# FACES OF ALEVI IDENTITY IN TURKEY IN THE POST-1990 PERIOD

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# ABSTRACT

## FACES OF ALEVI IDENTITY IN TURKEY IN THE POST-1990 PERIOD

This study mainly questions the multiplicity of Alevi identities by asking how people form their identities on the basis of the daily encounters of exclusion. Basically, the research focuses on how Alevi identity is produced and reproduced through the transformations of the post-1990 period, the so-called period of "Alevi revival," in Turkey. Based on 28 in-depth interviews with Alevi respondents living in Istanbul, this study shows that there are basically two different ways of telling the story of the post-1990 period in terms of the Alevi issue: In the first way of narration, post-1990 period appears as a time span which has enabled Alevis to be organized and to gain public visibility. In the second way of narration the period is described as a process which accelerated the assimilation of Alevis. The study argues that this difference is caused by the kind of exclusion that the respondents experienced in their daily lives. Drawing from Pierre Bourdieu's field analysis and Margaret Somers' narrative analysis of identity, this study shows that different ways of experiencing exclusion is central for the emergence of multiple Alevi identities in the post 1990 period in Turkey.

**Keywords**: Alevis, identity, narrative, exclusion, Alevi revival, Turkey.

# ÖZET

## 1990 SONRASI TURKIYESINDE ALEVI KIMLIGININ FARKLI YUZLERI

Bu calisma, Turkiye'de Alevi kimliklerinin farkli ifade bicimlerini esas alarak, insanlarin dislanma deneyimleri baglaminda kimliklerini nasil kurduklarini sorguluyor. Temel olarak arastirmanin odagi literaturde "Aleviligin yeniden canlandigi" bir donem olarak da ifade edilen 1990 sonrasindaki surecte Alevi kimliklerinin nasil uretildikleridir. Istanbul'da yasayan 28 Aleviyle yapilmis derinlemesine mulakatlar sonucunda, 1990 sonrasi donemin

Alevi meselesiyle ilgili iki farkli anlatisi oldugu gorulur: Bu anlatilardan ilki 1990 sonrasi donemi Alevilerin kendilerini daha rahat ifade edebildikleri bir donem olarak tanimlarken, ikincisi 1990'lardaki gelismelerin Aleviligin asimilasyonunu hizlandirdigini vurgular. Calisma, anlatilardaki bu farklilasmayi insanlarin gundelik yasamlarinda dislanmayi deneyimleme bicimlerinin farklilasmasiyla aciklar. Pierre Bourdieu'nin saha analizinin ve Margaret Somers'in kimligi kisisel anlatilar baglaminda inceleyen teorisinin de yardimiyla, arastirmanin temel savi farkli dislanma deneyimlerinin 1990 sonrasi donemde ortaya cikan farkli Alevi kimliklerinin olusumunda merkezi bir rol oynadigidir.

**Anahtar kelimeler:** Aleviler, kimlik, anlati, dislanma, Alevi revival, Turkiye.

what I do. My mother has always provided the intimacy and love which makes me feel comfortable and my father has always trusted in me which strengthened my belief in what I do. Also, my brother was more than a friend who has always been there for me. Last but not least, Selcuk, who has always been by my side and believed in me, deserves the biggest gratitude. This thesis is a result of his constant support and love which also has kept me on truck for furthering my graduate studies.

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# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction of the Research Question

Debates on Alevi identity in Turkey center around the argument that there are multiple ways for Alevis to claim their Alevi identities (Çamuroğlu, 1997; Massicard, 2003; Neyzi, 2003; Olsson et al., 1998; Vorhoff, 1998). Most of the authors put forward this argument in terms of different expressions of Alevi identities that emerged after the 1980 *coup d'etat*. In this period, especially in the post-1990 period, being Alevi appeared as a political identification and this appearance was accompanied by the emergence of multiple Alevi identity formations. On the other hand, the period is also significant for Alevis in another respect: After the military coup Turkish state started to emphasize its Sunni tendency in a more direct manner through the ideology of "Turkish-Islam Synthesis." The adoption of this ideology can be considered as a sign that exclusionary stance of the state against Alevis became much more obvious. In this respect, by taking these two issues of exclusionary stance and multiplicity of Alevi identities as a departure point, the main question of this study is to understand the multiple ways in which Alevis construct their Alevi identities in the post-1990 period.

In the emergence of multiple Alevi identities, the period called "Alevi revival," which basically covers the post-1990 period, has an important role. Most important signs of this process are the emergence of Alevi periodicals and newspapers, a great number of books about Alevism, and the establishment of community-based associations throughout Turkey and in the European diaspora (Çamuroğlu, 1997). In other words, starting from this period, Alevism gained a great visibility in the public sphere either through media or through the openings of Cem Houses, Alevi associations, etc. As previously mentioned, this public

visibility is accompanied by the emergence of multiple Alevi identities. What is meant by "multiple Alevi identities" is the situation of Alevis' defining Alevism in religious, cultural, ethnic or political terms depending on the context. As Neyzi (2003) argues, Alevism takes different forms in different regions of Anatolia. In other words each Alevi community has its own way of being Alevi. Massicard (2003) observes this situation in the context of Hacıbektaş Festival which is one of the major events supported by the majority of Alevis in Turkey. She argues that there is "indeterminacy" about Alevism in Turkey and the Hacıbektaş Festival itself reflects the same "indeterminacy" in its existence. Then, she explains what she called "indeterminacy" as a reflection of the diversity of actors, activities and logics co-existing during this event among the Alevis. Vorhoff (1998) also observes the diversity of Alevi identities in the literature on Alevism in Turkey. She states that "far from presenting an objective picture of the Alevi past and present and of the teachings, practices and exponents of Alevism – as all the texts claim – this literature is sustained by quite subjective attitudes and intentions" (p.225). In other words, there is an absence of consensus on what Alevism is in Turkey which implies that in Turkey, there are multiple ways for Alevis to claim their Alevi identity.

For Alevi revival to take place, the 1980 *coup d'etat* stands as the turning point. One of the most important characteristics of the period that follows the military coup was the rise of Sunni Islam in the name of Turkish-Islam synthesis. It can be claimed that after the military coup, the Turkish state purposefully supported the rise of Turkish-Islam synthesis against the rising "social cleavages" of the 1970s such as Marxism and Kurdish separatism (Goner, 2005; Sahin, 2005; Camuroglu, 1997). As a result, the state started to emphasize its Sunni tendency in a more direct manner, although previously the emphasis on Sunni stance was more implicit. In other words, exclusionary stance of the state against Alevis has become more obvious in this period. Although it is stated that in the 1990s political discourse deviated

from the Turkish-Islam Synthesis with the aim of supporting Alevis, Sivas Events in 1993 and Gazi Events in 1995 are important signs of the continuity of exclusionary stance towards Alevism (Koçan & Öncü, 2004).

On the basis of this issue of exclusion and the multiplicity of Alevi identities, this study aims to trace the different experiences of exclusion and their role in the formation of Alevi identities. In this respect, different ways of experiencing exclusion ended with different formations of Alevi identities. Here, it is emphasized that multiple ways through which Alevis experience exclusion is central to the way they form their identities. As it will be discussed in the Historical Background chapter, history of Alevism is also a history of exclusion and daily lives of people are also structured by this exclusionary stance. Hence, explaining how Alevis experience this exclusionary stances and how they form their Alevi identities within this exclusionary context is crucial when analyzing Alevi identities. In a way, this study aims to claim that multiple ways of being Alevi are formed within the context of different ways of experiencing exclusion.

In order to answer this question, narratives of Alevis about the post-1990 period are analyzed. During the fieldwork, there appeared two different ways of telling the story of post-1990 period related with the Alevi issue in Turkey. While the first narrative points out that this period witnessed important improvements which enable Alevis to claim their Alevi identities publicly; second narrative underlines that this public visibility is a "fake benefit" on the part of the Alevis and this process ended up with "assimilation" of Alevism. In this context, this study aims to address three related questions: How are different ways of narrating the period related to the way Alevis construct their Alevi identities? What experiences make Alevis to tell the story of the period in certain ways? Lastly, it is important to ask what kind of a ground this multiplicity of the narratives provides for re-evaluating the post-1990 period and the way Alevis experience the process.

**Entering the Field**

In order to conduct my fieldwork, firstly I contacted with some Alevi associations in Istanbul which enable me to reach informants and to observe and experience an environment with an Alevi majority.  First of all, I made a phone call to each of the associations of *Cem Vakfı* (CV) in Yenibosna neighborhood, *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* (PSKAD) in Küçük Armutlu neighborhood and *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* (HBVKDD) in Okmeydanı neighborhood. First reason why I chose these associations is their being three of the most important and largest Alevi associations in Turkey. Secondly, as it is argued in the Historical Background chapter, each of these three together represent the diversity of representations within Alevi community: While *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* emphasizes the cultural and folkloristic features of Alevism, *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* highlights the leftist political stance whereas *Cem Vakfı* stresses the religious side of Alevism within Islam. On the other hand, the reason why I chose their offices in Yenibosna, Küçük Armutlu and Okmeydanı is their proximity and accessibility.

During the phone calls, after explaining the objective of my study, I stated that I need to talk with Alevis and whether they could help me to conduct my research. I can state that they were quite welcoming for my study. The first place I visited as a consequence of these calls was *Cem Vakfı* in Yenibosna. In total, I made two visits to *Cem Vakfı* and talked with two *dedes*. Then, I visited *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* and talked with one of the administrators of the association. Third, I visited *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* and talked with one of the administrators and a *dede*. As a result of my visits to these three associations, I talked either with administrative staff who were also activists of the associations, or with *dedes*. In order to talk with members of the associations other than the administrative stuff, I made a second visit to PSAKD and sat in the small coffee house which is in the garden of the association. I specifically chose this association because it is a

stigmatized neighborhood where Alevis also live and I wanted to hear their experiences, as well. Surprisingly, people who spend time there were not the members of the association. Rather, they were there as members of Cem House. Also, with the purpose of interviewing people who are not affiliated with associations, I visited Gazi Cem House. I specifically decided to attend Gazi Cem House because Gazi neighborhood is also a stigmatized Alevi district which witnessed the Gazi events of 1995.  As a consequence of my visits to PSAKD Cem House and Gazi Cem House, I could talk with Alevis who attend Cem Houses.

After visiting these Cem Houses, I decided to talk with Alevis to whom I could not reach via Cem Houses. If I had limited the sample with the ones whom I talked via Cem Houses, I would miss the people who do not attend *Cem* regularly or irregularly. Therefore, I reached some personal contacts and through a kind of "snowball sampling," I found other respondents. For instance, as a result of these efforts, I had opportunity to talk with people who never attended *Cem* ceremony or who do not define Alevism as a religious affiliation. In other words, through snowball sampling, I managed to reach the group of Alevis who define Alevism as a way of life other than a religious affiliation. Also, again as a result of these contacts, I managed to reach university graduates. In the beginning of my fieldwork, I was able to talk only with primary school graduates or high-school graduates. In this respect, the people who were reached through my personal contacts also made the sample heterogeneous in terms of the educational background.

Hence, it can be concluded that entrance into field took place by firstly contacting with some Alevi associations, and then with some Cem Houses, and lastly some personal contacts who know other Alevis. By this way sample became heterogeneous, including both the staff of Alevi associations and people who do not have any affiliation with the associations; both *dedes* and regular followers of Alevi religion; both people who attend *Cem* regularly and people who do not; and both people who define Alevism as a religion and

people who do not. With the people I reached through associations and Cem Houses, I talked at the place of the associations and at suitable room of Cem Houses, respectively. With the people I reached through my personal contacts, I talked by visiting them in their houses. During the interviews I gave them a consent form[1] which enables them to call me if they have a question about the research.

As I said before, the associations were quite welcoming for helping the study. Although the same thing is also true for people whom I reached via Cem Houses or personal contacts, still it is important to discuss an issue that arose during the fieldwork. When I first attempted to conduct my interviews with the people whom I ran into Cem Houses or when I call the people I get through my personal contacts, at first they did not want to talk with me by stating that actually they cannot give the "true" information about Alevism. Generally, they directed me to *dedes* who, for them, has the "correct" information about Alevism. Here, an important point needs to be stressed: I am not arguing that Alevis with whom I have interviewed could not say anything substantial about Alevism. When I started asking my questions, all talk about what Alevism is for them very eagerly. What I want to underline here is the situation that they were not sure whether what they said about Alevism was true or not. Even, one woman claimed that "If I knew I would talk to you, I had studied on Alevism." In this respect, before conducting interviews, I needed to persuade some people to talk about Alevism by telling that every information about Alevism is valuable for me and for my research. On the basis of the frequency of this situation during my fieldwork, I can state that this unwillingness to talk about Alevism with the anxiety of giving wrong information on what Alevism is may be problematized in another study.

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   See Appendix – 1

**Sample**

After discussing the process of entering the field, it is necessary to talk about with whom the interviews are conducted in a detailed manner. In the sample, there are 28 respondents: 19 of them are the ones who narrate the post-1990 period as a period which brought public visibility to Alevism, whereas 9 of them are the ones who call this public visibility a "fake benefit." For the sake of the discussion, while the former group of 19 people is named as the first group, the latter group of 9 people is named as the second group.[2] To begin with, in the first group there are 9 men and 10 women out of 19 people, whereas in the second group there are 5 men and 4 women, out of 9. Before talking about the differences of the groups, it is necessary to acknowledge an important similarity: All of the respondents have similar familial backgrounds. Parents of the respondents have either no education or attended only primary school. Moreover, these families either migrated to İstanbul from an Anatolian city or village to find a job or still live in one of those cities. Among these cities, there are Sivas, Tokat, Adıyaman, Elazığ, Amasya, Gaziantep, and Tunceli. The range of income for the parents is between 500 TL – 1500 TL. In this context, in terms of the socio-economic situation of the families of the respondents, it can be argued that they are from lower middle class.

To begin with, the most important feature of people from the first group is their educational level which is mostly primary school. Except the four respondents who never went to school, there were thirteen primary school graduates, and two high school graduates in this group. While, one of the high school graduates is female and the other is male, among the ones who never went to school three of them are female and one of them is male. Moreover, in this group, all of the women define themselves as housewives. However, one of the women is retired from a state job, one of them worked in a low-paid private sector job for

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[2]
   For the schematized version of the sample see Appendix – 2.

eight years in the past, and two of them are working irregularly such as going to houses for cleaning. On the contrary to women, all of the men in the group are working or retired. Three of the men are working in private sector jobs, four of them are retired and two of them are working irregularly. Among men, there are four *dedes*: two of them are affiliated with *Cem Vakfı*, one is affiliated with *Hacı Bektaş Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği*, one is affiliated with Gazi Cem House. These four *dedes* are the retired ones. About the income of the first group, it is possible to claim that it ranges between 500TL – 1500 TL. Neighborhood is important to declare, as well: 5 of the respondents are from Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood which they call as Küçük Armutlu. 4 of the respondents are from Gazi Neighborhood. As it is stated before, these neighborhoods are stigmatized places in Istanbul in terms of social, economic, cultural, and political background of the dwellers. Especially Gazi Neighborhood is important for Alevi population, because of the Gazi Events in 1995.

In a similar way with the first group, most important feature of the second group is also their educational level. However, different than the first group, in the second group there is only one primary school graduate who is a woman. Except her, all of the respondents are university graduates. Moreover, two of the women respondents are attending a PhD program in Turkey. Again in a different way from the first group, none of the women in this group define themselves as housewives because they are all working in regular jobs. One of them is retired but works in the administration body of *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* as an activist, two of them are employed in private sector companies, and one of them is employed by a state company. All of the men are working, as well. One of them is retired from a state owned company but works in the administration body of *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* as the president of the association, three of them are working in a state owned company and one of them is working in a company in private sector. About the income of the second group, it can be claimed that it ranges between 1500TL – 3000 TL.

**Methodology**

Mainly, qualitative research methods are used while answering the research question. As a first step, a semi-structured interview with open ended questions is prepared.[3] This questionnaire is mainly about people's experiences as Alevis, what Alevism means for them, how they approach the state ideology which is based on Sunni Islam, to what extent they are aware of the Alevi identities which emerged in the context of the post-1990 period, etc. For preparing the interview schedule, other than the research question, some of the previous studies on Alevism and their interview formats were utilized. During the fieldwork, all of the interviews were recorded by taking the permission of the respondents. After completing the fieldwork, majority of the interviews are transcribed by a research company and small part of the interviews are transcribed by the researcher. Analysis of the fieldwork has been carried out on the basis of these transcriptions.

In order to analyze what comes up in the fieldwork, a theoretical framework which is the combination of Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995) field analysis and Margaret Somers' (1994) narrative analysis of identity is used. Reasons of this specific preference for the theoretical framework, which are discussed in the theoretical chapter in detailed manner, can be summarized in this way: First of all, transcribed narratives of the respondents are treated as *ontological narratives*, which is a concept provided by Somers, meaning stories social actors use to make sense and act in their lives. In the narrative analysis of identity, when analyzing the identity formation process, the focus is the certain narrative account (Somers, 1994). In other words, narrative analysis of identity limits analysis of identity formation process to that narrative account. By this way Somers' framework provides the possibility to escape any kinds of false generalizations or over-generalizations that is behind the limits of the narrative account in terms of the identity issue at stake.

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[3] See Apendix – 3.

However, Somers' narrative analysis of identity is not enough to analyze the whole identity formation process. This study argues that in order to discuss identity issue from a constructivist perspective, it is necessary to focus on identity formation process in a detailed manner, by focusing on everyday life of people in its relational setting. In this respect, a framework, which helps to conceptualize every-day life is essential. As it is argued in the theoretical chapter in a detailed manner, because concepts provided by Somers are not sufficient in this respect, Bourdieu's (1977, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995) field analysis is introduced into the discussion. Bourdieu's theory of field is important in the sense that it provides a framework which helps to conceptualize everyday life in detailed manner through the notions of position, disposition, capital, and habitus. The way these concepts enable one to conceptualize everyday life will also be clear in the theoretical chapter.

While joining Bourdieu's framework to Somers' narrative analysis of identity provides a good ground to conceptualize every-day life, joining Somers' framework to Bourdieu's field analysis enables one to see how discourse operates for structuring the lives and identities of people. In Somers' formulation, besides people and institutions, narratives appear as an important part of the social space. Especially Somers' concept of *public narratives*, which are "narratives attached to cultural and institutional formulations larger than the single individual" such as social mobility, freedom, is important for understanding the operation of discourse in the daily lives of the people (Somers, 1994, p.619). Moreover, through the notion of public narrative, the role of the *other* in the formation process of identity is incorporated into the analysis.

In this respect, the interviews are analyzed on the basis of this theoretical framework briefly discussed above. After carefully reading the narrative accounts, in order to ease the analysis, what respondents said are grouped under four themes: how people define Alevism, their perspective towards society and the state, their experiences of exclusion, and how they

define and experience the other. These groups emerged as a result of the themes through which interview questions are prepared. Then, narrative accounts of the respondents are analyzed on the basis of the theoretical framework which is tailored from Bourdieu's field analysis and Somers' narrative analysis of identity.

**Significance of the Study**

The period after 1990 is important for Alevis because of the Alevi revival, which resulted in the acceleration of Alevi movement. Moreover, through the appearance of Alevi movement Alevism became public and multiple representations of Alevi identity started to appear through the media channels. In this context, most of the studies on Alevis analyze Alevi identities at the institutional level mostly by focusing on the Alevi associations or Alevi publications. However, how ordinary Alevis experienced the transformation happened in this period and how these experiences affected their formation of Alevi identities were not questioned at all. Since, this study mainly focuses on how people experience this period in their daily lives, it fills an important gap in the literature on Alevis.

Second, this study also problematizes the multiplicity of Alevi identities by arguing that these multiple ways of being Alevi may be a result of multiple ways of experiencing exclusion. Although multiplicity of Alevi identities is a highly acknowledged issue, the factors involved in the emergence of diverse identities are not questioned at all. In this respect, this study claims that experiences of exclusion may be one of those conditions. Moreover, borrowing from Bourdieu, it is argued that because of the multiplicity of the fields, the experiences of exclusion vary, as well. Therefore, this study is important because of the parallelism it draws between multiple ways of experiencing exclusion and multiple ways of defining Alevism.

**Outline of the Chapters**

After introducing the research question, following chapter is Historical Background. The main purpose of this chapter is to provide the reader with a historical and social background of the Alevi issue in Turkey. By focusing on the transformations of the period between 1925 and 2000, this chapter gives an overall discussion of Alevi issue in Turkey. As it is stated in the beginning, history of Alevism is a history of exclusion and in this respect, second chapter outlines a detailed discussion of how Alevis have been excluded from a historical perspective. If it is recalled that explaining how Alevis experience exclusion is one of the central concerns of the research, this chapter is important in the sense that it discusses how exclusionary mechanisms are created historically.

In a nutshell, the historical discussion begins with the early republican period, specifically with the year of 1925. Then, multi-party period, reign of Democrat Party, the atmosphere of 1960s and 1970s are discussed, respectively. In this part of the chapter, the main focus of analysis is the role religion played in political agenda and how its role transformed in the mean time. Then, the period after 1990 is analyzed in terms of the "Alevi revival." Since these years are the times when Alevism become publicly discussed in a detailed manner for the first time in Turkish history, in this part historical analysis revolves around the processes which made such public visibility possible. Such kind of a focus is especially important because basically two ways of narrating the period underlines how these processes are experienced by the people. Lastly, the chapter ends with a discussion of the public representation of Alevi identities which presents a summary of the literature on Alevi identity.

The purpose of second chapter is to give a detailed discussion of the theoretical framework which will be used to answer the research question. The chapter begins with a discussion of the reasons to choose specific framework by taking some of the identity theories

and their critiques as a departure point. After that, Boudieu's theory of field and Somers's narrative analysis of identity is introduced. Then, a brief discussion of why it is important to combine Somers' theory with Bourdieu's and how their concepts complement each other is presented, as well.

In sum, the first half of the chapter problematizes the premise that "identity is a social construction" in order to emphasize what is social is not automatically anti-essentialist and constructivist. Then, through explaining the different theories on identity this part ends with a conclusion, arguing that identities are constructed relationally and situationally, and that they are constantly changing. Moreover, it is underlined that it is important to consider the power relations that are at stake in the formation process of identities. In this respect, it is claimed that through joining Bourdieu's field theory with Somers' narrative analysis of identity, these points are incorporated into the analysis. In the second half of the chapter, the notion of "field", as a space which includes narratives, people, and institutions is discussed through the concepts of position, disposition, habitus, and capital. Moreover, Somers's concepts of ontological narratives, and public narratives are incorporated into the discussion, as well.

The third chapter is devoted to analysis with the aim of answering the research question in light of the theoretical framework proposed in the second chapter. Here, what comes up in the fieldwork is discussed in detailed manner, as well. In this respect, the chapter begins with a detailed discussion of how people narrate the post-1990 period. Then, by taking different ways of narrating the period as a departure point, differentiation of *Alevi habitus* which is considered as the reason of the multiple ways of narrating the period, started to be questioned. For doing so, at first, early experiences of being Alevi is discussed because of the fact that early experiences have an utmost importance for the formation of Alevi habitus. Following that, transformation of Alevi habitus on the basis of the differentiation of the fields of struggle is explained. Lastly, how people define Alevi identity is discussed.

The main purpose of the chapter, and the study in general, is to argue that rather than the field Alevis *started* to struggle, the fields Alevis *continue* their struggle has an important role for the formation of their dispositional identity of being Alevi. In this respect, Alevis possess a habitus which provides them with "a feel for the game" that determines how they understand the Alevi and non-Alevi practices. Moreover, the way how people make sense of the position of being Alevi is formed through their habitus which is structured by the multiplicity and the types of the fields individuals occupy at the same time. However, although early experiences of being Alevi is important in the sense that encounters with the non-Alevi environment have a crucial place for the formation of habitus, latter experiences of being Alevi have an utmost significance, as well. This is because of the situation that in contrast to the early life experiences in which people feel vulnerable due to their inferior position, in the remaining part of their lives they struggle to improve their position by intensifying the necessary capital to defend it. Therefore, this study argues that, the dispositional identity of being Alevi, which appears as a position that needs to be defended, is mostly defined through the stakes of struggle that enable Alevis to defend their position in the field.

# CHAPTER I: HISTORICAL BACKGROUND & LITERATURE REVIEW

**Introduction**

In this chapter, historical background of the Alevi issue is discussed. Within the scope of the research, it has been argued that different ways of experiencing exclusion ended with different formations of Alevi identity. Hence, main purpose of this chapter is to provide a historical gaze towards the processes which shape the ways through which Alevis have been excluded in Turkey. In this respect, the place of religion in political agenda is the central concern due to the fact that the history of Alevi exclusion has been shaped through the "official" ways religion is addressed in Turkey. Although it has been stated that the way how people narrate the post-1990 period is the main focus of analysis, it is crucial to discuss the period before 1990 in order to see continuities and transformations in the attitudes towards Alevis in Turkey. By this way, the processes which provide a context for different narratives are explained from a historical perspective.

In this sense, the historical discussion of the chapter begins with the early republican period, specifically with the year of 1925. Then, multi-party period, reign of Democrat Party, the atmosphere of 1960s and 1970s is discussed, respectively. In this part of the chapter, main focus of analysis is the role religion played in political agenda and how its role was transformed in the mean time. Moreover, how Alevis reacted these processes, and transformations they have experienced in those years are explained, as well. In a way, the purpose of this part is also to provide a historical gaze towards the Alevi issue in the years between 1925 and 1980. Although same concerns are part of the agenda for the remaining part of the chapter, the post-1980 period, especially the period after 1990 is analyzed in terms of the "Alevi revival." Since these years are the times when Alevism become publicly discussed in an excessive manner for the first time in Turkish history, in this part historical

analysis revolves around the processes which made such public visibility possible. Such kind of a focus is especially important because basically the two ways of narrating the period, discussed in the Introduction Chapter, underlines how these processes are experienced by the people.

Finally, the chapter ends with a discussion of the public representation of Alevi identities. As it is argued above, 1990s coincide with a time span when Alevism is discussed publicly in detailed manner. Therefore, the last part of the chapter explains in what ways those discussions are carried on. Moreover, this part draws a more general picture of Alevi identities represented in the public sphere. In this respect, last part is also a kind of literature review which summarizes the studies on Alevi identity. Since great majority of the studies on Alevi identity focuses on the period of Alevi revival and Alevi identities formed in this context, these studies also explain how Alevism have been represented publicly. Discussing these representations is significant for locating the ontological narratives of Alevis.

### Early Republican Period (1925 – 1945)

In the early years of the Republican Period, the "monolithic" political system established after 1925 left very little room for the competing ideas and expression of the social discontent (Zürcher, 2004, p.177). The experiences of Progressive Republican Party, Free Republican Party, or decisions like closing down Turkish Women's Union, or all periodicals which have tendency towards liberalism or socialism are some of the examples of this attitude. Still, the ideology of the period can be named as Kemalism, although it is not possible to define Kemalism as coherent and stable. Rather, as Zürcher (2004) puts it, Kemalism can be defined as the totality of the principles whose definitions are flexible: secularism, rationalism, nationalism, populism, reformism and republicanism. In this sense,

within the scope of this research, in this chapter, understanding the perspective of the state towards religion will be the main focus of analysis.

In this period, the perspective of Turkish state towards religion can be defined as "not just separating Islam from politics but removing its power base, subordinating it to the state, and thus depriving the old elite of their ability to fight back" (Clark, 1999, p.75). Establishment of Directorate of Religious Affairs (DRA) is a good sign of this situation. In a way, foundation of DRA signaled that religion is under state control. Furthermore, there are other precautions Kemalist regime took in this era in order to control religion: In the same day when Directorate of Religious Affairs was established, caliphate was abolished. Also, in 1928 the article of the Constitution that declared Islam as the state religion was cancelled. By taking these reforms as a departure point, it can be argued that in this period the institutions which are necessary to create the "orthodox" Islam of the Turkish Republic were created under state control. For the ideology of the period, controlling religion meant making Islam privatized: Since then, religion "defined as having to do with private belief and/or domestic affairs" (Silverstein, 2003, p.511). On the other hand, through these transformations Turkish state declared its official relationship with Sunni-Islam. For instance, within the body of DRA it was only Sunni-Islam which was represented.

Where to put Alevis in this picture? Massicard (2007) argues that in the early years of the republic, Turkish-Alevi groups were treated as communities who managed to protect real essence of Turkishness against the Arabian way of Islam. In this respect, they were considered as a potential model for the new regime. In a similar way, Küçük (2002) states that early Republican regime was calling Alevis as Turks: Alevis had right to explain relation of Alevi belief with Turkish origin but they were deprived of conducting their rituals on legal grounds. Therefore, in this period, as a consequence of this attitude of the Kemalist regime, Alevis re-interpreted Alevism from a nationalist perspective (Küçük, 2002). In other words,

Turkish nationalism was seen as an area for Alevis to relate themselves to the state. However, it is also possible to state that banning of *tarikats* in 1925, which aimed to destroy the institutional strength of folk Islam, also gave harm to the Alevi communities (Clark, 1999). Within these regulations *tekkes* and *zaviyes* were also closed down which meant losing important places for conducting Alevi rituals. As a good example of attitudes of the state towards Alevis in the period of 1930s and 1940s, Kehl-Bodrogi states that "Alevi *dedes*, easily identifiable by their long beards and untrimmed moustaches were often arrested because of illegal religious and superstitious activities" (p.64). Therefore, it can be argued that although in the beginning of the republican period Alevi culture was advocated in the name of national identity; Alevism was excluded on religious grounds through the establishment of DRA, banning of *tarikats*, etc (Massicard, 2007).

In order to clarify attitudes of Alevis towards Kemalist regime, Kehl-Bodrogi (2003) claims that Atatürk has been considered by Alevis as the liberator they had long waited for. According to her, with the abolishment of the caliphate, and the cancellation of the article that declared Islam as the state religion, Alevis thought that "republican government eliminated all the principle institutional obstacles to the Alevis' equality with the Sunni majority" (Kehl-Bodrogi, 2003, p.57). In this respect, Atatürk appeared as the leader which enabled these transformations which were considered as in favor of Alevi people. Moreover, Atatürk's communicating with the leading figures of the community during the "Independence War" served the construction of this "secret" alliance between Atatürk and Alevis. She also gives the example of how Dersim 1938 was remembered among Alevis: "Even in Dersim, the traumatic experience was met by the creation of new myths which relieved Atatürk of every responsibility of the operation" (Kehl-Bodrogi, 2003, p.66). In this respect, the author argues that whatever disadvantages the Republic might had brought for them, Atatürk retained his

good reputation for the Alevis at least until the 1960s – in spite of the Dersim case – when a new generation discovering Marxism as a far better means to achieve equality.

However, Massicard (2007) has doubts about this mythical deification of Atatürk among Alevis. According to her, it is hard to be sure of this situation when the availability of the historical sources is considered. At this point Massicard gives the example of Dersim and harsh rural life conditions as the situations which lead to the doubts to claim so. Contrary to Kehl-Bodrogi, Massicard considers Dersim as the sign of an Alevi opposition. Moreover, she states that economic difficulties experienced by Alevi peasants might have led Alevis not to support the republican regime, directly. Then, Massicard explains Alevis' relation with the new regime in this way: Alevis neither support the new regime without any conditions nor hate it. While it is possible to argue that secularist reforms are carried out with the support of Alevis, they also support the rebellions against the state like in the case of Dersim. Therefore, it is possible to state that by its own being Alevi does not determine a certain stance to the regime.

Although it is stated that Kemalist regime had a tendency to oppress the challenging stances, the oppositionary movements which took place in the years of 1925-1930 signified that Kemalist reforms had not been accepted by people in the way that Kemalists had expected (Massicard, 2007). The rebellion of *Şeyh Sait* which had both religious and Kurdish-nationalist connotations and the event of Menemen which ended up with killing a high-ranked soldier can be considered as examples of the discontent people had towards Kemalist principles. Sunar (2004) exemplifies this situation by claiming that Kemalism's relation to society is based on the incongruence between its ideological principles and sociocultural infrastructure which in time lead to the continuance of isolated elites from the society and dichotomization of regime and society (Sunar, 2004). Pervasiveness of Islam among the Anatolian people made the political agenda of Kemalism problematic (Massicard, 2007). In

this respect, some authors argue that after the establishment of Republican regime and domination of Kemalist principles in Turkey, there was still segregated and closed *center* and diffuse, weak, and un-mobilized *periphery*.

**Multi-party Period (1946 – 1980)**

This model of closed center and un-mobilized periphery worked until the 1946 multi-party system. "The period between 1946 and 1959 was an important break in Turkish history. Elite competition spilled over into society and for the first time mobilized hitherto apolitical groups. The theater of conflict among the elite became the society itself, rather than the palace, the bureaus of the civil servants, or the backrooms of the single party" (Sunar & Sayarı, 2004, p.69). According to Clark (1999) Democrat Party's (DP) election was a sign of inability of Kemalist republican nationalism to replace either the cultural and moral values or the systems of Islam. What was new in this period was the way how populism was carried on: On the contrary to Republican People Party's (RPP) populism that based on exclusion, Democrat Party's populism was based on inclusion: It de-emphasized secularism, emphasized private initiative, and it tried to appeal to the demands and values of the society. Instead of forcing cultural change above, it promoted liberal initiative generated from below (Sunar, 2004).

In the beginning, Alevis supported Democrat Party by thinking that the multi-party regime would enable them to gain equal opportunities as opposed to the single-party regime (Massicard, 2007). However, with DP's increasing emphasis on Sunni-Islam through making Koranic instruction compulsory in elementary schools, opening a Faculty of Religion, and restoring the Arabic ezan; most Alevis gave-up supporting the party in the next elections. Nevertheless, in spite of these efforts, DP's attitude towards religion can be considered as ambivalent (Zürcher, 2004). While, for instance, restoring the Arabic ezan or increasing the

number of preacher schools can be considered as a strong emphasis on the religious issues, on the other hand DP never tried to give Islam a greater role in the administrative issues. For instance, in spite of these transformations stated above, DP did not stop state control over religion. Directorate of Religious Affairs was still functioning, and every preacher remained as civil servant (Zürcher, 2004). Toprak (1981) explains this situation by stating that "DP politicized the religious issue which helped build a mass following party" (p.72). Simply put, DP saw religion as an instrument to build an electorate base. Moreover, as another reason of DP's restraint attitude towards religious issues, Toprak (1981) argues that "earlier experiences of opposition parties during the one party period had a restraining impact on DP's approach to religious questions" (p.74).

In terms of the religious issues, what DP did, different than Republican People Party (RPP), is to re-evaluate the premise that Islam is a hindrance to modernization. Instead, DP proposed that religion may not be incompatible with development (Zürcher, 2004). This difference in the attitude of DP brought a relaxation in terms of the religious practices, and Islamic way of life became "much more prominent in every day life in the cities" (Zürcher, 2004, p.234). Furthermore, in this period, DP started to construct mosques in Alevi villages and started to change the names of these villages. This situation can be considered as one of the factors which strengthened the mistrust of Alevis in DP. Moreover, this kind of an atmosphere might have paved the way for the developments in 1960s in terms of the Alevi front which signified itself in the form of a party called *Türkiye Birlik Partisi* (Turkey Unity Party). Another triggering factor for the establishment of an Alevi party might be the context provided by 1960 coup. In the atmosphere after 1960 coup civil liberties among which there were freedom of religious belief, worship, and education were emphasized (Toprak, 1981). Cemal Gürsel's suggestion to establish a department of sects in Directorate of Religious Affairs came to the agenda in such a context. This suggestion might have sounded Alevis as a

new opportunity to explain themselves: The attempt of declaring the existence of multiple sects was also an attempt to recognize Alevis as a religious community. However, it is important to underline that there were also precautions took against the utilization of religion in political arena. For instance, in spite of the relaxation of civil rights "1961 Constitution also brought preventive measures concerning the use of religion for political ends" (Toprak, 1981, p.91).

As a reaction to the attempt of establishing a department of sects in DRA, some media channels declared that it was impossible to consider Alevism as a separate religion (Massicard, 2007). In order to argue against these claims, a statement which includes the word Alevi for the first time in the Republican Period is published by Alevi students in Ankara in the year of 1963. Following this statement, some Alevi associations were established, some publications on Alevism were released. For example, *Hacı Bektaş Turizm ve Tanıtma Derneği* was established in Ankara in December 1963. In a way, in the context of the transformations of the period, Alevis started to get organized. When it comes to the mid-1960s, "with the gradual reinstitutionalization of electoral competition, religion once again assumed an important role in Turkish party politics" (Toprak, 1981, p.92). Justice Party (JP – Adalet Partisi) with the image of successor of DP, tried to identify itself as the "champion of Islam" (Toprak, 1981). For instance, the leader of the party, Süleyman Demirel, was described with reference to his village, called Islamköy, and his father, who visited Mecca. Furthermore, during the senate elections Demirel emphasized that "the Turkish electorate was uneasy about the use of secularist pre-text as a means of restricting religious freedom" (Toprak, 1981, p.93). Through these discourses of the JP, RPP appeared as an anti-religious party.

In order to overcome this perspective on the RPP, the discourse of the party was under change especially through the critiques of Bülent Ecevit. Through Ecevit's critical analysis,

"Islam was no longer emphasized as a factor in the long-standing dichotomy between the progressive and the conservative political forces in Turkish society" (Toprak, 1981, p.95). For example, prior to 1969 elections, the RPP declared a warning against the usage of progressive-conservative categories with reference to religion (Toprak, 1981). Hence, it can be argued that "by the early 1970s, both major parties had adopted a more moderate stand on the issue of religion" (Toprak, 1981, p.95). However, this moderate stance was acknowledging only the existence Sunni-Islamic belief. There was no direct reference to Alevi belief. It is in the context of these developments, *Türkiye Birlik Partisi*, which is the first party that represents Alevis was established in 1966 (Massicard, 2007). However, this political opening of Alevis could not find a place in the Leftist movement because of the rising tension of Cold War period (Küçük, 2002). Moreover, party's confusion on whether it is an Alevi party or a party which defends developmentalism, played an important role in its short existence. Türkiye Birlik Partisi renounced itself in 1977.

Until now, the relation of political parties with religion is discussed. According to the results of 1973 elections Toprak (1981) states that religion is one of the most important factors through which people made their decisions on what party to give vote. She supports this situation on the basis of the success of National Salvation Party (NSP – Milli Selamet Partisi) "which based its appeal predominantly on the defense of Islam and Islamic traditions" (Toprak, 1981, p.96). Moreover, by using a public opinion poll prepared by *Milliyet* newspaper in that period, Toprak (1981) points out that 42% of the voters of NSP voted for it "because it is a religious party" (p.97). "The NSP won forty-nine seats in the national election of 1973 and participated in both of the coalition governments formed after 1973" (Mardin, 2006). By taking these claims as a departure point, it can be argued that in that period religion has been one of the most pervasive notions which organizes the political arena and the social life in Turkey. However, in all of these studies cited above and for the parties in the political

arena religion refers to Sunni-Islam. Simply put, attempts of referring to religion included only the Sunni-Muslims by directly excluding and ignoring the Alevi community.

On the other hand, 1960s can be considered as the years of transformation when people became more mobile. For instance there was an important growth in the political organization of students and industrial proletariat. Zürcher (2004) details this situation by stating that "for 1968 onwards, student movements in Germany, the United States, and especially France influenced the youth movement in Turkey" (Zürcher, 2004, p.255). When it comes to the 1970s, these groups became one of the main actors of the violence in the streets: A number of extremist youth groups on the left and Grey Wolves and fundamentalists on the right fought for control of the streets and the campuses" (Zürcher, 2004, p.263). This atmosphere of 1970s, coupled with economic and political instability, provided a ground to politicize the differences between Alevi and Sunni communities (Massicard, 2007). In this regard, Alevis identified themselves with Marxism, by thinking that these ideologies provided an answer to their economic and social inferiority.

In this period, Alevism was reinterpreted as a socialist ideology. In spite of the pervasiveness of the Marxist thought among Alevis, it is still possible to state heterogeneity among Alevis in terms of their political stance. Although youngsters support these ideologies, elderly worries that religious roots of Alevism was being undermined. As Clark (1999) puts it "in the 1970s while the Alevi youth became involved in Marxist ideologies, the *dedes* and *babas* took political action in their own way" (p.80). This collaboration with the socialist movement was utilized by some political actors in the right through declaring Alevis as the part of the "Communistic Threat." As a consequence, in 1978 in Malatya and Kahramanmaş and in 1980 in Çorum, there were serious attacks on Alevis to prevent the communistic threat. As a consequence of these attacks, which were organized by rightist-nationalist groups, 10

people died and hundreds of people were hurt in Malatya; more than 100 people died in Maraş; and 50 people died in Çorum.

Among these events, the bloodiest one took place in Kahramanmaraş in 1978 (Massicard, 2007). On 19th December, a cinema, which was run by people who have rightist tendencies, was bombed and leftists were accused of the bombing. On 21st December, two teachers who have leftist tendencies were killed. Right after this murder, Alevi neighborhoods and some leftist organizations were attacked by rightist people who also had the hidden support of the municipality (Massicard, 2007). The military intervention which gave an end to the events could take place after two days and the unofficial number of deaths was estimated as two or three hundred. In the whole country the effects of Kahramanmaraş events were huge and as a consequence martial rule was declared. However, in Çorum, a similar event took place in 1980 in spite of the martial rule. On 27th May some rightists, who were protesting against the assassination of one of the party members of *Milliyeci Hareket Partisi,* attacked the shops which were run by "leftists." (Massicard, 2007). According to them, leftists were the ones who were responsible for the assassination. These attacks were followed by attacks on Alevi neighborhoods. On 7th June, number of death was 50. The starting point of Çorum Events is very similar to the events in Malatya which took place in 1978.  As a result of the assassination of the mayor of Malatya, who was elected with the support of rightists, some of the leftist associations and Alevi neighborhoods were attacked (Massicard, 2007). The number of deaths as a result of this event was 9.

"From the introduction of multy-party politics in 1950 until the military intervention of 1980, on the political and religious extremes, the far left was supported by some Alevi-Bektashis, while some Sunnis supported the far right" (Clark, 1999, p.81). In other words, during 1970s, Alevis were considered as leftists and this consideration is the departure point for most of the massacres discussed above. Although it is possible to explain the emergence

of these incidents on the basis of rising socio-economic tension between groups; it is impossible to disregard the political dynamics which gave rise to the events (Massicard, 2007). Put it differently, the tension between rightist and leftist groups and the official support gained by rightist-nationalist have an important role for the emergence of these massacres.

### Alevi Revival (1980 – 2000)

The period after 1990 can be best conceptualized by the term "Alevi revival." Here, what is implied by the "Alevi revival" is Alevism's becoming an object of rediscovery and re-definition after the 1980s and the most important signs of this process is the emergence of Alevi periodicals and newspapers, a great number of books about Alevism, and the establishment of community based-associations throughout Turkey and in the European diaspora (Çamuroğlu, 1997). In other words, this declaration stands as the starting point of the Alevi movement in Turkey. Then, what were the conditions which set the ground ready for a movement which has the word Alevi in its name? As a very general response, it can be stated that all of the authors who study Alevi movement agree with the fact that 1980 *coup d'etat* stands as the turning point for Alevi revival to happen. In this context, the question asked above can be re-formulated as what was changed through the effects of 1980 military coup which gave rise to the Alevi movement.

One of the most important results of 1980 *coup d'etat* was the rise of Sunni Islam in the name of *Turkish Islam Synthesis*. After the military coup, the Turkish State purposefully supported the rise of Turkish-Islam synthesis against the rising social cleavages of 1970s such as Marxism and Kurdish separatism (Göner, 2005; Şahin, 2005; Çamuroğlu, 1997). Put simply, the new ideology incorporates "Islam into nationalist credo, hoped to renew the Islamic sense of community in an effort to prevent the recurrence of ideological divisions which had led to the anarchy of the street in the 1970s" (Toprak, 1990, p.10). Hence, it can be

argued that the new agenda gained legitimacy in the political arena of Turkey for a decade (Toprak, 1990). Among the transformations triggered by the new agenda, obligatory Religious and Morals Course which excludes Alevism; and increasing construction of the mosques into the Alevi villages can be listed. On the basis of these policies of the state it may be argued that since the new agenda does not provide any space for Alevism, the atmosphere of the era was not favorable for the rise of Alevi movement in Turkey. However, it may be argued that these "difference repressive attitudes" of the Turkish state made Alevis to embrace their Alevi identity against the Sunni emphasis of the state, as a defense of the self-identity (Göner, 2005; Massicard, 2007).

Also, in this period, with the collapse of the Socialist bloc, Left was not a sound option for Alevis to identify with anymore (Çamuroğlu, 1997; Erman & Göker, 2000). As Çamuroğlu (1997) argues, what signifies the difference of post-1980 period from the 1970s was Alevism's appearance as an umbrella term for Alevis (Çamuroğlu, 1997). As it is argued before, in 1970s, this umbrella term was "left" which mostly refers to Marxism, and most of the Alevis of the era were identifying themselves as leftists. However, after 1980 Alevism started to appear as the most important way of self-identification. For this shift to happen, the price paid by Alevis in Maraş, Çorum, Malatya, and Sivas in 1970s for their support of the left had an important role (Göner, 2005). Moreover, with the dominance of Sunni Islam as the state ideology, Right started to gain administrative power in the positions where Left had been strong before and this made Alevis feel more inferior (Massicard, 2007). In a context in which Islamism was emphasized so much and left was not a sound option to identify with there emerged a renewed interest on the Alevi identity itself (Koçan & Öncü, 2001). As Massicard (2007) argues, first people who took important roles to mobilize Alevis and who were mobilized by Alevi movement in 1990s were the "old leftists."

In 1990s, the change in the political agenda in terms of the attitudes towards Alevis can be observed. The agenda that had supported Turkish Islam synthesis against the cleavages in the society in 1980s became less dominant and Alevis, as the guarantors of Kemalism and secularism, has been started to be supported partly against the rise of Sunni Islam (Erman & Göker, 2000). In 1990s political discourse deviated from the Turkish-Islam Synthesis against the rise of Islamic fundamentalism. In order to form an oppositional "secular bloc" against Islamic fundamentalism, the idea that both Sunnis and non-Sunnis are the citizens of the republic started to be emphasized (Koçan & Öncü, 2004). In this regard, legal establishment of Alevi cultural associations, which quickly sprang up all over the country was allowed officially (Koçan & Öncü, 2004). Furthermore, state officials started to join Hacı Bektaş Festival which is a very important event for all of the Alevis in Turkey (Massicard, 2007). Also, for the first time in the history of Turkish Republic, Alevi associations were allocated money from the state budget during the Motherland Party and Democratic Leftist Party coalition which founded after the resignation of Erbakan government (Şahin, 2005). Lastly, after the general election of April 1999, the coalition government declared "our government will give necessary importance to reinforce the Sunni–Alevi siblingship." It was the first government to use "Alevi" in its manifesto (Şahin, 2005).

The rise of Islamic fundamentalism was not the only factor which affected the change in the political agenda. Also, the regulations imposed by European Union (EU) in the context of globally rising discourse of identity politics appear as one of the important triggering factors (Göner, 2005; Şahin, 2005). Alevism, which is a historically non-represented collective identity, now has to be recognized and represented by the state in response to demands from the EU (Göner, 2005). The 1998 and 2000 progression reports of the EU Commission on Turkey both mention Alevis and their demands and EU as a supranational organization guaranteeing the "right to have identity" as a human right, forced Turkey to

promulgate laws to recognize its ethnic and religious minorities as a condition of being accepted to the EU (Şahin, 2005). Therefore, Turkey's struggle for EU membership can be considered as an important factor for Alevis through affecting the policies of the state.

Another important act of the state which affected the flourish of the Alevi movement was the elimination of the laws which ensures the monopoly of the state on TV channels and radio stations in 1989 with the Özal government (Çaha, 2004). This elimination created a new environment for the expression of opinion. State-owned TV channels are restricted to inform the public only about approved issues by the government. However, with this change the officially illicit or publicly concealed issues came to be openly discussed (Çaha, 2004). Although the political agenda of 1990s was more prone to provide space for Alevi identity, this regulation is still important in the sense that representation of Alevi identity is not bounded to official representation only. In a way, this means that Alevis have the control to make their own representation through the media channels. For the role of media in the formation and representation of Alevi identities Çaha (2004) argues that no identity has been supported in media as much as Alevism although at those times media mediated for the revival of a number of different identities.

Lastly, events of Sivas in 1993 and Gazi 1995 were crucial especially for the creation of an Alevi audience to address (Masssicard, 2007). In Sivas in July 1993 an Alevi festival which is called Pir Sultan Abdal Festival was attacked by fundamentalists by setting a fire in the hotel in which participants of the festival accommodated and thirty seven people died. Because the attack was not exposed to serious police intervention, Alevis in the country was shocked by the state's attitude towards the Alevis. Similarly in March 1995, assassins shot at an Alevi teahouse in Gazi district in which three people were killed. Following the event, huge demonstrations held in the city on the basis of the argument that police had refused to protect Alevis. During these demonstrations more people killed by the policemen shooting at

the crowds. These events were important for mobilizing the Alevis. Even though there was this change in the media and state, people were still afraid to declare their Alevi identity openly due to the long-existed prejudices among the society against Alevis. However, these events made people act against the existing prejudices in the society because in a way they proved the seriousness of the situation. Therefore the role of Sivas and Gazi events has an important place in the creation of the Alevi community (Massicard, 2007).

In conclusion it can be stated that political agenda of the 1980s which were more repressive sow the first seeds for the emergence of Alevi movement by making Alevis felt more inferior and disturbed due to the dominant ideology. With the shift in the political agenda in 1990s, especially with the legal establishment of Alevi associations and the openness of the media towards different identities, Alevi movement gained a public appearance. However, as also Şahin (2005) argues, while discussing how Alevis become public in 1990s, it is not enough to consider social and political environment within the limits of internal dynamics only. Transnational dynamics such as global rise of identity politics and regulations imposed by EU emerge as the important factors that shaped these opportunity structures.

For the rise of Alevi movement, another important issue is migration. Although there is no direct study which details the Alevi migration, taking Cerit's (1986) study (as cited in Şahin, 2005) as a departure point, it can be stated that starting from 1950s, it can be argued that a significant number of Alevis migrated to larger cities. Statistical analysis has shown that out-migration rates of Alevi-dense provinces have been much higher than the national average since the 1950s (Şahin, 2005). This migration process reached its peak in 1970s. Then, what does migration mean to Alevis? Migration to urban setting refers to a shift in the life space. In this regard, for Alevis, urban context emerges as a new space for culture and identity-formation processes through communicating with new social actors other than Alevi

community in the new setting (Şahin, 2005). As a result of this process, Alevis started to discover their self through recognizing the other (Göner, 2005). For example, they started to face with the prejudices against Alevis among Sunnis and by recognizing the self in the negative image of the other, Alevis started to embrace their Alevi identity. Moreover, living in the urban context led to the accumulation of economic and cultural capital among Alevis (Göner, 2005). By this way, the number of educated Alevis and Alevi bourgeoisie started to increase. As a result of this migration process, there was this emergence of *araştırmacı-yazar* (researcher-writer) who became the major actor that made Alevism public (Şahin, 2005). These writers were the urban-educated children of the first-generation of Alevi migrants who grew up in the early years of migration and received a modern secular education (Şahin, 2005). Being educated, they have taken up the role of writer and claimed authority on knowledge of Alevism. Moreover, a majority of these writers have taken active roles in associational activities, either as presidents or board members (Şahin, 2005; Çamuroğlu, 1997).

In the case of Alevis, migration does not only refer to migration to cities and urbanization within the limits of Turkey. It also refers to migration to transnational spaces, especially to Germany. Hence, it can be argued that in addition to the migration within the borders of Turkey, Alevis who migrated to Germany played a very important role for the rise of Alevi movement in Turkey. According to Şahin (2005) central actors in making Alevism public are Alevi immigrants in Europe rather than Alevis in Turkey. She argues that through transnational networks, European Alevis have transported not only financial and human resources but, more importantly, identity discourse and an identity-based association model to Turkey. Especially, for the case of Germany this situation is obvious. On the basis of the study of Sökefeld (2008) in which he analyzed the Alevi movement in Germany and in transnational space, argument of Şahin about the role of migrants in transnational space

becomes much more meaningful. In the Introduction Chapter, the importance of the publishing of Alevi declaration for the emergence of Alevi movement in Turkey has been pointed out. This declaration was based on an earlier statement drafted by the founders of the Alevi Culture Group in Hamburg in the year of 1989 (Sökefeld, 2008).

Sökefeld (2008) points out to the fact that Alevi movement in Germany was organized before the Alevi movement in Turkey and interaction between the actors in both countries played a significant role for the Alevi movement in Turkey, as also argued by Şahin. For example, on December 1988 a group of Alevis met together in Hamburg to discuss the situation of Alevis and Alevism (Sökefeld, 2008). Then, they formed Alevi Culture Group and organized the Alevi Culture Week "which was the first time ever, event announced explicitly in the name of Alevis" (Sökefeld, 2008, p. 39). Moreover the associations of Hamburg Alevi Kültür Merkezi and Hamburg Alevi Kültür Birliği were established in a time when in Turkey using Alevi in the name of association was forbidden by law (Sökefeld, 2008). For the rise of Alevi movement in Germany, Sökefeld (2008) argues that what was new were "the ideas of identity and culture, here emerging in German debate on immigration and multiculturalism, that enabled a new articulation concerns about Alevism" (Sökefeld, 2008, p.62). Therefore, for the rise of Alevi movement in Turkey shifts in networks due to the migration within the country to urban places and migration to transnational spaces especially Germany played a very significant role.


**Public Representation of Alevi Identities**

What kinds of Alevi identities appeared on the public sphere of Turkey as a result of these transformations discussed above? Göner (2005) argues that in the modern setting of the urban context, Alevism emerged as a modern phenomenon. In this sense, she gives the example of the representation of *dedelik* by *Cem Vakfi*. Although before *dedelik* was

something acquired through descent, in *Cem Vakfi* there are courses for becoming a *dede*. This means that by getting the necessary education one could become a *dede*. Vorhoff (1998) compares this situation of Alevism emerged as a result of Alevi revival to the nation-building process and argues that what is done in this process is *invention of tradition*[4] for the *imagined community*[5] of Alevis. What is in common in both of these authors is the fact that after the revival Alevism emerged as a modern phenomenon reproduced and constructed in the context of Alevi movement so it triggered a modern way of Alevi identity formation.

On the basis of these arguments the question can be reformulated as what constitutes the main axes of the discussion about Alevi identities as a modern discourse. Before talking about the dimensions of Alevi identity around which it is discussed it must be stated that there are multiple ways for one to claim his or her Alevi identity (Olsson et al., 1998; Neyzi, 2003; Massicard, 2003; Vorhoff, 1998; Çamuroğlu, 1997). Therefore, representation of Alevi identities emerged in the context of Alevi movement in Turkey has a fragmented picture. However, as Sökefeld (2008) argues for the German context, it is possible to find a *master difference* with which all of the Alevis in Turkey will agree in spite of their different understanding of Alevi identities: This is the difference between Alevis and Sunnis. "Although opinions differ about what Alevism is and what Alevis are, it is undisputed what Alevis are *not*: they are not Sunnis" (Sökefeld, 2008, p.94). Because all of Alevis agree with this difference, Sökefeld calls it as master difference which can be true for Alevis in Turkey. In Turkey, on the basis of their difference from Sunni-Islam Alevis built their identity politics, they have perceived themselves counterforce to Islamic fundamentalism that ensures secularism (Koçan & Göker, 2000). In this context "while Sunnis regarded Alevis as being somehow deviant, Alevis saw Sunnis as harmful to the universalistic assertions of secular

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[4]
   Hobsbawm, E. J., & Terence, O. R. (1983). *The invention of tradition*. NY: Cambridge University Press.
[5]
   Anderson, B. (1991). *Imagined communities*: *Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*. NY: Verso.

citizenship" (Koçan & Göker, p.13). On the basis of this situation, it can be concluded that Sunnis appear as the *other* of the Alevi identity.

Therefore, what are the dimensions around which modern discourse of Alevi identities discussed? Şahin (2005) argues that two most contested dimensions are whether "Alevism is in or outside of Islam" and whether "Alevism is a culture or a religion." In order to see the general picture of Alevi identities emerged through the discussion of these dimensions, it is important to analyze the Alevi associations in terms of identities they represent. Following Çamuroğlu's (1997) grouping of Alevi identities emerged in the context of Alevi movement, three Alevi associations appear as the important institutions which affects the ways Alevi identities are formed: *Cem Vakfı*, *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği*, and *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Tanıtma Derneği*. Çamuroğlu (1997) argues that there appeared three different ways of claiming Alevi identity as a result of the Alevi revival. First group identifies Alevism as the real essence of Islam. By also accepting the five pillars of Islam, they have closer attitude towards orthodox Islam. On the basis of the identification of Çamuroğlu, it is the *Cem Vakfı* which has such kind of a standing among Alevi associations. Established in 1995 after the events in Gazi district, *Cem Vakfı* argues that Alevism is the essence of Islam, also Alevis are the followers of Quran, Muhammed, and Ali (Gölbaşı, 2007). However, they argue that Alevis interpret Quran in the way *twelve imams* interpreted it and it is through this interpretation universal values such as human rights, democracy, egalitarianism come to the foci of Alevism.

Second group of Alevis for Çamuroğlu (1997) are the ones who define Alevism as a secular belief supported by folkloristic characteristics. For them other than being a religious belief, Alevism is an ethno-political standing. It is the *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* which fits to this group. Founded in 1978 for the aim of analyzing the life of Pir Sultan Abdal, through the process of 1980s and 1990s, especially after the Sivas Massacre, association gains

a more political and leftist standing. According to them Alevism has nothing to do with Islam and mostly they emphasize the cultural and philosophical standing of Alevism (Gölbaşı, 2007). For them Alevism is more than a religion, it is a political standing and for this reason in their manifestation they demand solutions to the political problems of Turkey such as anti-democratic attitudes, Kurdish issue, as well as the Alevi issue (Gölbaşı, 2007). This standing of *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* can be considered as the remnant of Alevi standing in 1970s. Its main difference from *Cem Vakfı* is its definition of Alevism out of Islam and its emphasis on Alevism as a secular belief. In this context, while *Cem Vakfı* tries to get a place to Alevism in the Directorate of Religious Affairs, *Pir Sultan Abdal* aims the closure of Directorate of Religious Affairs because it is against the secular discourse of the Turkish State (Okan, 2004).

Third group of Alevis are the ones who have an equal standing to both positions of Alevism as a "secular belief" and as the "real Islam". On the basis of this definition it is the *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Tanıtma Derneği* which fits to this category. Established in 1994, association tries to protect the cultural essence of Alevism in the modern context (Gölbaşı, 2007). In this context main question of them is how to protect the essence of Alevism which is an oral culture in the modern context. Because it is difficult to maintain oral tradition in modern context which impose order, this question becomes very crucial for Alevism. Compared to *Cem Vakfı* and *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği*, *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Tanıtma Derneği* does not emphasize Islamic side of Alevism and its political standing.

By looking at the big picture drawn by the Alevi movement in Turkey, Massicard (2007) also arrives at a similar grouping for the Alevi associations in Turkey. According to her, Alevi movement is a fragmented movement in terms of the position agents take. In this context she argues that while some Alevi associations like *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür Tanıtma Derneği* emphasize the cultural features of Alevism, associations like *Pir Sultan Abdal*

highlights the leftist political standing. Also, some associations like *Cem Vakfi* stress the religious side of Alevilik within Islam.

Massicard (2007) explains this differentiation in terms of position about Alevism on the basis of the social profiles and resources that the agents had. For example, because the president of *Cem Vakfi* İzzettin Doğan genealogically comes from a *dede* family who always supported the state, his association is more religiously oriented and in line with the state policies. Lastly, Massicard (2007) makes an important point about Alevi movement in Turkey and argues that it is better to analyze movement on the basis of Bourdieu's concept of field. In this context, Alevism in Turkey can be considered as a field in which there are multiple actors who have the possibility of being in an agreement or conflict. This perspective gives the Alevi identities within the context of Alevi movement a dynamic outlook.

In addition to representation of Alevi identities in terms of Alevi associations, books about Alevism published during the era plays important role for the formation of Alevi identities in the context of Alevi movement. In this context, Vorhoff (1998) points out to the importance of analyzing the books about Alevism in terms of their imagination of Alevi history since re-writing past is an important part of formation of an identity. After analyzing the books about Alevism she concludes that there are multiple Alevi identities represented in the books depending on the political standing of the author.

In the books about Alevism Hacı Bektaş emerges as an important figure and most of the time in the body of him political standing of the Alevi identity is represented. For example, Leftists present Hacı Bektaş as a revolutionary figure, in the Kemalist writings he appears as a 14th century Atatürk and for the ones who dissociate themselves from nationalist position Hacı Bektaş is devoid of any racial marking, he collected best elements of any culture in his being: humanitarian, peace-loving, and egalitarian (Vorhoff, 1998). The only common point of this historiography is "the endless repetition of one pattern: the good, the

righteous and innocent against the evil, vain, and the cruel" (Vorhoff, 1998, p.246). Therefore, in this history writing Alevis always represented as innocent and oppressed.

Through these analyses, important issues about the Alevi identities emerge. First of all, it was obvious that Alevi identity is a modern identity formed in the context of Alevi movement through the invention of tradition for the imagined community of Alevis. Secondly, Sunnis appear as the *other* of Alevi identity. Through this differentiation with Sunnis, Alevis construct their identity in line with the modern values of democracy, secularism and humanism by arguing that they are the guarantors of secularism in Turkey against Sunni Islamic threat. Hence, being democratic, humanist, and secular appears as the important features of Alevi identity. Thirdly, in the context of Alevi historiography, Alevi identity is always represented as innocent and oppressed because of the massacres they experienced throughout the history. Moreover, for the discussion of the answers of the questions whether "Alevism is in or outside of Islam" and whether "Alevism is a culture or a religion" it is obvious that different associations have different answers. Looking from this perspective representation of Alevi identities in the context of Alevi movement seem fragmented and dynamic.

However, there are authors who argue that this fragmented picture of Alevi identities started to disappear. According to Göner (2005) and Dressler (2008) because of the hegemonic structure of the Turkish state, more and more Alevis started to define Alevism in terms of religious identity. In this sense, Göner (2005) states that contrary to what most of the Alevis thought the shift experienced in 1990s in the attitudes of the state towards Alevis was not a positive development for the recognition of Alevism publicly. According to Göner (2005), what happened with this shift was the emergence of a new hegemonic discourse. Before, because of the *difference repressive* and *difference blind* hegemony of the state Alevis were organized as a counter-hegemonic movement (Göner, 2005). However, after the process

in 1980s which was shaped by the domination of Turkish-Islam synthesis, difference repressive hegemonic discourse shifted to a hegemonic discourse that respects identities which define themselves on the basis of their religious terms rather than ideological terms. This was a shift experience globally through the rise of identity politics and it means that different identities who define themselves in religious terms started to be recognized by the new hegemonic discourse (Göner, 2005).

In this context, in order to be normalized and to be heard in public sphere Alevism had to define itself in religious terms and remark its difference on the basis of what defines Sunni Islam. For example, if mosques are the places of worship of Sunnis, Cem Houses are the places of worship of Alevis; if Sunnis have *imam* Alevis have *dede* (Göner, 2005). What is significant here is the fact that the borders within which Alevis define Alevism determined by this hegemonic discourse. Thanks to this new hegemonic discourse, while cultural and religious differences of Alevis were included into the hegemonic discourse, the collective memory of Alevis which is based on the uneasy historical relations with the state was excluded. In this context, while Alevism starts to appear as a religion with strict practices, its counter-hegemonic standing was domesticated (Göner, 2005).

Similarly, Dressler (2008) argues that "though configured differently, both (Turkey and Germany) secular and national contexts encourage Alevis to standardize and objectify Alevism using the language and grammar of religion" (p.280). Then, for the case of Turkey he claims that because of the grammar of Turkish laicism, the issue of Alevism appears as a religious one. In this sense, "Turkish laicism's obsessive anxiety about religion and its regulation pushes Alevism in a more thoroughly 'religious direction'" (Dressler, 2008, p.295). Because of the public debates who interpret Alevism in religious terms, even those Alevis who do not define Alevism as a religion are inclined to relate to that religious discourse in competition with those religious interpretations (Dressler, 2008). Therefore, in order to gain

official recognition Alevis in Turkey feel the necessity of identifying their place in relation to the symbolic universe of Islamic tradition by using the grammar of religion. (Dressler, 2008).

On the basis of the picture drawn by Dressler and Göner, it can be concluded that the one who defines Alevism as a religion by referring to symbolic universe defined by Sunni Islam, will have the potential to be recognized by hegemonic discourse of the state, so it will have the potential to determine the definition of Alevi identity against the rival explanations. In this context, because *Cem Vakfı* establishes its position on the basis of loyalty to state and a Turkish-Islamic attitude, in the long run it might be the one who gain control over the definition of Alevi identity against Alevi voices with a leftist and state-critical approach who oppose the Turkish-Islamic paradigm (Dressler, 2008; Erman & Göker, 2000).

**Conclusion**

Throughout the chapter, mechanisms which create Alevi exclusion are discussed. Mainly, official perspective to religion which is shaped around a strong emphasis on Sunni-Islam is proved to be one of those main mechanisms. By focusing on the political agenda of the parties and voters, the role of the religion in determining the state ideology is tried to be underlined. Among the transformations discussed about the time period under scrutiny, the 1980 coup has an important place. As previously mentioned, Turkish-Islam synthesis adopted right after the military coup can be considered as an open manifestation of the official imminence towards Sunni-Islam. Interestingly, this manifestation is followed by "Alevi revival" which expresses itself through different public representations of Alevi identity. In this respect, rest of the chapter focuses on 1990s in detailed manner.

Last part of the chapter is devoted to the discussion of these public representations of Alevi identities. By specifically focusing on Alevi associations and publications on Alevism, the meaning of being Alevi in their context is questioned. Publications on Alevism provide

diverse meanings for defining Alevism. The same thing is also true for associations. However, in the case of associations, it can be argued that each association represent a different stance in Alevism either emphasizing Alevism as the real Islam, as a way of living or as a political stance. Although this discussion on diversity of public representations stresses the multiple ways of defining Alevism, the chapter ends with a discussion of the studies which emphasize that starting from 1990, Alevism is defined more on religious terms rather than political or cultural terms. In this respect, these studies open a new ground when discussing Alevi identity in Turkey.

## CHAPTER II: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

**Introduction**

In this chapter, the theoretical framework which will help to answer the research question is discussed. First of all, in the beginning of the chapter, some of the theories on identity and their critiques are introduced. These critiques are important in the sense that they provide a basis to tailor a good framework for analyzing the ways identities are formed from a constructionist point of view. In a way, these critiques provide a ground for justifying why certain framework is chosen for answering the research question. In this respect, within the scope of this study, the research question is answered through joining Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1987, 1990, 1992, 1995) field analysis to Margaret Somers' (1994) narrative construction of identity. In this formulation, ontological narratives of Alevis are the main focus of analysis. On the basis of these narrative accounts, formation of Alevi dispositional identities is analyzed.

In his theoretical approach, Bourdieu uses field to conceptualize social space. Basically, for him social space is defined by hierarchically located positions and field contains all of these positions in its body. Furthermore, positions of people in the field is determined by "the rules of the game," their habitus, and type and amount of the capital they have. By this way, Bourdieu introduces important concepts to think about the every-day flow of the field: Through the notion of *capital* the economic situation of people, their educational and cultural background, relations they established with other people, and their religiosity is conceptualized. Also, the notion of habitus is used to analyze how and why people act in certain ways and the role of the past experiences in their actions and the specific logic of the field individuals inhabit. However, Bourdieu does not talk about a single field. Rather he

underlines that there are variety of fields which are co-existing. By this way he actually incorporates the complexity of social space into his analysis.

Here, through incorporating Bourdieu's field theory, critiques of social constructionist approaches tried to be overcome: First, by separating the position in the field from dispositional identity, the dilemma of classifying people as "something" in the first place tried to be transcended. Second, conceptualization of identities as difficult-to-change "cognitive schemas" is handled by emphasizing changing relations and situations in the field. Third, power relations are incorporated into the formation processes of identities through the hierarchically defined positions in the field. Moreover, through joining Somers' narrativity to Bourdieu's field analysis operation of discourse in structuring the lives and identities of people is incorporated into the discussion. Therefore, in the next part first, some theories on identity and their critiques will be discussed and secondly Bourdieu's theory of field with Sommers' narrative analysis of identity will be elaborated on.

**Identity as a Social Construction**

In contemporary debates on the question of identity, perhaps the only thing scholars are in agreement with each other is the premise that identity is a social construction. By emphasizing the processes through which identities come into play, studies in this area try to explain how identities are constructed. This perspective towards the question of identity is mostly a result of the scholarly efforts in the area of gender studies and studies on race, ethnicity, and nationalism (Cerulo, 1997). Great majority of the studies in these areas argue against essentialism which refers to "a belief in the real true essence of things, the invariable and fixed properties which define the 'whatness' of a given entity" (Fuss, 1989, p.xi). Rather, most of the studies underline that these essentialist claims play a significant role in naturalizing the existing power relations among various social groups (Mahalingam, 2007).

Through the process of essentialization of race and gender, group differences are made to appear as immutable and natural. Appiah (1990) (as cited in Mahalingam, 2007) exemplifies this situation by analyzing the relationship between biology and essentialism in the colonial context when constructing the theories of race.

If the emphasis on social constructionism is the backbone of identity question, first of all, it is important to discuss the studies which made constructionist perspective on identity possible. In this respect, as it is said before, area of gender studies and studies on race, ethnicity, and nationalism have an utmost importance. To begin with, Anderson's (1991) term, "imagined community," can be considered as his main theoretical contribution to the study of nations and nationalism, and identity issue. This conceptual presentation refers to the processes that enable people to imagine a nation. According to Anderson, these processes are threefold: "print capitalism," new provincial elites in the Americas, and the bureaucratic fuse of nations into empires (Wilson, 2001). Among them, print capitalism has the utmost importance due to the fact that it enabled people to "imagine" larger groups of people who had no special form of togetherness before. In a way, Anderson emphasizes the role of language for creating a sense of community (Wilson, 2001). In this regard, Anderson underlines socially and historically constructed notion of a belonging by stressing the importance of the processes at stake for formation of a nation. His work implies that a nation is a constructed entity through the efforts of imaginers and inventors (Motyl, 2002). As a consequence of this formulation, national identity emerges as a socially constructed belonging.

In a parallel way with the studies on nationalism, social constructivist perspective has become one of the most important stances in contemporary studies on gender, as well. (Dietz, 2003). According to Dietz (2003) "collective aim of these theorists is to thematize a feminism rooted in the realities of women's lives and in ways of knowing or being that flow from

women's experiences, or from the female body" (p.406). For instance, Hartsock (1987) (as cited in Dietz, 2003) points out to an important difference between the "lived realities" of women and of men in a society structured by the norms of heterosexuality and masculine domination. Therefore, through focusing on everyday practices, these studies try to explain the processes through which masculinity and femininity are constructed.

Among these works, Chodorow's (1978) study of *The Reproduction of Mothering* has an important place because, as Somers (1994) states, she tries to refute the assumption of theories on women, proposed by social scientists who study moral development, which considers being woman as being "abnormal." In *The Reproduction of Mothering*, Chodorow argues that the development and reproduction of gender identity - that is, of "masculine" and "feminine" personality - arise from a "universal" nuclear family structure in which one heterosexual female parent is primarily responsible for the mothering of children (Segura & Pierce 1993). Although her limited focus on European-American middle-class family structure can be criticized because of a Western-centered perspective towards the issue, her work is meaningful in emphasizing that mothering occurs in a social context (Segura & Pierce 1993). What Chodorow emphasizes with her work is that female identity is constructed through the mothering practices structured by the family.

These approaches to gender and national identity are important because they point out to the processes through which identities are constructed. For instance, while Anderson emphasizes the importance of language for inventors and imaginers of the national identity, Chodorow underlines the significance of the relations people establish within the family for the formation of gender identity. However, there are also important critiques of these studies which warn scholars against the traps of social constructionism. Although Anderson's and Chodorow's works are essential due to the fact that they have enabled scholars to think identities from a constructivist point of view, their critiques are also essential in order to

explain the construction process of identities in a more detailed manner. In this respect, these critiques give some hints about how to study identities from a constructivist perspective on better grounds.

### Importance of the Context

One of the most important critiques of constructivist studies on gender is the ways through which these studies have replaced the biologically founded woman category. In this respect, it can be stated that most of these works, "face the problem of essentialism in the form of questions about whether it is possible or desirable to forward a collective concept of 'women,' valorize a symbolic appeal to 'the feminine,' or posit irreducible 'sexual difference' without asserting some invidiously exclusive or normalizing metaphysical substance, natural life form, or deep structure with regard to these entities" (Dietz, 2003, p.407). In other words, critiques point out that these constructivist attempts of studying gender reproduced their own dichotomy of woman vs. man. For instance, Scott (1999) (as cited in Somers 1994) criticizes Chodorow's work by stating that she substituted her own ahistorical and essentialist notion of "woman" instead of the biologically founded one. Recall that Chodorow studies construction process of female identity by focusing on the mothering practices in Western middle-class families. Hence, following Scott's critique it can be claimed that Chodorow's category of "woman" excludes and marginalizes non-Western family forms, gay and lesbian families, and single parent households (Segura & Pierce 1993). By these ways, Chodorow produces another category of essence which is not based on biology but this time culture and class.

Parallel critiques have been made for Anderson's formulation of "imagined community," as well. In this respect, "the most compelling critique of Imagined Communities came from Partha Chatterjee whose question reminds us of historical and cultural specificity between the European and Asian experience" (Chong, 2009). Basically, Chatterjee (1993)

rejects Anderson's conceptualization of nation-state as a portable form which can be transported to every locality without any problems. By focusing on the post-colonial experience of nation-state formation in India, Chatterjee (1993) argues that nationalism in the East is not "imagined" exactly in the same manner as it is imagined in the West. In his study, he asks a meaningful question that "if nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined community from certain 'modular' forms already available to them by Europe and the Americas, what do they have left to imagine?" (Chatterjee, 1993, p.5). Therefore, for the formation of a national identity in the post-colonial contexts, it is necessary to focus on other context-specific processes at stake, such as Indian *public realm* vs. *spiritual realm* distinction.

These critiques against constructivist arguments on gender and nationalism are important in their emphasis on the significance of social context for the formation of identities. In both of the critiques of Scott and Chatterjee, there is an important warning against the trap of Western-oriented perspective towards the construction process. In this respect, replacing biological assumptions with Western norms of family or nation-state formation does not necessarily mean abandoning essentialist claims on identity. Rather, these ways of explaining the process of identity formation produce another category of essence which is based on the social. As Fuss (1990) states, constructionists frequently assume that the category of the social automatically escapes essentialism and in essence social is constructivist. However, to argue that people are always embedded in social may not be the way of rejecting essentialism. On the basis of this statement, Fuss criticizes the dichotomy of essentialism vs. constructivism by claiming that "if we are to intervene effectively in the impasse created by the essentialist/constructivist divide, it might be necessary to begin questioning the *constructionist* assumption that nature and fixity go together (naturally) just as sociality and change go together (naturally). In a similar way with Fuss, Calhoun (1994) also

states that constructionism can be essentialist too if it rejects personal and political agency by overemphasizing social pressures as an alternative to biological causation. Similarly, Norval (1996) argues that social constructivist approaches have danger to be essentially subjectivist by creating a ground which stands outside all forms of discursive construction. For Calhoun and also for Norval that ground is the role of social pressures, in other words power relations, in the formation of identities.

All of these critiques warn theoreticians of identity against the taken for granted assumption that what is social is automatically anti-essentialist and constructivist. Within the scope of this research, what is proposed as a response to these critiques is focusing on everyday life of people in their relational setting when analyzing the identity formation process. In other words, in order to pay attention to context specific features, it is necessary to focus on the processes through which identities are constructed in the everyday life of people. In this study, Bourdieu's notion of field is used to conceptualize everyday life and the context specific features that shape the identity formation process. As it is stated, Bourdieu's theory of field introduces important terms to conceptualize everyday life such as capital, habitus, position and disposition. Since in Bourdieusian theory, field contains all of these concepts both structuring them and being structured by their existence, it provides a strong framework for elaborating on the context specific features. In the second half of the chapter, these concepts are discussed in detailed manner in terms of their roles in the identity formation process.

**Identity as a Category**

Another important issue which arose as a result of the critiques of constructionist perspective is about keeping the category of a belonging without being essentialist. This dilemma is mostly seen in studies on gender. Most of these studies discuss issues on the basis

of a category of woman. However, the assumption that "'women' will all act the same under all conditions simply because of their biological sex or even their socialized gender-identities" is still problematic because of the essentialist connotations of assuming an already given gender identity (Somers, 1994, p.611). Fuss (1990) discusses this dilemma by claiming that escaping from essentialism is not an easy task. She states that essentialism appears on the agenda when we are talking about categories of women, gay, etc. even though differences within a certain category aimed to be discussed.

Furthermore, she adds that even "the plural category of 'women' for instance, though conceptually signaling heterogeneity nonetheless semantically marks a collectivity; constructed or not, 'women' still occupies the space of a linguistic unity. It is for this reason that a statement like 'American women are x' is no less essentializing than its formulation in the singular, '*The* American woman is x'" (Fuss, 1990, p.4). For dealing with this problem, Fuss suggests that it is necessary to "securely displace essentialism" through distinguishing between kinds of essentialisms: Following Locke, she distinguishes between *real essence*, which refers to the understanding of essence as irreducible and unchanging, and *nominal essence*, which refers to the view of essence as merely a linguistic convenience, a classificatory fiction we need to categorize and label. In this regard, Fuss states that keeping the category of a belonging in the form of nominal essence, "allows us to work within the category of women as a *linguistic* rather than a natural kind" (Fuss, 1990, p.5).

Basically, what is underlined here is that talking about identity formation process of a group of people or a community under a certain category, for example, of women, has potential to be essentialist in terms of its classification of people as "something" in the first place. In other words, assuming an already given category of belonging may end up with over-generalizations for the category. As mentioned above, Fuss solves this problem by separating two kinds of essentialisms. However, it is also possible to solve this problem by

using Bourdieu's notions of *position* and *dispositional identity*. According to Bourdieu, every individual occupies a position in the field, which is defined by the distribution of capital (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Then, he defines disposition as the sense of one's position in the field. By recognizing and relating to other positions, individuals make sense of their positions in the social space. This process of making sense of one's position in social space forms the dispositional identity of an individual. By using Bourdieusian framework, the category of an identity can be conceptualized as a position in the field whereas the way identities are defined can be conceptualized as dispositional identity. In this formulation, the category of woman, for example, refers to a position only, not the totality of the characteristics of being woman. Those characteristics are formed through making sense of the position of woman, which is related to many other aspects that define the position such as class, race or ethnicity. Hence, by separating the position from dispositional identity, it is possible to get rid of the dilemma of classifying people as "something" in the first place.

### Identities as "Cognitive Schemas?"

As all the points discussed above indicate, it is necessary to focus on the identity formation processes in a more detailed manner by paying attention to the different aspects of localities. Therefore, the question here is *how* to analyze the identity formation process, specifically. As it is previously mentioned, there are micro-sociological perspectives which focus on how identities are formed and come into play in the daily lives of people (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin, 2010). Here, some of these theories are discussed in terms of their focus on identity formation process. Basically, these micro-sociological approaches "understand identities as cognitive schemas-internally stored information and meanings serving as frameworks for interpreting experience" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p.286). In other

words, they are "cognitive bases" for defining and understanding situations stored in the self-concept of individual.

The first group of these theories takes Mead's *symbolic interactionist* framework as a departure point (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin, 2010). Mead (2003) argues that "the individual's self is constituted simply by an organization of particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in specific social acts in which he participates with them" (p.37). He calls this "organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called 'the generalized other'" (Mead, 2003, p.36). In Mead's conceptualization, "when the individual assigns to him/ herself the same positional designations and behaves in the expected way in role relationships with others, he/she can be said to have taken on a set of identities" (Thoits, 1983, p.175). Based on this conceptualization of symbolic interactionist thought, there is a group of micro-sociological approaches on identity each of which focuses on how certain identities are formed.

In McCall and Simpson's *Role-Identity Theory*, it is stated that individuals devise characters for themselves for each position they occupy during their lives (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin, 2010). By following symbolic interactionist thought, this theory assumes that through providing multiple roles, these positions and characters are the basis for the multiplicity of the identities people have. "Because people have multiple and often competing role-identities, which also come and go during one's life course, an important theoretical problem in McCall & Simmons's theory is to explain which role-identities people value most and will thus attempt to perform" (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin, 2010, p.5).

Second approach to identity, which is proposed by Stryker (2008) in the name of *Identity Theory* is an attempt to answer this question. In a similar way with the Role-Identity Theory, also in Identity Theory persons are seen as having multiple identities which can be conceptualized as organized systems of role relationships in which they participate (Stryker,

2008). In this formulation, identities appear as "self-cognitions tied to roles" or "cognitive schemas" which have the capacity to affect cognitive and perceptual processes. "As cognitive schema, they are not situation specific and can be carried by persons into the many situations they experience, affecting conduct in those situations" (Stryker, 2008, p.20). The concept of *saliency* is provided to answer the question that "given situations in which there exist behavioral options aligned with two (or more) sets of role expectations attached to two (or more) positions in networks of social relationships, why do persons choose one particular course of action?" According to Stryker's concept of saliency, salience itself, is determined by the amount of commitment an individual has to an identity (Thoits, 1983). In this respect, "identities are hierarchically organized by degree of commitment, or what might be called their 'network-embeddedness.'" (Thoits, 1983, p.176). Therefore, the more salient an identity is, the more likely for it to be performed in varying situations.

With a slight difference from Identity Theory, Thoits' (1983) *Identity Accumulation Theory* sees roles and identities as resources available to deal with life's exigencies (Stryker, 2008). "Consistent with Stryker, the self is conceptualized here as a set of discrete identities-self-definitions in terms of occupied social positions" (Thoits, 1983, p.175). According to this formulation, higher the number of identities people have, the more capability people have dealing with the varying situations (Thoits, 1983). The last approach, Burke's *Identity Control Theory* states that in order to protect existing identity schemas, people continuously alter their behaviors, rather than changing identities (Stryker, 2008). "Behavior, in this model, is organized to change the situation and hence the perceived self-relevant meanings in order to bring them into agreement with those in the identity standard" (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p.287). Therefore, identities have the power to transform already existing situations and create new situations in order to protect one's self-coherency with the identity schemas.

All of these theories affirm that individuals have multiple identities because of the different positions/roles they occupy during their lives. Moreover, they claim that people decide which identity to use in certain situations depending on the inner characteristics of identities as Stryker formulates in the saliency theory. By inner characteristics, what is emphasized is the characteristics which are inherent to identities. Recall that these theories conceptualize identities as multiple cognitive schemas stored in the self-concept of individual. Therefore, the most salient or important an identity is, the most likely for it to be used in certain situations. In other words, for an identity to come into play, the comparison of inner characteristics with respect to its saliency is the central concern. Even the situations can be altered, as in the case of Identity Control Theory, for the sake of protecting an identity schema. However, there is a different set of micro-sociological theories which criticize this assumption by emphasizing the situational factors. In this respect, these theories underline "how social contexts elicit certain identities and shape their meanings" (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin, 2010, p.9). For the sake of discussion, former theories discussed above is named as first group of micro-sociological theories (Role-Identity Theory, Identity Theory, Identity Accumulation Theory, Identity Control Theory) and the ones which will be discussed now is named as second group of micro-sociological theories.

Second group of micro-sociological theories agree with the former theories in the sense that "social roles, group memberships, and category memberships are incorporated into the self-image" in the form of multiple identities (Owens, Robinson, and Smith-Lovin, 2010, p.9). In other words, they also see identities as "cognitive schemas" to interpret life. Nevertheless, they criticize the application of symbolic interactionism in these theories by stating that they disregard the structural factors which elicit certain identities. It is because of this reason they emphasize the structural factors for identities to come into play rather than the characteristics of identities, themselves. Therefore, different than first group of theories,

second group of theories emphasizes the social context other than the inner characteristics, for identities to come into play.

To begin with, in *Situated Identity Theory*, Alexander and Wiley (1981) argues that identities are formed through dispositional attributes that flow from the perspectives of given perceivers of the event field. In this regard, "the social reality at any moment is the complex of situated identities generated from all of the perspectives that are relevant to the events in a social field" (Alexander & Wiley, 1981, p.274). When people agree on the particular dimensions of the situations relative to act, identities come into play. On the other hand, Heise's (1997) *Affect Control Theory* states that people control social interactions by striving to maintain culturally shared feelings about the situation (Scholl, 2009). "Affect Control Theory (ACT) states that while interacting socially, people try to create impressions that match culturally shared fundamental feelings associated with their mental representation of the situation" (Scholl, 2009, p.180). Different from Identity Control Theory discussed above, this approach emphasizes the importance of culturally shared feelings, rather than the internalized meanings of identity, for people to act accordingly. Therefore, people try to control their interactions in order to meet the criteria established by cultural norms. Lastly, according to Tajfel's *Social Identity Theory* people have multiple identities and these identities come into play depending on the different social context. Depending on the category of membership people have such as nationality, political affiliation, people have multiple identities (Hogg, 1995). Thus, contexts determine which "specific social identity becomes the salient basis for self-regulation" (Hogg, 1995, p.259).

Main problem in both groups of theories is their perspective of identity as a trait or a characteristic. For them, through the roles/positions people occupy, people get multiple identities which are stored in the individual's self-concept. In other words, all of the theories discussed above assume that people have a repertoire of ready-made identities. Although they

acknowledge that identities are formed through role-taking or interactions people involve in with other people, after that they treat identities as stable, difficult to change "cognitive schemas." Rather than emphasizing how these identities are transformed, these theories prefer to discuss how one of these identities comes into play. As the first group of micro-sociological theories underline, *saliency* of an identity is the criteria for an identity to be chosen in certain situations. On the other hand, according to second group of theories, it is the social context which elicits certain identities to come into play. In this respect, although the theories discussed above acknowledge that identities are constructed relationally, they ignore that they are also constructed and transformed situationally.

First of all, within the scope of this research identities are not treated as "cognitive schemas" and self-concept is not thought as consisting a repertoire of ready-made multiple identities that come into play. Rather, borrowing from Bourdieu and Somers, this study claims that identities are constructed relationally, which means in relation to people, institutions, and narratives. As it is argued before, certain positions in the social field refer to certain identity categories and dispositional identity starts to be constructed when people start to make sense of their positions. In this respect, since identities are relational, when the relation of position to other positions, institutions and narratives transforms, dispositional identities transform, as well. By this way, identities do not appear as difficult-to-change "cognitive schemas." Rather, they are ready-to-be-transformed depending on the changing relations. Second, in this research identities are treated as situationally constructed. Here, being situational means that identities are not cognitive schemas carried from one situation to another situation, as second group of theories argue. Instead, it is argued that situations also construct identities. Borrowing from Somers' narrative construction of identity, in this research identity formation process of people is analyzed on the basis of the ontological narratives of people. However, it

is also acknowledged that these ontological narratives may change situationally, also transforming the dispositional identities.

Nevertheless, both groups of theories are important in the sense that they underline an accumulation process which they call as socialization. Put simply, they argue that depending on past experiences of socialization, people accumulate identities as "cognitive schemas" which come into play either depending on the saliency of hierarchically ranked identities or certain contexts. Although it is stated that this research considers identities constructed relationally and situationally, in the formation process of identities, past experiences have an important place, as well. In other words, although relations of positions to other positions and situational factors are effective in formation process, past experiences also have an importance. Following Bourdieu, this research considers past experiences as the journey individuals made from one position to another position and this journey can be conceptualized through the concept of habitus. Bourdieu's concept of habitus underlines that the way people make sense of their positions are defined in relation to a system of objective potentialities that are gained through the journey individuals made from one position to another in the social space. In other words, for the formation of dispositional identities the role of past experiences, which are incorporated into the present through habitus, is central. However, different than both groups of micro-sociological approaches, dispositional identities are not the same thing as cognitive identity schemas accumulated as a result of the socialization process. In this research, by using habitus, past experiences are conceptualized separate from the way identity is conceptualized. On the other hand, importance of habitus for the formation of a dispositional identity is stressed. This relation between habitus and dispositional identity is discussed in the second half of the chapter in detailed manner.

**Role of Power Relations**

As it is argued above, micro-sociological approaches to identity assumes that people have repertoire of identity schemas, which are formed through their socialization process and carried over situation to situation. There also post-structuralist theories which define identity on the basis of the relations of power that are defined as mechanisms which produce subjects by creating hierarchically formed categories. Furthermore, these theories claim that people create a self-concept on the basis of the ways of relating to oneself, which are external to individual. They arrive at this conclusion by taking Foucault's concept of *technologies of self* as a departure point. "Following Deleuze (1988), one might think of Foucault's notion of the self by means of a spatial metaphor as involving the 'folding' back of exterior relations of power and governance to create an 'interiority' that can act of itself" (Dean, 1994, p.157). In other words, there are "technologies of power" which determine how one establishes his or her relation with oneself and it is through this way individuals turn into subjects. Foucault arrives at this conclusion by analyzing history of subjectivity in terms of the "social divisions brought about in the name of madness, illness, and delinquency, along with their effects on the constitution of a rational and normal subject" (Foucault, 1993). As a consequence of this analysis, he insistently argues that modern power is not repressive, rather it is a matter of formation.

The most compelling point proposed by these theoreticians is the idea that identity emerges through the ways individuals relate themselves and these ways are *external* to individuals, and are not created by individuals in their lifetime (Butler, 2001). In this respect, they argue that "everyone exists at the centre of phenomenological field and thus has some access to experience, to some knowledge about themselves and their world" (Grossberg, 1996, p.98). Here, the word "access" points out to the situation that the ways individuals relate to themselves, or as Foucault calls as technologies of self, have their own history

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independent of the individuals. Furthermore, "although everyone exists within the strata of subjectivity, they are also located at particular positions, each of which enables and constrains the possibilities of experience, of representing those experiences and of legitimizing those representations" (Grossberg, 1996, p.99). Therefore, these theories argue that "access" to the ways of relating to oneself is limited depending on the position individuals occupy in social space. On the basis of this discussion it can be stated that contrary to micro-sociological approaches on identity, post-structuralist theories emphasize situational access to certain ways of relating to oneself as an important processes for the formation of identities. Moreover, since these ways are external to individual, identities are in constant transformation depending on the context they are formed.

One of the areas which is effected by the post-structuralist accounts of identity formation is gender literature. Judith Butler's theory of performitivity, is a good example to see the implications of post-structuralist accounts in gender theory. Dietz (2003) also agrees with this situation. She argues that "what really seems to be at stake in the feminism/postmodernism confrontation is (a) the deconstruction of the subject in the category ofwomen in feminist theory and (b) the formulation of a post-foundational feminist politics that shifts from the concept of an autonomous agent to the theorization of discursive relations of power, language games, significations, subversions, and performances" (Dietz, 2003, p.412). Then, she adds that on these matters, Butler's work is central.

Basically, in "Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity" Butler (1990) (as cited in Dietz, 2003) states that "there are no prediscursive, prior, or 'natural' sites or foundations for either sex or gender on which to rest identity. In effect, 'sex is as culturally constructed as gender' and hence is itself a 'gendered category.'" By this way, Butler underlines that as well as gender, sex is a socially constructed category, as well. Therefore, in Butler's formulation, pre-situated and pre-discursive subject categories such as sex and

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gender are denied. Furthermore, Butler proposes that gender identity is constructed through the regulations shaped by the power relations which are at stake to normalize heterosexuality and patriarchal norms. In other words, through the binary opposition of masculine vs. feminine, disciplinary practices produces gender identities as oppressive and hierarchical. Most importantly, Butler argues that "gender is performative," meaning "the subject, the body, and the category of sex, all of which, under these terms, are no longer construed as entities prior to practices of signification" (Dietz, 2003, p.413). In Butler's formulation, practices of signification are discursive acts of behaving such as acting like a woman/acting like a man and through these kinds of "performativities" gender identities are constructed. She argues that "body, sex, desire, and the subject are effects of signification and discursive ordering, 'under context, up for grabs,' circumscribed as political issues and productions of power" (Dietz, 2003, p.413). By this way, Butler emphasized the centrality of power relations.

Centrality of the post-structuralist accounts for the identity formation process is their emphasis on power relations at stake. By conceptualizing "technologies of self" as external mechanisms to individuals, they assume a history of oppression prior to the individual beings. Therefore, they stress that it is through these ways of relating to oneself, hierarchically defined identity categories are created. Within the scope of this research, power relations come to the fore of the identity formation process through incorporating Bourdieu's theory of field. As it is stated before, the notions provided by field theory are used to conceptualize everyday life of individuals. Furthermore, everyday life is also structured by power relations. Bourdieu conceptualizes power relations which structure the everyday life of people by claiming that positions in the field are related to one another by opposition and the agents who occupy these positions are related to each other by struggle and competition (Hanks, 2005). Therefore, in the fields there are dominant and subordinate positions which are determined by

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types and amount of capital people have (Swartz, 1996). The struggle for position in fields opposes those who have the monopoly power over the definition and distribution of capital: those who defend orthodoxy against those who advocate heresy. In this respect, this study incorporates the role of power relations into the formation process of identities through the hierarchically defined positions in the field which underline a struggling process to better off.

Taking all of the discussed above as a departure point, it can be stated that when analyzing identity formation processes it is important to focus on relational setting individuals involve in, by paying special attention to the context specific features. In order to pay attention to these points, it is necessary to analyze everyday life with the help of a theoretical framework which enables one to conceptualize daily interactions in a detailed manner. In this respect, within the scope of this research everyday life of the people within which Alevi ontological narratives are formed is conceptualized through joining Bourdieu's field theory to Somers' narrative analysis of identity. By this way, ontological narratives of the people who occupy the position of being Alevi become the main focus of analysis of the research. On the basis of these narrative accounts, formation of Alevi dispositional identities is analyzed. Through incorporating Bourdieu's field theory, critiques of social constructionist approaches tried to be overcome firstly by separating position from dispositional identity; secondly by paying special attention to the changing relations and situations; and lastly by incorporating power relations into the analysis.  In order to make these points clear, in what follows the theoretical framework which will help to answer the research question is discussed in detail.


**Narrative Construction of Identity**

To begin with, Somers (1994) claims that it is through narratives and narrativity that we come to know, understand, and make sense of the social world, and it is through narratives and narrativity that we constitute our social identities. For her, "narrative is an *ontological*

*condition of social life*” (p.614). By this claim she means that “‘experience’ is constituted

through narratives; that people make sense of what has happened and is happening to them by

attempting to assemble or in some way to integrate these happenings within one or more

narratives; and that people are guided to act in certain ways, and not others, on the basis of the

protections, expectations, and memories derived from a multiplicity but ultimately limited

repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives” (Somers, 1994, p.614). Here,

Somers define narrativity as a way of being, as a way of defining and representing one’s

existence and as a way of making meaning of what is happening on the basis of some limited

repertoires of frameworks.

   According to her there are four dimensions of narrativity. First one is called

*ontological narratives* and it refers to the stories social actors use to make sense and act in

their lives. Both narrative and ontology are mutually constitutive: they affect activities,

consciousness, and beliefs and in turn affected by them (Somers, 1994). Ontological

narratives mainly come from *public narratives* which are “those narratives attached to cultural

and institutional formulations larger than the single individual, to inter-subjective networks or

institutions, however local or grand, micro or macro-stories about social mobility, the

freeborn Englishman, etc” (Somers, 1994, p.619). Third dimension of narrative identity is

*metanarrativity* which refers to the masternarratives in which people are embedded as social

actors such as progress, industrialization, and enlightenment. Lastly, and most importantly

*conceptual narrativity* constitutes a dimension of narrativity. Somers (1994) explains them as

the vocabulary that we use as social researchers to explain social phenomena. “The challenge

of conceptual narrativity is to devise a vocabulary that we can use to reconstruct and plot over

time and space the ontological narratives and relationships of historical actors, the public and

cultural narratives that inform their lives, and the crucial intersection of these narratives with

other relevant social forces. The conceptual challenge that narrativity poses is to develop a social analytic vocabulary that can accommodate this relationality" (Somers, 1994, p.620).

What are the benefits provided by joining narrative to the analysis of identity? Or put it differently, what do ontological narratives tell us about the identity formation process? A narrative identity approach assumes people act in particular ways because not to do so would fundamentally violate their sense of being at that particular time and space. Identity formation takes shape within these relational settings of contested but patterned relations among narratives, people, and institutions (Somers, 1994). Through this way, Somers emphasizes the importance of the social context of everyday life for the analysis of the ontological narratives.

### Theory of Field: Capital, Habitus, Dispositional Identity

What Somers defines as relational setting is very similar to Bourdieu's concept of field. Bourdieu (1992) uses field to conceptualize the social space individuals inhabit. Basically, he defines field as objective relations between positions in the social space which impose determinations upon individuals. On the other hand, Somers conceptualizes social space on the basis of the "narratives, people, and institutions." Through Bourdieu's formulation, the relations among people and institutions can be thought as the relations between positions in the field. At this point, joining Bourdieu's field analysis to Somers' narrative analysis of identity will provide the ground to focus on the everyday lives of the people in a more detailed manner. This is because of the fact that Bourdieu's field theory introduces important concepts to conceptualize everyday life such as capital and habitus. However, in Somers' formulation, besides people and institutions, narratives appear as the important parts of the social space. Especially Somers' concept of public narrative is important for understanding the operation of discourse in the daily lives of people. Therefore,

joining Somers' narrativity to Bourdieu's field analysis enables one to see how discourse operates for structuring the lives and identities of people.

In order to understand Bourdieu's field analysis, it is necessary to clarify the relationship between position, field and habitus; and also to add some other concepts such as disposition, capital into the analysis: According to Bourdieu, the field can be considered as an input that shapes the individual through the habitus. In other words, the field conditions habitus and the dispositional structure that informs habitus. In this definition, disposition refers to sense of one's position in social space. Through their habitus individuals make sense of their positions in the field. Therefore, habitus emerges as the linkage between social structural power relations and the intimate ways of being at the level of individual interactions. In the remaining part of the discussion, these concepts and their relation with each other will be explained in a detailed manner.

According to Bourdieu, the objective positions in the field are defined by the distribution of capital through which there is access to the specific profits in the field (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). Therefore, in order to construct the field, one must identify the forms of capital that operate within it. For Bourdieu (1992), a species of capital is a stake of struggle which enables its possessors to exist in the field and basically, there are four types of them: *economic capital* which points out to the economic resources of individuals; *cultural capital* or better, informational capital which refers to the cultural resources individuals gained through education or through familial relations; "*social capital* which consists of resources based on connections and group memberships, and *symbolic capital* which is the form the different types of capital take once they are perceived and recognized as legitimate" (Bourdieu, 1987, p.4).

As the very definition of the term implies, in Bourdieu's framework capital is useful to conceptualize the resources that people have access to, such as their educational and cultural

background, and their social life within the relations they established with other people. These assets are important to understand the daily encounters of people with institutions, with other people, and with narratives. For instance, in this research, how people narrate the post-1980 period is related to the types of capital people have. This point will be clearer in the analysis part. However, at this point in addition to the four types of capital listed above, it is necessary to introduce *spiritual capital* and *political capital* into the discussion: First of all, in this research, the concepts of "religious field" and "spiritual capital" are used on the basis of the analysis of Bradford (2003) who enlarges the Bourdieu's "religious field" and proposes the concept of "spiritual capital" instead of religious capital. He arrives at this conclusion by criticizing Bourdieu's understanding of the religious field. According to Bradford, Bourdieu perceives religion in organizational terms, his approach leaves little room for imagining lay people as social actors capable of manipulating religious symbols. Then he adds that Bourdieu's model mostly "treats religion as an institution but not as a disposition, as an intricate system of coercion but not as a liquid species of capital" (Bradford, 2003, p.151). Through the concept of "spiritual capital," the author considers spiritual dispositions as a form of cultural capital, which is "the product of social relations-and thus as a marker of status within struggles for domination in a variety of contexts" (Bradford, 2003, p.152). Since the value of spiritual capital is determined not just by professionals but also by laity, "laypeople may exercise spiritual power by virtue of the material or symbolic capital they have accumulated in other fields" (Bradford, 2003, p.164).

Second, according to Bourdieu, "political capital" is the main type of capital in the political field which individuals involved in to compete for (Kauppi, 2003). According to Ietçu-Fairclough (2008), Bourdieu defines the underlying logic of the political field as representation and mobilization: "Agents in the political field are continuously engaged in a labor of representation by which they seek to construct and impose a particular vision of the

social world (i.e., a particular ideology, or 'truth'), while at the same time seeking to mobilize

the support of those upon whom their power ultimately depends (Ietçu-Fairclough, 2008,

p.410). In this respect, representation claims are said to be representing the interest of entire

population. It is by this way, large groups of people aimed to be mobilized (Ietçu-Fairclough,

2008). Therefore, it can be stated that in political fields "political agents attempt to

monopolize the legitimate means of manipulating the social world" (Kauppi, 2003, p.779). In

other words, through the efforts of political actors in the political field, certain image of the

social world dominates the social life.

Throughout the historical process of the actions in the political field, each political

notion produces its own understanding of the social world, which creates "outsiders" who are

dominated by the "insiders" (Kauppi, 2003). For instance, state, as "the grand social

organizer" in the political field, participates in the construction of social reality by imposing

"fundamental principles of classification on everybody such as sex, age, competence, and so

on" (Kauppi, 2003, p.781). Therefore, the construction of reality creates oppressors and

oppressed, insiders and outsiders. Bourdieu conceptualizes these two poles through the

amount of political capital possessed in the political field: While "the dominant have a lot of

capital, the dominated relatively little" (Kauppi, 2003, p.778). Basically, political capital can

be defined as what people in the political field try to accumulate and fight for. It involves

specific social skills, the capacity to mobilize individuals around a common goal, to formulate

collective policies, or to win seats for one's party, for instance (Kauppi, 2003, p. 778).

At this point it is important to underline how different types of capital might interact

with each other. Following Bradford's (2003) discussion of spiritual capital, this point may be

elaborated on. In this respect, Bradford (2003) argues that "the valuation of spiritual capital

should vary according to the broader field in which it is embedded" (p.163). Then, she adds

that criteria for evaluating spiritual capital vary depending on sub-cultural differences which

are produced and received within specific social contexts. For instance, "the definition of high spiritual capital changes dramatically when one compares media celebrities with Republican members of Congress, or school officials in Brookline, Massachusetts-a progressive, multicultural community" (Bradford, 2003, p.162). Here, Bradford stresses that value of spiritual capital is determined depending on the field it comes into play. Since fields are structured by the dominant type of capital which determines the stakes of struggle, in a way, Bradford points out how different types of capital interact with each other on the basis of the fields they are embedded. For example, within the field of cultural production, spiritual capital, functioning as cultural capital, may support celebrities in their efforts to maintain (or improve) their position (Bradford, 2003). In this respect, "the decision to convert and-even more significantly-the selection of one spiritual product over another are determined by the social variables that structure tastes, competencies, knowledge, and practices" (Bradford, 2003, p.165). Here, it is underlined that depending on the types of capital which are at stake in the field, valuation of another capital varies.

Within field, the distribution of capital reflects a hierarchical set of power relations among competing individuals, groups, and organizations. Hanks (2005) states that according to Bourdieu positions in the field are related to one another by opposition and the agents who occupy these positions are related to each other by struggle and competition. Therefore, fields can be considered as structured spaces of dominant and subordinate positions based on types and amount of capital such as cultural capital, social capital for the right to use symbolic violence (Swartz, 1996). The struggle for position in fields opposes those who are able to exercise some degree of monopoly power over the definition and distribution of capital: those who defend orthodoxy against those who advocate heresy. These two opposing strategies are crucial for field analysis: orthodoxies call into existence their heterodox reversals by the logic of distinction (Swartz, 1996). Put it differently, although there is a dominant group in the

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field, they must always contend with resistance (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this formulation field emerges out of the relationship through the struggle between hierarchically defined positions. "The struggle amongst social subjects is to accrue valorized capital in the appropriate field that can lead to a better position in society for themselves and for similarly dispositioned subjects" (Lapofsky, 2003, p.14). In other words, individuals try to accumulate type of capital valued in the field in order to achieve better positions in the social space.

Here, Bourdieu's way of defining the field as a space of struggle is very important for answering the research question because during the fieldwork, all of the respondents defined Alevism as an identity which needs to be defended. As a consequence of the prejudices about Alevism they faced during their daily lives, the ability to defend the "rightness" of the position of being Alevi against those prejudices is very central to the way people construct their Alevi identity. Even one respondent told that as she learned more about Alevism, she had more courage to defend it so she could claim her Alevi identity more comfortably. Therefore, it is possible to state that for the respondents, struggling is a very important component of the position of being Alevi. In this regard, it can be argued that Alevism appears as a position that needs to be defended in the fields of struggle.

If struggling is the central part of the structure of the field, what kind of a struggle does Bourdieu talk about? In other words, are there some rules which define the stakes of the struggle or are people freely floating in the social space? The answer to this question is hidden in the very definition of the field. As it is said earlier, field points out the objective relations between positions in the social space which impose determinations upon individuals. Here, the word "impose" underlines the tacit acceptance of the rules of the field by the individuals. This means that each field has its own specific logic and through this specific logic, fields impose on actors specific forms of struggle. In order to make this point clear, Bourdieu (1992) compares a field to a game. Entry into a field requires tacit acceptance of the rules of the

game, meaning that specific forms of struggle are legitimated whereas others are excluded. Bourdieu, calls this deep structure of the field as *doxa* for it represents a tacit, fundamental agreement on the stakes of struggle between orthodox and heterodox positions (Swartz, 1996). Therefore, the concept of field points out to the objective relations which exist independently of individual consciousness and will (Bourdieu, 1992).

Here, Bourdieu makes an important point by arguing that there is this tacit acceptance of the rules of the struggle by people. In other words, there are certain ways of struggle legitimated in the field and people adhere these ways of struggle without being aware of them. For instance, during the fieldwork, most of the Alevis were complaining about the unofficial status of Cem Houses as Alevis' place of worship and official non-recognition of *dedes* as religious leaders of Alevis. While discussing the importance of these issues for Alevis, they always give the example that Sunnis have mosques as the places of worship and also they have *imams* officially assigned and paid. Even the very structure of the comparison which points out to the assumption that if Sunnis have mosques Alevis have Cem Houses, if Sunnis have *imams* Alevis have *dedes*; underlines how the ways of struggle are determined by the dominant positions in the field. The ways through which Sunni Islam defines itself appear as the ways Alevis struggle to define themselves.

To formulate this implicit logic operating in the field at the individual level, Bourdieu introduces the concept of habitus which also contributes to structuring of the field, like the amount and types of capital operating in the field. According to Bourdieu (1995) habitus is the "systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structure, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends" (p.32). In this formulation, habitus emerges as the *expression* of the sense of one's position in the social space (Lepofsky, 2003). Recall that disposition has been

defined as the sense of one's position in the social space. In Bourdieu's formulation, it is through habitus individuals *express* how they make sense of their position in the social context. In other words, habitus is a way of expressing how an individual experience the social structures in terms of his or her position in the society. This is the reason why habitus is defined as "the practiced form of a disposition to interpret (consciously or not) one's place in society" (Lepofsky, 2003, p.13). Moreover, these practices are meaningful for a group of people who make sense of their position in similar ways.

Bourdieu claims that it is the field which structures the habitus. That's why "when habitus encounters a social world of which it is the product, it is like a 'fish in water': it does not feel the weight of the water, and it takes the world about itself for granted" (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992 p.127). Here, Bourdieu underlines the taken for granted feature of the doxa for habitus. He argues that although the world encompasses the individual, the individual has the capacity to comprehend it because the world itself comprises her. It is because this world has produced the individual, because it has produced the categories of thought that the individual apply to it, that it appears to the individual as self-evident (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, p.128). What Bourdieu emphasizes here is the situation that individuals are not fully rational actors who are aware of all the possibilities and make calculations for their best interest. Rather, human mind is socially structured and reads the world within the limits provided by this structuration (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992). In this sense "habitus is a socialized subjectivity" and there are rules in the world which individuals obey without being aware of (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p.126). In this respect, habitus also acts as the judgment of good or bad, appropriate or inappropriate (Hanks, 2005). This logic of abilities and disabilities is determined by the necessities of the field.

Doxa, which is the fundamental presuppositions of the field, refers to this relationship "of immediate adherence that is established in practice between a habitus and the field to

which it is attuned, the pre-verbal taking-for granted of the world that flows from practical sense" (Bourideu, 1990, p.68). Here, Bourdieu emphasizes the un-discursive or pre-discursive transmission of the doxa. By doing so Bourdieu points out to the importance of the body and action for the communication of doxa. "Symbolic power works partly through the control of other people's bodies and belief that is given by the collectively recognized capacity to act in various ways on deep-rooted linguistic and muscular patterns of behavior" (Bourdieu, 1990 p.69). Bourdieu states that the body believes in what it plays at: "It does not represent what it performs, it does not memorize the past, it enacts the past, bringing it back to life" (Bourdieu, 1990 p.73).

What Bourdieu means by past brings into the discussion another feature of the habitus as a structuring structure. Here, Bourdieu emphasizes that habitus is also "the strategy-generating principle enabling agents to cope with unforeseen and ever-changing situations results from the incorporation of the durable objective structures of the world" (Bourdieu, 1992 p.135). In other words, habitus provides individuals with the strategies which makes them deal with the changing situations they encounter within the field they inhabit. Here, what is emphasized is that through habitus, dispositions form a sense of what can or cannot be done as a consequence of the one's position in society (Lepofsky, 2003). For Bourdieu (1977) these limits of what can be done, which enable agents to cope with the unforeseen and changing situations, are determined by the expected future. The role of the past enters into the discussion at this point. Actually, what determines certain anticipations of the future is determined by the past experience. Agents' responses are defined in relation to a system of objective potentialities that are gained through the journey individual made from one position to another in the social space which refers to past experience and these objective potentialities are inscribed in the present, things to do or not to do, to say or not to say in relation to a forthcoming reality. Through this way "the most improbable practices are excluded either

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totally without examination, as unthinkable, or at the cost of double negation which inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity, that is, to refuse what is anyway refused and to love the inevitable" (Bourdieu 1977 p.77). Therefore, habitus performs an estimation of chances presupposing transformation of the past effect into an expected objective (Bourdieu, 1990).

By this way, through the incorporation of past experiences into the present actions, habitus also "contributes to constituting the field as a meaningful world, a world endowed with a sense and value, in which it is worth investing one's energy" (Bourdieu, 1992, p.127). In this context, habitus is both structured by the necessities of the field and in turn structures the field on the basis of those necessities. In other words, it is a "structured structure" which is also a "structuring structure." In a nutshell, "being the product of a particular class of objective regularities, the habitus tends to generate all the 'reasonable,' 'common-sense,' behaviors which are possible within the limits of these regularities" (Bourdieu, 1995, p.35). Therefore, "habitus, the product of history, produces individual and collective practices, and hence history, in accordance with the schemes engendered by history" (Bourdieu, 1977 p.82). Through this way, habitus contributes to the constitution of the field.

In this context, habitus is first of all, a structured structure by the field which mediates between individual and the field; second, it is a logic from/within which individuals act; and third, it is the totality of the actions of individuals who occupy the same position. Since field structures habitus and also is structured by it, a transformation in the actions of people, or in the logic from/within which people act also transforms the field and the habitus. Therefore, in Bourdieu's conceptualization, habitus is a concept which is ready to be transformed by the changes in the field, and also it has capacity to transform the structure of the field. Field and habitus are in constant interaction through mutually effecting and to be effected by each other.

In sum, social positions give rise to embodied dispositions which is defined as habitus (Hanks, 2005). This is because of the fact that to sustain engagement in a field is to be shaped,

at least potentially, by the kind of positions one occupies. Therefore, it can be stated that field shapes the individual through habitus (Hanks, 2005). By recognizing and relating to other people's practices who occupy the same position, individuals make sense of their positions in the social space. This process of making sense of one's position in social space forms the dispositional identity of an individual. Habitus is the expression of this dispositional identity in practice. Therefore, habitus is both a "structured structure" by the rules of the field and a "structuring structure" through the dispositional acts of individuals. For habitus to emerge as the structured structure, the relations individuals establish with the other groups in the field is central, as well. In other words, habitus is formed by both one's relation to the people who occupy the same position and to the people who occupy other positions in the field. As Bourdieu (1992) puts it, latter relation emerges in the form of struggle among the hierarchically defined positions. Since field emerges as a result of this struggle and habitus is shaped by the field at the same time, the way one position related to another position is also central for the formation of the habitus and the dispositional identity of the individual. In other words, the relation with the other positions in the field also determines how individual relates his or her own position.

In this context, the individual who is born into a field have a "sense of the game," the belief in the field and in this respect habitus can be considered as the manifestation of the doxa in the world of individual. It is through the pre-discursive and pre-conscious communication of the doxa the field structures the habitus. Then, habitus contributes to the structuring the field by generating all the possible behaviors within the limits of the field. This is the context in which individuals construct their ontological narratives. At this point, it is possible to find parallels between Bourdieu's doxa and Somer's metanarrativity. Both of the concepts point out the deeply embedded logic of the social space within which individuals make meaning of their world. Bourdieu's detailed discussion of doxa also enables one to

better conceptualize what Somers means by metanarrativity. As it is said earlier, through joining Bourdieu to Sommers' narrative analysis of identity it is possible to conceptualize the everyday life of the people in a more detailed manner: Capital is a good way of formulating the economic situation of people, their educational and cultural background, their social relations and their religiosity. Moreover, the logic behind people's actions, and also their past experiences can be framed through habitus. Lastly, field contains all of these relations as the larger space which contains narratives, institutions and individuals.

In addition to Bourdieu's contributions to Somers' framework, Somers makes an important contribution to the Bourdieu's theory by introducing the concept of public narratives. It is important to note that for Bourdieu the importance of the body and action for the communication of doxa is significant. Although Bourdieu states that besides bodily action and past experiences, language plays an important role in the transmission of doxa, he has not discussed the role of the discourse in an extensive manner in his theory. Integrating the concept of public narratives into the theoretical framework of Bourdieu will provide a better ground to analyze the role of the discourse in the formation of ontological narratives.


**Public Narratives and Role of the *Other***

It can be argued that through its introduction of public narratives, narrative analysis of identity underlines the importance of discourse. Here, public narratives can be considered as the manifestation of discursive structure operating in the daily life. The self and narratives about the self are culturally and discursively situated. "Simply put, 'my story' can never be wholly mine because I define and articulate my existence with and among the story of others" (Freeman, 2001, p.287). As Somers argues, this articulation happens within the limited repertoire of available social, public, and cultural narratives. "Refiguration by narrative confirms this aspect of self-knowledge which goes far beyond the narrative domain in that the

self does not know itself immediately, but only indirectly, through the detour of cultural signs of all sorts, which articulate the self in symbolic mediations that already articulate action, among them the narratives of daily life" (Ricouer, 1991, p.80).

In the case of this research, the role of the public narratives is integral part of the role of the others for the formation of ontological narratives of Alevis. During the fieldwork, all of the Alevis were complaining about the negative attitudes of Sunnis against Alevis especially in the form of the stories they made up about Alevis. Among the most common ones there was the story of *mum söndü* (the candle burned out) which tells that during *Cem* ceremony Alevis have sexual intercourse with other family members. It is called *mum söndü* because the story states that sexual intercourse takes place after the lights are off. These kinds of stories communicate the image of "Sunni perception of Alevis" to Alevis themselves. Moreover, the way daily encounters take place with Sunnis is another important way of communicating the public image of Alevis among Sunnis. For example, during the fieldwork there were lots of stories stating that especially in Ramadan Sunni people reject eating with or from Alevis because of the belief that what Alevis cook is not allowed to be eaten. One of the respondents was running a grocery shop and he stated that some of his usual Sunni customers always stopped shopping from him during every Ramadan. Actually, it is through these kinds of stories and encounters with Sunnis, Alevism appears as a position that needs to be defended. In these examples, it is obvious that the role of the others and the public narratives on Alevism are related in an intertwined manner.

Although the role of the other is central to the formation of the Alevi ontological narratives, in Bourdieu's framework, there is not much discussion on this issue especially in terms of field perspective. As Bottero (2010) states, Bourdieu's account of "'socialized subjectivity' focuses more on how 'identity' emerges from the interrelations between habitus and field, rather than from the intersubjective relationship between agents" (Bottero, 2010,

p.5). She poses this question as the problem of reflexivity. According to Bottero, reflexivity refers to the situations in which people reflect self-consciously on their own identity. In other words, this reflexivity question points out to the times when people try to understand what they are exposed to. For Bottero, reflexivity emerges out of the intersubjective relationship between people because this kind of an intersubjective relationship makes people feel the necessity to provide accounts of their actions to others. For instance, in the two cases discussed above, as a consequence of the encounters with Sunnis, Alevis feel the necessity to defend their identity against the prejudiced attitudes. Moreover, during the fieldwork, there were times when people reflexively talk about the "rules of the game." For example, while talking about Sunnis, there are people who claim that it is in the best interest of the state to divide people as Alevis and Sunnis, Kurds and Turks. They state that by doing so, state weakens the oppositionary force of people because these divisions are the most important barriers before people to unite against the state. Here, it is important to stress that other than tacitly accepting the "rules of the game," there are situations in which people consciously reflect upon those rules.

Bottero's suggestion for solving the problem of reflexivity in Bourdieu's framework is the incorporation of the role of the others into the formation process of habitus which is absent in Bourdieu's account. She claims that "the capacity for reflexive thought emerges from the 'incorporation of the role or perspective of the other within our own habitus', so 'habits fit into an ongoing dialogue between social agents and their world'" (Bottero, 2010, p.12). Here, she gives the example of the need for people to provide accounts of their actions to themselves, and others triggered by particular types or contexts of interaction. For example, during the fieldwork, there was a woman who told that one day she invited her Sunni neighbor to her house in order to prove that in fact Alevis were not dirty. This is nothing more than giving account of oneself to the other. Therefore, "on this reading of Bourdieu, the

"sense of the game" refers ultimately to a sense of one's relations with other individuals and what those individuals will regard as tolerable, given certain broadly shared but not definitive understandings'" (Bottero, 2010, p.14). It can be argued that incorporation of the concept of the other into the analysis of Bourdieu enables one to see the role of the interaction between people for the constitution of the habitus and the field, so provides a wider horizon to conceptualize the Alevi ontological narratives. Within the scope of this study, in order to incorporate role of the other into the Bourdieu's framework, Somers' concept of public narratives and George Herbert Mead's (1932) (as cited in Ezzy, 1998) conceptualization of *the other* is used in combination with each other.

Somers (1994) claims that others are not part of the external problem of constraint but constitutive – for good or for bad – of the individual's narrative identity. In this formulation, the other is not the exterior of the self. Rather, it emphasizes the embeddedness of the other within already available cultural resources. It is the same ways which define the other and the self, and in this sense they are both embedded in the same cultural, social, and political contexts. As Bourdieu argues both positions of orthodoxy and heterodoxy belong to the same universe of doxa. Therefore, in the case of this research although Sunnis appear as the others of Alevis, both of the identities are emerged in the same cultural and social context.

In this context, it is important to focus on how the category of the *other* is formed. Norval (1996) argues that the question of the other is important in the sense that it provides an answer to the question of why certain features act as constitutive characteristic of a certain identity. For example, during the fieldwork, while Alevis define Alevism they state that Alevis are permissive and large-minded *contrary to* Sunnis who are repressive and puritan. In a parallel way, Mead (2003) argues that "the individual's self is constituted simply by an organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them" (p.37). As it is argued

before, he calls this "organized community or social group which gives to the individual his unity of self may be called 'the generalized other" (Mead, 2003, p.36). However, in Mead's conceptualization this generalized other appears as one homogenous entity which he calls as society. In order to make the concept more comprehensive, it is important to take it as the generalized others in its plural form. Through making it plural it is possible to emphasize several affiliations occupied by a certain individual at the same time just like emphasizing the multiple fields individuals inhabit.

Therefore, it can be argued that "our experience is always influenced by that of others, and our stories are always intertwined with other stories" (Freeman & Brockmeier, 2001, p.81). Here, again, it is important to stress that the role of the other is intertwined with the role of the public narratives for the formation of ontological narratives. Borrowing from Mead, it is possible to conceptualize how these two are intertwined: By describing "passage" as a character of reality, Mead states that it is the passing between perspectives through taking the role of the other which is important for identity (Ezzy, 1998). In order to make this point clear, Mead uses the example of a person in a train: In the train people experience it as both moving and stationary. Mead names this situation of "both moving and being stationary" as "passing from one to the other" (Ezzy, 1998, p241). He claims that the self forms itself only in so far as "it can pass from its own system into those of others, and can thus, in passing, occupy both its own system and that into which it is passing" (Ezzy, 1998, p.241). Therefore, by occupying the attitudes of others, people can see themselves from the perspective of the other. For Mead (2003) "the individual's self is constituted simply by an organization of the particular attitudes of other individuals toward himself and toward one another in the specific social acts in which he participates with them" (p.37). Therefore, imagining oneself from the standpoint of the other is an important process for the formation of the identity.

Mead's conceptualization provides a ground to theorize how previously discussed prejudices against Alevis are perceived by Alevis themselves. For example, through the story of *mum söndü*, an Alevi occupies the position of a Sunni, looks herself from her perspective and forms her ontological narrative by occupying both her own position and that into which she is passing. Moreover, through this passage between perspectives, an Alevi forms the category of Sunni as the other, opposite of being Alevi. Since, it is this public narrative of *mum söndü* which enables Alevis to pass from their perspective to the perspective of the other, it has been argued that the role of the other and the role of the public narratives are intertwined in the formation of the Alevi ontological narratives.

**Conclusion**

In this chapter, by taking theories on identity formation and their critiques as a departure point, a theoretical framework which helps to answer research question is tailored. In the first half of the chapter, some of the theories on identity and their criticisms are re-visited. Mainly, the discussion is revolved around how to analyze the formation process of identities from a constructionist perspective. Studies and critiques cited in this part has proved that it is not an easy task to escape from essentialism, even if it is acknowledged that "identities are socially constructed." In this respect many important points, which needs to be taken into consideration when analyzing identity formation process, arise as a result of the discussion: First of all, it has been argued that what is social is not automatically anti-essentialist and constructivist. Rather, it is necessary to focus on identity formation process in a detailed manner, as it is proposed within the scope of this research by focusing on everyday life of people in its relational setting. Second, talking about identity formation process of a group of people or a community under a certain category, has potential to be essentialist in terms of its classification of people as "something" in the first place. Therefore, one should be

careful about using identity categories in the very first steps of the analysis. Third, identities

are not stable, difficult to change "cognitive schemas" and self-concept is not a repertoire of

ready-made multiple identities that come into play. Rather, for this study identities are in

constant transformation depending on the changing relations and situations. Furthermore, in

the formation process of identities, past experiences have an important place, as well. Lastly,

as previously mentioned, since analyzing everyday life is central to the identity formation

process, importance of power relations which structure the flow of mundane life come to the

fore.

In order to incorporate all of the points discussed above, Bourdieu's theory of field

and Somers' narrative analysis of identity is discussed in a detailed manner. In this respect

Sommers' concept of ontological narratives is used to formulate narrative accounts of Alevis.

What comes up in these narrative accounts is analyzed by incorporating Bourdieu's field

theory. As mentioned above, Bourdieu's field theory also provides answers to the critiques

discussed in the first half of the chapter: The distinction of position and dispositional identity

can be considered as a way of escaping from naming people as "something" before focusing

on their identity formation process. Also constant transition of the factors which structure the

field and their complexity provide a ground to analyze identities as entities constantly

transforming. Moreover, hierarchically defined structure of the field enables one to

incorporate role of the power relations into the analysis.

Bourdieu incorporates complexity and transition into the field structure by introducing

a bunch of important concepts: position, disposition, capital, and habitus. The significance of

these concepts for the field analysis is their interaction because through the interaction of

position, disposition, capital, and habitus structure of the field is formed and transformed.

Also, these concepts enables one to combine different assets of daily of life such as daily

actions of people, their social relations, economic situations, the logic within/from which

people act, and their past experiences. While doing that, Bourdieu emphasizes role of the structure and role of the agency at the same, especially with the concept of habitus which is both structured by the field and also which acts as a structuring factor of the field.

The significance of combining Sommers' framework to Bourdiesian field analysis is also a result of the Sommers' concept of public narratives. Through joining public narrative concept of Sommers to Bourdieu's framework, the importance of the discourse for the formation of ontological narratives of Alevi comes to the fore. As a result of the narrative accounts of Alevis, it can be concluded that, the role of discourse is intertwined with the role of the other. Following Bottero's critique of reflexivity and introducing Mead's concept of the other, the operation of public narratives in structuring the ontological narratives of people is analyzed. Basically, it is concluded that Alevis form their ontological narratives by occupying both their own positions and that into which they are passing, and this passage is enabled by the prejudiced stories on Alevis which is considered as public narratives.

All in all, the complex process of identity formation is tried to be conceptualized by using the frameworks discussed in this chapter. As the critiques listed in the first half of the chapter point out, it is not an easy task to study identities by paying attention to their constantly transforming nature. In this respect, it is important to come up with a framework which provides a ground to conceptualize the details of identity formation process. Basically, the aim of combining Bourdieu with Sommers and Mead is a result of such kind of an attempt. Although the concepts provided by Bourdieu is useful to pay attention many aspects of identity formation process, still there is a need to introduce additional terms in order to take, for instance, the roles of discourse and the other into consideration. Therefore, when analyzing identities, using different frameworks in combination with each other may be a remedy to protect the complexity of identities by also paying attention their constantly transforming asset.

# CHAPTER III: ENCOUNTERS OF EXCLUSION AND THE FORMATION OF ALEVI IDENTITIES

**Introduction**

In order to answer the research question, the issues which arise during the fieldwork will be discussed in this chapter on the basis of the framework proposed in the theoretical chapter. As it is discussed in the Introduction, main question of the research is to explain the multiple ways in which Alevis construct their Alevi identities through questioning their every-day experiences of being Alevi in the post-1990 period. By claiming that different ways of experiencing exclusion ended with different formations of Alevi identity, this study aims to trace the multiple experiences of being Alevi and their role in the formation process of Alevi identities. In this respect, main focus of the study can be defined as analyzing the dynamics of the position of being Alevi, from its acquisition in childhood to the varied practices it engenders in the remaining part of the individuals' life. Here, it is important to ask how the dispositional identity of being Alevi is reproduced through the social-historical changes that link ontological narratives of Alevis to the wider social changes. For doing that the habitus of Alevis will be the main focus of analysis.

During the fieldwork, there were two different ways of telling the story of the post-1990 period. The first narrative points out that this period witnessed important developments which enable Alevis to claim their Alevi identities in a more open way. Most of the time, increasing media representations of Alevi identity, establishment of Alevi associations, and opening of Cem Houses appear as the proofs which signify that now it is easier for Alevis to claim their Alevi identity publicly. However, the second narrative underlines that this public visibility is a "fake benefit" for the Alevis. In this narration, it is stated that although Alevi identity became more visible in this period, this visibility became possible only through the

"assimilation" of Alevi identity. Taking these different ways of narrating the period as a departure point, the question is how the dispositional identity of being Alevi is reproduced through the social-historical changes that link and mediate individual and collective ontological narratives. For doing that the experiences of being an Alevi in Turkey and the concepts of self and other will be analyzed by using Bourdieu's field analysis and Sommers' narrative analysis of identity. In this respect while narrative accounts of Alevis are treated as ontological narratives, the analysis of these ontological narratives is done through the combination of Bourdieu's field theory, Sommers' narrative analysis of identity and Mead's theory of the other.

### Alevi Narratives of the post-1990 Period

The first narrative of the period highlights the claim that before 1990s Alevis used to have difficulties in claiming their Alevi identity publicly. However, nowadays it is easier for them to become public. One respondent describes the old times by stating that "before when we visit someone it was difficult to say that 'I am an Alevi.' However, nowadays, when someone says that he or she is Alevi, people are able to come together to take care of each other."[6] Again one woman respondent claimed that especially in Ramadans and at Mevlüts, which is a religious occasion organized by Sunni-Muslims, Alevis could not say who they were.[7] About the Ramadan time, another respondent stated that some of his Alevi neighbors put the lights on when it is Sahur time, even if they did not fast.[8] However, they say that today they do not feel those kinds of pressures that much anymore.

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[6] Male, 52, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, Private Sector.

[7] Female, 41, Housewife.

[8] Female, 35, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, Housewife.

When it comes to the reasons of this transformation, each person has his or her idea. However, increasing amount of Cem Houses in the cities is one of the most common answers given by the people. One respondent exemplifies this situation by stating that "before, we were hiding. When these Cem Houses were established years ago, we were able to do everything. Now, we do not get afraid of anything. Before, when we were asked whether we were Alevis or Sunnis, we could not say anything. However, nowadays we can say who we are. Everything goes public now."[9] Secondly, increasing media visibility of Alevism especially on TV channels are among the reasons people listed during the fieldwork: "On TV there are more programs about Alevism. By this way, people find out that Alevism is a beautiful belief, it is not something that must be scared off. Before, when people learned that you were an Alevi, they used to run away from you. However, nowadays people welcomed us so we are more comfortable with claiming our identities publicly."[10] In addition to media visibility and Cem Houses, some argue that this change took place as a result of the prices paid by Alevis in Gazi, and Sivas: "After the events of Gazi, Sivas, Alevis made themselves public. They started to build Cem Houses."[11] They claim that as a result of these prices, Alevis are organized and established associations to defend their rights. Migration to big cities and urbanization are also among the reasons listed: "We are more comfortable now because we came to mega cities. In mega cities, the heart and eyes of people are open."[12]  Lastly, for this change to happen some state that the regulations of EU imposed on Turkish state paved the way. For example, one respondent claimed that "we are more comfortable nowadays

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   Female, 53, Gazi Neighborhood, Housewife.
10
   Male, 46, Public Sector.
11
   Male, 63, Retired, *Dede*.
12
   Male, 42, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, Private Sector.

because state struggles to be a member of EU. This is the reason why state is flexible about the issues about us. Otherwise, it would not even give us water."[13]

Here, there is an important point to make. Considering these quotations only, one can get the idea that in this way of narration, Alevis appear as satisfied about their contemporary situation in Turkey. However, these quotations can tell about only half of the picture. What Alevis were talking about when describing these transformations is the improvement they experienced in time. Compared to old times, nowadays they feel more comfortable with their Alevi identity publicly. Yet, this does not mean that everything is so far so good for Alevis. In order to elaborate on this situation, it is necessary to discuss their narratives as a whole. Although the claim that now Alevis feel more comfortable is central to the first way of narrating the period, there are also listed problems of Alevis. The most important problem is the situation of Cem Houses which refers that they are not recognized legally: "They [the state] do not demand water, electricity allowance from mosques, but they do from us. In fact we still have lots of problems."[14] In a similar way, an Alevi woman claims that "I think the state is doing nothing for Alevis. They sometimes say good things about Alevis, but they do not give legal status to Cem Houses. They do not accept Cem Houses as the place of worship. In the same way they provide the electricity allowances for mosques, they must provide those allowances for Cem Houses too. State does not pay *dedes* in Cem Houses. Actually, there are no rights given by the state."[] Here, it can be seen that there are still important problems of Alevis, especially with the state, and rather than drawing a perfect picture, there is also a critical look at what is going on in terms of the social status of Alevis.

At first sight, this two-way perspective towards the contemporary situation of Alevis in Turkey may seem contradictory or one can state that this situation makes the narrative

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    Male, 52, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, Private Sector.
14
    Female, 41, Housewife.
  15
    Female, 43, Gazi Neighborhood, Housewife.

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inconsistent. However, by taking these two perspectives as the complementary part of a single story, it can be stated that although there are still important problems about the situation of Alevis in Turkey, compared to the old times, nowadays some Alevis feel themselves more comfortable about claiming their identity publicly. Most importantly, they have Cem Houses where they can conduct their *Cem* ceremony. Most of the respondents claim that before, in the villages they chose the most distant places to conduct *Cem* and they always left guardians during the *Cem* ceremony. Although in the cities they feel more comfortable for conducting *Cem*s, since the state does not officially recognize Cem Houses as the places of worship, Alevis still think that they are not fully welcomed. In order to support this situation, they also give the issues of religious courses and the budget spent for Directorate of Religious Affairs which only represents the Sunni belief: "Cem Houses could not get the legal status, we are again going backwards. They did not abolish the Directorate of Religious Affairs, they do not give lessons on Alevism."[15] says a male respondent. Here, his usage of "again going backward" points out to his perception of the improvements Alevis have been experiencing recently. But he states that if these improvements are not supported continuously, there will be a return to the old days.

Contrary to the first narrative, the second narrative of the period underlines that there is no real improvement in the situation of Alevis and things are even worse for Alevis now. For example, one respondent claims that "to what extent Alevism has been recognized by the state, it found itself in the center politically. Before, it was on the periphery and because of this situation it was oppositionary."[16] According to this respondent, nowadays Alevism became part of the mainstream politics although before it was oppositionary which, for her, was a better way of doing politics. In order to define the situation of Alevis today, another

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[15] Male, 52, Fatih Sultan Neighborhood, Private Sector.

[16] Female, 33, Private Sector.

respondent claims that "I think that Alevis have inclined to Sunni-Islam. They have symphaties for the state although there is no valid ground to do that."[17] In a similar way, a woman respondent reflects on the situation of Alevis by stating that today there are still social pressures on Alevis "but they are not aware of this situation, they do not see how state perceives them. They imagine a situation in which they are treated as first-class citizens."[18] Here, the usage of the word "imagine" is meaningful. Basically, in this narrative, Alevis appear as subjects deceived by the state, they think that they are recognized by the state although it is a "fake visibility," it is only an imagination of Alevi people.

In this way of narration, what is responsible for this transformation in the attitudes of Alevis is this "fake" public visibility Alevis gained throughout the process. For example, during an interview, as a reply to the "pessimistic" perspective towards the contemporary situation of Alevis, when I say that "but there are Alevis who claim that nowadays it is easier for them to claim their identity publicly, for example there are people who feel more free because they can conduct their *Cem*s in the cities," one of the respondents give the example of a time when she attended *Cem* ceremony. She stated that *dede* said nothing different than what people heart from the television channels every day. For her what is done during the *Cem* ceremony is "dancing a little bit and remembering that he or she is an Alevi. In fact, what you call as *Cem* is more than that. It is a ceremony you share information with each other, as far as I understand."[19] Another respondent reflects on *Cem* ceremonies conducted in the cities by stating that "Cem Houses increased in number but *dede* started to talk like an *imam*."[20] According to one respondent, the "real" *Cem* ceremony is "an event when you remember that you are a community. It is an occasion in which you solve the problems.

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    Male, 52, Retired.
18
    Female, 38, Public Sector.
19
    Female, 34, PhD Student.
20
    Male, 36, Private Sector.

However, nowadays it is a ceremony in which *dede* requests from people to solve their problems for the sake of formality."[21] As these quotations openly remark, what is listed among the most important reasons in the first narrative for emphasizing Alevis to feel more comfortable, which is being able to conduct *Cem*, is defined as something that is deviated from how it should be.

Urbanization appears among the other reasons but for this time as a negative factor. For example, one of the respondents states that "I think state is very happy about where Alevis are because they think that they assimilated Alevis enough. I also think that Alevis are assimilated enough."[22] Then, he adds that this assimilation process is a result of urbanization: In the cities by encountering with Sunnis every day, Alevis have chosen to be on the side of the dominant ideology because it is the easier way. Hence, it can be stated that in the second narrative of the period, the public visibility of Alevism appears as a "fake" benefit. In this narrative, it is claimed that although it is true that Alevi identity became more visible through this period, this visibility became possible only through the "assimilation" of Alevi identity which makes Alevism closer to Sunni Islam and mainstream politics.

In a nutshell, while in the first narrative, post-1990 period appears as a time span which enabled Alevis to be organized and to gain public visibility, in the second narrative the period described as a process which accelerated the assimilation of Alevi identity. Therefore, by taking this division in the narratives of the period as a point of departure, it is important to ask in what ways it is possible to explain the bifurcation in the stories? How these different ways of narrating the period is related to the way Alevis constructs their Alevi identities? Or, what experiences make Alevis to tell the story of the period in these particular ways? What kind of a ground does this bifurcation in the narratives provide for re-evaluating the post-1990

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[21] Male, 42, Public Sector.
[22] Male, 36, Private Sector.

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period and the way Alevis experience the process? What is the relation of different ways of experiencing exclusion and different ways of narrating the post-1990 period? In what ways does this relation shape formation of Alevi identities?

In order to answer these questions, different ways of narrating the period will be considered as signs that respondents practice life from/within different habitus. Following Bourdieu's (1990) metaphor of social life as a game, Alevis possess a habitus that provides them with "a feel for the game" that determines how they understand Alevi and non-Alevi practices. Put it differently, belonging to an Alevi community can be considered as the prism through which Alevis consider and evaluate themselves and others. However, depending on the kinds of fields that individuals occupy, how Alevis make sense of themselves and others differs. This means that how the position of being Alevi is internalized and modified during the life time varies depending on the multiplicity of the fields individuals act and interact. Hence, the types of fields individuals occupy at the same time can be considered as the reason why Alevis experience and narrate the same time period differently.

On the basis of Bourdieu's formulation discussed in the Theoretical Framework Chapter, being Alevi can be considered as a position in the social space. In Bourdieusian terms, in Turkey being Alevi appears as a "heterodox" position that challenges the official "orthodoxy" of the Sunni-Islam. As it is discussed in the Historical Background Chapter, this situation is a result of a long historical process. Furthermore, Alevi identity can be conceptualized as a dispositional identity of being Alevi which is formed through how people make sense of their position or how people relate to the position of being Alevi. Following Lepofsky (2003), habitus can be considered as the expression of the dispositional identity. Therefore, it can be stated that the position of being Alevi embodied in specific dispositional actions of habitus provides Alevis with an identity position in the fields they inhabit.

**Early Experiences and Formation of the "Alevi" Habitus**

As it is argued above, being Alevi is a position in social space and through the way people make sense of their positions, dispositional identity of being Alevi is formed. However, this does not mean that there is one way of making meaning of the position. Depending on the multiplicity of the fields that an individual occupies, being Alevi has different dispositional connotations. This situation is the result of practicing life from/within different habitus. Bradford (2003) suggests that although Bourdieu defines habitus as the "embodied history, internalized as a second nature and so forgotten as history" he escapes the situation that history is not always played out on a grand scale: there are micro-histories, local and regional histories. These micro histories are important to take into consideration because they underline that individuals occupy multiple fields. "Because there is a dialectic between the definition of a field and the activities of its inhabitants, and because people occupy multiple fields simultaneously, changes in one field may affect another" (Bradford, 2003, p.163).

Therefore, the reason why there are two narratives of the same period is a result of different experiences of being Alevi which depends on the types of the fields individuals occupy. In other words, depending on the fields, people practice life from/within different habitus which paves the way for different dispositional identities of being Alevi. Hence, the main focus of the study is to analyze the dynamicity of the position of being Alevi, from childhood, when people first started to realize their position as Alevis, and onwards. Here, it is important to ask how the dispositional identity of being Alevi is transformed through the interaction between social-historical changes and ontological narratives of Alevi. For doing that it is necessary to focus on the habitus which gives rise to the different ways of narrating the same time period. In this respect, habitus is a good starting point because it is at the intersection point of the concepts of field, position, and dispositional identity.

For doing that the experiences of being an Alevi in Turkey and the concepts of self and other will be analyzed on the basis of Alevi ontological narratives. Here, there is an important point to make. In all of the ontological narratives, the ways Alevis experience exclusion have an important place. This means that the daily non-Alevi environment, with open or concealed negative perspectives on being Alevi, has an important role for the formation of dispositional identity of being Alevi. The respondents exemplified many experiences of exclusion in their neighbourhoods and schools that reminded them of their otherness as Alevis. Recalling that field basically refers to the struggle between the hierarchically defined positions, the exclusionary practices experienced by Alevis point out to the struggle Alevis give for their position in the fields they occupy.

This situation also dominates the childhood experiences of Alevis. In the ontological narratives, very first encounters with Sunnis and their perspective towards Alevism are very central. Therefore, it can be argued that in the early experiences of being Alevi, these encounters with the non-Alevi environment have an important place. Moreover, most of these encounters with the Sunni perspective take place in terms of religious issues. Especially, in schools, religious and morals courses are one of the places for Alevis to realize their difference from what is told in the lesson and began to question their position. For example, one respondent answers the question of "when did you first realize that you are an Alevi?" in this way: "I remember that in the third grade of the primary school I did not know I was an Alevi in this way: Our teacher asked whether we had memorized the prayer of Subhaneke. Although everybody in the classroom had memorized, I had not and I asked them how they had memorized. It was surprising for me. They said that their grandmothers taught it before they went to bed. Then, I was asking my mother why they did not teach us those prayers. On the basis of these happenings, I see that I learned Alevism at a point."[23] To the same

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[23] Female, 33, Private Sector, (second group).

question, another respondent claims that "before, we were not aware of [the fact that we were Alevis.] After starting the school, when we took religious and morals course in the fourth and fifth grade, we realized that we were different."24 In both of these quotations, it can be seen that religious and morals courses that are taught at the elementary level are one of the places where Alevis first face with their difference. Especially, through what is taught in course, Alevis started to question their difference. This realization takes place through learning that their knowledge on religion does not count as "the knowledge" on religion. Therefore, for the first time in their life, being Alevi starts to mean being different.

However, the school is not the only place for starting to question people's position. Besides that, in daily life, there are important events which break the ordinary flow and remind Alevis their difference. For instance, one respondent talked about an event of childhood: "In our village, when there are not any Cem Houses in any place, they came and they created lots of pressure. They put us under the panzer to build a mosque in the village. We said we did not want a mosque because we were Alevis."25 Here, respondent talks about a time when he realized a great pressure because he is an Alevi. Most importantly, this pressure appears in the struggle for the place of worship. In a parallel way with the first cases discussed above, which points out to the difference in terms of the way of worshipping, this time, the place of worship appears as the indicator of the difference of Alevism. In this respect, mosques are very powerful symbols for Alevis to feel their "inferiority." For example, one respondent talked about a childhood event: "Children used to go to the mosque when we were child, and they used to ask why we did not come. They used to say that we learned this information, we learned that prayer. But we could not say that we were the Alevi children. We tried to make up some excuses for our absence such as we were sick, etc."26

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    Female, 38, Housewife (first group).
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    Male, 42, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, (first group).
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Again, in this quotation, the centrality of the place of worship for feeling the difference is exemplified. Moreover, there is also a silence and concealing of the identity which underlines the social pressures the respondent feels due to her identity.

Taking these cases as a departure point, it can be stated that either in the school or in daily life, there are important indicators for Alevis to realize their difference such as the difference in the way of worshipping and in the place of worship. More importantly, these indicators are also tools of exclusion which make Alevis to feel inferior, to question their position, and most of the time to conceal their identity in order to avoid such kinds of pressures. Therefore, the encounters with Sunnis in the early life have an important role for structuring the habitus of the respondents. As a consequence of these encounters with the Sunni perspective, Alevis re-evaluate what they already know about Alevism. For instance, after taking religious and moral courses in the schools, some respondents stated that they asked their parents about Alevism to learn more about it. This attempt of asking is to check the rightness of Alevism against their feeling of inferiority. Moreover, asking to a person who "knows" Alevism better is an attempt to find a stronger ground to defend their position. Following Bourdieu, this attempt of finding a stronger ground can be thought as an attempt to intensify the capital at stake which enables one to deal with the exclusion in a better way.

As a result of these encounters and re-evaluations, Alevis start to relate to their position in the social space. In other words, dispositional identity of being Alevi started to be constructed. In this process, as it is argued before, experiencing exclusion and trying to deal with it is very important. In the context of the habitus structured through the encounters with Sunni perspective, Alevis start to search for a ground to defend their position. Following Bourdieu, this attempt of searching a ground of defense can be conceptualized as an attempt of intensifying the capital one has. In a way, respondents feel that if they learn more about Alevism, they can defend their position in a better way. On the basis of the examples

Female, 45, Housewife, (first group).

discussed above, in the very first experiences, the type of the capital which is needed to struggle seems as the spiritual capital. Since fields are defined by the valued stakes of struggle, the type of the field Alevis struggle for their position is the religious field. Moreover, most of these encounters with the dominant take place in terms of the religious issues, such as prayers, or place of worship. Therefore, it can be stated that in the very first stages of life, the struggle for position takes place in the religious field.

In the ontological narratives of the respondents, as a consequence of the early experiences of exclusion, being Alevi appears as a dispositional identity that needs to be "defended." For instance, one respondent stated that in middle school she had "courage to defend" Alevism against the prejudices about Alevism, because she was a successful and beloved student.[27] This respondent also states that in a Sunni dominated place it is difficult to "defend" Alevism. Similarly, another respondent claimed that before, she had to be quiet when people said something bad about Alevism because she did not have enough information to "defend" the rightness of Alevism.[28] Another respondent stated that after coming to Istanbul at a young age, what made him easily identify with Alevism was learning more about Alevism so that he could "defend" his identity on better grounds.[29]

In these narratives, usage of the verb "defend" is significant. This usage refers to the frequency of the respondents to face with the exclusion in their daily lives and how much they had to deal with it. Through these encounters, being Alevi integrated into the narratives as a position that needs to be defended. Moreover, the ability to defend it determines how a person establishes his or her relationship with the position. Hence, the ability to defend the position of being Alevi appears as an important component of the habitus of the respondents. For example, the respondent states that she could defend Alevism because she was a successful

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[27] Female, 34, PhD Student.
[28] Female, 39, Housewife.
[29] Male, 48, Retired, *Dede*.

student in the classroom. Because of this situation, according to her, her success in the lessons enabled her to defend the rightness of Alevism. In her case, relating to Alevism happened in the context when she could argue for Alevism. However, in the case of the other respondents, the knowledge about Alevism appears as an important ground to defend and claim Alevi identity more comfortably. These respondents state that when they learned more about Alevism, they had the courage to defend it. In all of these cases, it is important to see the need of the respondents to find a ground to defend Alevism. In other words, ability to defend appears as an important component of the dispositional identity of being Alevi. Therefore, it can be stated that in the remaining part of their lives, Alevis struggle to defend their position in better ways by trying to intensify their capital in the fields that they are positioned.

### Fields of Struggle and the Transformation of Alevi Habitus

As it is argued before, dispositional identity is not constructed only through the early experiences of the position. Although in the early life, experiencing exclusion takes place within the religious field in terms of the way of worshipping or the place of worship, this does not mean that all of Alevis continue their struggle within the limits of the religious field. Some Alevis carry the struggle into the cultural field. As a result, some people practice their lives from/within different habitus which is the reason why people have different dispositional identities although they occupy the position of being Alevi. Furthermore, this may be the reason why there are multiple ways of narrating the same time period.

By focusing on the ontological narratives of the respondents, it can be stated that rather than the field Alevis *started* to struggle, the fields Alevis *continue* their struggle has an important role for the formation of their dispositional identity. This is because of the situation that in contrast to the early life experiences in which people feel vulnerable because of their inferior position, in the remaining part of their lives they struggle to improve their position by

intensifying the necessary capital to defend the position. However, this does not mean that people do not experience exclusion after a certain point. Rather, it means that the type of the stakes of struggle is one of the important factors which structure habitus from which people experience the life. When these stakes of struggle are transformed, dispositional identity of being Alevi is transformed, as well. During the fieldwork, it appeared that there are two major fields of struggle for Alevis: religious field and cultural field. In other words, while some Alevis continue their struggles in the religious field, some carry this struggle into the cultural field and make use of their cultural capital to defend their position.

Nevertheless, this carrying process does not refer to total abandoning of the religious field. On the contrary, as a consequence of this process, some Alevis occupy both the religious and the cultural field at the same time. Furthermore, on the basis of the case in the intersection of religious and cultural fields, this study points out how the habitus which is structured by religious practices might affect the social dynamics beyond the arena of the religious field. For the ones who occupy both the cultural and religious field, the spiritual capital of being Alevi, which is partly inculcated by the experiences of exclusion during the childhood, continued to be an important part of the respondents' capital in their ongoing life. In other words, it can be stated that spiritual capital embedded through occupying the position of being Alevi, continues to be an important linkage between the subjective world of the Alevis and the social and cultural world they inhabit. In this respect socialization into the habitus of Alevi community involves developing a "practical sense," a set of dispositions, for interpreting life which delimits options, and constraints choice. In order to make these points clear, it necessary to continue analysis by elaborating on the ontological narratives of the respondents.

The ones who continue their struggle in the religious field keep encountering with the Sunni perspective in their daily lives in terms of religious issues. While for men this

context is the workplace, for women it is the life of the neighborhood in which they live. In the lives of the men workplace appears as the important place to encounter with the Sunni perspective. For example, a male respondent talks about a situation in his workplace in the month of Ramadan. There is a colleague of him who stops eating with him in Ramadan although, as the respondent puts it, normally eats with him in the "eleven months of the year."[30] There are also respondents who state that not fasting in the workplaces in Ramadan is not easy. They say that they can feel the "awkward" looks on them. Moreover, one of the respondents who is running a grocery shop stated that some of his usual Sunni customers always stopped shopping from him during every Ramadan. In all of these narrative accounts, the effects of the month of Ramadan and the fasting in this month are obvious. As a consequence of these narrative accounts, it can be claimed that the month of Ramadan is also a very powerful symbol for Alevis to feel the exclusion. Most of the time daily encounters with Sunnis remind their difference from the dominant.

In the case of women, the life of the neighborhood is the powerful reminder of their inferiority. Before talking about the specific examples on how women experience the relations in the neighborhood, it is necessary to contextualize the dynamics of these neighborhoods. As previously mentioned, Gazi Neighorhood and Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood are two of these neighborhoods. Significance of Gazi Neighborhood comes from Alevi majority who lives in the place. Moreover, Gazi Events of 1995, which is discussed in the Historical Background chapter, had an important effect on the life of the neighborhood. Especially after this incident, Gazi Neighborhood became a stigmatized place. Many of the people complain about the situation that it gets more difficult to find a job when people learn that they are from Gazi. Even some of the respondents state that they just ceased to be members of the Cem House because of the pressures they felt after Gazi events.

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    Male, 48, Private Sector.

The dynamics of Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood is a little bit different than Gazi. In Fatih Sultan Mehmet, there are Kurds and leftist groups in addition to Alevis. The reason why this neighborhood is a stigmatized one is the political activities of the people who live there. Most of the time, these people are defined as separatists. One of the respondents explained the motives behind this labeling in this way: "We are resisting against the bourgeois life style in the middle of a place which is defined by bourgeoisie such as people of Bebek and Etiler. That's the reason why they put pressure on us." Of course this statement disregards the ethnic dimension which gave rise to the conflicts in many respects: important number of Kurds and Alevis living in the neighborhood. In other words, socio-economic factors are intertwined with ethnic dimension for becoming Fatih Sultan Mehmet as a stigmatized neighborhood.

However, what is emphasized in this study considering the dynamics of life of the neighborhood is the relations people, or mostly women, establish with their Sunni neighbors. Narrative accounts of the respondents signify that even in neighborhoods like Gazi or Fatih Sultan Mehmet, where an important number of Alevis live, daily encounters with Sunnis is an important dynamic of the neighborhood. Furthermore, religion is an important condition which determines the context of these encounters. For example, a woman respondent states that "'I am fasting, you are not fasting. You should cover your neck.' In buses we had lots of those kinds of quarrels."[31] Similarly, another woman respondent states that when she first moved into her neighborhood, there are people who warned her against wearing short-sleeves. Following this example, she stated that "I am Alevi I can do everything I want and nobody could interfere my life in this way." These cases point out that there is an imposition of the Sunni dress code upon Alevi women in their daily lives. As Bourdieu puts it, the body "is a fundamental dim of the habitus [...] what is learned by the body is not something that one has,

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[31] Female, 41, Gazi Neighborhood, Housewife.

like knowledge that can be burnished, but something that one is" (Rapaport & Lomsky-Federer, 2002, p.239). Hence, following Bourdieu body can be considered as the communicator of the dispositional identity and that's the reason why Sunnis try to impose it on, while Alevi women reject it.

However, dress code is not the only example of exclusion narrated by the women. In a neighborhood in which Alevis and Sunnis live together, I asked women about their relationship with Sunni women. One of them summarized it in this way: "When they called us for *mevlüt* ceremonies we attend, we also call them. For example, when we cook *aşure*, we also give it to them, they give us too. We are talking with each other, we visit each other but at the end of the day their way is theirs, our way is ours."32 Here, the respondent summarizes the interaction by separating two sides in a clear manner with the words "us" and "them." She claims that both of the sides include each other into the religious occasions. However, as she underlines in the last sentence, there is this clear separation between the two sides. This situation exemplifies that even in the "ordinary" encounters when there is no open negative behaviors against Alevis, they still feel the distinction between "us" and "them."

When they attend the Sunni occasions such as *mevlüts*, another respondent describes how she feels in this way: "You sit there, they talk. Because you represent a minority group there, you cannot join the conversation easily. You cannot react in the way you naturally do because you never know what to expect."33 In this quotation, the anxiety the respondent felt for the Sunni dominated occasions is obvious. She always has to be careful against unexpected things. Besides these religious occasions, there are also prejudiced stories on Alevis. During the fieldwork, all of the Alevis were complaining about the negative attitudes of Sunnis against Alevis especially in the form of the stories they made up about Alevis. For

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   Female, 41, Housewife.
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   Female, 45, Housewife.

instance, against the belief that "Alevis are dirty people", one of the respondents stated that she invited her Sunni neighbor to her house in order to prove that in fact Alevis are not dirty.34 Moreover, during the fieldwork, the most repeated story was the story of *mum söndü* (the candle burned out) which tells that during the *Cem* ceremony Alevis have sexual intercourse with the family members. It is called as *mum söndü* because the story states that sexual intercourse takes place after the lights are off. In a nutshell, these stories are important for most Alevis to communicate their difference in daily life.

For both women and men, their encounters in the religious field are important for re-structuring the habitus and formation of their dispositional identity of being Alevi. For instance, the examples of the male respondent whose customer stops buying from him in Ramadan or in the case in which the colleague stops eating with him again in Ramadan communicate strong prejudices against Alevis. Moreover, in the case of the female respondent who showed her house to a Sunni neighbor, again there is the prejudice that Alevis are dirty people. In these examples, encountering with the other takes place within the context prepared by these stories. Moreover, encountering with the other belief provides an important ground for Alevis to experience the exclusion, as the cases of not being able to eat in the month of Ramadan and dress code pointed out. In a Sunni dominated environment, the anxiety of not knowing what to expect is also related to these prejudiced stories. In this case the respondent is worried about what kind of a prejudice against Alevis she might be faced. As it is stated above, although early experiences have an utmost importance for structuring the habitus; later experiences of being Alevi are also important in structuring the Alevi habitus, as well.

Following Bottero's (2010) critique of Bourdieu which claims that in Bourdieu's theory "'socialized subjectivity' focuses more on how 'identity' emerges from the interrelations between habitus and field, rather than from the inter-subjective relationship

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   Female, 61, Housewife.

between agents," it can be stated that for the emergence of Alevi habitus in the religious field, it is necessary to incorporate the role of others, which refers to Sunnis in the case of this research, into the analysis. In all the cases discussed above, the importance of the encounters with Sunnis and their perspective towards Alevism is tried to be underlined. As a consequence of these encounters, again following Bottero, it can be argued that Alevis feel the need to provide accounts of their actions to themselves and to others. The effort of the female respondent who showed her house to a Sunni neighbor can be interpreted in this way: Against the prejudice on Alevis as being dirty, she tries to give an account of herself by opening her house.

Moreover, since encounter with the other takes place within the context prepared by the prejudiced stories on Alevis, as it is discussed above, it is also necessary to incorporate those narratives into the analysis. In this study, those stories are conceptualized as part of the public narratives on Alevis. Moreover, following Mead (2003), these negative public narratives can be seen as the tools enabling Alevis to see the Sunni perspective on Alevis. As it is argued in the Theoretical Chapter, Mead defines the role of the other for the formation of identity as the passing between perspectives through taking the role of the other. Borrowing from him, it can be argued that these public narratives on Alevis are the tools for Alevis to pass into the Sunni perspective on Alevism. For example, through the story of *mum söndü*, an Alevi occupies the position of a Sunni, looks herself or himself from his or her perspective. This process of passing into the perspective of the dominant has an important role for the formation of the dispositional identity in terms of communicating the inferiority of the position of being Alevi. Moreover, through this passage between perspectives, an Alevi forms the category of Sunni as the other, "opposite" of being Alevi. Since, it is these negative public narratives which enable Alevis to pass from their perspective to the perspective of the other,

the role of the other and the role of the public narratives are intertwined in the formation of the dispositional identity of being Alevi.

In a parallel way, these encounters with the Sunni perspective make Alevis to give an account of themselves. They need to explain why they fast in Muharrem rather than Ramadan, they need to tell that there is not such an event as *mum söndü* during the *Cem* ceremony or they need to prove that in fact Alevis are not dirty people. Through these efforts of account giving, struggling appears as an important part of the ontological narratives of Alevi identity. Hence, the stakes of struggle come into prominence. In Bourdieusian terminology, the stakes of struggle are conceptualized as the type and intensity of the capital people have. What determines the type of capital is the field in which Alevis struggle for Alevism. In the cases discussed above, these struggles take place in the religious field through religious symbols. Therefore, spiritual capital has an utmost importance for Alevis to improve one's position in the religious field.

Since Alevi revival which took place in the post-1990 period, improved the stakes of struggle to act in the religious field, the ones located in the religious field narrate the post-1990 period as the period which provide public visibility to Alevism. In other words, transformations of the period provided them with the spiritual capital to deal with the negative Sunni perspective. For instance, there are Cem Houses in the cities which enable people to invite their neighbors to *Cem* ceremony for proving, for instance, that *mum söndü* is not what is done during the ceremony. Even Sunnis can watch the Alevi TV Channels to see what Alevis do during the *Cem*. Moreover, thanks to the associations, demands of Alevis such as the right to become public started to be heard. All of these things provided better grounds for Alevis to defend their position. Put it differently, thanks to the transformations of the post-1990 period, the ones in the religious field have more spiritual capital to struggle for their position. This situation is the source of the narrative which points out that this period

witnessed the important developments which enable Alevis to claim their Alevi identities in a more open way. Compared to the old times, the struggles Alevis give in the religious field transformed the structure of the field on behalf of Alevis. This transformation of the field has an important role in re-structuring the habitus in the religious field and the dispositional identity.

As it is argued before, because of the cultural capital they have, some Alevis carry the struggle into the cultural field. However, they still continue occupying the religious field, as well. Early experiences of being Alevi shaped in the context of the encounters with Sunnis in terms of the religious issues still have an important role for shaping their perspective towards social life. In this respect it can be stated that socialization into the habitus of Alevi community involves developing a "practical sense," a set of dispositions, for interpreting life. In the cultural field the struggle for position takes place by identifying being Alevi with being oppressed and by defending egalitarianism as the most important value. Therefore, through the possession of cultural capital, Alevism is defined as a political stance in which egalitarianism and being on the side of the oppressed is very important. This is because of the fact that as a result of having cultural capital, the ones who occupy both of the fields at the same time do not experience exclusion through the daily encounters with Sunnis in terms of the religious issues. Therefore, in these fields, dispositional identity of being Alevi appears as a "way of life," and a political affiliation other than a religious affiliation. Also, on the basis of the ontological narratives of the respondents it can be claimed that for the ones in these fields, exclusion means being deprived of political capital.

Furthermore, as it is just stated, contrary to the ones in the religious field, in the daily lives of the ones who occupy both the cultural and religious fields, there are not encounters with Sunnis in terms of the religious issues. Most importantly, since most of the respondents in this field are university graduates, the important part of their daily contexts is the academic

environments and in order to be accepted there spiritual capital is not the most important stake of struggle. At this point it is important to recall the example of a respondent who claims that because she was a successful student, in the middle school it was easy for her to defend the position of being Alevi. She describes this situation by stating that "but what makes me to prove myself [in terms of my Alevi identity] is the success I had in the school. I mean, unless you are so, it is a difficult situation to deal with." Moreover, the cultural capital has enabled them to escape from the situations in which they feel inferior. For instance, one respondent stated that she preferred not to attend the Sunni dominated events such as *iftar* meal because the talks during the meal makes her uncomfortable.35 In a similar manner, another respondent answered the question that "when do you feel yourself alienated because of your Alevi identity?" in this way: "When Sunnis are talking to each other about the religious issues, I feel alienated."36 Then she adds that she preferred not to be in these kinds of situations. However, for the ones in the religious field, it is not easy not to "prefer" to attend the Sunni occasions. At the end of the day, for them religion is an important part of the daily life. Even if they avoid *iftar* meals, these encounters may find them in the grocery shop one runs, as in the case of the respondent whose customer stops buying from him in the month of Ramadan.

Therefore, in the cultural field the struggle for position takes place not in terms of the religious issues because there are not much encounters with Sunnis in these terms. Rather, the struggle here takes place by identifying being Alevi with being oppressed and by defending egalitarianism as the most important value. Therefore, the way Alevis in the cultural field experience exclusion does not take place through the exclusionary encounters in the daily life. The possession of cultural capital, which enabled Alevis to carry the struggle into the cultural field pave the way for Alevis to escape from those kinds of encounters with Sunnis on daily

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   Female, 49, Retired.

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   Male, 35, Public Sector.

basis. However, conversion of spiritual capital, embedded by occupying the position of being Alevi, into the cultural capital enabled the ones at the intersection of cultural and religious field to emphasize the dispositional identity of being Alevi as a political stance, and as a way of life. Bradford (2003) argues that "because it may be translated into other forms of capital, spiritual capital is a valuable asset that, when strategically invested, might bring social and economic advancement" (p.168). Therefore, for the ones who occupy both fields, exclusion means not possessing political capital. Put it differently, these people experience exclusion by realizing that they are deprived of the political capital. Moreover, through developing a political stance on the basis of the position of being Alevi, the ones at the intersection point of the religious and the cultural field struggle to transform their cultural capital into the political capital in order to avoid exclusion.

In order to make these points clear, it is necessary to talk about how the ones at the intersection point of the both fields define the dispositional identity of being Alevi. In their definition, Alevism appears as a way of life, with a great emphasis on its political stance. For instance, one woman respondent expresses this situation in this way: "I incorporated Alevism in my life as a philosophy of life. I mean, I can comfortably state that culturally I am an Alevi but religion is something outside of my life. For that reason, cultural side of Alevism is something that I can accept without any hesitation."[37] Another respondent describes this situation by arguing "defining Alevism as a religion only, is a partial perspective because Alevism is a phenomenon where philosophy and belief meets." Both of these quotes underline that philosophical and cultural stance is more important for the dispositional identity of being Alevi.

When it comes to the issue of defining Alevism, all of the respondents emphasize that Alevism is an egalitarian stance. Then, they add that Alevis are on the side of the

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[37] Female, 33, Private Sector.

oppressed and in that respect they are oppositionary. For example one respondent defines herself as "culturally" Alevi. When the definition of being "culturally" Alevi is asked, she responds that: "For me being culturally Alevi is being oppositionary, respecting to other cultures, being oppositionary because of being oppressed. These are the features that are defined as cultural." Here, the respondent underlines that Alevism is an oppositionary stance because of its position of being oppressed. She argues that, it is through these cultural features of Alevism, she relates herself to the position of being Alevi. Put it differently, in her definition, being oppositionary is being on the side of the oppressed and since Alevis are an oppressed group she identifies herself as "culturally" Alevi. Similarly, another respondent states that Alevism is important for her "in terms of understanding the other, of being on the side of the oppressed. I believe that throughout the historical process, they have been an oppressed group. For that reason, I see myself as the other. [By occupying the position of Alevi] I can understand the other."38 Also, in this quotation, the emphasis on being oppressed, and understanding the other, which refers to the people who are excluded and oppressed, is obvious. Through this emphasis, being Alevi appears as an oppositionary and egalitarian stance.

In the cultural field, the requirements of Alevism are shaped in these terms, too. For instance, a male respondent lists the requirements of Alevism by saying that "first of all, the requirements of Alevism are being equal to 72 kinds of people; loving nature, loving the human; being against injustice. Also, basic rule claims that do not argue for what you have not seen, do not take what is forbidden, when it is said 'watch your waist,' it advices to follow the moral rules. I mean, if you fulfill these basic rules, you fulfill the requirements of being Alevi."39 Here, the values appear as the basics of being Alevis. There is no reference to the

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    Female, 38, Public Sector.
39
    Male, 52, Retired.

*Cem* ceremony or fasting in the month of Muharrem. Directly, the respondent talks about egalitarianism, being humanistic, being decent as the requirements of being Alevi. In a similar way, another respondent states that "for an Alevi to identify himself or herself as Alevi, he or she must be against the existing system. Right now, this system is run by AKP (Justice and Development Party) and it is ambiguous where this road heads to. He or she must be against it because by essence Alevism is something like that. An Alevi must be oppositionary. He or she must be more sensitive to the women issue."[40] Here, again, respondent directly refers to the values important for Alevis such as being oppositionary and being against the dominant without referring to the rituals of Alevis.

Hence, in the cultural field Alevism appears as a political stance in which egalitarianism and being on the side of the oppressed is very important. In this respect, the difference of cultural field from religious field emerges as Alevism's is being defined as a secular affiliation, a way of life in the cultural field. In other words, due to the conversion of spiritual capital into the cultural capital, the ones at the intersection of religious and cultural field define Alevism as a way of life, other than a religious affiliation. Furthermore, as it is said before early experiences of being Alevi in the religious field which communicate the inferiority of the position of being Alevi continued to be an important part of the habitus from/within Alevis in these fields experience life. Therefore, for these people relating to the position of being Alevi also means identifying with being oppressed, and being in the side of the oppressed. Therefore, besides being a "philosophy of life," here, dispositional identity of being Alevi also appears as a political stance. As it is stated, Alevism as a political stance is defined as being on the side of the oppressed. Since oppression communicated through the childhood experiences continued to be an important part of their habitus, besides a way of life, Alevism also appears as a political stance.

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[40] Female, 34, PhD Student.

Hence, conversion of spiritual capital, embedded by occupying the position of being Alevi, into the cultural capital enabled the ones at the intersection of cultural and religious field to emphasize the dispositional identity of being Alevi as a political stance, and as a way of life. Therefore, in these fields, the struggle for the position of being Alevi takes place by identifying being Alevi with being oppressed. It is through this way the habitus within/from which individuals experience the life is re-structured and the defining Alevism as a way of life and as a political stance is constructed. However, one can argue against the claim that these people occupy both fields at the same time by stating that Alevism is incorporated into their lives as a way of life, not as a religious affiliation. Nevertheless, arguing so is ignoring these people's early experiences of exclusion in terms of the religious issues. In this respect, socialization into the habitus of Alevi community in the early life involves developing a "practical sense," a set of dispositions, for interpreting life. Therefore, the spiritual capital of being Alevi, which is communicated by the experiences of exclusion during the childhood, continued to be an important part of the respondents' capital in their ongoing life. Yet, the habitus in these fields is transformed through the possession of cultural capital and conversion of spiritual capital into the cultural capital. For this reason, it can be argued that these people occupy both fields simultaneously. Moreover, the case in the intersection of the religious field and cultural field points out how the habitus which is structured in the religious field might affect social dynamics beyond the arena of religious field.

Then how the transformations of the post-1990 period relate to the way the ones in the cultural field experience and narrate it? As it is argued before, the ones in these fields experience exclusion through the way of being deprived of the political capital. In other words, for the ones at the intersection of the religious and cultural field, exclusion means being deprived of political capital. Recall that, in the Theoretical Chapter, political field is defined as a site of representation. Through the efforts of political actors in the political field,

certain image of the social world is created to dominate the social life. However, this certain understanding of the social world also creates outsiders. Put simply, the construction of reality creates oppressors and oppressed, insiders and outsiders and Bourdieu conceptualizes these two poles by the amount of political capital possessed. In this respect, for the ones in the religious and cultural field, exclusion means not having a representation or having an inferior representation in the political field. For them, in the context of the construction of reality in the political field, the position of being Alevi is created as the "outsider." This situation of being deprived of political capital which prevents representation of one's position in the political field, is the way through which people in the both fields experience exclusion.

In this respect, by defining Alevism as a political stance, what is aimed is to improve the position of being Alevi by gaining political capital. Since the ones in these fields do not experience exclusion in the way the ones who occupy the religious field experience it – through the daily encounters with Sunnis in religious terms – transformations of the period such as opening of Cem Houses or TV channels, have not improved their stakes of struggle. In other words, transformations of the post-1990 period have not enabled Alevis in these fields to convert their cultural capital into the political capital. Furthermore, according to these people, transformations of the period did not alter or provide the/a representation of the position of being Alevi in the political field. This is the reason why the ones at the intersection of the both fields narrate the period as a process which accelerated the assimilation of Alevi identity by bringing a "fake" public visibility. It is a "fake" visibility because the period has neither improved the stakes of struggle for them nor provided a "good" representation in the political field.

**Dispositional Identities of Being Alevi**

In this context, the question is how the dispositional identities of being Alevi are defined as a consequence of practicing life from/within the habitus structured by the processes specific to the fields of struggle. To begin with, as it is argued before, at the intersection of the cultural and religious fields, Alevism appears as a political stance in which egalitarianism and being on the side of the oppressed is very important. Most of the respondents in these fields define Alevism as an egalitarian stance. Moreover, people in these fields claim that Alevis are on the side of the oppressed and in that respect they are oppositionary. In line with this thought, requirements of being Alevi appears as egalitarianism, being humanistic, being decent, being oppositionary and being against the dominant. What is interesting here is the situation that in this definition of being Alevi, there is no reference to the *Cem* ceremony or fasting in the month of Muharrem as the requirements of Alevism.

However, in the religious field dispositional identity of being Alevi appears as a religious identity. For instance, the ones in the religious field define the requirements of being Alevi as the attendance to *Cem* ceremony, fasting in the month of Muharrem which they call as *On İki İmamlar Orucu*. A woman respondent expresses this situation in this way: "we are fasting in the month of Muharrem, fasting for Hızır, going to Cem Houses. I think these are the requirements of Alevism."[41] Similarly, a male respondent replies the question of "what is Alevism for you" in this way: "For instance, in the evening we fast for 12 *imams*, and break our fast here [in the Cem House]. Women cook here. After breaking our fast, we join to *Cem* ceremony. If there are people who have animosity between themselves or there are indebted people, they are not welcomed in our society. First he or she solves his or her animosity or pays debts and then allowed to eat his or her *lokma*. This is the way Alevism is."[42] Here, the

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[41]
    Female, 45, Housewife.
[42]
    Male, 52, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, Private Sector.

respondent underlines the importance of the act of worship for being Alevi. Another woman respondent answers the same question by stating that being Alevi is "worshipping, being honest, being on the side of God."

In all of these definitions, it is obvious that Alevism is a religious identity and worshipping is a very central part of the definition. Another point which arises from these definitions is the values important for Alevis. For example, when describing the *Cem* ceremony, the male respondent talks about the importance of social purity in order to be accepted to *Cem*: The one has to solve his or her problems of money or friendship to be accepted to *Cem*. Moreover, a woman respondent puts also being honest into the characteristics of being Alevi. In a parallel way, another woman respondent lists the features of Alevism by stating that "honesty; integrity; humanism; watching his or her hand, tongue, and waist; a person who never keeps enmity is the best Alevi, I can say. He or she is human. However, you steal, you do bad things then pray to God, but if these things are always in your heart, no matter how much you pray, it is not a matter of fact." Here, besides praying, the importance of the other values for Alevism is stressed. Especially the statement of "watching your hand, tongue, and waist" is the most common idiom used by Alevi people to point out to the importance of these values. According to this premise, watching your hand advices not to do bad things with your hand such as stealing; watching your tongue advices not to say bad things; and watching your waist advices not to engage in a casual sexual relationship without getting married. One woman respondent defines the philosophy of this premise in this way: "What are the rules of watching your hand, tongue, and waist? Watching your hand is not doing bad things with your hand, not hurting anyone else. With your tongue is not lying, not gossiping, not saying bad things about people. I mean, it is the meaning. Watching your waist is not committing adultery. This is the basics." Therefore, it can be argued that besides praying, through the premise of "watching your hand, tongue, and waist" people underline the

important values to adhere for being Alevi. Here, being honest, being humanist, being decent, being kind appears among the important values of Alevism. However, what is important here is the situation that all of these values become meaningful for the respondents in the religious context.

Interestingly, in a similar way with the ones in the religious field, the people in the cultural field also refers to "watching your hand, tongue, waist" as the core of the Alevi perspective. However, they make sense of the premise in a different way. For instance, after stating that the premise is important for being Alevi, one respondent continues: "This is something different than being part of a religion or sect, it is an ethical stance, it is something true. For that reason, I can say that this philosophy is the most important thing an Alevi must have."43 Also, she states that "if you internalize this philosophy of 'watching your hand, your tongue, your waist,' you are on the side of the oppressed, you refuse the relation of the oppressed and the oppressor by default." In this quotes, respondent interprets the premise in order to prove that Alevism is a political stance which identifies itself with the oppressed. Another respondent reflects on the premise by claiming that "if people try not to steal, not to lie, not to conduct immorality, he or she is full of human love. A person who cannot lie cannot do something bad because he or she reveals himself or herself. People who do not steal struggle for earning money in the honest way."44 This respondent also states that because of this human love, Alevism has an egalitarian stance. Through these two quotes, it can be argued that in the cultural field the premise is interpreted in accordance with the political values through which being Alevi is identified. In fact, in the religious field the idiom is also interpreted to emphasize the values important for being Alevi. However, in the cultural field these values are connected to egalitarian and oppositionary stance of Alevism.

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    Female, 49, Retired.
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    Male, 42, Public Sector.

In the religious field, in addition to the values, most of the respondents refer to the centrality of Islam for defining Alevism. Especially *dedes* claim that Alevism is the true essence of Islam. For example one of the *dedes* defines Alevism by stating that: "Alevism is the way of living Islam, which is the religion of Muhammed Mustafa, in its true way." Another *dede* says that "Alevism is the real essence of Islam." Other respondents also refer to Muhammed as one of the important figures of Alevism and they underline the situation that Alevism is not something unrelated to Islam. For instance, one respondent claims that "Alevism is not underestimating God or Quran." Therefore, it can be stated that in the religious field Alevism appears as a religion related to Islam, considering Muhammed as an important figure. However, for the difference from Sunni Islam, it is stated that Alevis do not perform *namaz,* and in addition to Muhammed, Alevis also have respect for Ali. Moreover, centrality of Cem House instead of the mosque for the Alevi religion is emphasized.

Lastly, in both of the fields the position of being Sunni represents the dominant and the other of the dispositional identity of being Alevi. Furthermore, in both of the fields, the position of being Sunni is defined in a fragmented manner. For instance, in religious field, especially about the marriage issue there is a distinction between a "farsighted" Sunni and the "puritan" one. Most of the time respondents state that they wish their children to marry with the "farsighted" Sunnis. According to them, "farsighted" means having no exclusionary stance against Alevis. However, they state that when their daughters marry with "puritan" Sunnis, they are exposed to pressure. Here, the gendered perspective towards the marriage is obvious. While for men it is easier to marry with Sunni women, for women it is more difficult to marry Sunni men. This situation is expressed in this way: "Our daughters who marry with Sunni men had lots of difficulties. However, when their daughters marry with one of us, they even feel more comfortable."[45] In the religious field, "puritan" Sunni is defined as oppressive

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[45]
    Female, 35, Fatih Sultan Mehmet Neighborhood, Housewife.

and cruel. In this definition, Sunnis appear as obsessive about their worship but at the same time they did things which they consider as sin: "Since they perform *namaz*, fast in Ramadan, they think that their sins are forgiven. Then they think that they have the right to do all the bad things. They think, since they pray to God, all of their sins will be forgiven."[46] Therefore, in the religious field, the position of being Sunni is described as being obsessed with the procedural stuff of the religion while ignoring the core values.

In a similar way with the religious field, in cultural field the position of being Sunni is separated into "puritan" Sunni and "leftist" Sunni: "For me being Sunni-Muslim refers to people who live on the basis of the religious values. However, there are lots of 'Sunnis' with whom I get on well. The thing is that they do not live their lives according to the principles of Sunni-Islam. They are just born into it."[47] In this description, Sunni-Islam appears as a collection of the unchanging principles of a religion. Although one cannot choose to be part of it, still one can reject it by not obeying its rules. However, those rules are determined and stable; and identifying with them makes one automatically "puritan." In a parallel way with this definition, the "leftist" Sunni is defined as the one who "has forgotten" the principles of Sunni-Islam.

All in all, as all the quotes cited above indicate, there are multiple ways of defining dispositional identity of being Alevi. Moreover, these definitions are shaped by the fields Alevis struggle for Alevism. On the basis of the differentiation of the fields, even the same premise can be interpreted in different ways to be consistent with the dispositional identity: The premise of "watching your hand, tongue, waist" is interpreted in accordance with the political values through which being Alevi is identified in the cultural and religious fields whereas, in the religious field it is used to symbolize the religious values. However, there also

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   Male, 48, Private Sector.
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   Male, 36, Private Sector.

similarities between these multiple identities. For instance, in both of the fields the position of being Sunni represents the dominant and the other of the dispositional identity of being Alevi. Moreover, in both of the fields, the position of being Sunni is defined in a fragmented manner. While in the cultural field the position of being Sunni is separated as being "puritan" and being "leftist," in the religious field, it is separated as being "far-sighted" and being "puritan."

**Conclusion**

On the basis of the discussion above, it can be concluded that when analyzing Alevi identity formation process, it is crucial to focus on different ways of experiencing exclusion. Narrative accounts of the people signify that these experiences of exclusion may vary depending on many aspects. However, following Bourdieu these aspects can be conceptualized by the multiplicity of the fields individuals occupy. Here, another important point needs to be stressed: The fields individuals occupy can change during their lives so it is necessary to consider these changes, as well. At this point habitus comes into play by providing people with "a feel for the game" that determines how they understand life. How people make sense of the position of being Alevi is formed by their habitus which is structured by the multiplicity and the types of the fields individuals occupy in the lifetime. As it is mentioned previously, through these ways of relating to the position of being Alevi, dispositional identity is formed.

Following Bourdieusian logic, early experiences of being Alevi are analyzed first. Ontological narratives of the respondents signify that most of the people start to relate to the position of being Alevi in a Sunni-dominated environment. This Sunni-dominated atmosphere is mostly felt in schools or in daily life. More importantly, these encounters with the non-Alevi environment take place in terms of the way of worshipping or the place of worship.

Hence, it can be concluded that the respondents start to relate to the position of being Alevi in the religious field. Also, these encounters in the religious field have an important place in structuring the habitus. Moreover, the differences in the place of worship or in the way of worshipping are also tools of exclusion which make Alevis to feel inferior, to question their position, and most of time to conceal their identity in order to avoid pressure. As a consequence of these early experiences of the exclusion, being Alevi appears as a dispositional identity that needs to be "defended." Furthermore, the ability to defend appears as an important component of the dispositional identity of being Alevi and the habitus through which individuals experience the life from/within.

Nevertheless, through the analysis of narrative accounts, the fields in which Alevis continue their struggling have a determining role in the formation of their dispositional identity. As previously mentioned, when Alevis start to realize their difference, they feel themselves inferior and vulnerable so that they even conceal their Alevi identity. However, in the remaining parts of their lives, they try to challenge this feeling of inferiority by trying to have an access to the necessary capital to defend it. In other words, Alevis try to improve their stakes of struggle and this attempt effects the ways through which they relate to the position of being Alevi. Ontological narratives of the respondents signify that some Alevis stay in the religious field and try to intensify their spiritual capital to defend their position. On the other hand, some carry this struggle into the cultural field and make use of cultural capital to defend the position of being Alevi. As a consequence of this carrying process, some Alevis occupy both the religious and the cultural field at the same time.

The ones who continue their struggle in the religious field keep encountering with the Sunni perspective in their daily lives in terms of the religious issues. As most of the cases discussed throughout the chapter point out, these encounters with the Sunni perspective push Alevis to prove themselves by challenging the negative perspectives on Alevism. At this

point, the importance of the stakes of struggle comes to the fore. In a way, Alevis in this field struggle to intensify the spiritual capital. In this respect, transformations of the post-1990 period, such as opening of Cem Houses, Alevi TV channels, and the establishment of the associations, intensified the spiritual capital to deal with the negative Sunni perspective in daily life. This situation is the reason why the ones in this field narrate the post-1990 period as the period which provide public visibility for Alevism. Furthermore, since the habitus from/within they experience the life is structured and re-structured in the religious field, in their ontological narratives dispositional identity of being Alevi appears as a religious identity whose requirements defined as attendance to *Cem* ceremony, fasting in the month of Muharrem which they call as *On İki İmamlar Orucu*.

On the other hand, at the intersection of the cultural and religious fields there are not many encounters with Sunnis in terms of the religious issues. In other words, in these fields exclusion is not experienced in terms of the religious issues. Rather, for the ones who occupy the both fields, exclusion means not possessing political capital. Put it differently, these people experience exclusion by realizing that they are deprived of the political capital. Conversion of spiritual capital into the cultural capital enabled the ones at the intersection of cultural and religious field to emphasize the dispositional identity of being Alevi as a political stance, and as a way of life. Therefore, in these fields the struggle for the position takes place by identifying being Alevi with being oppressed and by defending the egalitarianism as the most important value. In a way, through developing a political stance on the basis of the position of being Alevi, these Alevis struggle to transform their cultural capital into the political capital in order to avoid exclusion. Since, transformations of the post-1990 period have not enabled Alevis in these fields to convert their cultural capital into the political capital, the ones at the intersection of the both fields narrate the period as a process which accelerated the assimilation of Alevi identity. For them, transformations of the period did not

change the representation of the position of being Alevi. Hence, they narrate the period as a

process which brought "fake" visibility to Alevis.

## CONCLUSION

In this study, the issue of Alevi identity, which is a highly debated issue in the

literature, is re-visited by conducting a fieldwork with Alevis from diverse backgrounds.  As

previously mentioned, most of the scholars who study Alevism prefer to emphasize multiple

ways of defining Alevism rather than giving a single definition of it. In this respect, this study tries to problematize different ways of defining Alevism by analyzing the conditions which give rise to this situation. Considering these conditions, it is argued that different ways Alevis experience exclusion is at the core of the formation of multiple Alevi identities. In other words, exclusion may take many forms depending on one's position in social space and this multiplicity may provide a ground to explain multiplicity of Alevi identities in Turkey. As it is exemplified in the Historical Background chapter, exclusionary stance towards Alevis in Turkey is a central issue in the history of Alevis. The fieldwork also supports this situation through the narrative accounts which underlines daily encounters of exclusion. Therefore, how Alevis experience exclusion is an important question for Alevi identity.

With this aim, ontological narratives of Alevis are analyzed in terms of the Bourdiesian field analysis. By taking different ways of narrating the post-1990 period as the sign that people experience their lives from/within different habitus, this study argues that types of the fields individuals occupy can be considered as the reason why Alevis differently experience and narrate the same time period. The ones who are in the religious field keep encountering with the Sunni perspective in their daily lives in terms of religious issues, and these encounters communicate the exclusionary stance towards Alevis. On the other hand, in daily lives of the ones who occupy both cultural and religious fields, there are not encounters with Sunnis in terms of the religious issues. Rather, the struggle here takes place by identifying being Alevi with being oppressed and by defending egalitarianism as the most important value. In this respect, for the ones who occupy both fields, exclusion means not possessing political capital. Moreover, through developing a political stance on the basis of the position of being Alevi, the ones at the intersection point of the religious and the cultural field struggle to transform their cultural capital into the political capital in order to avoid exclusion.

Therefore, since Alevi revival which took place in the post-1990 period, improved the stakes of struggle to act in the religious field, the ones located in the religious field narrate the post-1990 period as the period which provide public visibility to Alevism. On the other hand, since the ones in the religious and cultural fields do not experience the exclusion in the way the ones who occupy the religious field experience it – through the daily encounters with Sunnis in religious terms – transformations of the period such as opening of Cem Houses or TV channels, have not improved their stakes of struggle. This is the reason why the ones at the intersection of both fields narrate the period as a process which accelerated the assimilation of Alevi identity by bringing a "fake" public visibility.

Focusing on the multiple narrations of the post-1990 period, this study speaks to the literature on Alevis in Turkey. Because of the Alevi revival, this time period is a highly studied one in terms of many aspects relating to Alevi issue. For instance, in her article, Özlem Göner questions Alevi revival of 1990s and asks that "whether the rise of Alevism after 1980 is a counter-hegemonic social movement or it represents an accommodation of Alevi culture to hegemonic discourse" (Göner, 2005, p.119). Then, she answers the question in this way: Most of the Alevis consider the transformations of the post-1990 period as improvement in terms of Alevi issue in Turkey. However, if it is considered that power operates without being noticed through producing subjects rather than oppressing them, the process is scarier than it is seen. In this regard, within the context provided by the power structure of the post-1990 period, Alevism has to be defined, classified, and re-constructed. In order to be normalized and to be heard in the public sphere, Alevism had to be defined as a religious identity, and it had to be defined in terms of its difference from Sunni-Islam. Therefore, while in 1970s Alevism was defined as a counter-hegemonic stance which resist against *difference repressive* discourse of the state, in the post-1990 period Alevis are

incorporated into a new form of hegemonic discourse which pushes them to define Alevism as a religious affiliation rather than an ideological stance (Göner, 2005).

In a nutshell, Göner claims that post-1990 period incorporated Alevis to hegemonic discourse through pushing them to define Alevism as a religious affiliation. She states that within the power structure of the period, defining itself as a religious identity was the only way to be normalized and to be heard in public sphere. Therefore, in a parallel way with the ones in the intersection of the religious and cultural field, Göner considers public representation of Alevism in the post-1990 period as a visibility which accommodates "Alevi culture" to hegemonic discourse. Recall that contrary to the ones in the religious field, the ones in religious and cultural fields claim that public visibility of Alevism became possible only through the "assimilation" of Alevi identity. Göner also underlines how power structure of the period reproduced Alevism as a religious identity rather than an ideological stance. Although she does not directly say so, also Göner implies that transformations of the post-1990 period assimilated Alevis into the hegemonic discourse.

Nevertheless, this study emphasizes that there are multiple ways of narrating the post-1990 period which underlines that there are multiple ways of experiencing the time span. During the fieldwork, some people, who define Alevism as a religious affiliation, insistently argue that since 1990s it is easier to claim Alevi identity publicly and this period can be considered as a period of improvement. In this respect, in a way, fieldwork supports Göner's claim that for Alevism to be heard in public sphere it had to define itself as a religious identity because people who feel more comfortable about Alevi identity were the people who define Alevism as a religious stance. Fieldwork also supports that people who consider Alevism as a political stance do not have such kind of perspective towards the period. However, by claiming that it is "scary" to consider the transformations of the post-1990 period as improvements in terms of Alevi issue in Turkey, Göner quickly disregards the experiences of

the people who agree with the idea of improvement. In this respect, this study argues that rather than telling one story of the period, it may be better to emphasize multiplicity of the ways of experiencing the period depending on fields individuals occupy. According to one perspective transformations of the period can be considered as "improvements" whereas according to another perspective the period can be considered as the process which "accommodates Alevi culture to hegemonic discourse." Furthermore, it is argued that each way of experiencing the period provides a fruitful angle to evaluate the time span from different perspectives.

Before concluding, it is necessary to discuss to what extent it is possible to generalize the findings of the study to the other cases on identity formation. Theoretically speaking, the framework proposed in this study may provide a certain perspective when analyzing the identity formation process. For instance, the emphasis on the role of the habitus in the formation of identities can be considered as one of those perspectives. As previous discussions on the usage of habitus[48] also remark, this concept of Bourdieu provides a fruitful ground for questioning identity formation process. As it is stated, habitus is 1) a structured structure by the field which mediates between individual and the field; 2) it is a logic from/within which individuals act; 3) it is the totality of the actions of individuals who occupy the same position. Dispositional identity emerges in the context of the habitus and when habitus is transformed, so does the dispositional identity. In the theoretical chapter, the importance of conceptualizing identity as a relational and situational notion is underlined. In this respect, habitus, as a concept which is in constant transformation, enables this relational and situational formation and transformation of identities.

Therefore, the usage of habitus may provide an example for other cases on identity formation on theoretical grounds. However, it is still necessary to emphasize that theoretical

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[48]
    i.e. Bottero (2010); Burgois & Schonberg (2007); Rapoport & Lomsky-Federer (2002); King (2000).

framework of the study is tailored on the basis of a specific case. In other words, narrative accounts of the respondents and the issue of exclusion are the points of departure of this study. In this respect, although this study provides a certain perspective for the other cases on identity issue, it may not provide an answer to many related questions of identity. For instance, one does not necessarily need to focus on daily encounters of exclusion in order to talk about a group identity. There are identities formed on the basis of a specific kind of a memory, or there are identities formed in diaspora. Therefore, although it is possible to generalize some findings of the study on theoretical grounds, such as the usage of habitus, this situation does not necessarily mean that it is possible to generalize the framework to all the cases on identity formation.

As previously mentioned, this study mostly speaks to the Alevi literature in Turkey. Because of this fact, as a final word it is necessary to talk about some points which arise during the study in terms of studying Alevism. These points can be considered as hints for conducting further research on Alevis in Turkey. To begin with, during the fieldwork, regular members of Alevi associations could not be included into the sample. Although administrative staff and some activists of the associations were interviewed, the members of Alevi associations who are not from the ranks of administration could not be interviewed. Analyzing the way they form their Alevi identities might have been interesting in terms of whether they define Alevism in a parallel way with the definitions of the associations. As it is discussed in the Historical Background chapter in detailed manner, while *Hacı Bektaş Veli Kültür ve Dayanışma Derneği* emphasizes the cultural and folkloristic features of Alevism, *Pir Sultan Abdal Kültür Derneği* highlights the leftist political stance whereas *Cem Vakfı* stresses the religious side of Alevism within Islam. In this context, it might have been interesting to find out to what extent these definitions are also admitted by the regular

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members of the associations. Furthermore, how they experience the post-1990 period, as the members of Alevi associations might have been another important issue to study.

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# APPENDICES

**KOÇ ÜNİVERSİTESİ**

**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ BİLGİLENDİRME FORMU**

Koç Üniversitesi'nin Karşılaştırmalı Tarih ve Toplum Bölümü yüksek lisans öğrencisi Nazlı Özkan tarafından gerçekleştirilen bu proje kapsamında size Alevilikten ne anladığınız, toplumsal bağlamda Alevilerin durumu ve Türkiye'nin yakın geçmişiyle ilgili sorular sorulacaktır. Adınız ve soyadınız gibi kişisel bilgileriniz araştırmanın hiçbir safhasında kullanılmayacak ve açıklanmayacaktır.

Bu görüşmede size soracağımız soruların doğru ya da yanlış cevapları yoktur. Bu yüzden sorulara istediğiniz gibi cevap verebilirsiniz.

Araştırmayla ilgili herhangi bir sorunuz olursa ya da daha fazla bilgi almak isterseniz proje yürütücüsü Nazlı Özkan'la iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

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         Yrd. Doç. Dr. Murat Yüksel
         Sosyoloji Bölümü Öğrt.Üyesi
         Tez Danışmanı

Appendix – 2

## Sampling Schema

| Occupation | First Group | | Second Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Private Sector | - | 5 | 2 | 1 |
| Public Sector | - | - | 1 | 3 |
| Retired | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Housewife | 9 | - | - | - |
| Total | 10 | 9 | 4 | 5 |

| Membership to Any Alevi Associations | First Group | | Second Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| None | 10 | 6 | 3 | 4 |
| Cem Vakfı | - | 2 | - | - |
| Pir Sultan Abdal KDD | - | - | 1 | - |
| Hacı Bektaş Veli KDD | - | 1 | - | 1 |
| Total | 10 | 9 | 4 | 5 |

| Income | First Group | | Second Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| 500 TL – 1000 TL | 10 | 9 | - | - |
| 1500 TL – 3000 TL | - | - | 4 | 5 |
| Total | 10 | 9 | 4 | 5 |

| Neighborhood | First Group | | Second Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Gazi Neighb. | 4 | - | - | - |
| Fatih Sultan Mehmet N. | 1 | 4 | - | - |
| Total | 5 | 4 | - | - |

| Educational Background | First Group | | Second Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Never went to school | 3 | 1 | - | - |
| Primary School | 6 | 7 | 1 | - |
| Secondary School | 1 | 1 | - | - |
| University Graduate | - | - | 1 | 5 |
| Graduate School | - | - | 2 | - |

| Marital Status | First Group | | Second Group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | F | M | F | M |
| Single | - | - | 1 | - |
| Married to an Alevi | 8 | 6 | 2 | 3 |
| Married to a Sunni | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Widow | - | 1 | - | - |
| Divorced | - | - | - | - |

| Total | 10 | 9 | 4 | 5 | | Total | 10 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
|-------|----|---|---|---|---|-------|----|---|---|---|

Appendix – 3

**Demografik Sorular**

1. **Cinsiyet:**

2. **Yaş:**

3. **Doğum yeriniz:**

4. **Şu anda oturduğunuz yer:**

5. **Oturduğunuz ev kira mı, kendinizin mi?:**

6. **Hayatınızın büyük çoğunluğunu geçirdiğiniz yer:**

7. **Medeni durumunuz:**

8. **Öğrenim durumunuz:**

9. **Anne ve babanızın öğrenim durumu:**

10. **Mesleğiniz:**

11. **Aileniz kaç kişi:**

12. **Ailede (başka) kimler çalışıyor:**

13. **Evinize giren toplam aylık gelir:**

<u>**Kimlik Soruları**</u>

1. **Kendinizi öncelikli olarak nasıl tanımlarsınız? Yani şöyle sorayım, Alevi olmak kimliğinizin önemli bir parçası mı?**

2. **Alevi olduğunuzu nasıl öğrendiniz?**

3. **Alevi olmak size ne ifade ediyor? Yani sizce Alevilik nedir?**

4. **Sizce Aleviliğin gereklilikleri nelerdir?**

5. Siz bunları yerine getiriyor musunuz?

6. Alevilik bir din mi? / Mezhep mi?

7. İslam'ın içinde mi?

8. İsteyen herkes Alevi olabilir mi?

9. Alevilik anlayışınızın oluşmasında neler etkili olmuştur?

10. Alevilik ile ilgili bilgileri kimden öğrendiniz?

11. Çocuklarınıza Aleviliği öğretir misiniz? Nasıl?

12. Evinizde ne tür dini kitaplar bulunmaktadır?

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**Toplum & Devlet**

1. Günümüzde Alevilerin toplumdaki konumu hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

2. Peki bu hep böyle miydi? Yani siz zaman içinde Alevilerin toplumdaki

   konumuyla ilgili bir değişim gözlemlediniz mi?

3. 1980 darbesiyle ilgili neler hatırlıyorsunuz?

4. 1980 sonrasındaki dönemle ilgili fikirleriniz neler? Olumlu, olumsuz? Değişen

   şeyler var mı mesela?

5. Peki, Aleviler için 1980 sonrası dönemde değişen şeyler oldu mu? Olumlu,

   olumsuz? Neler?

6. Sizce bu dönemdeki gelişmeler Alevilerin toplumdaki konumunu etkiledi mi?

7. Gazi olayları hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Bu olay sizi kişisel olarak nasıl etkiledi?

8. Sivas olayları hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? Bu olay sizi kişisel olarak nasıl etkiledi?

9. Okullarda okutulan din derslerinin içeriği hakkındaki fikirleriniz neler?

## Dışlanma

1. Çocukken (ve/ya da göç etmeden önce) Alevi-Sünni ayrımının farkında mıydınız?

2. Sizce Sünni-Alevi ayrımı nasıl meydana geldi?

3. Alevi olduğunuzdan bahsetmediğiniz durumlar/ortamlar oldu mu?

4. Bugüne kadar Alevi olduğunuzu belirttiğiniz ortamlarda ne tür tepkilerle karşılaştınız?

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5. **Alevi olduğunuz için kendinizi yabancı hissettiğiniz durumlar oldu mu? Bununla ilgili başınızdan geçen bir olay var mı?**

6. **Kadın/Bayan olarak Alevi olmak ve erkek olarak Alevi olmak arasında bir fark var mı? Nedir?**

7. *Alevi olduğunuzu her ortamda rahatlıkla ifade edebiliyor musunuz?*

8. *Hangi ortamlarda kendinizi rahatlıkla Alevi olarak tanımlarsınız?*

## Öteki

1. **Sizce Sünni kimdir? Kimler kendini Sünni Müslüman olarak tanımlayabilir?**

2. **Kimler kendini Alevi olarak tanımlayabilir?**

3. Anne-babanızın Alevilik tanımıyla kendi Alevilik tanımınızı karşılaştırdığınızda neler söyleyebilirsiniz? Farklı mı, benzer mi?

4. Eşinizde mi Alevi?

5. Türkiye'de yaşayan diğer Aleviler hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?

6. Sizin toplumdaki diğer Alevilerden farklı olduğunuz yönler var mı? Neler?

7. Peki benzer olduğunuz yönler neler?

8. Sünnilerle benzer olduğunuz yönler var mı?

9. Farklı olduğunuz yönler neler?

10. Oğlunuzun ya da kızınızın yine bir Aleviyle mi evlenmesini istersiniz?

**11. Oğlunuzun ya da kızınızın bir Sünni'yle evlenmesine tepkiniz ne olur?**

<u>**Alevi Dernekleri**</u>

1. **Herhangi bir Alevi derneğine üyeliğiniz var mı?**

2. **Türkiye'deki Alevi derneklerinin çalışmalarını takip ediyor musunuz? Bunlar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz?**

3. **Onların Alevilik anlayışlarıyla sizin Alevilik anlayışınız arasında bir fark var mı, ya da benzer mi?**

4. **Türkiye'de Alevileri en iyi kim temsil edebilir sizce, yani şu anda böyle bir kurum var mı? Yoksa da nasıl bir kurum bunu yapabilirdi?**

Appendix – 4

**Overwiev of the Discourses on the Post-1990 Period & Alevi Identity**

| | *First Group* | | *Second Group* | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **F** | **M** | **F** | **M** |
| **Post-1990: Brought improvement** | 10 | 9 | - | - |
| **Post-1990: Brought assimilation** | - | - | 4 | 5 |
| **Alevi Identity as a religious affiliation** | 10 | 9 | - | - |
| **Alevi Identity as a way of life and political stance** | - | - | 4 | 5 |

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