are remarkable issues to research. However, I chose to examine Alevilik and Alevilik in Gazi Mahallesi in particular. This is because being Alevi means something, but being Alevi in Gazi Mahallesi means something else.

From a different viewpoint, being from Gazi is an overarching situation, and being Alevi is one of the most important fact of it. However, multifactorial characteristic of Gazi contains tension as well. Some issues cause increase of tension, when some of them ease the tension. In other words, the neighborhood can be investigated within this relational and multi-dynamic perspective, instead of that seeing the neighborhood within the fragmented perspective. However, I prefer to

conduct my research according to fragmentation of the neighborhood, but it can be analyzed reversely in order to show relational characteristic of the neighborhood and tension within the overarching identity.

However, I conduct my research within the fragmented perspective, and attempt to show it within the existence of the three Cemevis. Moreover, when fragmented characteristic of Alevilik merges with identity of the neighborhood, the Cemevis emerge as a free space. There are three important points such that transmovement structure, indigenous structure and prefigurative structure. These three points can be analyzed in the three Cemevis within the different aspects which also support fragmentation once again.

First, the contemporary political atmosphere and also political culture, which is inheritance of leftist political organizations, had influence on the establishment process of the Cemevis. The militant culture and tactics were used in order to construct the Cemevis. However, there are many leftist political organizations which have different organizational methods. Therefore, the fragmentation among the leftist organizations influenced the construction process of the Cemevis. For instance, the Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi was emerged as a group from a leftist tradition. Moreover, the head of SGPSAC, and members of the Cemevis were a part of different leftist organizations and it causes to heterogeneity within the Cemevi.

Second, being from Gazi is a unique situation and identity for the inhabitants of the neighborhood. Being from Gazi means solidarity, a strong network and common interest among the people at least the Alevi population of the neighborhood. Therefore, this is the most important and common point in terms of the three Cemevis, because the indigenous structure of the neighborhood can be seen in them.

Third, the Gazi Cemevi is the first Cemevi in the neighborhood. It emerged in a mainstream position. It became a symbol for the Alevi people not only for the inhabitants of Gazi, but also the others. In the beginning, it has a prefigurative meaning in terms of the Alevi identity, because it created an autonomous space them. However, after 22 years, it became a mainstream space, and caused emerging its alternatives in the neighborhood.

Consequently, this thesis investigates the fragmented characteristic of Alevilik, in terms of Cemevi. It is a significant contribution to the literature, because Alevilik is not considered within the fragmented dynamics. Moreover, Cemevi had not been analyzed in order to observe this characteristic. Additionally, Gazi Mahallesi is identified as an Alevi neighborhood, yet it had not been investigated within a research.

This thesis does not claim that it is representative for all parties and situations even though they were not included in this research. I had about 20 in-depth interviews, and many informal conversations. Maybe different results can be found with a different group of people in Gazi. Nevertheless, their experience are in the center of the thesis. Moreover, different people have different experiences and different results as well. This is also a limitation of the research.

Additionally, considering this thesis is a representative for all that causes in contradiction with the aim of the thesis. In other words, the thesis claims that each Cemevi is a unique case. Moreover, even they are in the same neighborhood, they have different stories, reasons, and points for establishment. They have different functions and roles in the neighborhood.

In conclusion, I believe that this thesis provides a significant standpoint on the fragmentation of Alevilik and its exemplified position in Gazi Mahallesi in terms of the three Cemevis.

APPENDIX A: Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

NAME	SEX	AGE	AFFILIATION	THE DATE OF INTERVIEWS	TYPE OF INTERVIEW
C.Z.	Male	52	Gazi Cemevi	15 April 2015	Individul and Focus Group (Not Recorded)
H.Ö	Male	49	Gazi Cemevi	15 April 2015	Individul and Focus Group (Not Recorded)
O.A	Male	55	Gazi Cemevi	15 April 2015	Individul and Focus Group (Not Recorded)
H.Ş	Female	48	Gazi Cemevi	10 April 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
G.F	Male	45	Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi	30 November 2014 15 April 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
M.K.	Male	38	Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi	9 March 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
B.Ö	Female	29	Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi/ People's Teacher	9 March 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
F.Ç	Male	60	SGPSAC	15 November 2014/ 7 December 2014/10 February 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
H.Ç	Female	55	SGPSAC	7 December 2014/10 February 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
Z.B	Male	50	SGPSAC	10 February 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)

A.H	Male	26	Neighbourhood Resident	10 December 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
E.S	Male	27	Neighbourhood Resident	15 November 2014/ 7 December 2014/10 February 2015/9 March 2015/15 April 2015	Individual (Not Recorded)
Nevzat Altun	Male	59	Muhtar of Gazi Mahallesi	10 February 2015	Individual
A.B	Male	60	Neighbourhood Resident	29 November 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
C.D.	Male	62	Neighbourhood Resident	13 December 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
E.F.	Female	64	Neighbourhood Resident	6 December 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
G.H.	Male	58	Neighbourhood Resident	29 November 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
J.K.	Female	55	Neighbourhood Resident	6 December 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
L.M.	Male	57	Neighbourhood Resident	14 November 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)
N.O.	Female	28	Neighbourhood Resident/Waitress	6 December 2014	Individual (Not Recorded)

APPENDIX B: Some Photos from Gazi Mahallesi



Fig.1. Toma in the main street



Fig.2. Two Toma in the Street



Fig.3. A protest



Fig.4. Demonstration for Ozgecan Aslan



Fig.5. The SGPSAC



Fig.6. A person from protest



Fig.7. A protestor



Fig.8. A protestor



Fig.9. Toma in front of the Gazi Cemevi



Fig.10. A night protest



Fig.11. Hasan Ferit Gedik's funeral



Fig.12. The Gazi Şehitleri Cemevi



Fig. 13. The SGPSA Cemevi

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