

UNDERSTANDING THE ALEVI REVIVAL: A TRANSNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis evaluates the concept of “Transnational Social Space” and investigates the characteristics of the claimed transnational space between Turkey and Germany. By taking the “Alevi Revival” of the 1990s as the case study, the thesis employs the concept of “Transnational Social Space” as an alternative explanation in the field of Turkish politics. By investigating the Alevi movement in Turkey and Germany in a comparative perspective, the thesis claims that the Alevi movement in Germany is an important factor affecting the direction of the Alevi movement in Turkey. In order to determine the effects of the Alevi movement in Germany on the Alevi movement in Turkey, the thesis takes three key events of the Alevi movement. These are, the Declaration of Alevism, the

Establishment of the Peace Party and the Constitutions of the Alevi-Bektashi
Representative Council.

Keywords: Transnationalism, Alevi revival, Alevi Politics, Germany and Turkey

ÖZET

ALEVİ UYANIŞINI ANLAMLANDIRMAK: ULUSÖTESİ BİR YAKLAŞIM

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Bu tez, Ulus ötesi Toplumsal Alan (UTA) kavramını merkeze alarak, Almanya ve Türkiye arasında kurulduğu iddia edilen UTA'nın özelliklerini tartışmaktadır. 1990 sonrası yaşanan Alevi Uyanışını örnek olay alan tez, UTA'yı Türkiye'deki siyasal gelişmeleri açıklamak için kullanmaktadır. Tez, Türkiye'deki ve Almanya'daki Alevi hareketini karşılaştırmalı olarak inceleyerek, Almanya'daki Alevi hareketinin Türkiye'deki Alevi hareketi üzerindeki etkisini ve etkinliğini araştırmaktadır. Karşılaştırmalı analiz çerçevesinde; Alevilik Bildirgesi, Barış Partisi deneyimi ve Alevi-Bektaşî Temsilciler Meclisinin kuruluşu, örnek olaylar olarak seçilmiştir. Bu örneklerin kuruluş ve örgütlenme aşamalarında Almanya Alevi Örgütlerinin etkinliği araştırılmıştır. Temel olarak bu üç olay üzerinden, tez, Almanya'daki Alevi hareketinin Türkiye Siyasetini belirlemede ihmal edilmemesi gereken bir öneme sahip olduğunu iddia etmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: Ulusötesilik, Alevi Uyanışı, Alevilik, Almanya ve Türkiye

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INTRODUCTION

Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them. This is the principle on which I bring up these children. Stick to Facts, Sir! Thomas Grandgrind in *Hard Times*; Charles Dickens

After the collapse of the bipolar world system, the previously silent ethno-religious actors started to be an important element within the discussions and analyses of world politics. The role of ethnic and religious groups for the regional stability or security has been continuously emphasized by scholars, and the discussions on identity politics and ethno-nationalism were eagerly articulated to the scope of political science (Stack, 1981). Consequently, the before unnoticed groups were conceptualised as the new transnational actors affecting politics (See Paul, 1981; Piscatori, 1981). Within this picture also immigrants have been made the subject of inquiry by political scientists and they were conceptualised as significant actors that have the capacity to shape politics (See Slater, 1981). However, it is claimed that, unlike the discussion on ethno-religious groups, the conventional literature of political science is a late and reluctant participant within this emerging field. Probably the underlying reason behind this negligence is the perception of immigration as a temporary process, which will be inevitably concluded

with the complete rupture of immigrants from the political arena of the emigration country and automatic inclusion to that of the immigration country (Castles and Miller, 1993). Therefore, immigrants and immigrant politics have been left to the sphere of the politics of the immigration country.

All of these observations are valid for Turkish politics. Although the migration movements and immigrants constitute a central part of the Turkish political history, students of Turkish politics either ignore the issue totally or deal with it reluctantly. Therefore, neither immigrants nor the immigrant politics have been a frequently visited subject in Turkish politics, though almost 10 percent of the total Turkish population live abroad and engage in back and forth movements between Turkey and various immigration countries (Martin, 1991). Moreover, it is known that within the last two decades, an extensive network, which enabled persistent transfers of symbolic and economic capital as well as human capital between the immigration countries and Turkey, emerged. However, there are only a few pioneering studies that investigate the effects of immigrants on the domestic and international politics -in particular on the bilateral relations with the emigration country - of Turkey (See Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003 and Argun, 2003). This deficiency directs the existing studies on immigration to conceptualise the political behaviours of immigrants as the peculiar outgrowth of Turkish politics by ignoring the very possibility of the reverse. As a result, the field of Turkish studies is still blind to the role of immigrants in the making of Turkish politics.

On the basis of this observation, this thesis aims to shed light on two important points. Firstly, the thesis interrogates the validity of the existing studies that explain the connection between immigrants and Turkey in a uni-directional way and claims that immigrants also have an important potential to affect and even shape the Turkish politics. In other words, the thesis points out that the immigrant population living abroad should be included to the analyses of Turkish politics as an important actor that has the capacity to change the direction of the political movements within the Turkish political sphere. Secondly, the thesis investigates the peculiar connection between Turkey and Germany, which is deeply shaped by the migration movement from Turkey to Germany. Particularly, the thesis tries to propose the content and objectives of the connection between the immigrants living in Germany and their counterparts remained in Turkey. In order to achieve this task, the thesis takes the particular connection between the Alevi in Germany and Turkey and demonstrates the role of Alevi associations in shaping the Alevi movement in Turkey and in the creation of the Alevi identity politics within the Turkish political arena.

The main outline of the study is as follows. In the first chapter, I provide a review of the discussions on transnationalism. Basically, I concentrate on three main attempts coming from distinctive disciplines, namely, social anthropology, sociology and political science. I discuss each attempt by interrogating their premises and analytical power to explain and to set a research agenda for prospective studies and I adopt the model proposed by the political scientist, Thomas Faist, that is, the transnational social space.

On the basis of the discussion, the chapter provides the general schema of transnational social space and discusses its delicate relationship with globalisation, and summarizes the preconditions and *conditions conducive* for the emergence of the transnational social space. Consistent with the main premises of the study, the second chapter discusses the emergence and content of the transnational space between Turkey and Germany. To provide an analytical picture of this emerging field, the chapter briefly discusses preconditions and *conditions conducive* of the transnational space in reference to the migration from Turkey to Germany. On the basis of these observations, the chapter confirms the existing literature that claims the emergence of a transnational space between the two countries within the last two decades. In addition, the chapter makes a crude typology among the immigrant population from Turkey on the basis of social stratification and claims that the background of immigrants in terms of social class is decisive in determining the extent and content of the transnational activities they participate in. Although the chapter discusses the lower and upper classes and mentions their particular means of engaging in the transnational space between Turkey and Germany, the main focus remains on the middle class migrants, who are in search of a symbolic identity within the Turkish political arena and consequently affect Turkish politics on the national level.

The third chapter proposes a working definition of Alevism in reference to the three main institutions of Alevism, namely, *dedelik*, *ayin-i cem* and *musahiplik* and provides a short history of Alevis in reference to Turkish modernization and migration movement.

The chapter summarises the Alevi immigration to Germany and discusses the emergence and content of the primary networks among the Alevis in Germany and Turkey, by focusing on the particular connection between the early Alevi associations established in Germany and Turkey until the 1980s. On the basis of this short review of Alevism, the chapter introduces the methodology employed in the thesis.

The fourth chapter provides a comparative study of the Alevi movement in Germany and Turkey and claims that due to the contextual differences; distinctive Alevisms, with different objectives and agendas emerged in Germany and Turkey respectively. In other words, the chapter claims that Alevis in Germany and Turkey developed different political objectives as a result of different opportunity structures and institutional contexts surrounding Alevis. For instance, whereas the main motive of the Alevi movement in Germany was the demand of difference from the state, the main demand of the Alevi movement in Turkey was indifference from the state.

The fifth chapter focuses on the developments in the post 1990 period and investigates the particular connection between the Alevi movement in Turkey and Germany. Basically, the chapter provides an in-depth analysis of three main events that are argued as the cornerstones of the Alevi movement by the scholars. These are: The Declaration of Alevism, The Establishment of the Peace Party and The Constitution of the Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council. By investigating the role of the Alevi associations in Germany within these events, the chapter claims that the understanding of Alevism of

Germany became effective among the Alevi associations in Turkey and this critical interaction in the transnational space between the two countries became influential in the evolution of the Alevi movement in Turkey to the identity politics. On the basis of the institutional analysis, the chapter challenges the validity of the conventional literature that claims that the developments in Turkey are decisive in the emergence of identity politics among the Alevis in Germany and argues that the connection between Germany and Turkey is bi-directional and the emergence of the Alevi identity politics can be analysed as the peculiar outgrowth of the symbolic capital transfer from Germany to Turkey as well.

CHAPTER I

THEORIZING TRANSNATIONALISM:

THE EMERGENCE OF TRANSNATIONAL SPACE

In this chapter, I briefly review the main paradigms in the immigration studies and discuss the deficiencies of the post 1980 studies in conceptualising immigrant politics and identities that arose from the culturalism adopted by immigration studies. On the basis of this deficiency, I summarize the emergence of the discussion on transnationalism. Principally, I concentrate on three main attempts to theorize transnationalism. The first attempt belongs to a group of social anthropologists, who proposed two novel concepts, namely, transnationalism and transmigrant as a response to the culturalist tendencies within the immigration studies. The second attempt belongs to the sociologist Portes, who concentrates on the emergence of transnationalism, which he observes within the process of globalisation. While discussing the emergence of transnationalism, I try to differentiate globalisation from transnationalism by visiting the discussion on cultural dimensions of globalisation and point out the localities that transnationalism contains. Finally, I discuss the attempt of the political scientist, Faist, who tries to propose a working definition of the discussion and presents the term transnational social space, instead of transnationalism and transmigrant.

1.1 Immigration Studies

Mass population movements have always been an integral part of the history of humankind and consequently many scholars from various disciplines have worked on the issue by drawing attention to the different aspects and dimensions of the phenomenon. As a result of these efforts, there is a vast literature on migration, which fruitfully gave way to various migration theories that interrogate reasons and destinations of human movement across political and social borders. Besides the divergences brought by the disciplinary differences, there are some paradigms that direct researchers to focus on a specific dimension of the subject or to investigate the issue from a particular theoretical perspective. For instance, the main focus of the studies on international migration to Europe conducted during the 1960s was on the economic impacts of the migration such as the ratios of worker remittances and the plans of return migration, which would eventually affect the composition of work force at home and host countries. However, in the 1970s, when the pace of migration decreased as a result of the restrictive measures taken by the host countries and the consolidation of the immigrant populations through naturalization and family reunifications, the focus of the researches shifted to the discussions on the integration and assimilation of the immigrant population in the host societies. Consequently, within a decade, the main subject of the studies on immigration shifted from the migrant as an economic asset to the migrant as a social being. Only after this shift, the absence of migrants' social existence within the literature has been noticed and researchers started to concentrate on the socio-cultural

composition of the immigrants and their integration into the host country. “The famous playwright Max Frisch summed up the situation in a now famous phrase: “man hat Arbeitskraefte gerufen und es kommen Menschen”. We called for manpower, but people came instead” (Mandel, 1989: 28).

During this second period, one of the main research questions was the socio-economic integration of migrants into the host country, that is, the level of socio-economic achievements such as housing, language abilities and educational enrolment of the migrant population. The key terms that were continuously employed during this period were “cultural shock” and “identity crisis”. Moreover, the discussions about the second and third generation started to occupy a central position in the literature. The second and third generations were compared to their parents and their ability to adapt to the mainstream society became the subject of inquiry.

1.1.1 Culturalisation of Immigration Studies

Meanwhile, social sciences adopted a culturalist stand and key words such as “difference”, “identity” and “authenticity” were added to the lexicon of the social sciences. Instead of structural conceptualisations, the emergence of new movements is insistently explained with continuous references to the highly obscure concept of “culture”. As a result of the re-invention of culture as a tool to explain human behaviour (Faist, 1994: 63), ethnology studies were replaced by ethnography (Al-Azmeh, 1996:

18). Even the political ideologies adopted more “culture sensitive” slogans such as “different is beautiful”. This trend also affected immigration studies and consequently, the literature started to conceptualise cultural identities of immigrants as handicaps towards their assimilation and integration into the host country. Mostly, the identity is dealt as if it is an eternal and abiding reality and it is accepted as the omni-determinant of the human behaviour (Faist, 1994). Even though it is acknowledged that humans are carriers of multiple identities, the scholars insisted that one of these identities was more dominant and determines the migrant behaviour on the last instance. “Culture in this sense, is presumed to be something virtually burnt into the genes, forever distinguishing and separating them” (Vertovec, 96: 51). As a result, several monographs that focus on the politics of the home country and its effect on the immigrant population have been written. Academicians of the host country preferred to make their researches in the home country instead of the host country, where the migrant actually live and construct their identities (Kaya, 2000:27). Within these explanations, the immigrant politics was conceptualised as the peculiar outgrowth of the domestic politics of the home country. A typical example of this trend can be seen in the writings about the sudden politicisation of Islam among the migrants in the European context. Basically, the whole event is explained as the “re-awakening of the religious identity”, which is claimed to be brought from the homeland. Within these explanations, the complex dimensions created by the ideological and contextual factors surrounding migrant populations were ignored in favour of the cultural factors, which were claimed to be a product of solely “the authentic culture” of the migrants. Such an understanding of the re-awakened identity

was made subject of satire by Al-Azmeh (1996:41), with the analogy of the well-known fairy tale, Aladdin and the magic lamp, in which the genie was brought to the light with the touch of Aladdin. It refers to the fact that ethno-religious identity of migrants suddenly came out of the sleeping lair, with the bewitched effects of the events occurring in the host country. During the studies of this period, migrants were analysed as the passive agents living in a country but determined by the realities of another country. In other words, the factors associated with the home country are overemphasized in reference to the socio-political context within the host country.

1.2 The Emergence of the Discussion on Transnationalism

As a reaction to the increasing ‘culturalisation’ of immigration studies, new conceptual tools and innovative approaches that interrogate and challenge the main premises of culturalism emerged. Partly as a response to culturalism and partly to merge the ongoing debate of globalisation with the migration studies, starting from 1980 onwards and especially during the period between 1990 and 1994, the field of migration studies experienced a sudden appearance of novel concepts which aim to illuminate the contemporary migration experience with the assertion of “those new times and new socio-historical circumstances demand a new theoretical paradigm” (Kivisto, 2001: 551, 554). By following the critiques of the cultural anthropology about the bounded understanding of culture and ethnicity, this new perspective pointed out to the fact that migrants should not be conceptualised solely as an artefact of their culture, imported

from the home country without a substantial transformation; but rather, they should be conceptualised as a product of complex acculturation processes that create peculiar and creative combinations of the elements from both the home and host countries. As an extension of this discussion, many scholars emphasized the need for a new framework and unspoiled terms for understanding this complex situation.

1.2.1 Anthropological Perspective: Transnationalism and Transmigrant

The earliest attempt for developing a new terminology was articulated by a group of cultural anthropologists, namely, Nina Glick Schiller, Linda Basch and Cristina Blac-Szanton (Schiller et al., 1992 and Bash et al., 1994). Initially, they condemned the existing literature on immigration and immigrants for reproducing the understanding of migration as a “permanent rupture and complete abandonment of the old patterns” and they argued that the migrating populations of the contemporary world is an outgrowth of “networks, activities and patterns of life that encompasses both their host and home societies”; i.e. they claimed that the contemporary migrants were agents that “cut cross national boundaries and bring two societies into a single social field” (Schiller et al., 1992: 1). Parallel to this, by disregarding previous terms and frameworks that point out this multiple and combining feature of the immigrant population, such as “part societies” or “feet in two societies”, they proposed a new terminology; namely transnationalism and transmigrant (Schiller et al., 1992: 5).

At that level, we should note that the term transnationalism is definitely not a new concept and it is extensively used within the literature of political science and international relations since the 1960s to characterize all types of interactions and institutions above the national level, and to describe the international actors functioning beyond the national borders, such as the United Nations (Pries, 2001: 17). However, the conceptualisation developed by Schiller et al., proposes a novel meaning for the term transnationalism. Basically, they defined transnationalism as (Schiller et al., 1992: 1-2):

... the process by which immigrants build social fields that link together their country of origin and their country of settlement. ... Transmigrants develop and maintain multiple relations –familial, economic, social, organizational, religious, and political that span borders. Transmigrants take actions, make decisions, and feel concerns, and develop identities within social networks that connect them to two or more societies simultaneously.

They claimed that this new theoretical framework would enable scholars to understand how transmigrants created “varying and multiple identities generated from their simultaneous positioning in several social locations both to accommodate to and to resist the difficult circumstances and the dominant ideologies they encounter in their transnational fields” (Schiller et al., 1992: 4). In other words, the authors argued that the communities developed by international immigrants were not mere extensions of their communities of origin though they acknowledged that immigrants arrived to the host country with certain practices and concepts constructed at home, such as particular class affiliations and varying levels of politicisation. Within their conceptualisation, the main focus remains on the daily life experiences of immigrants and the peculiar identity construction of them, which is conceptualised as a by-product of the continuous and

simultaneous exposure to the nation building processes of at least two nation states (Schiller et al., 1992: 4). On the basis of this assertion, they claimed that transmigrants had started to imagine deterritorialized nation-states as a resistance to the hegemonic practices of nation-states that surround them (Basch et al., 1994: 280).

1.2.2 Critique of the Early Account of Transnationalism

By employing terms such as “de-nationalization” and “world system theory”, Schiller et al. aim to combine the discussion on transnationalism with the ongoing debate of globalisation. However, although they mention the role of global capitalism and changing conditions of capital and labour relations within the discussion, they do not provide a detailed elaboration of the concepts, “deterritorialization” or “globalisation”, and instead they accept them as given. Due to the under-theorization of such concepts, they fail to provide a satisfactory answer to the question: to what extent the imagined nation of transmigrant is “deterritorialized” and emancipated from the constraints of the geographical realities and hegemonic nation building processes of the home country? As a result, their attempt created a strong criticism and initiated a theoretical discussion on the necessity and efficiency of these new terms (Portes et al., 1999: 218). It is argued that neither the migration of large masses nor the persistent connection of the immigrant population to their homeland, via sending remittances and/or information or by involving in the homeland politics, constitute an infallible evidence for accepting the

term as a new conceptual tool (Kivisto 2001: 555). As a result, their contribution to the literature remained primarily in their attempt to re-emphasize the multiple and fluid identities of contemporary migrants, which they formed as a resistance to the global political and economic situation surrounding them (Schiller et al., 1992: 11).

It should be noted that, they do not propose an alternative conceptualisation of migrant identities to previous attempts. In fact, by basing itself on the discussions of cultural relativity and by investigating the artefacts of the popular culture created by the immigrant populations, cultural studies challenged the essentialised conceptualisation of identity and developed new concepts for de-essentialising and analysing cultural identities long before the discussions on transnationalism actually emerged. Within the tradition of cultural studies, cultural identities are defined as unfixed and in a constant flux, through which they are defined and re-defined according to the changing conditions surrounding them. As Hall (1994) points, cultural identities are not an essence but points of identification of suture, constructed through continuous interaction of history, culture and power. He describes this process as (Hall, 1994: 395):

Far from being externally fixed in some essentialised past, they are subject to the continuous 'play of history', culture and power. Far from being grounded in mere 'recovery' of the past, which is waiting to be found, and which when found will secure our sense of ourselves into eternity, identities are the names we give to the different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves within the narrative of the past.

Obviously, the claimed complex identities of the transmigrants of Schiller et al. can be conceptualised with no trouble as a *repositioning* occurred under the condition of the host society by the application of the framework developed by Hall. On the basis of this observation, it seems clear that the framework developed by Schiller et al. cannot provide a satisfactory answer to the question: what is the difference between the earlier migrants and the contemporary migrants that forces us to adopt a new framework? Nevertheless, though it is underemphasized, there is an answer that we can deduce from their conceptualisation: the simultaneity of the migrant existence in the home and host country (Pries, 2001: 17) which became possible after the technological revolution that enhanced convenient and cheap communication facilities and low-cost transportation services combining the host and home countries more densely than it was possible in the previous decades.

1.3 Sociological Perspective: Transnational Migrant

The role of technological development is first articulated to the conceptualisation of transnational communities systematically by the sociologist Alejandro Portes (See Portes et al., 1999; Portes 1999), who defends the usage and applicability of the term, transnationalism, and tries to develop a historical perspective, in which the development of transnational communities can be monitored. He proposes a two-factored analysis for explaining the emergence of transnational communities and its difference in reference to

the previous immigration experiences. The first factor he points out is the improvement of air transportation, long-distance telephone, facsimile communication, and electronic mails. Secondly, he emphasizes the availability of these services to the migrant population *en masse*, who are generally not the most prosperous members of the host society they live in (Portes et al., 1999: 223). For the mass acquirement of these facilities by the majority of the immigrant population, he foresees at least two decades and the emergence of the second generation, which according to him also coincides with the upward mobility of the migrants within the strata of the host society. Moreover, he emphasizes the relative distance between the host and home countries, which affects the possibility of regular contact between migrants and their counterparts in the home country (Portes et al., 1999: 224).

Though he is in line with Schiller et al. in general, on the basis of his observations, he refuses the replacement of the term migrant with transmigrant, since according to him; transnationalism refers to a situation, affecting the lives of the migrants without entailing an essential change in the migrant per se. Therefore, he claims that the term migrant meets the necessary requirements for describing the *nouvelle* situation. What he proposes for explaining the difference between transnational migrants and previous migrant populations is the continuous pendulum like movement of both people and ideas between the host and home country. Portes et al. (1999: 217) explain the situation as:

While back and forth movements by immigrants have always existed, they have not acquired until recently the critical mass and complexity necessary to speak of an emergent social field. This field is composed of a growing number of persons who live dual lives; speaking two languages, having homes in two countries, and making living through continuous regular contacts across national borders.

Paradoxically, these criteria, provided by him for classifying a given migrant community as a transnational community, also constitutes the primary handicap to his theory: limiting the applicability of the term, “transnational migrant”, only to a minority of the present day migrant population (Kivisto, 2001: 562). Nevertheless, in reference to the previous ones, Portes’ attempt is still more promising, since it provides an important step for future conceptualisations and sets an agenda for prospective research. For instance, unlike the monolithic conceptualisation of transnationalism of Schiller et al., Portes and his colleagues define three different fields of transnationalism: economic, political and socio-cultural. Obviously, economic transnationalism refers to the activities of the transnational entrepreneurs who engage in commodity production, combining and affecting both the host and home countries (Portes et al., 1999: 227). Political transnationalism involves the political campaigns of party officials, governmental functionaries or community leaders with the aim of the pursuit of political power and ambition for directing the politics in the host and home countries (Portes et al., 1999: 221) and socio-cultural transnationalism refers to “the activities oriented towards the reinforcements of a national identity abroad or the collective enjoyment of cultural events and goods” (Portes et al., 1999: 221). Moreover, he also provides a more systematic account of the factors shaping the construction of transnational communities.

These are the forces contributing to migration, the extent to which homeland issues remain relevant for immigrants, and the role of hostility directed against migrants (Portes, 1999: 464-66).

1.3.1 The Delicate Connection: Transnationalism and Globalisation

The most crucial contribution of Portes to the discussion of transnationalism lies in the connection he makes between globalisation and transnationalism, which was confused and used almost interchangeably by Schiller et al. In order to clarify the relationship, Portes and his colleagues define three distinguishing features of transnationalism. These are (Portes et al., 1999: 227-228):

- 1) the emergence of these activities is tied to the logic of capitalist expansion itself;
- 2) while following well-established principles of social network development, transnational communities represent a phenomenon at variance with conventional expectations of immigrant assimilation;
- 3) because transnational enterprise is fuelled by the dynamics of capitalism, it has greater potential as a form of individual and group resistance to dominant structures than alternative strategies.

Basically, Portes conceives transnational communities both as the outcome and the potential antidote of globalisation. According to him, the process of globalisation constructed the environment necessary for the embodiment of the transnational communities; but also through its regulatory power, the very same process of globalisation also limits and shapes the future of the communities. If we remember that the large-scale distribution of cheap transportation and communication channels are a

product of globalisation, the eminent role of globalisation in the emergence and improvements of transnationalism becomes more visible. Moreover, globally regulated migration waves continuously challenge the future of transnational communities by integrating previously stacked regions to the host country or by enabling the flow of new migrants, which will undermine the life chances of previous “transmigrants”. Therefore, an approach that draws the line of similarity and difference between globalisation and transnationalism is necessary for the elaboration of the subject. Moreover, being aware of the difference between them would also enable us to perceive and differentiate the role of globalisation in the creative processes of identity construction within the migrant communities.

For analysing globalisation and its cultural impulses, the most appropriate theoretician that we can consult is probably Arjun Appadurai (1999), who presented the pioneering account of the complex character of the global cultural capitalism and its effects on the migrant populations. Basically, he develops a new framework, which tries to operationalise the transformation brought by the new global cultural economy with five ‘scapes’: ethnoscaples, technoscaples, finanscaples, mediascaples and ideoscaples. These five scapes refer to various fields, in which the transformation of cultural globalisation occurs. Ethnoscaples refer to the distribution of individuals, namely, tourists, immigrants and refugees, who become a new force that can and do affect the politics of and between nations to an unprecedented degree. Technoscaples refer to the distribution of

technology, both high and low in high speed over the “previously impervious boundaries”. The examples Appadurai proposes are the distribution of textile industry over several countries and the emergence of software engineering in India. For him, the peculiar distribution of technology is not governed by the economies of scale, of political control, or of market rationality anymore but by the complex relationship between money flows, political possibilities and the availability of both low and highly skilled labour (Appadurai, 1999: 102). Finanscapes refer to the distribution and disposition of global capital over national boundaries in an enormous speed. According to Appadurai, these three scapes are interconnected unpredictably and disjunctively so that all of them are constrained by their own incentives and do constrain each other to a great extent. The mediascapes refer to the distribution of information as in the form of newspaper, magazines, TV stations etc and to the images of the worlds imagined by the increasing number of private and public interests throughout the globe, in which the world of commodities and world of news are profoundly mixed. Finally, the ideoscapes refer to the distribution of political ideas and values, such as human rights, freedom of speech and cultural rights, which consists of state and counter ideologies, contesting with each other for the pursuit of the state power or a piece of it. For Appadurai, the current cultural flows occur in and through the growing disjunctures between these five scapes. Although global flows of people and things have always existed to some extent, Appadurai claims that the transformation in the last three decades brought a radical rapture from the past forms and thus due to “the sheer speed, scale and volume of each

of these flows ... the disjunctures have become central to the politics of the global culture” (Appadurai, 1999: 105).

Concerning all of these features, it seems that globalisation is the precondition for the emergence and survival of transnationalism *en masse*. However, unlike globalisation, transnationalism refers to a more specific phenomenon, which cannot be understood with the terms associated with globalisation such as deterritorialization, referring to the complete disconnection between the people and the geographic space. To clarify this point, we can examine the usage of the term, deterritorialization, by Appadurai within the context of global cultural capitalism. According to him, deterritorialization provides the fertile ground in which “mediascapes and ideoscapes of the modern world find their fractured and fragmented counterparts” (Appadurai, 1999: 107). For instance, through the creation of a mediascape, which preserves the contact of deterritorialized ethnoscapas with their homeland -though blurred-, the emergence of a new conflictual ideoscapes such as the project of Khalitisan, an imaginary homeland for the deterritorialized Sikh communities dispersed to the whole world, became possible. However, unlike the deterritorialized Sikh communities, transnational communities carry some sense of geographic boundedness; though cannot be compared to the nation-state projects of the 19th century.

1.3.2 Transnationalism as Multi-Locality

The delicate distinction between globalisation and transnationalism constitutes one of the most important factors of the phenomenon. Ludger Pries (2001: 21) emphasizes this feature of transnationalism and claims that transnational migrants live within “triadic connections” that link them to the localities of the host country and home country simultaneously. That is, whereas globalisation refers to the processes that are “decentred” or “deterritorialized”, transnationalization occurs within the setting of two or more nation-states and thus are not de-nationalized or deterritorialized in the strict sense of the term. However, the very logic of this multi-locality unintentionally emancipates migrants from the restriction of the prescribed localities as well. On the basis of this transformation, Ludger Pries says that instead of “transmigrant” and “transnationalism” or “transnational community”, which ascribes some essential features to the present migrants, the term “transnational social space” should be employed. He defines transnational social space as (Pries, 2001: 22-23):

The term “transnational social space” indicates social realities of growing importance that are organized transversally to the metaphor sketched above of ...[the]... circles which mutual embeddedness of social space and geographic space. Transnational social spaces can be understood as pluri-local frames of reference which structure everyday practices, social positions, biographical employment projects, and human identities, and simultaneously exist above and beyond the social context of national societies.

The novel side of this explanation lies in its attempt to interchange the term social field with the social space. In fact, if we interrogate the connection between transnationalism

and discussion on modernization, this proposal turns out to be more important. Consistent to the theories of “time-space distancing” (Giddens 1990) or “time-space compression” (Harvey, 1989), which are developed to understand the consequences of modernization, transnational social space refers to a meaning that is relatively emancipated from constraints of time, geography and political borders. However, the very concept of transnational space resonates with nationalism as a cultural and political project (Argun, 2003: 19). Faist (2000: 207-208) explains this situation as:

[T]ransnational communities ... without propinquity do not necessarily require individual persons living in two worlds simultaneously or between cultures in a total ‘global village’ of de-territorialized space ...however... [these communities] link through exchange, reciprocity, and solidarity to achieve a high degree of social cohesion, and a common repertoire of symbolic and collective representation.

Thus, space in this sense refers to more than aggregation of geographic places and includes various migrant subjectivities, social and symbolic ties and diverse opportunity structures that extend the limits of simple territoriality, though limited, to an extent by them.

1.4 The Perspective of Political Science: Transnational Space

The first theoretician, who attempted to give a full account of transnational social space, is Thomas Faist (2000), who actually attempted to develop a migration theory, which can combine macro and micro approaches to migration. He proposes a more complex

system that has the power to affect and even to direct the migrant politics and claims that various factors contribute to the emergence of this highly elusive ground of transnational social space, which can be observed among various migrant groups. Indeed, according to him, the contemporary examples of Muslims in Morocco and Algeria, engaging in religious exchange with their country of origin; Kurdish organizations in Europe, trying to influence Turkish politics and Latin American politicians, campaigning within the borders of USA for national elections in Latin America, enforce us “to dissect the interstices between local, nation-state, and global elements in economic, political, and cultural activities of migrants” (Faist, 2000: 196). It can be claimed that he develops a more critical approach for differentiating globalisation and transnationalism, which refers to a more limited situation. For illustrating the multifaceted characteristics of this situation, he mentions the example of the “triadic identity” developed by the Turkish hip-hop youth by combining Turkish, German and global elements (Faist, 2000: 202). Whereas in this example the hip-hop culture developed within the metropolises of the world refers to the global, the German and Turkish elements refer to the pairs of the transnational social space. Moreover, the adaptation of the global discourse of human rights by the transnational communities, such as Kurds and Alevis can be analysed as a basic indicator of the articulation of the global ideoscapes by transnational migrant populations.

The theoretical framework employed by Faist is the world system theory and its basic axis of centre-periphery distinction. By adopting the world system theory to a particular geography, he claims that transnational social space combines usually a country in the centre with a country in the periphery or more than two countries in a way that involves not only the circulation of humans but also the circulation of ideas, symbols, and material culture (Faist, 2000: 13). Therefore, unlike the previous theoreticians he does not count globalisation as a prerequisite for the emergence of transnational social space, but parallel to Portes he affirms that the technological changes brought by globalisation, namely, improved communication technologies and transportation facilities enabled transnationalism to become more extensive and substantial than the earlier manifestations, which were rather short lived or included only a specific or an elite immigrant population (Kivisto 2001: 565). For a systematic analysis of transnational social spaces, he mentions the *ceteris paribus* conditions for the emergence of transnational social spaces as (Faist, 2000: 213):

[F]irst, strong ties of migrants and refugees to the country of origin over an extended period of time. Social ties and symbolic ties need to flourish through vivid and border crossing social connections, language, religious, and cultural norms. Second, these ties and corresponding resources are not only embedded in migration flows but in other linkages as well, such as political and economic inter-state linkages –characteristics of migration systems. Third, juridical and political regulations, such as domestic and international regimes, allow to varying degrees for the movement of people and tolerate political and religious activities of former migrants.

As it is seen in his prerequisites, he proposes a system in which various actors are constitutive in the creation of transnational social space. According to Faist (2000: 200),

transnational social space consists of pentagonic relationships between five main actors. These are the governments of host and home countries who engage in the policies to shape and direct the migrant community, the civil society in the host and home country which provides various opportunity structures to define and reproduce migrant identities and the transnationalized group itself. Moreover, instead of bringing a theory of sudden emergence of transnational social space, as an unintentional outcome of technological developments, he mentions of a staged model of emergence (Faist, 2000: 201). According to him, there are two main phases of the development of transnational social space. In the first phase, transnational social space is a by-product of international migration and mostly, it is a phenomenon limited to the first generation of migrants, who preserved their connection with their kin or co-ethnics instead of severing their ties irrevocably. As a result of these ties and prolonged international migration and return migration, the raw material of the new ethnic communities is formed. In the second phase, the connection between the host and home countries goes beyond the chain migration and sending remittances to the home country, and migrant communities develop distinctive ways of life, which engage border crossing activities on a regular basis and more often. In this stage, transnational movement of people ideas and symbols become an institutionalised activity among the migrant populations. Generally, in this second phase, main actors of transnational social space are second and third generation migrants.

Another factor that distinguishes Faist from the earlier theoreticians is his emphasis on the internal differentiation of the migrant community and its effect on the transnational activities they engage. Basically, he identifies three distinctive transnational social spaces. These are kinship groups, transnational circuits and transnational communities (Faist, 2000: 202-210). According to him, each one of these distinctive spaces indicates a particular kind of connection between the host and home countries. For instance, transnational kinship groups refer to the micro level connections between the immigrants and their kin, which are limited to the remittances and gift exchange or construction of networks that enable future immigrations. Most commonly, the individuals participating within these networks of transnational kinship are those of first generation and their effects in the home country is either local such as village level or involves only the family members such as in the case of transnational families of human capital migrants that dispersed to several countries (Faist, 2000: 202-206). In contrast, transnational circuits refer to the instrumental engagement of migrant population with the emigration country in order to utilize their advantages in terms of language and business networks for the sake of economic benefits. Typical examples of this type are the Indian and Chinese entrepreneurs constructing trading networks all around the world (Faist, 2000: 206-207). The last group transnational communities are constructed out of the solidarity derived from the shared values and symbols that construct collective identities, i.e. transnational communities are ethnic groups settled in multiple localities that engage in continuous interaction with each other. Though this interaction can occur in local levels such as village communities or among the politicised communities as in the case of the

refugees, it occurs in a larger scale, in which migrants set goals for political struggles and/or nation building within the borders of the home country. The most famous examples of this group are Jews, Armenians, Palestinians and Kurds (Faist, 2000: 208).

1.4.1 Conditions Conducive of the Transnational Space

Before going on to the discussion of transnational space between Germany and Turkey, I would like to sum up the main premises for the emergence and development of transnational social space. The main prerequisite of transnational social space is the development of cheap and convenient transportation facilities, communication means and their dispersal to the migrant community *en masse*. However, the sole existence of these technological innovations cannot guarantee the emergence of transnational social space automatically. Besides, the construction and preservation of the primary social networks between the pioneering migrants and their counterparts, who remained in the home country, constitutes the necessary condition of the emergence of transnational social space. Only on the ground of these primary networks, the relatively institutionalised political and social connection that constitutes the embryonic existence of transnational social spaces can be constructed. Whereas these first preconditions are more connected with the transnationalizing community itself, also the four actors, the government and civil society of the home and host countries are the necessary agents in the construction of transnational social space. Therefore, the last *condition conducive* of

the transnational social space is the existence of opportunity structures within the home and host countries such as the prescription of political rights to the immigrant population by the home country, or the existence of institutionalised policies, such as multiculturalism to tolerate, which can even promote the cultural diversity among the migrant population in the host country. Nevertheless, the civil society both in the host and home countries constitutes the institutional channels of interaction between the two countries and the very existence of these institutions enable the large scale mobilization of transnational communities, i.e. they turn out to be the main agents regulating transnational transactions, either political, social or economic.

CHAPTER II

TRANSNATIONAL SPACE BETWEEN GERMANY AND TURKEY

In the previous chapter I summarized the evolution of the debate on transnationalism and discussed the *conditions conducive* for the emergence of transnational social spaces. In this chapter I will investigate conditions in reference to the immigration from Turkey to Germany and discuss the emergence and content of the transnational space between Germany and Turkey. In order to provide a more analytical picture of this emerging field, I will start with a brief summary of the migration movement from Turkey to Germany and then move to the technological preconditions for the emergence of the transnational space between Germany and Turkey.

2.1 The Condition Conducive of Transnational Space Between Turkey and Germany

The migration from Turkey to Germany started with the bilateral agreement between the German and Turkish governments in 1961. According to the needs of the German economy, the immigrants from Turkey were thought as a temporary work force that would sustain the economic expansion and return to Turkey after the establishment of

the equilibrium between the German workforce and the expanding economy. Consistent to this understanding, they were named as *gastarbeiter*, guest workers, and deprived of the majority of the rights that the native population enjoy. For instance, the foreigner law of the 1970s, which was changed only in the 1980s, were stating that: “The foreigners can enjoy all of the basic rights and freedoms, except the right to organize, the freedom of mobilization, the freedom of choosing the place of work and place of education” (quoted in Kaya, 2000: 48). Such regulations prevented the assimilation of the migrants into the mainstream society and promoted the emergence of “the myth of return”, which led many migrants to live in the minimum standards to collect the required money for establishing a job opportunity in Turkey after their eventual return (Gitmez and Wilpert, 1987: 87). As a result of such regulations that prevent assimilation into the German society, immigrants from Turkey did not construct institutions and associations that would deal with the issues concerning their status in Germany or with homeland issues. Moreover, starting from the late 1970s and during 1980s, consistent to the logic of “gastarbeiter system”, Germany introduced several programs for encouraging return migration. For instance in the 1980s, a sum of 10,500 DM per person and for the each non-adult family member 1,500DM additional payment was offered to the migrants who engage in return migration (Kaya, 2000: 49). In fact, as a result of this return promotion, a sizeable proportion of the immigrants from Turkey returned. In 1974, the number of return migrants was 148,000 and in 1985, 213,000, which makes up 30 percent of the immigrant population (Penninx, 1982 cited in Argun, 2003: 58). At the same time, many new immigrants and refugees from Turkey entered the country via family reunifications

and continued international marriages and consequently, immigration from Turkey continued and the number of Turkish citizens and former Turkish citizens residing in Germany reached approximately 2.4 million in the aggregate level (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 33).

2.1.1 Technological Preconditions of the Transnational Space Between Germany and Turkey

Although the immigrant population constituted the lowest strata of the German society in the initial decades, their position within the society improved gradually and in the mid-1970s, immigrants from Turkey acquired the economic strength to purchase the communication facilities such as facsimiles and cheap long-distance telephone lines, which turned out to be an effective means of communication between the German metropolises and Turkish villages, from which the majority of the migrants came (Abadan-Unat, 1993: 202). Besides this, the transportation facilities between Germany and Turkey increased to a great extent. According to the current statistics, there were 30,000 planes that were taking off for Turkey from Germany, which carried 4.3 million people in 2000 (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 35). As a result of the relatively cheap plane tickets between Germany and the Turkish cities, the industrial metropolises of Germany are connected to Turkey in a more regular and systematic way than they are connected to each other (Kaya, 2000: 75). Interestingly, the institutionalisation of the communication

channels coincides with the prediction of Portes, who foresaw two decades and the emergence of the second generation for it. Indeed, in the second decade of the migration from Turkey, the necessary technological conditions for the emergence of a transnational space between the two countries were achieved.

Nevertheless, statistically speaking, the level of interconnectedness between the immigrants in Germany and their counterparts in Turkey did not reach that of Latin-American migration to USA, i.e. still there is no pendulum like movement of immigrants between Turkey and Germany (Jurgens, 2001: 94). Although there are various forms of visits between the two countries, and these visits are occurring more often than it was the case in the previous decades, still there is an absence in terms of actual physical contact in reference to the cases of pan-American transnationalism. However, this handicap against the construction of transnational space has been easily overcome by the improved electronic communication facilities and the spread of global media that render the geographical distances insignificant (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 16). As a result of this mediascape that connects Turkey to Germany, the transnational space between Germany and Turkey is constructed among the imagined medium of the increased communication channels (Jurgens, 2001). The immigrants from Turkey are able to follow the improvements in Turkey, even more seriously than they follow the improvements in Germany. Ostergaard-Nielsen explains this situation as (2003: 34-5):

More than a decade ago Turkish state-television channels, TRT, became available on cable throughout Europe and it was soon followed by private channels on satellite TV. One study found that 74 per cent of Turks in Germany watched the Turkish News, and that 40 per cent of Turks in Germany watched only Turkish TV. In addition, 95 per cent of Turks read Turkish newspapers and 55 per cent only Turkish newspapers. This explains why more than 200,000 copies hit the streets in Germany everyday.

2.1.2 The Construction and Evolution of Primary Networks Between Germany and Turkey

For the emergence of transnational spaces, the literature emphasises the continuation and institutionalisation of the primary networks between the migrants and their counterparts remained in the home country. Starting in the initial decades, immigrants from Turkey have constructed informal networks, which connected immigrants with their counterparts in Turkey such as relatives or co-villagers. A basic indicator of these networks can be seen in the overrepresentation of some groups among the immigrant population. Indeed, this is a general phenomenon occurred in all European countries that received extensive migration from Turkey. The most famous examples of these groups are: the high proportion of immigrants from the town of Emirdağ in Belgium and Kulu in Sweden (Argun, 2003: 41). Although in the Turkish context, these are small-scale residential centres in inner Anatolia, they constitute a high proportion of the immigrant population in their host country. Such examples indicate that the immigrant populations did not sever their relation with their counterparts in Turkey and instead, these primary networks functioned as a bridge enforcing prospective migration. However, after the pace of migration has been decreased and the immigrant population consolidated, these

primary networks started to be evolved into ethno-religious enclaves and consequently, a more diversified ethno-religious consciousness within the immigrant community from Turkey emerged in Germany (Soysal, 1994). Indeed, it is claimed that the immigrant community residing in Germany exhibits a greater diversity than it was the case in Turkey or any other European country (Argun, 2003: 68-9). Consequently, scholars working on the issue point out this differentiation within the immigrant community. For instance, a recent study that compares immigrant communities from Turkey residing in Germany and France demonstrates that relatively similar communities exhibit organizational differences in terms of their associational activities. Whereas immigrants in Germany are divided among ethnic and religious ties, the main axis of differentiation among the immigrants in France is on the political affiliations (Yalçın-Heckmann, 1995: 98).

2.1.3 The Role of Germany in the Construction of Transnational Space

In addition to the existence of primary networks among the immigrants in the host and home country, the literature also emphasizes the role of the institutional context within the host country. In the case of Germany, this context is one of the main constituents of the ethno-religious diversity in Germany. The existing literature on immigrant communities emphasizes two factors for explaining this diversity among the immigrant community (See Soysal, 1994 and Ireland, 1994). These are political opportunity

structures such as the understanding of citizenship and the immigration policy of the host country, and social institutions within the host country which function as “midwives” for regulating political participation of the immigrants (Ireland, 1994: 10). In Germany, all of these factors are prevalent. Firstly, the citizenship laws in Germany determines the right of citizenship on the basis of ethnicity, *ius sanguinis*, and by excluding immigrants from citizenry, it creates a mechanism of structural exclusion for the immigrant population (Brubaker, 1992). Secondly, through assigning the foreigner population to semi-public charity organizations according to their nationality and religion, the German system ethnicises the immigrant groups by creating separate legal and social status for foreigners and as a result, constructs a kind of “soft apartheid” (Joppke, 2003: 361). As a result of this mechanism, a significant number of the immigrant population is excluded from the political arena of the country and instead, they are directed to the home country. Şükran Ketenci (1989, quoted in Argun, 2003: 42) explains this tendency as:

Even those who say that they decided to live in Germany and not go back to Turkey continue to be oriented, with their life styles and their interest, towards Turkey.... When are the early elections scheduled? How much does a kilogram of meat in Turkey cost now?

Moreover, the comparative studies about the immigrant population residing in different European countries support the existence of this tendency. For instance, in a comparison between the migrant groups within different European countries, Ruud Koopmans and Paul Statham (2000) claim that immigrants residing in Germany are more prone to make claims concerning the issues related to their homeland, rather than immigration issues or

basic freedoms within the host country. As a result of these structural factors, immigrants from Turkey residing in Germany are led to engage in homeland politics more often and enthusiastically than their counterparts residing in other European countries.

In addition to this institutional context, which furthers ethnic differentiation among the immigrant communities, the newly initiated multicultural policies that are adopted by the German states further promote the ethnic plurality within immigrants (Joppke, 2003: 362). Basically, after the 1980s, though not in the national level, the multicultural policies were encouraged in the local level. These multicultural policies not only created the necessary ground for the survival of ethno-religious diversity among the immigrant population, but also encouraged the ethno-religious fragmentation, by creating a clientele system that channels immigrant communities to the ethnic and religious enclaves. Even though many of the group differences that are observed among the immigrant population are also visible in Turkey, the popular political awareness of ethnic and religious heterogeneity has been discovered earlier in Germany (Argun, 2003: 67). On the basis of these observations, scholars working on the issue claimed that the multicultural policies created a kind of patron-client relationship with the immigrant populations and consequently, led to the transformation of the social conflicts into irrevocable ethno-cultural ones (Radtke, 1994; Kaya, 2000). With the system of multiculturalism in Germany, immigrants are (un)intentionally encouraged to express

their problems and demands in reference to their ethnic origins for acquiring support from the authorities of states, i.e. the immigrant minorities are kept away from the public sphere and imprisoned within the borders of a-political communities formed by the process of self-ethnicisation, instead of forming interest groups to defend their rights against the discriminatory practices (Radtke, 1994). The observation of Radtke (1994, 36) is illustrative for understanding the process:

When the city of Frankfurt e.g. establishes an ‘Office for Multi-Cultural Affairs’, people who want to get help, advice money from the office have to present their problems with reference to their ethnic origins. If there is, for example, a conflict between a tenant and a landlord let’s say about noise and smell in a fast-food shop then the office only but surely will intervene if one of the conflicting parties plays the ethnic card. The noise and smell must be identified as ethnic noise and smell.

Partly as a result of this translation of social problems into ethnic ones and partly due to taking a share from the prosperous budgets of the local authorities that promote multiculturalism, the ethnic differentiation within the immigrant community is furthered, by even creating distinctive identities that emphasise the primary differences among communities, such as religion, language and ethnic origin. The most easily recognizable groups are the Kurds, Yezidis, Alevis and various Islamic communities.

2.1.4 The Role of Turkey in the Construction of Transnational Space

Moreover, the policies of Turkey towards the immigrants living in Europe and particularly in Germany are decisive in the construction of transnational space between Turkey and Germany. Whereas the Turkish state was a participant in the immigration process from the beginning of the labour migration, immigrants from Turkey were perceived as remittance machines or as mere statistical decreases in the increasing unemployment rates. However, in post 1980 period, partly to mobilize immigrants abroad as a pressure group for international politics such as EU accession (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 107) and partly to attract the increasing amount of remittances (Abadan-Unat, 1995), the perception of Turkey concerning her immigrants living abroad have been changed. This trend can be observed in the Turkish state discourse, in which the term; ‘our workers abroad’ have gradually evolved into the term; ‘our citizens abroad’ (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 107). Especially, after the 1980s, these changes became visible and the Turkish state defined dealing with the social security issue and problems of its citizens abroad as a constitutional mission (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 108). This mission included sending teachers to give religious and secular education to the immigrants in their receiving country and constructing mosques and consulates¹ that will deal with the issues concerning the immigrants. Especially, after the 1990s the Turkish state developed specific policies to attract the immigrants living abroad. For instance,

¹ As the country, that contains the largest amount of immigrants from Turkey, Germany has the largest amount of diplomatic representation in any one country in the whole world. There are 14 consulates employing 50 career diplomats and a total of 534 personals from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 109).

they “were granted the right to vote at national border entrances 70 days prior to the general elections in Turkey” (Argun, 2003: 75). Most importantly, the immigrants living in those countries that do not allow dual citizenship such as Germany, have been granted a range of economic and legal rights that the Turkish nationals enjoy besides the favourable legislative arrangements such as the reduction of the military service (Keyman and İçduygu, 2003). Basically, with all these regulations, Turkey acknowledged her immigrants residing in Germany as regular members of the Turkish society and promoted their continuous engagement with Turkish politics. In some cases Turkish state even facilitates immigrants to circumvent the German laws. For instance, since the German laws do not accept dual citizenship, naturalized Turkish citizens are required to give up their Turkish nationality. However, after the process of naturalization is finalized, Turkey admits immigrants back to the Turkish citizenship (Kaya, 2000: 46-47). Especially after the 1990s, when the naturalization processes for the Turkish nationals is alleviated by the liberalization of citizenship law in Germany, this procedure was conducted in an institutionalised manner, by creating a *de facto* situation of dual citizenship, though it is illicit *de jure*. All of these arrangements and regulations furthered the bond between the immigrants residing in Germany and Turkey and the transnational space between Germany and Turkey is activated in the 1980s.

2.2 The Transnational Space Between Germany and Turkey

In the last decade, many scholars argued that a transnational space between Turkey and Germany emerged after the 1980s (Argun, 2003; Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003). The earliest attempt to give an account of the transnationalized actors of this emerging field was given by Betigül Ercan Argun (2003), who proposed the term “Deutschkei”, a combination of German words for Turkey; *Türkei* and Germany; *Deutschland*, for describing the transnational space between Germany and Turkey. By following the conditions mentioned above, she claimed that the context of Deutschkei is highly controversial and creative in terms of ethno-religious differences and she defined four main actors that are active within this emerging field. These are Alevis, Kurds, ultra nationalists, and Islamists, who provide a powerful critique of Turkey with various aims and agendas: “the politics of state reformation (Alevis), of state formation (Kurds), of state appropriation (Islamists), and of state conservation (ultra-nationalists)” (Argun, 2003: 6). Moreover, she claims that one of her objectives in dealing with the issue of Deutschkei is demonstrating that the transnational connections of the immigrants from Turkey function in a bi-directional way, i.e. she claims that immigrant communities in Germany also have the capacity to affect, shape or reform the domestic politics in Turkey (Argun, 2003: 12). Without doubt, her premise is a logical one and should not be underestimated in analysing Turkish politics. However, if we remember the structural exclusion that immigrants from Turkey (in Germany) are exposed and the policies of the Turkish state that accept the immigrant communities as regular members in the national

arena, even by promoting their engagement to the international and domestic politics of Turkey, I would claim that there is a continuous interaction between the immigrant groups and their counterparts in Turkey and most commonly it is the pair in Germany affecting Turkish politics on various levels. Typical examples of this process can be seen in the effects of the immigrants living in Germany to the villages of origin or the activities of the Kurdish refugees to affect the accession process of Turkey to the EU, the reverse of which are unlikely to occur.

2.2.1 The Role of Socio-economic Background of Immigrants in the Transnational Space

There is another factor which is effective in determining the content and objectives of the transnational space; that is, the socio-economic background of the immigrant population. Whereas multicultural policies and transnational networks can provide a valuable social and symbolic capital for the upwardly mobile migrants, these terms create different meanings when the lower strata of the immigrant population are considered (Cohen, 1999). Therefore, socio-economic positioning of the immigrants should be included to the analyses of the *Deutschkei*. On the basis of this observation, I will differentiate three main segments among the immigrant population from Turkey. These are: First, the upwardly mobile immigrant group that articulated itself to the

network society² and acquired a prestigious position within the host country, in which it holds upper middle and middle class positions; second, the middle and lower middle strata of the immigrant groups, which are excluded from the German political arena and stacked in the lower stratum of the host society and third, the lower classes of the immigrant group, who either already returned to Turkey or still occupies the lowest stratum within the host country. Basically, I claim that each of these three groups engage in distinctive activities within the transnational space between Germany and Turkey and affect Turkish politics on various levels, namely, local, national and supra national.

After the first migration waves and socio-economic achievements of the migrants, it is impossible to speak of the homogeneity of the Turkish migrants socio-economically, as it was the case during the 1960s. Whereas the upwardly mobile migrants, mainly composed of second and third generations, acquired the knowledge of another European language, mostly English next to German and Turkish, for some segments of the lower strata, it is still not possible to talk about the existence of the sufficient knowledge of German (Kaya, 2000), which is essential for integrating into the mainstream society. In fact, in the contemporary German context, it is possible to find upwardly mobile immigrants, who engage in constructing cosmopolitan identities that combines elements from the German and Turkish culture extensively as well as the global cultural trends.

² Here I use the term network society referring to the definition proposed by Manuel Castells (See Castells, 1996).

On the various levels of the social life, this group differentiates itself from the majority of the immigrant population. Generally, the members of this group are over-represented among those who acquired German citizenship. Moreover, via their ties with the newspapers and political organizations, this group is participating in the political discussions in Germany more often. Unlike the first generation, for this group, Turkey is not the only destination for the holidays, and Germany has been the motherland, though symbolically they are attached to Turkey as well. Consequently, they demonstrate a higher level of integration in reference to the lower strata. Indeed, several members of the upwardly mobile immigrants attended to the politics in Germany and even some of them have been elected to the German Parliament. Probably, the most famous example of them is Cem Özdemir.

Although this group is also exposed to racial discrimination, owing to their Turkish decent, their responses and means to fight against these activities are completely different than the majority of the immigrants from Turkey (See Özdemir, 1997: 8). Basically, they aim to restructure the self-understanding of the majority culture by rejecting the understanding of citizenship based on ethnicity, *ius sanguinis* instead of residence, *ius soli*. Instead of demanding the prevention of the racial discrimination solely, they aim to decompose the racist community itself, by proposing the acceptance of their difference as an integral part of the German society. This demand can be easily

observed in the writings of Zafer Şenocak³ who states: “Germany long ago became part of the German-Turks. Now a question is being posed, which we cannot answer alone: Are we also part of Germany?” (Şenocak, 1994: 268). As seen here, the request of German-Turks is not to be recognized as Turks residing in Germany but as equal members of German society, which is not just getting the legal rights of German citizenship. On the contrary, this request aims the redefinition of Germanness on a way, which will be able to include German-Turks, without forcing them for assimilation or involution. The attempts of this group created new symbols to fight against the racial stereotyping and exclusion of the German public. A typical example of this trend can be seen in the works of Zaimoğlu, a second-generation German writer of Turkish decent. Basically, he aims to retrospect the derogatory slur; *Kanake*⁴ against Turks and transform it to a sense of satiric pride, which is much more praised among the progressive German circles than among the majority of the second and third generation, on behalf of whom he speaks (Jurgens, 2001: 101). Without doubt, the engagement of these upwardly mobile immigrants in the transnational space between Germany and Turkey follows a completely different path in reference to the majority of the migrants from Turkey. Many of them take part in the transnational economic circuits, such as the famous *Öger Tourism* or *Şahinler Holding* or construct transnational families that dispersed to several European countries and Turkey as well. Their effects can be seen in

³ Şenocak is a German writer from Turkish origin. In general, he acts as the representative of the Turkish community in Germany by engaging in public discussions and publishing several books and documents about the Turkish migration to Germany.

⁴ Kanake is a mixed language that combines elements from Turkish and several German dialects.

the economic level, which increases trade and tourism between the two countries, or in the literature. On the basis of these observations, it is possible to claim that the engagement of this group in transnational space is stimulated more by individual motives in reference to the lower strata of the immigrants from Turkey, engaging in transnational communities.

2.2.2 Structural Conditions that are Effective in the Transnational Activities of the Lower Strata of the Immigrant Population

Unlike the upwardly mobile immigrants, the lower and middle strata of the immigrant population are not constructing cosmopolitan identities that aim to redefine and shape the majority society; on the contrary, they survive within the host society more passively (Kaya, 2000: 131). As a result, their motives and activities within the transnational space vary significantly. Jurgens (2001: 106) explains this differentiation in terms of socio-economic background:

As a result, I would argue that educated, upwardly mobile migrants are more likely to draw on an intellectualised discourse of culture and to express multi-ethnic or hybrid forms of identity in a self-conscious way... [However] ... [m]igrants in less secure and less prestigious positions, mean-while, tend to be more strongly bound to Turkey, and they often seem to redraw the moral lines that separate them from Germanness. Muslim “fundamentalism” –which has a certain “centre of gravity” among rural peasant and urban “working-class” Turks in both Germany and Turkey – is one, but only one, form that this reassertion of boundaries may take.

The example of political Islam among the immigrants in the European context creates a suitable ground to analyse the effects of racial exclusion experienced by the immigrant population, which composes the lowest strata of the host society. When analysing political Islam among the immigrants groups in Britain, Al-Azmeh (1996: 2) mentions several factors that are effective in the emergence of this peculiar identity. These are:

... in the first instance, primary importance must be attributed to the impossibility of socio-economic assimilation experienced by second-generation immigrants born in situations of urban degradation and into marginal, declining and unskilled industry, at a time of increasing state indifference and hostility coupled with racism in the very capillaries of the "host society" Added to this are pressures that push Asian Muslim (and other) shopkeepers to cater for the poorest, as slum landlords and purveyors of cheap goods, and thus take on the classic features of a middleman minority confronted with racist reactions. The work of ethnic entrepreneur, operating through kinship networks which provide the basis for domestic commodity production as well as for the sweatshop, is a classic condition conducive to social involution, and the formation of social as well as geographical ghettos.

All of these cases are valid observations for analysing the contemporary positioning of lower class immigrants from Turkey in the German context. Obviously, according to the current statistics, the majority of the population does not welcome immigrants from Turkey and 34 percent of the German citizens do not prefer to have Turkish nationals in their neighbourhood (Fetzer, 2000: 124). This rejection of the immigrants from Turkey as potential neighbours resulted in the creation of special districts that are heavily populated by the immigrants from Turkey. The most widely cited example in the literature is the Kreuzberg of Berlin. According to statistics, approximately 40 percent of the population in the district is composed of foreigners and half of the foreigners are

actually immigrants from Turkey (Kaya, 2000: 77). If we remember that since the 1990s, the number of naturalized Turkish nationals, who are officially registered as Germans increased, the actual number of immigrants and/or ex-immigrants from Turkey should be higher than the official statistics offer. Moreover, it is also known that the immigrants from Turkey circumvent the restrictive zoning laws⁵, regulating the level of concentration of the foreigners living in a given district, with the help of a friend or a relative living in somewhere else, i.e. they register themselves in a flat belonging to somebody else and actually live in Kreuzberg (Mandel, 1996: 148). Indeed, the general appearance of this district as “the little Istanbul” (See Kaya, 2000: 77; Gitmez and Wilpert, 1987: 86) supports the prediction of a higher concentration of immigrants from Turkey.

In addition to the high concentration of the immigrants, the district’s infrastructure conditions also demonstrate significant differences in reference to the German standards. The old residential buildings are over represented in the district and the housing quality indicators are relatively low. For instance, “only 55 per cent of the apartments have modern amenities with bath, lavatory and central heating, whilst 41 per cent are still stove-heated” (Kemper, 1998: 1773). As the statistics indicate, the living conditions of the district Kreuzberg is lower than the German averages, but the buildings inhabited by the immigrants from Turkey are generally lower than the ones inhabited by the Germans

⁵ Zoning laws primarily aim to prevent the over-concentration of specific immigrant groups by limiting the maximum number of immigrant group in a given district. Although zoning laws are applied in Berlin, they are not in force in all of the German states.

living in the district. The description provided by Mandel (1996: 150) is illustrative for understanding the living conditions of the immigrants from Turkey:

Upon entering some of these unrenovated apartment buildings, one is often confronted with the lingering odor of urine emanating from Auser-toiletten, tiny shared “water closets” located in the stairwell between floors. In many, there is no central heating, no hot water, and only one cold-water tap. Coal dust in the air settles on clothing, under fingernails, and of course, in the lungs.

Actually, residential segregation is one of the most easily recognizable effects of racism surrounding the immigrant population. Moreover, there is regular racial discrimination that the immigrants are exposed in their daily life and such incidents are increased after the unification. The most extreme examples of these attacks are seen in Solingen, where the neo-nazi groups burned the houses of the immigrants. As a result of such events, the social involution of the immigrants from Turkey is increasing. A basic indicator of this is the low level of interaction between immigrants from Turkey and Germans. In the last decades, the share of immigrants from Turkey, who do not name a Germany as a friend, is three-quarter of the total immigrant population (Seifert, 1998).

As a direct result of the increasing xenophobia towards the immigrants in Germany, a trend of ethnic businesses among the immigrants from Turkey emerged. Consequently, the numbers of self-employed people among the Turks in Germany have been increased since the early recruitment days and statistically, it seems that Turkish entrepreneurs will soon outnumber their German counterparts (Buch et al., 1994)⁶. Moreover, if we

⁶ There are 51.000 self employed Turks in Germany (Zentrum für Türkenstudien, 1999).

remember that there is concentration in specific cities and regions, the numbers became more amazing. For instance, there are five to six thousand Turkish entrepreneurs in Berlin alone (Hillmann, 1998). However, the business types preferred by the majority of the immigrants also demonstrate segregation and the emergence of ethnic niches. The sample studies illustrate these ethnic niches (Thieme and Dieter, 1996: 156):

There is a strong concentration in a few business types. In a sample study of Turkish enterprises in three Ruhr cities of Essen, Dortmund, and Duisburg, more than 40 percent of the businesses were groceries. Restaurants came next with 21 percent followed by tailors with 10.5 percent⁷.

Most commonly, migrants engage in the ‘protected market’, satisfying the particular needs of the migrants, which provide a specialized area for the migrant entrepreneurs by excluding the native ones: a typical example is fresh fruits and vegetables exported from Turkey (Gitmez and Wilpert, 1987: 99-107). Moreover, there are other protected markets. For instance, there is a growing market of “helal” meat⁸ industry in Germany, which offers everything from “helal” sausage to “helal” bread (Mandel, 1996: 151). Besides the economic features of the ethnic entrepreneurs, it is claimed that ethnic businesses do also provide migrants with particular identities, which emphasize their differences from the native population (Argun, 2003: 70-1). The clearest example of this can be seen in the discourses of “helal” meat which enforces the rejection of meat prepared by the Germans by creating a sense of disgust against the un“helal” and

⁷ The tailor shops owned by the immigrants from Turkey, primarily function as *Aenderungsschneiderei*; i.e. they mend clothing instead of designing (Gitmez and Wilpert, 1987: 99-107).

⁸ The type of meat, which is prepared according to the Islamic principles, is very close to kosher meat of the Jews. However, unlike the Kosher, there are no absolute rules that define the limits of “helal” and “un-helal”. Therefore, the issue remains a personal preference instead of a religious observance.

consumers of it, i.e. Germans. At that level, it can be claimed that the producers of “helal” meat for creating themselves a secluded market from the German entrepreneurs, spread the stories and created a necessity for the Muslims to buy it even though the price is higher (Mandel, 1996: 152).

2.3 The Search of a Symbolic Identity Within the Transnational Space

All of the conditions discussed above are effective in the construction of distinctive identities among the immigrant population from Turkey. However, there is another dimension, which should be elaborated for understanding the direction and content of the transnational space between Germany and Turkey. That is the deficit of the social and symbolic capital among the immigrants from Turkey (Çağlar, 1995). Whereas the economic capital of the immigrants demonstrates a gradual but persistent increase, in terms of social capital there is a general deficit. In other words, for the majority of the immigrants from Turkey, the social capital is restricted to their relatives or co-ethnies (Çağlar, 1995: 310). Although the upwardly mobile immigrants are able to include some Germans to their social capital as well, for the lower strata of the immigrants, the scope of the social capital constrained very locally, by the village community or ethno-religious enclave they participate in. This situation becomes more severe when the symbolic capital of the immigrants is considered. Basically, the immigrants are rejected by the mainstream German society as *auslaender*, foreigners, and exposed to the racial discrimination. Even the most successful members of the immigrant group are defined by ethnic terms and not accepted as equal members of the German society (Çağlar,

1995: 311). However, whereas the upwardly mobile immigrants are equipped by cosmopolitan identities to fight against this exclusion, as in the cases of German writers or politicians of Turkish descent, for the middle and lower strata of the immigrant population, this exclusion is hard to cope with. As a result, the immigrants are directed to compensate their symbolic capital within the limited social capital they have, i.e. within the fertile ground of *Deutschkei*, as it was the case in the hip-hop youth groups, or they are directed to Turkey. However, immigrants are symbolically rejected by the mainstream society in Turkey as well. Simply they are labelled as *almancis*, German-like, and classified as morally inferior Turks. Even though their economic capital is highly valued in Turkey, they are accepted as moral foreigners and overseen by the majority society (Mandel, 1994). This double rejection of the symbolic capital of the immigrants directed them to invent new symbolic identities that fights against the mainstream German society and creates a sense of commonality in the mainstream Turkish society. In other words, the middle and lower strata of immigrants started to create distinctive identities that exaggerate their communalities with the Turkish society and over-emphasize the distinction they have in reference to the German society. This position is visible within the emergence of political Islam, which draws the line of separation with the German society very clearly and emphasises the religious communality they have with the Turkish society. However, due to the contextual and institutional differences between the two countries, these novel identities are also carrying strong divergences in reference to those in Turkey.

This process is most commonly observed among the lowest strata of the immigrants from Turkey who engaged in return migration or making regular visits to their villages. For instance, Tılıç-Rittersberger (1998) claims that as a reaction to the derogatory label of *almanci*, the returnee immigrants are emphasizing their religious identity more strongly than non-immigrant villagers. Moreover, she argues that within the process of reassessing their identities as genuine Turks, the returnees turn out to be an important agent in initiating the process of religious revival in the local level. Similarly, Shankland (1999: 161) draws our attention to the continuous interaction between the immigrants living in Germany and their counterparts remained in the village and claims that the former is responsible in some transformation within the village. For instance, he mentions that the previously esoteric religious ceremonies have been publicized after the example of the immigrants living in Germany. It is possible to increase the cases by reviewing the Turkish village monographs with extensive migration rates. Indeed, the role of returnees or absentee members of the village community, residing abroad, is emphasized within the literature of the immigration from Turkey to Germany (See Abadan-Unat, 1993 and Abadan-Unat, 1997).

On the basis of these observations, I do claim that whereas the engagement of the lower strata of the immigrants creates effects in the local level, the middle strata of the immigrants has an impact in the national level, i.e. within the Turkish politics. Like the lower strata of the immigrants, they are also in a continuous search of a symbolic identity. However, unlike the former, the locality of their search is the transnational

space between Turkey and Germany. Precisely, they engage in institutional activities combining the two countries and claiming distinctive identities that struggle to acquire a symbolic capital within the Turkish political arena. In the proceeding chapter, I pick up the case of the Alevis and discuss their particular positioning within the transnational space. My primary aim is providing the picture of the Alevi movement by drawing the line of distinction between the Alevis in Germany and Turkey and explain the emergence of the Alevi identity politics with the interaction between these two pairs of the transnational space.

CHAPTER III

ALEVISM AND FORMATION OF THE PRIMARY ALEVI NETWORKS

In the previous chapter, I discussed the emergence and the content of the transnational space between Germany and Turkey. In this chapter, I focus on Alevism and after giving a working definition of traditional Alevism, I provide the particular positioning of Alevism in reference to the Turkish state and discuss the history both in internal and international migration. Basically, this chapter investigates the construction of the primary networks between the Alevis migrated to Germany and their counterparts remained in Turkey and discusses the content of the interaction between the two groups until the 1980s.

31. What is Alevism?

Basically, Alevism is a heterodoxial community, which is characterized by their great devotion to the fourth Caliph, Ali, the son in-law of Muhammed (Olsson, 1998). Though there are Alevi communities in several countries in the Balkans and the Middle East, the highest concentration of Alevis are in Anatolia, i.e. the present day Turkey.

Alevis traditionally inhabit rural Central and Eastern Anatolia; in particular, the triangle of Kayseri-Sivas-Divriği. Kurdish Alevis are mainly found in Tunceli, Elazığ and Muş provinces of south-eastern Anatolia, and some tribal settlement of Tahtaci and Çepni exist on the Mediterranean coast. Many Alevis have migrated from their rural villages, which tend to be peripheral and underdeveloped, to the large industrialized cities of Western Turkey and to Western Europe, mainly Germany (Zeidan, 2001).

Although some predictions have been proposed for the number of Alevis, providing a precise number is almost impossible due to the lack of governmental data on sectarian differences in the Turkish Republic (Güneş-Ayata, 1992). However, by following the various researches on Alevism, a rough estimation between 6 to 17 million, which is approximately %10-25 of the population, can be made (Shindeldecker, 2001). Without doubt, this huge difference between the numbers indicates the ambiguity of whom to classify as an Alevi. Most commonly, researchers include several distinctive groups under this macro banner according to their subjective criteria.

This ambiguity is also observable in the religious structure of the community. Despite the increasing numbers of studies on the Alevi theology, it is still impossible to figure out a generally accepted definition of Alevism (Bozarslan, 2003). It can be claimed that to some extent, this ambiguity is resulted from the syncretic religious system, which combines various elements from surrounding traditions such as Islam, Christianity, and Animism and so on (Ocak, 1991). In addition to this, the absence of empirical data and historical resources makes the issue of Alevism one of the most ideological subjects in the contemporary Turkish political arena. Obviously, each researcher, depending on

his/her own background, defines Alevism differently, claims a different number and asserts a distinctive character for the community. For instance, when the researcher is coming from Christian background, the elements that show resemblance to Christianity is emphasized over the elements of Islam and the community is analysed as a diversification of the neo-Platonist-Christian philosophy (Vorhoff 1998), or researchers coming from the Kurdish background tend to explain Alevism as an artefact of the Kurdish civilization by ignoring other elements it may contain (Algül, 1999). Thus, all of these features enforce scholars to revisit the issue and create a new working definition, in which we can monitor the historical developments within the community.

3.1.1 A Working Definition of Alevism⁹

Indeed, students of Alevism are well aware of these problems and subsequent deficiencies. Consequently, the studies on Alevism are heavily criticized within the literature as well (See For instance; Bozarlan, 2003; Aykan, 2002; Livni, 2002) For instance, Livni (2002) even proposed to reject the usage of the term, Alevi, totally. In fact, what he rejects is the claim that there is a unified community, bound together with a shared culture and common ancestor that existed prior to the Turkish modernization. Instead, he offered to study Alevism as a by-product of Turkish modernization project. Indeed, if we consider that even the term itself was not employed till the 19th century

⁹ An earlier version of this working definition was presented at the 8th Annual Congress of Sociology Students with collaboration of Besim Can Zırh (See Demiray and Zırh, 2002).

(Ortaylı, 1997: 210) this proposal seems rather a plausible one. In order to get rid of this obstacle, I propose a new working definition and throughout this essay I define Alevism in reference to three main institutions: *ayin-i cem*, *musahiplik*, and *dedelik*. These three institutions provide the required restriction for recognizing Alevism from the Ottoman history till the present¹⁰ and enable us to differentiate Alevism from other similar syncretic traditions in the Middle East¹¹. Moreover, this working definition of Alevism is consistent with the given accounts of the community. For instance, one of the earliest researchers dealt with the issue, Yörükhan (1998: 35) claims that Alevism would disappear as a “distinctive religious community” if one of these institutions vanishes. Also, the scholars continuously emphasize the constitutive role of these three institutions for the reproduction of the community and reassuring group solidarity and constantly employ these terms in order to monitor the transformation of the community (See Okan, 1999 and Yalçınkaya, 1996).

Dedelik: *Dede*; literally means Grandfather, is the practitioner of the Alevi faith. Basically *dede* is the holy man of Alevism, which is the only person capable of conducting religious ceremonies. In this sense, *dede* occupies the central position within the community. No one can be initiated to the community without the approval of him

10 There are references to these three institutions in the writings of travellers in the Ottoman land (For a discussion of them see, Dankoff, 1995).

11 Indeed, confusing Alevism with the nearby communities is a common incident in the literature. For instance, although researchers are strongly connecting the Alawites of Syria and the Alevis of Anatolia (See Olsson 1998), historically and traditionally they constitute completely different traditions (Melikoff, 1999). Therefore, such a definition will enable us to define our subject precisely and monitor the historical transformation within the community in a historical perspective.

or without being a disciple of the *dede* (Aktaş, 2000). In addition to his religious function; he -a *dede* is always a male- also controls the closed justice system of the community as being the primary judge. In the beginning of the collective rituals, *dede* plays the role of the judge and the community accepts his decisions as court verdicts. A *dede* has a juridical power to exile a member of the community temporarily or for lifetime from the village, by declaring him/her as an excommunity. These functions of *dede* enabled the reproduction of the Alevi community in the isolated rural setting till the migration waves of 1950s. A basic indicator of the survival of the closed rural system can be seen in the absence of the recourses to the official judiciary system till the 1960s (Demir, 1999: 24).

Musahiplik: Literally meaning Fraternity of Conversation; it is the basic mechanism that keeps the solidarity among the members alive. In terms of religious doctrine, it constitutes the first step towards the initiation to the esoteric doctrine of the Alevi faith, i.e. without having been bound by the tie of *musahiplik* no one can be initiated to the community and can participate in the collective rituals. In fact, in the traditional rural settings, it is impossible to talk about Alevism without *musahiplik* (Yalçınkaya, 1996: 6). Moreover, Musahiplik creates a social tie between two adult individuals and their families, which requires a spiritual solidarity as well as a material one (Bal, 1997a: 149). A *musahip* is held responsible for paying debts of his *musahip* and even can be accepted as guilty for the crimes of his *musahip* (Kaygusuz, 1991: 11).

Ayin-i Cem: Literally meaning the Ceremony of Integration; it is the main ritual of the Alevi faith. Traditionally, *Ayin-i Cem* is practiced by the attendance of both male and female members during the winter season in the largest house of the village -most commonly in the house of the *dede*- (Bal, 1997b: 84). During the rituals, *Semah*; traditional religious dances, are performed with the company of the *saz*,¹² and commonly alcoholic drinks are consumed, which creates the strongest controversy with the Sunni majority of the country. Also the traditional courts are held in the beginning of these rituals. In the traditional settings, adults without a *musahip* and individuals who found guilty of a crime previously were not accepted to the rituals. *Ayin-i Cem* aims to strengthen the inner solidarity by reproducing and strengthening the group identity with continuous repetition of hymns, which recalls the collective history of Alevism.

Besides these three institutions, common symbols, selected from the collective memory of Alevism, imagined or real, created a sense of ‘Alevi-ness’ even above the institutional communalities. Without doubt, the most significant symbol for Alevis is the figure of Ali. The figure of Ali occupies the central position within the Alevi literature and constitutes the main signifier of the ‘Alevi-ness’. Basically, Ali is *Allah’ın Aslanı*; the lion of the God, who helps people in need and fights against the cruel and the evil. Similarly, Hacı Bektaş Veli, who is claimed to be the reincarnated Ali, constitutes a central figure within the community and since 1960 the annual festival of Hacı Bektaş

¹² A *saz* is a short length lute, belonging to the tambour family; it is the most commonly used instrument among the Alevis.

Veli became an important field where Alevi meet and commemorate the common cultural heritage (Massicard, 2003). These common historical symbols are employed for building a distinctive linguistic habitus; i.e. specific set of meanings and symbols, which determine both interaction with each other and with ‘others’ (Stillar, 1998). With the specific attribution to these common symbols, the boo words and hurrah words, which signifies “us” and them” are created (Cohen, 2000). For instance, within the Alevi lexicon, Ali is understood as the oppressed but rightful and symbolically employed as a hurrah Word, whereas Yezid, the political rival of Ali for the caliphate is symbolized with evilness and cruelty and employed as a boo word. A typical example of how they function can be seen in the anecdote told by a leader of an Alevi association¹³:

When I was fifteen years old, during a dispute, a playmate of mine called me Kızılbaş (a derogatory term for Alevi). Later on, I told the event to my mother and she advised me: ‘when they call you Kızılbaş again, ... call them Yezid!’ That is how I learned that I am an Alevi.

As a result of the linguistic habitus, though the term Alevi or a direct index of Alevism is not used, it is possible to trace the signifiers referring to Alevism by investigating the continuously employed Alevi lexicon. For instance, the fire brigade, which could not accomplish its duty during the Sivas events¹⁴, is compared with Muaviye, the son of Yezid, who did not provide water to Hasan and Hüseyin in Kerbela¹⁵ (See Eral, 1995: 201). Similarly, the writers who are proponents of political Islam in Turkey are

¹³ Interview with the former leader of the Hacı Bektaş Association, Ulaş Dinçer 05.08. 2001 Ankara.

¹⁴ In 3 July 1993, 37 people, gathered for the annual Alevi Festival, were killed by fire in Sivas by the fundamentalist demonstrators.

¹⁵ In Kerbela Desert Hüseyin, the son of Ali, was killed by Yezid, the son of Muaviye, due to the struggle for Khalifah, in the Kerbela desert (now in Iraq) by drought.

compared to Yavuz Sultan Selim¹⁶, who was held responsible for the massacre of Alevis (See Demir, 1992: 3).

3.1.2 How to Investigate Alevism?

Investigating the Alevi movement in Turkey or in a European country is not an easy task and the literature on Alevism continuously point out this difficulties and handicaps (Livni, 2002; Bozarslan, 2003; Say, 2003). The first and probably the most important one of these problems is the great divergences within the tradition. Basically, Alevism is a protean that shows great variation according to geography and ethno-linguistic factors. The characteristics of rituals and religious leaders show great disparities according to these criteria (Melikoff, 1998; Kehl-Bodrogi, 1997a). Such differentiations have so deep effects that the Alevi activists say that there are as many Alevisms as there are individual Alevis (See Gül, 1999: 99). Moreover this protean tradition is also very prone to juxtapose itself with the surrounding ideologies and political movements, which consequently direct the movement to transform itself into something else very easily. In other words, whenever the researcher claims that he/she found the “essence” or “true nature” of Alevism, it transforms itself in a very novel way and changes some of the basic elements that have been the fundamental block of the given study and consequently imprison the findings of the researcher to be either archive materials or

¹⁶ In the reign of Yavuz, as a security measurement in the eastern border thousands of Alevis were either killed or forced to migrate to the western part of the empire.

simply obsolete them. The pre-republican history as well as the last four decades is full of creative cases of such juxtapositions. The most famous cases are the juxtaposition of Alevism with the Marxist-Left and Kemalist-Secularism.

The second problem in investigating Alevism is the absence/insufficiency of reliable historical documents about the community and still there are no quantitative researches that can shed light to main problems such as how many Alevis there are, where the majority of the Alevis live etc. The absence of the quantitative material also enforces scholars to speak in the speculative realm, since there are no objective materials to test the validity of their hypotheses (Livni, 2002). Therefore, the literature on Alevism is a “slippery ground”, in which fallacies happen more often than not. As a result of these features, conventional research methods such as survey study or content analysis of the publications are not so applicable or to phrase it properly, if applicable not fertile methods to grasp this complex tradition in its totality, which includes divergences and in most cases controversies simultaneously (See Erdemir, 2002).

On the basis of these observations, I aim to investigate the Alevi movement especially in the last two decades and in the discursive field. In other words, instead of trying to find what Alevism was, is or going to be, my aim is to demonstrate the complex processes in which rival Alevi discourses compete to define and direct Alevism. My basic objective is to show the peculiar effects of the German Alevi associations on the ongoing debate of Alevism in Turkey, i.e. to demonstrate how the particular discourse of Alevism

constructed in Germany has been transmitted to Turkey and established itself as an effective agent in the Turkish political arena. Therefore, instead of taking the individual Alevi subjects as the unit of analysis, I concentrate on the associations and endowments established on the basis of Alevism and investigate their particular claims on Alevism. At that level, there is the problem of representation; since the Alevi associations and endowments only cover a limited number of Alevis living in Turkey and abroad. However, various discourses on Alevism are constructed within these institutions and the majority of Alevi population remains silent about the ongoing disputes. Therefore, determining the effects of these discourses on the Alevi subjects is out of the scope of this study and this study focuses strictly on the Alevi discourses created by the Alevi associations, foundations and endowments. In other words, the study provides an institutional analysis of the Alevi associations in Turkey and Germany to understand the critical interaction occurring between them.

There are an abundant number of Alevi associations in Turkey and Germany. However, the associations in Germany established federations that gather various tiny associations under a single roof and created a unified Alevi discourse within the federation. Three federations exist in Germany (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000), The Federation of German Alevi Union (AABF), which represents the majority of the Alevi associations, there are 89 associations organized under the roof of the Federation, which represent 12,000 individuals. In addition, there is the Federation of the Alevis of Kurdistan, there are 22 local Alevi associations under this federation, which represents 2000 members in

total and finally there is the Cem Foundations in Germany, gather a few organizations and presents unknown members. Moreover, there are also other local organization, that are active in Germany, 21 of which (representing 2,400 individual) collaborates with the Federation of German Alevi union and they are on the verge of becoming full members. Whereas the Federation of German Alevi Union is effective in the national and supra national level by arranging congresses in Europe and Turkey or making speeches with the authorities of the Turkish and German state as well as with the European Parliament, the other two federations remain mainly local. Moreover, only the Federation of German Alevi Union has consistent organs of publication, which enable us to investigate their claims concerning Alevism. Therefore, I only concentrate on the process of the establishment of the Federation of German Alevi Union and investigate the constitution and public declarations of the Federation for analysing the German associations.

The associational activity in Turkey -though limited in reference to Germany- contains more diversity and lacked a unifying organ, at least till the Constitution of the Unity of the Alevi-Bektashi Institutions in 1999; however, still the level of representation of this umbrella organization is not comparable to that of in Germany. Therefore, instead of fragmenting the research into several associations, I choose three main intuitions to investigate. These are the CEM Foundations (CEM) (established in 1995 and has currently 22 branches), the Anatolian Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture Foundation (HBVAKD) (established in 1994 and has currently 32 branches) and the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Associations (PSKAD) (established in 1978 as a local association, in 1988 organized

nationally, currently has 35 branches) (Şahhüseyinoğlu, 2001). My primary reasons in choosing these three institutions are as follows: Firstly, according to the 2003 reports provided by the Associations Desk in Ankara Police Headquarter, these three organizations are the only active cultural organizations, providing the required legal documents for the continuation of the association and conducting regular meetings and elections. In addition to these three institutions, other Alevi organizations are either passive participants in the field that will be closed down according to the current law of associations –since they have absences in their legal documents- or they are classified as village associations and/or endowments that are organized locally. Secondly, these three organizations are the pioneering and the largest organizations that achieved to open several branches that show a considerable geographic diversity accompanied by an institutional character. Moreover, these three associations have the greatest number of members and created differentiable discourses and claims about Alevism and even engaged in the continuous struggle about the “authenticity” and “truth” of their own definition and their publications and declarations. Though these publications and declarations are not regular as it was the case in Germany, they provide the necessary ground to investigate their particular discourses concerning Alevism and monitor the changes in their claims.

My primary methodology is in-depth analysis of the constitutions and public declarations concerning Alevism, given by the headquarters of the following associations: CEM Foundations, Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Associations and Anatolian

Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture Foundations in Turkey and the Federation of German Alevi Union in Germany. The texts of the declarations were gathered from the headquarters of these three intuitions, the majority of which were also published in the dailies and journals of the associations. Among these, I preferred to cite the ones, which were published in the dailies and journals instead of the verbal declarations that did not appear in any accessible sources. Primarily, I made the content analysis of these declarations and classified their particular discourses on Alevism. The main objective of this investigation was to figure out the changes and transformation in the claims concerning Alevism. In addition to the content analyses of the declarations, I conducted unstructured interviews with the prominent members of the associations, which I employ to support and further explain the data provided in the thesis. Moreover, though not conducted in a systematic way, I attended several meetings and elections in the associations and collected the periodicals of the associations and pamphlets distributed in the festivals and meetings. The periodicals that are published by these Associations are as follows: the Journal of Cem, published by the Cem Foundation, Pir Sultan Abdal Culture and Art Journal published by the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association, and Alevilerin Sesi published by the Federation of German Alevi Union. The Anatolian Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture Foundation does not have any journals that appear periodically; generally the declaration of the leaders of the foundation is published in the Journal of Kervan. However, since these materials are not systematically produced, they are not employed for comparative purposes, but as supportive and explanatory materials.

3.2 History of Alevism Until 1980

Although it is possible to give a popular history of Alevism starting from the *Babai* revolts of the 13th century (Ocak, 1996), I provide a short introduction of Alevi history with reference to Turkish modernization in line with the main premises of this study. My objective is to clarify the ‘paradoxical relations of Alevis with the Republic of Turkey’ and then I focus on the migration movement, which I think is the main factor affecting the contemporary positioning of Alevism.

3.2.1 The Positioning of Alevis in Reference to the Republic of Turkey

Basically, due to the heterodoxial belief system and their perception as a potential ally for the surrounding enemies, Alevis were persecuted by the Ottoman state periodically. Whenever a threat from the eastern border rose, the Alevi communities settled in the border regions were deported, exiled and/or massacred. Though with some ups and downs, the general policy of the state towards Alevis did not change significantly until the establishment of the new republic. Though Alevis were protected from discrimination, they were not guaranteed an official recognition from the new nation-state during the early years of the republic. Instead, the state remained blind towards the Alevis, as it was the case in the late Ottoman modernization (Ortaylı, 1999). However, with the introduction of the succeeding reformations, this attitude was changed and the basic structure of Alevism; namely, the institution of *dede*, which has an intermediary role between the state and the individual were rejected for the sake of “modernization”.

This understanding of the early-republican ideology can be seen in the words of Atatürk, the founder of the modern Turkish republic (1989: 536):

Is it possible to classify the mass, which follows some sheiks, *dedes*, *seyits*, *çelebis*, *babas*, and relies his/her life and chance to some magicians, fortune-tellers, healers and breath exhalers, as a civilized nation? [The titles written in italic are extensively used by Alevis]

Although in the early republican years there is no record of the persecution of the Alevi *dedes*, there are no signs of sympathy towards them either (Okan, 1999). Moreover, through the introduction of the new laws, which abolish religious orders and announce all communal worshipping practices outside the mosque as illegal, the possibility of traditional Alevism to reproduce itself as a community organized in the national level was destructed. As we discussed above, the primary Alevi ritual *ayin-i cem* is practiced only with the presence of a *dede*, the main executer, and it is held out of the Mosque. Though there is no registration of a trial against the Alevis for conducting rituals or for the preservation of *dedelik* during the early republican years, the renounce of the central hierarchy, which was binding the main *dede* lineages and their disciples in the villages, was destructed. This policy of the new regime created a general unrest among the Alevi communities, majority of which eagerly supported the republican movement.¹⁷ In fact, the roots of this unrest can be traced in the rebellion of Dersim (Çamuroğlu, 1998: 114). However, except for the incidents in Dersim, it seems that this paradoxical position did

¹⁷ Though the new regime rejected the traditional Alevi society by the introduction of modern laws and the abolishment of the Sunni system of legislation, it brought a considerable freedom to the Alevis. Basically, Alevis achieved to participate in education and since they accepted the newly introduced mixed education system (in terms of gender) they achieved a considerable upward mobility in the social stratification of the society (Arinberg-Lantza 1998: 156).

not result in conflict; on the contrary, the ideology of modern nation state remained mainly urban (Onulduran 1974: 46) and the religious life of the Alevis continued to remain untouched in the rural side. Only after 1950s, with the first waves of rural to urban migration, Alevis were encountered with the nation state and its policy towards Alevism.

3.2.2 Migration and Construction of Primary Networks Among Alevis

The traditional community life was challenged after the first rural to urban migration waves, which resulted in the continuous population loss in the Alevi villages and subsequent urbanization of the Alevi population. On the basis of the fieldwork in north-central Anatolia, Shankland (1993a: 3) mentions that whereas the Alevi villages were losing almost half of their population, Sunni villages were able to maintain their population. In fact, as a result of the mass-migration, the predominantly rural Alevis turned out to be an urban population within the Turkish and European metropolises within three decades. Although there are no statistical data on the rates of Alevi migration on the national scale, on the basis of field research and statistics of specific regions, scholars working on the issue agree that Alevis villagers are more prone to migration than their Sunni neighbours (Güneş-Ayata 1992; Martin 1991; Shankland, 1999: 168). Indeed, the out-migration rates of Turkish cities, which are densely populated by Alevis, support this view (Şahin, 2001: 97):

The out-migration rate of Alevi dense provinces was much higher than the national average since 1950s. In 1950, one of the Alevi populated provinces; Elazığ had the second highest out-migration rate with

16.89%, while another Alevi populated province, Erzincan, was on the way to have the highest out-migration rate. Erzincan's out migration reached 26.53% in 1965, 36.81% in the 1975 and 45% in 1985. Tunceli's out-migration rate was significantly high during the 60s and 70s, but increased sharply and reached to 43.32% in 1985. In 1980, Erzincan (42.02%), Sivas (34.94%), and Tunceli (35.47) were among the provinces whose out migration rates were much higher than the national average (19.2%).

Similar to the students of migration and urbanization in Turkey, scholars working on the labour migration from Turkey to Europe and particularly to Germany emphasize the tendency of Alevis to migrate more (Faist 2000; Martin 1991). Consistent to this, Alevism is defined as a factor that promotes chain migration, which enables the continuation of migrant flow with the same ethnic-religious characteristics (Wilpert, 1988). The existing studies on Alevism confirm that the migration of the Alevis most commonly occurs as chain migration, through which, first the close-relatives of the pioneering migrant, then the village and in some cases the whole province engage in migration with high proportions. To observe this tendency, we can employ the ethnographic data gathered in three Alevi villages that illustrate great geographic diversification: Dereköy (South-West), Susesi (Central-North) and Sarılar (South-East). For instance, in Dereköy, despite the 514 inhabitants living in the village (1985 census) there are, 70 living in the provincial centre, 300-50 in İzmir (west coast of Turkey), 150 in Norway and 50 in West Germany, with a total of 1200 people (Naess 1988: 175). Similarly in Sarılar, despite 400 families living in the village, 50 families are living in Adana, 200,-250 in Gaziantep, 200 in Germany and about 50 in other places (McElwain, 2001). The migration statistics are not different for Susesi, where almost two thirds of

the population lives in Europe and in the cities of Turkey (Shankland 1999: 155). Moreover, it is claimed that Alevi constitute a more determinant migrating group and most often do not engage in return migration. Argun (2003: 107) explains this situation as:

In the early stages of Turkish migration to Europe, several Alevi villages reported heavy emigration, while the nearby Sunni Muslim villages experienced relatively fewer exits. Villages from which half or more of the adult men emigrated and often did not return were frequently Alevi rather than Sunni.

Moreover, scholars mention that the migrants of these three villages preserved their ties with their villages and co-villagers and engaged in persistent interaction even within the international setting, which enabled further migration and construction of communities based on village solidarity. These primary networks among the immigrants of Alevi origin constitute the ground on which the Alevi transnational social space will be built later.

As a result of chain migration, small semi-isolated communities consist of Alevi, mainly co-villagers or co-ethnics within the cities. For instance, since the population movement occurred as chain migration, some districts within the cities became settlements with high Alevi concentrations¹⁸. The researches working on Alevi

¹⁸ Although the common type of migration in Turkey corresponds to the step migration model developed by Ravenstein (Abdan-Unat, 1993), the Alevi migration is mostly targeted towards the metropolises directly rather than a first step towards the nearest small town and/or city. It can be argued that instead of migrating to the nearby cities, where they are not welcomed by the majority Sunni population, Alevi preferred to migrate to the cosmopolitan metropolises more, where their religious differences became less visible (Sahin, 2001: 98). This observation is valid, if we consider the migrants in Europe. Studies conducted on the labour migration from Turkey to Europe confirm that a significant number of immigrant

communities in the squatter-settlements of urban Turkey show that the Alevis tend to settle in different districts or in different parts (*Mahalles*) of the same district in the cities (Karpas, 1976 & Dubetsky, 1977). For instance, though the Alevis constitute a minority with 10-25% of the total population, in the district of Aktepe they constitute %35 of the population of Turkey (Sewell 1964). Similar to the case in the Turkish metropolises, instead of organizing around the 'Turkish nationality', migrant communities formed enclaves on the basis of ethnic and religious differences (Faist 2000, Gitmez and Wilpert 1987, Wilpert 1988). Therefore, the improvement of semi-isolated communities is a valid observation also for the Alevi migrants in the European setting.

3.2.3 The Effects of Migration and Subsequent Mass Urbanization on Alevism

In the previous chapter, we observed that Alevis were exposed to migration both quantitatively and qualitatively more than their Sunni counterparts. Obviously, the effects of mass migration are not only a population transfer and the emergence of the Alevi districts in the cities, but also an irreversible transformation to the traditional Alevism through the adaptation to urban conditions. Within the semi-isolated settlements in the urban centres, the reference point of the Alevi identity shifted from the inner strata of the village (*Mahalles* or different lineages) to the village itself, which became the basic unifying identity for the migrants within the city (Karpas, 1976: 165; Shankland, 1999: 157). Basically, these districts became the places where the Alevi

workers from Turkey both from Sunni and Alevi backgrounds had village origins (Abadan-Unat, 1969; Wilpert, 1988).

migrants met with the destructive effects of urbanization. Beginning from the pre-republican period, migration and consequent urbanization for Alevis turned out to be a constitutive factor, affecting the traditional community life negatively. In other words, migration to the city meant the dissolution of the traditional community for the Alevis (Vergin, 2000). Consistent with this, many scholars emphasized the importance of urbanization as *condition conducive* of the present picture of Alevism (Raudvere, 1998: 192; Shankland, 1999: 168; Kehl-Bodrogi, 1997a: 120).

In the urban context, the traditional community structure started to transform itself and adapt to the urban conditions. As a result of urbanization and consequent modernization, several changes, which deeply affected the present Alevism, took place. Firstly, the Alevi migrants created a new identity that based itself on the solidarity of the fellow villagers, which cross cut the internal stratification within the village to an extent. Today, this tendency can still be seen in the vast number of village associations among the Alevi population¹⁹, where Alevis were organized under the name of the village, independent from their status in the village. Secondly, the traditional institutions of Alevism, which are the basic identity markers, either disappeared in the urban conditions or marginalized. The three main social institutions, *dedelik*, *musahiplik* and *ayin-i cem* provide the basic tools for observing this process. The first effects of urbanization were

¹⁹ Şahin (2002: 100) explains the situation as: “The first Alevi associations that appeared in the major cities were hometown associations in the 1960s. Alevis coming from the same village, town or province came together and formed these hometown associations to maintain primordial ties, create solidarity and provide help for newcomers. The associations founded by the Alevis served spaces to meet, discuss Alevi tradition and knowledge, and organize cem ceremony.” Moreover, the existing literature shows that village associations established by Alevi migrants outnumber those of Sunni origins (Coşkun, 2003).

experienced in the institution of *musahiplik*, the functional solidarity system of rural life, which was unable to survive in the severe economic conditions of cities. Obviously, it was impossible to continue for the Alevis, who are competing with each other in the urban workforce, to support their *musahip* economically (Bozkurt, 1998: 87). The most important event of plain rural life, *ayin-i cem* was postponed to the weekends and turned out to be a folkloric entertainment by losing its religious content (Bozkurt, 1998: 87). Finally, *dedes*, the only executors of the Alevi ceremonies, were not able to cope with the economic conditions only by performing their religious functions. The severe economic conditions of the Metropolises forced the *dedes*, either to continue being the holy-men or an acquaintance, competing in the labour market with his fellow villagers. Since their occupational position was left behind their disciples, they lost their charisma. Moreover, the powerful control mechanism of rural life; excommunity, which may force people even to commit suicide (Kehl-Bodrogi 1997b: 127), was not applicable in the cosmopolitan character of the city, where the village community was replaced by the urban society. Thus, the endogamous justice system of Alevism was not able to compete with the modern judiciary system and gradually faded away (Bozkurt, 1998: 89).

The effects of urbanization, which I discussed above, have occurred simultaneously both in the German and Turkish metropolises. In other words, the mass migration and consequent urbanisation dissolved the traditional organisation patterns and created destructive effects for traditional Alevism. However, it can be claimed that Alevis, who migrated to the Turkish metropolises were relatively “advantageous” in comparison to

their counterparts, who migrated to Germany. There are several reasons for this. First, there was no (or sufficient numbers of) *dedes* who are able to conduct ceremonies in Germany. Secondly, visiting Turkey for participating in the ceremonies was too costly and time schedules of these ceremonies were incompatible with the industrial work shifts. Thirdly, the traditional structure of Alevism lacks the required institutions that can create a spatial structure, which will enable the continuation of the religious life in a foreign environment.

When the migration to Germany started in 1961, Alevis were within the first migrants. Though there were some migrants who are descendant of *dede* lineages, no practicing *dede* migrated to Germany and only in the 1970s, a few *dedes* from Turkey visited their disciples in Germany; but in these rare visits no *ayin-i cem* was organized (Sökefeld, 2002: 171). Whereas regular visits to the villages were a common practice among the migrants in Turkish metropolises -depending on the distance between village and the metropolis- this option was too costly to afford for the new migrants in Germany. Moreover, the schedules of the ceremonies, which are mainly held during the winter, were not compatible with the working shifts of the industrial labour. Especially, if we recall that the early migrants were planning to stay temporarily in Germany only to earn a sufficient amount of capital to return to Turkey, such an investment solely for the sake of religious life seems impractical. Finally, as Sökefeld (2002: 172) points out, unlike the orthodox Sunni migrants who could arrange a place of worship, and choose an ordinary individual to lead prayers, irrelevant to his background, it was impossible for the

Alevis to replace a *dede*, who collects his charisma from his holy descent. Therefore, unlike the Sunni migrants the Alevis were not able to develop institutions on the basis of religion at least until the 1980s. Sökefeld (2002: 170) explains the difference between the Alevi and Sunni migrants as follows:

First, Alevis had no religious structures, institutions and practices that could easily be transferred from one place to another. Sunnis had their prescribed prayers (*namaz*) which could be practiced anywhere, when the direction towards Mecca was ascertained. Communal prayers are said in the mosque and almost any room could be converted into a provisional mosque with little effort. Alevi worship, in contrast, does not focus in a fixed sequence of words and movements, but is rather established upon specific social relationships and networks, which cannot easily be relocated. Alevi places of worship were more positions within a specific social structure than a spatial structure...Dedes could not be transferred from one congregation to another like a Christian priest or a Sunni hoca as they occupied specific positions within particular and fixed networks of talips.

3.3 The Interaction Between the Alevi Network in Germany and Turkey Until 1980

The continued interaction between the village community, a district in Turkish metropolis and a German industrial city constitutes the basis of the informal Alevi networks. Within these networks continuous interactions between the immigrants have occurred. Until the 1980s mostly, the remittances from abroad were directed to the village or the Turkish metropolises, and new immigrants were directed to the settlements in Germany. During this period, the scope of exchange remained limited and created effects only in the local level such as the initiation of new technologies to villages or creating new migration waves to the Turkish or German cities. Although these primary

networks cannot be classified as transnational social space, they constituted the necessary ground to build the transnational Alevi space between Germany and Turkey. Indeed, the interaction between the Alevi associations in Germany and Turkey till the 1980s supports this statement.

Although the first decades of the migration to the Turkish metropolises and Germany were marked by the construction of informal networks, Alevis both in Turkey and Germany started to construct associations and political organizations starting from the 1970s. The first Alevi organization; The Cultural Association of Hacı Bektaş Veli (HBKDV) was first established in 1960s in the small town of Hacı Bektaş, then a branch was opened in Ankara and in 1963 in İstanbul. Although, there have been organizations established by the Alevis, mostly village and town associations, it is the first Alevi association organized in the national level. Parallel to the establishment of HBKDV, several village and town associations, of which the majority of the members were Alevis, were established between 1960 and 1980. Most commonly cited of these associations are The Culture Centre of Divriği, The Endowment of Tunceli, The Association of Turhal and The Association of Tourism and Culture of Banaz Village (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 121-122). After the 1980s, some of these associations started to be organized on the national level and became central actors within the Alevi politics. For instance, the Village Association of Banaz changed its name to the Cultural Association of Pir Sultan Abdal and gathered the largest number of Alevis under its roof. At the same time, the previously closed religious endowments and places were renovated and became cultural

associations. The most famous example of this trend was the Association of the Karaca Ahmet Sultan (1969), which still functions in Istanbul (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 87-90). However, the most interesting and important event in the organizational life of the Alevis during this time is the establishment of the Unity Party (BP)²⁰. On 12 October 1966, the Unity Party, which had changed its name later as the Unity Party of Turkey (TBP), was established as the first political movement of Alevis (Schüler, 1999: 163). Though some scholars claim that the party does not carry precise Alevi features (Kehl-Bodrogi, 1988: 126), the fact that all of the founders were Alevi individuals (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 69) and the existence of symbols and *hurrah words* prizing Alevism within the articles of the party program, the party flag, posters and slogans indicate that the party has a strong Alevi sentiment within the party. The party flag was in the colour of red and in the centre there was the figure of a lion, which is surrounded by 12 stars. Obviously, the lion was symbolizing Ali; “the lion of the god”, and 12 stars were recalling the memory of the 12 imams. In fact, not only Alevis associated the party with Alevism but also other political groups condemned the party for basing itself solely to ethnic and religious identity. Indeed, the party was taken to the court with the accusation of being a representative of a specific ethnic identity (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 69-70).

²⁰ BP/TBP attended only three elections, 1969, 1973 and 1977; the highest success was achieved in the 1969 election with 2.8 % of the votes. The party sent only 7 MP's to the parliament. In this election TBP joined the elections only in 38 cities, which have a high concentration of Alevi electorates, like Amasya, Tokat, Çorum, Sivas, Erzincan, Malatya, Kahraman Maraş, Tunceli, İçel and Yozgat. In the first 6 cities TBP achieved to get more than 10% and in the later four cities more than 5%; in the other areas the votes of the party remained unimportant.

Moreover, three of the MP's, Yusuf Ulusoy, Kazım Ulusoy, Ali Naki Ulusoy, were descendants of Hacı Bektaş Veli and belonged to respected *dede* lineages. Also, in the party program some of the statements were implying the unrest of the Alevi communities though latent, such as the Article9:

Everybody has the freedom to choose his/her religion and belief. The religious rituals that are not against the ethic and good of society should be set free. Nobody can be forced to attend to religious rituals and ceremonies without his/her own will or to declare his/her own religious beliefs and nobody can be condemned due to his/her religious beliefs.

Obviously, the article is referring to the ban of the Alevi ritual, *ayin-i cem*, and the idea that the discriminatory public view towards Alevism should be changed. Furthermore, some of the terms used in the party program were simply referring to the *linguistic habitus* of Alevism. For instance, instead of party program or declaration, the word; *Yol*, literally means way, which was entailing the Alevi order was used. However, the most basic indicator of the Alevi background of the party was observed in the incidents of 1972, when five of the seven MP's of BP gave vote of confidence for the Justice Party (AP) of Süleyman Demirel. The MPs who voted for JP were declared ex-community and rejected by the Alevi Society (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 70).

During the 1970s, lots of worker organizations, which were primarily organized among the Alevis were established in Germany. The first of these associations was the Union of Turkish Worker Association (TALEB). However, the leader of the association, Süleyman Cem, was saying that it actually meant the Union of Turkish Alevi Association, since the words "Alevi" and "Amele", i.e. worker, start with the same letter

and such a reading of the abbreviation is also possible. In the 1970s, another organization with the name of the Worker Union is established in München and this organization gathered various worker associations established by Alevi and constructed a federation. This federation constituted the backbone of the Alevi organizations in Germany. The association published a journal and worked as a shadow organization of BP/TBP and provided financial support to the party. However, the most important success of the organization was changing the derogatory translation of *Kızılbaş* in the Turkish-German dictionary of Langenscheidt in Germany. The organization was in close contact with the TBP and even Süleyman Cem was declared as a candidate of TBP in the national election of 1977 (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 115-116). However, the organization was closed after the abolishment of TBP with the military coup d'état of 1980 (Gül, 1999: 84).

As the examples of the TBP and its shadow organizations in Germany demonstrate, the associations in Germany were very much dependent on the Turkish associations for ideological guidance and agenda setting, though their Turkish counterpart eagerly accepted the financial aid of the German associations. Moreover, their activities were limited to a minority of the first generation migrants, and level of interconnectedness between the pairs was relatively low in comparison to the post-1980 present picture of the Alevi movement. During this time interaction between the pairs occurred in a more informal network due to the lack of a vivid Alevi associational life both in Turkey and Germany. This situation is changed with the establishment of numerous Alevi

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CHAPTER IV

CONSTRUCTION OF DISTINCTIVE ALEVISMS IN GERMANY AND TURKEY

Although there have been a continuous interaction between the Alevi in Turkey and Germany, the geographical spread of the Alevi created divergent patterns within the traditional Alevism. The most important factor affecting the traditional life was the mass migration and subsequent urbanization that created a tremendous restructuring in traditional Alevism, which I discussed in the previous chapter in reference to the Turkish case. However, the particular migration history in Germany constituted a distinctive context, surrounding Alevism and as a result, starting from the initial decades of the immigration, Alevi in Germany and Turkey embarked on developing a divergent version of Alevism, which I will label respectively as the ‘multicultural Alevism’ in Germany and ‘urban Alevism’ in Turkey. More importantly, in addition to the effects of the mass migration, the various contexts and different opportunity structures such as different citizenship understandings and multicultural policies furthered the creation of a distinctive Alevism by even determining its main goals and premises in the German and Turkish context. On the basis of these observations, this chapter compares the positioning of Alevi in Germany to that of Alevi in Turkey and discusses the main

premises and *conditions conducive* of ‘multicultural Alevism’ in Germany and ‘urban Alevism’ in Turkey.

4.1 The Alevi Movement in Germany

Although the effects of migration and subsequent urbanization are more or less similar for the Alevis in Germany and Turkey, after the 1970s the institutional context surrounding Alevis created divergences within the understanding of Alevism and led to the construction of distinctive Alevisms in Germany and Turkey. The most important factor affecting this divergence within Alevism is different opportunity structures and political currents within these settings. In other words, differences in the citizenship laws and policies of Germany and Turkey, concerning the religious minorities created distinctive positioning among the Alevis in Germany and Turkey. In brief, whereas Turkey was insisting on her unitary structure and undermining ethno-religious differences among her citizens by encouraging homogenisation, Germany accepted the ethno-cultural differences among the immigrant groups and provided a public space for uttering this difference via the multicultural policies, though consistent to her ethnic understanding of citizenship, excluded the immigrant groups from the political arena of Germany.

In the liberal context of Germany, in which the main discussion were on cultural rights and multiculturalism, the Alevi migrants created a distinctive understanding of Alevism, which shows great deviations from the Alevism in Turkey. For instance, whereas under

the hegemonic discourse of the Turkish state, Alevi in Turkey showed conformity to the basic premises of Turkish nationalism, Alevi in Germany found opportunities to challenge it. Indeed, in the relative freedom of Deutschland, the criticism of the Alevi in Germany is more direct and harsh in reference to the Alevi in Turkey. Most commonly, they compare the conditions in Turkey to the conditions in Germany and on the basis of this comparison; they condemn the policies of Turkey. For instance, in 1998, Ali Rıza Gülçiçek²¹, the leader of the Federation of European Alevi Associations, was saying (Cumhuriyet, August 2, 1998):

The belief institutions of the Alevi-Bektashis are prohibited in Turkey...On the other hand the Alevi living in Europe have the opportunity to improve their culture and beliefs in the context of unconditional democracy without facing any handicap.

Moreover, there are many attempts that carry strong elements adopted from the European political heritage for imagining Alevism. For instance, in explaining the emergence of Alevi movement in Germany, Turgut Öker, the leader of the AABF, mentioned the multiculturalist movement of Algerian students, which challenged the understanding of French nation-state by claiming the right to be different with the slogan of “black is beautiful”²².

²¹ Ali Rıza Gülçiçek later became a member of the Party Assembly in the Republican People’s Party (CHP). Therefore, he did not become a nominee for the leadership of the Federation of European Alevi Union (AABF) again and even resigned from the position of the honorary leadership of the AABF due to his political identity. Succeedingly, Ali Kılıç was elected as the leader of the AABF (January 1, 1998, Cumhuriyet).

²² Interview with Turgut Öker, the leader of the AABF, 23. 08. 2001, PSAD, Ankara

Indeed, the role of the German political context is more than a tendency of comparing the two countries. In addition to this, immigrants from Turkey, extensively borrow concepts and slogans from the political language in Germany. These borrowing can be easily seen among the marginal attempts, which demonstrates great diversifications from the main discussion in Turkey. For instance, Haşim Kutlu, who is a refugee living in Germany and writing in the journal of Zülfikar, a pro Kurdish Alevi journal published in Germany only, was pointing to a controversial definition of Alevism:

The meaning of the word Kızılbaş (literally redhead, a pejorative of Alevi) in its motherland is Ser-ü Sor. It finds its roots within the sun and fire cult. We learn from the holy book of Zoroastrianism (*Zara Tuşt Ta*); *Zend Avesta* that the word “Airyanem Vejo” means “the seed of the Aryans” which is employed with the meaning of those of the Aryan descent ... Parallel to the later evolution of their language and improvement of their culture “Ser-ü Sor” was also employed for defining decent ... Moreover, “Redness” is blood. Blood is the life, the descent, the continuity. For emphasizing the blood connection this word is employed.... Being aware of such designations, racist Hitler claimed that the German race is that of Aryan descent. He conducted his racism on the basis of that (Kutlu, 1997: 127).

Without doubt, most Alevis would accept this conceptualisation of Alevism as nothing but a chimera or insanity. However, this marginal example demonstrates how the political currents in the host country affect the imagination of the Alevi immigrants. Without any difficulty, the words such as Aryan, motherland, blood, the Aryan decent and race can be traced back to the lexicon of the Nazi era and in fact, instead of the motherland, *urland* (the mythical original country of the Aryans in German) can be a more appropriate translation.

In addition to such individualistic attempts, there are active political movements within Deutschkei that operate on the basis of Alevism, though they are not less marginal. For instance, there is “one extremist group that advocates the establishment of an autonomous nation of “Alevistan” with Zaza, or Dersimce, being the national language” (Mandel, 1996: 428). Such an idea of Alevistan is hard to be imagined within the Turkish borders and it creates a general disgust among the Alevi population in Turkey (Stokes, 1999: 268). When this radical project made subject by Abdülkadir Sezgin, the former inspector of the Directorate of Religious Affairs in Turkey, he was strongly criticized by the Alevi Associations. The Alevi associations in Turkey strongly rejected the idea of Alevistan and they accused Sezgin for insulting and trying to degrade Alevism by creating aspersions like Alevistan (Evrensel, 22.08.2001). Obviously, the project of Alevistan is a marginal one, and it is far away from representing Alevism. However, the very notion of Alevistan indicates that a distinctive Alevism, which is transformed in the host country, by patterning itself on separatist Kurdish movement and western discourse of nationalism, is emerging (Mandel, 1996: 429). Consistently, the journal of the group of Alevistan; *Kızıl Yol*; literally meaning the Red Path, had made an analogy between the Alevis of Turkey and the Sikh minority of India and imagined a nation for the Alevis based on the religious difference (Şener & İlknur, 1995: 64). In fact, the similarities between the Sikh movement and the Red Path are more than this; both movements are constructed among the immigrant populations and reflect the disjuncture created by the global cultural capitalism that position itself against the

resistant nationalisms of the home countries. This example demonstrates how the global ideoscapes are at work in creating peculiar imaginations.

Although these marginal cases such as Alevistan and Alevism as a genetic heritage of the Aryan civilization are suitable to define the outer limits of the movement and highlight the difference between the Alevi movement in Germany and Turkey, a deeper analysis that will reveal the content and main premises of the Alevi movement in Germany is necessary. As we discussed in the previous chapters, the majority of the Alevi population in Germany, who engage in the Alevi transnational space are from the lower stratum of the immigrant population and live under the conditions of urban degradation; as described in the second chapter. Therefore, repeating these conditions in particular for the Alevis would be an appropriate method for understanding the content and premises of the peculiar Alevi movement constructed in Germany.

4.1.1 The Effects of Structural Conditions on the Alevi Movement in Germany

In the second chapter, the residential segregation experienced by the immigrants from Turkey was emphasized. However, if we focus on the Alevi communities, the residential segregation gains another dimension. Basically, Alevis in Germany are a minority within the minority; and they live under the conditions of double segregation; simultaneous segregation from the German Society and from the Sunni majority of the immigrant population (Mandel, 1996). Even though Alevis in Turkish metropolises are also exposed to segregation to an extent, the channels to get in touch with the majority population and

to find ways for integrating themselves to the mainstream society are not blocked as firmly as it was seen among the Alevi in Germany.

Under the condition of being a double segregation, the trigger of the Alevi movement in Germany has been the reaction against the activities of the Sunni immigrants. Within the creative environment of *Deutschkei*, the differences between the Alevi and Sunni migrants were felt more strongly after the construction of the first mosques in the European setting (Okan, 1999: 104-5). Spontaneously, Alevi migrants started to protest these activities and organization with large Alevi members started to emphasize their Alevi identity. Consistent to this, the leaders of the Alevi associations in Europe emphasized the activities of the Islamic groups who engaged in the construction of mosques and associations nearby the Alevi communities as a reason for the emergence of Alevi movement in the European setting (Şener and İlknur, 1995: 118). However, in Turkey, activities such as mosque building and increasing activities of the Islamic organisations are associated with the right wing politics and its segments within the state functionaries. Therefore, whereas Alevi in Turkey showed conformity to the main principles of Kemalism, perhaps with the aim of creating allies against the exclusionary practices that generates an unprivileged position for Alevism, in Germany, these activities resulted in the creation of an Alevism that emphasize its difference in reference to the Sunni immigrants by institutionalising the existing differences. The typical examples of this case can be seen in the construction of *cem evi*s. Whereas in the traditional Alevism there are no institutionalised buildings for the religious ceremonies,

in Germany and later on, in Turkey buildings were constructed specifically for religious needs. Now there are *cem evi*s in the districts of the cities with dense Alevi population. The construction of *cem evi*s led to the institutionalisation of the religious ceremony as well, which traditionally demonstrates great geographic and cultural variations. As a result of the reformation of religious ceremonies, the ceremonies conducted in Germany carry *nouvelle* elements in reference to the rural *ayin-i cem*. For instance, the majority of the participants sit in the rows, instead of sitting on their knees surrounding the platform where the *dede* conducts the ceremony. Moreover, during the ceremonies, video cameras and stereo sound systems are among the common elements, which was unthinkable in the traditional Alevism²³. In fact, this construction of “a more secular version” of Alevi rituals is also prevalent in Turkey. However, Alevis in Germany are either the pioneering pair of this event or prefer more spectacular and extreme versions than it were observed in Turkey. For instance, it is possible to observe Alevi *dedes*, celebrating the *Ashura day*, in front of the Köln cathedral or an Alevi orchestra²⁴ with thousands of *saz* virtuosi, playing the previously secret religious hymns in huge stadiums publicly are not exceptional events in Germany.

²³ Indeed, the *ayin-i cem* ceremonies conducted in Germany demonstrate several differences in reference to the ones held in Turkey. For instance, there are cases in which the whole ceremony was conducted in German for enabling foreign (German) visitors to follow the ceremony (Cumhuriyet 29.07.1998).

²⁴ This event is named as *Binyılın Türküsü*, literally “the folk song of the millennium”, on May 13, 2000 in Köln Arena, Germany. Within the organisation 1264 *saz* virtuosi and 700 *Semah* dancers were accompanied by the Köln symphony orchestra. On October 5, 2002, this activity was repeated in Turkey with the addition of 1000 *saz* virtuosi from several Turkish cities (Özgür Politika, 06.10.2002).

Moreover, there are activities of the Alevi ethnic entrepreneurs, which constitute contrasting cases in reference to Turkey. In Germany, new jobs or material products are invented or developed specifically for the Alevi customers. The most controversial of this can be seen in the case of *Erenler Cenaze*, a specific funeral house for the Alevis. Although it is known that practically there are no differences between the burial ceremony of Alevis and Sunnis (Shankland, 1999: 143-4), in the post 1980 period some Alevi entrepreneurs founded a funeral house specialized on Alevi funerals. It can be claimed that the very existence of such a business enforces the “Alevi identity” and even re-imagines it, by stressing its difference from the Sunni migrants and native Germans. In line with this development, now, there is a movement to open an Alevi cemetery in Berlin. It is a practice impossible to observe and even imagine in Turkey, where there is no reference on the existence of such a separated graveyard throughout the history. Similar to the funeral house, there is also a primary school specifically constructed for the Alevi children living in Berlin.

4.1.2 The Multicultural Alevism of Germany

In addition to these effects of the German context, the multicultural policies of the German states require a special attention for understanding the particular discourse of Alevism, constructed in Germany. In the second chapter I briefly mentioned the role of the multiculturalism in promoting ethno-religious diversity among the immigrants by creating clientele ties and translating the social conflicts into ethno-cultural ones. Basically, now I discuss the role of multicultural policies on the transformation of the

Alevi community. Although many scholars mention the existence of the multicultural policies in Germany and acknowledge that they are effective in the identity construction of the immigrants, still the subject remains under-theorized and there is no detailed analysis of multiculturalism in Germany in the national scale. However, there are several studies that discuss the role and effects of multicultural policies on the Alevi movement in Germany (See Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000; Kaya, 1998; Massicard, 2003). Before going in detail on the connection of Alevism with the authorities that promotes multiculturalism, I first outline the multicultural policies that became the central debate in Germany after the 1980s.

Starting from the mid 1980s onwards, institutions with the aim of dealing with the problems of immigrants and promoting their integration to the German society emerged. The typical examples of these are the *Haus der Kulturen der Welt*; established in Kreuzberg, Berlin (Kaya, 1998) and *Deutsch-Auslaendische Begegnungsstaetten*; in Hamburg (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000). Such intuitions arrange festivals that bring together the “claimed distinct cultures” for promoting intercultural understanding and encouraging mutual tolerance. However, the scholars working on the issue radically reject the ability of such events for creating equality and effective communication channel, in which immigrants can utter their problems. For instance, Alund and Schierup (1991) make the analogy of the ethnic tower of the Babel, in which various ethno-linguistic groups existed without any substantial interaction, for understanding multicultural policies. In fact, even the word, *Auslaender*, foreigners in the institutions

or the phrase of the House of the cultures of the World, indicates the paradoxes that the very notion of multiculturalism contains. For constructing an egalitarian platform, migrants or minorities should be used instead of the word foreigner, the opposite of which indicates the continuation of the “soft apartheid” of the German foreigner policy. Similarly, the usage of the cultures of the world instead of the cultures of Berlin or Germany indicates that the immigrant cultures are defined as heterogenous, ethnic particularities in reference to the universalistic, homogeneous German Culture (Kaya, 1998). Simply, within these policies the structural exclusion of the immigrants and the rejection of the symbolic identity of them is continued and even transferred to the institutional activities. Such classification of the immigrant cultures as distinct entities, that can not be translated to the German society, inevitably contributes to the broadening of the differences between the German and “migrant” cultures. Within this climate the activities of these institutions do not go beyond creating platforms where the folkloric practices of the immigrant populations are demonstrated. However, they are effective in creating a sense of identity among the immigrants. For instance, Sökefeld (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000: 15) claims that while Alevis were participating in the activities of these intuitions they gained an awareness of their peculiar culture and identity. These activities channelled the Alevi immigrants to express their identity more explicitly and often than their counterparts remaining in Turkey. The multicultural institutions of German states²⁵ finance the activities of the Alevi associations assist them to conduct

²⁵ For instance, an important meeting, in which Alevism was discussed and the existing literature on Alevism was revalued, was held in Bielefeld on 17-19 May 2002 with the assistance of the German

meetings, in which Alevism is discussed and reconstructed (See Kaya, 1998: 40). Such meetings created a sense of Aleviness, which is a novel construct for the Alevi subjects, who have been Alevi throughout their life. At that level the anecdote mentioned by Sökefeld is illustrative (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000: 16):

For example, one of the Hamburg Alevis who participated was visited by a cousin from Turkey during this event. He related this story that he drove with his cousin directly from the airport to a discussion about Alevism. The cousin was struck by the experience of a large crowded audience, listening to Alevi intellectuals and debating Alevism. After that event the cousin told his host: ‘today it is the first time I really felt to be Alevi!’

German politicians and academicians are regular participants of these events. For instance, Kaya (1998: 42) mentions the attendance of Barbara John (Commissioner for Foreigners Affairs), Hans Nisble (Mayor of Wedding, Social Democratic Party), Franz Schulz (Major of Kreuzberg, The Greens), and İsmail Hakkı Koşan, (a member of the Berlin Senate, The Greens) in the Alevi cultural night in Berlin. Among the circles of the German politicians Alevism is compared to Sunni immigrant communities, and it is perceived as the liberal version of Islam, which is more suitable to the cohabitation with the German majority²⁶ (Mandel, 1996: 156). In the same way Nisble was calling the German citizens to collaborate with the Alevis against the challenge of radical Islam prevalent among the Sunni immigrants from Turkey (Kaya, 1998: 43). Such perceptions

Ministry of the Internal Affairs and collaboration of Bielefeld University.

²⁶ Such a view of Alevism as the liberal version of Islam, which is more suitable to cohabitation with the German majority is prevalent also among the German academicians. For instance, Kieser (2003: 11-18) claims that Alevis have a long tradition to live with Christians side by side, without mixing with Christian population and keeping their distinct culture intact among the Christian majorities.

of the German politicians and media are effective for the construction of the multicultural discourse of Alevism. On the basis of these observations, Massicard (2003) claims that the institutions define the scope and the criteria of the claim makings of the immigrants by distributing or withholding subsidies and awarding or denying state aid to Alevi organizations. In addition, the role of multiculturalism in the creation of Alevi movement in Germany is also emphasised by other scholars. For instance Argun (2003: 116) claims that Alevis are the pioneering and the champion among the actors in Deutschland in embracing the idea of multiculturalism and consequently they developed a political stand that defines cultural pluralism as the fundamental building block of Turkey's democratisation. However, the multicultural policies not only provide the institutional context and the novel terms, such as recognition and cultural difference, but also through their continuous interaction with the Alevi associations in Germany they initiate and promote a process of institutionalisation within the Alevi movement (Massicard, 2003). This process of institutionalisation is observable within the discussion on the Alevi religious courses in Berlin. When the Islamic Federation of Berlin was accepted as the religious community and granted the right to provide religious courses in the public schools, the Alevi organisations in Berlin vocally rejected the provision of religious courses, which will be based on the Sunni understanding of the Islamic Federation of Berlin. As a result of the ongoing debate between the authorities of the Berlin state and the local Alevi Association in Berlin, Alevis are also accepted as a religious community and granted the right of giving religious education according to the principles of Alevism in 2000 (Massicard, 2003; Kehl-Bodrogi, 2003). In fact, this

process constitutes a controversy with the process of increasing secularisation of the Alevism, as a result of the destructive effects of urbanisation. Indeed, this event occurred approximately simultaneously in the other German states, as well (Kehl-Bodrogi, 2003). In the present picture the umbrella organisation of the Alevi associations in Germany, the Federation of German Alevi Union struggles to be recognized as a *Religionsgemeinschaft*; a religious community in Germany. Within this debate Massicard (2003) points out the possibility of the construction of Alevism as a denomination, within the German context. Kehl-Bodrogi (2003) mentions the existence of the main objective among the Alevi activists in Germany to transfer the process of legalisation and achievements in the way of public recognition of the Alevi difference to Turkey. Although it is still too early to give an answer to the question, whether these developments will create a tendency to return to the religious ground for defining Alevism, it can be claimed that with these processes, a distinctive discourse of Alevism, that pays a special attention to the identity building²⁷ and recognition of the Alevi identity in Turkey has been emerged and this peculiar identity construction is search of a space within the Turkish political arena.

The typical example of this trend can be seen in the constitution of AABF, which defines the constitutional recognition of Alevism in Turkey as one of its missions. Consistent to this article in the constitution, the leader of the Federation makes

²⁷ Even in the attempts to create a textbook for Alevism, this strong emphasis on the legalisation and identity building is prevalent (Massicard, 2003).

declaration concerning the position of Alevis in Turkey. For instance in 1998, Ali Kılıç, the leader of the federation at the time was saying: “Our name is still forbidden [in Turkey]. We couldn’t set our own agenda. [Instead]It was always set by other people and we [Alevis] followed. However, from now on, this will change” (Cumhuriyet, December 1, 1998).

4.2. The Alevi Movement in Turkey

Unlike the counterparts in Germany, the Alevis in the Turkish metropolises were exposed to different factors, which shaped their understanding of Alevism deeply. As I elaborated in the previous chapter under the destructive conditions of urbanity, Alevism embarked on losing its traditional structure. Starting from 1970s, the destructive effects of urbanization increased to a great extent and most of the traditional institutions were either forgotten or became obsolete. Consequently many scholars working on the issue accepted the trivialization and disappearance of the traditional forms as the signs of the total extinction of Alevism as a distinctive religious community (Vorhoff, 1998: 31), which is believed to be a matter of time in the 1980s (Çamuroğlu, 1997). As a result of the destructive effects of urbanism, Alevi communities started to neglect many elements of traditional Alevism and adopted a more sceptical position against the religious teachings, which contains many mythological elements and legends where the saints conduct various miracles such as transforming themselves into a bird or move the giant stones by ordering. In fact, if we survey the Alevi literature of post-1980 period, we can observe this trend. For instance, there is a large stone located in the courtyard of the house of Pir

Sultan Abdal, in Banaz (Sivas) (east of central Anatolia), which is claimed to be carried by him from Horasan (northern Iran) in horseback, approximately a thousand kilometres away. In 1980, an Alevi visitor who is a teacher and an urbanite was interpreting this belief as a superstition.

It is impossible to bring it on horseback... Moreover, the stone also isn't special at all. When I entered the courtyard, I also noticed that many green fabrics were tied to the trees. Thus, our folk show its loyalty to Pir Sultan Abdal in a superstitious way (Erseven, 1992: 11).

Astonishingly, the teacher in the example is one of the pioneering activists among the Alevi organizations. Later on he worked as an instructor for *ayin-i cem* teams in several associations and published several books on *ayin-i cem* ceremonies and Alevism in general. It is possible to increase the number of such seemingly paradoxical cases. However, instead of indicating the extinction of community, these examples demonstrate the metamorphosis²⁸ of the traditional Alevism into a new form. Unlike the predictions of scholars, the Alevi community invented and acquired a new form of Alevism (Güneş-Ayata, 1992), which showed a great adaptation to the metropolitan life in Turkey. Indeed, the differences between the traditional Alevism and this contemporary urban Alevism is emphasised by many scholars. For instance, Yalçınkaya (1996: 1-10) claims there are an archaic Alevism, which is connected to the Islamic history and rural life, and a contemporary Alevism, which stays away from theological discussions and is predominantly urban. Basically, the new form of Alevism shifts the emphasis from the religious sphere to the cultural, where Alevism still functions as an important creator of

²⁸ I owe this word to Yasin Aktay (1999: 38).

symbols and concepts for self-identification (Shankland, 1993a: 153, Kehl-Bodrogi, 1997b). Without doubt, in this new form, Alevism underwent through a dramatic re-positioning, through which religious ceremonies are replaced with the extrovert ones, in which village community is celebrated and Aleviness is remembered and reproduced in the profane rituals (Shankland, 1999: 160). Consistently, in the urban context, new actors emerged, reflecting this new identity. For instance, in the squatter settlements of Ankara there is Zöhre Ana, a self claimed saint that does not come from the holy lineages of Alevism, but works as a healer in a two storey building and in the first store there is a shop that sells Atatürk pictures and republican souvenirs (Dole, 2001). Within this new identity, the collective music, poetry, dance and songs fused with the republican ideology²⁹ and created an urban ethic, an urban identity for the villagers (Shankland, 1998: 61). In the same vein, Güneş-Ayata (1992) claims that as a result of these shared experiences of city life, Alevi identity was re-interpreted and the Alevi solidaristic ethnic networks are converted into a secularised political discourse of the left³⁰, in which Alevi identity is used through the cover-up of cultural and political symbols. Within this ‘urban Alevism’, the Alevi identity has never been expressed in terms of minority rights, however, it has been continuously used for the political bargaining (Güneş-Ayata, 1992).

²⁹ The existing literature emphasises the juxtaposition of Alevism with the founding ideology of Turkey; Kemalism (See Shankland, 1999, Vorhoff, 1995). Basically, the literature focuses on the employment of the Atatürk pictures and statues by the Alevis extensively and cites their continuous references to the principle of secularism for the well being of the Alevism.

³⁰ The literature is full of examples that show the connection between the Turkish leftist movement and Alevism (See Melikoff, 1998 and Vorhoff, 1995). In general, the extensive employment of the Alevi songs within the leftist circles is emphasized and the adoption of the leftist lexicon by the Alevi musicians and even by the Alevi *dedes* were exemplified within the literature as a proof of the juxtaposition between these two traditions

As a result a more silent Alevism in reference to the institutionalised version of Germany emerged in the Turkey. Whereas in Germany more visible and institutionalised symbols are employed for indicating Alevism, in Turkey, Alevism remained more hidden and the allegoric signifiers of Alevism is employed instead of direct indexes.

4.2.1 The Military Coup D'etat of 1980 and the Urban Alevism of Turkey

Similar to the multicultural policies in Germany, the Alevi movement in Turkey affected by the emergence of new opportunity structures within the Turkish context. The most important event that changed the span of Alevism in Turkey was the military coup d'etat of 1980 and subsequent cultural policies. Partly as an as response to the legitimacy crisis of the Turkish state and partly to stop the political polarization in the Turkish context, the leaders of military coup d'etat of the 1980 initiated a process for redefinition of the Turkish identity. This new trend is described as the Turkish-Islamic synthesis and created a definition of Turkishness that combines elements claimed to be originating from the Turkic culture and Islamic tradition. At that level, we should note that scholars working on the Turkish identity has always emphasized that the Islamic tradition had always been an important element of the Turkish identity and right from the beginning of the republic, the Turkish identity have been constructed around the lines of Islam. However, unlike the civic-republican definition of Kemalism, this new definition of Turkishness emphasized being Muslim over being Turkish and promoted ethno-religious dimension of being Turkish over the civic citizenship understanding of Turkey (Bora and Can, 1991: 148). Consistent to this main premise, the military government and later on the Motherland

party instrumentalised Islam for naturalizing the politicization in the country and (un)intentionally supported the Islamic indoctrination (Ahmed, 1988:762). As a result, compulsory religious courses, which only include Sunni and even only Hanefi branch of Islam, are initiated. The construction of mosques increased and the number of high schools giving religious education became higher than ever. These policies produced a mechanism that aim to assimilate the heterodox Alevism into the Sunni Islam, which created a general unrest among the Alevis (Kehl-Bodrogi, 1992: 14).

However, more importantly these policies dislocated the unitary understanding of the Turkish nationalism, which previously provided a safe ground for the religious and ethnic minorities and resulted in the alienation of some segments of the society from the state (Bora and Can, 1991: 148). The most commonly cited of these segments are the Alevis and Kurds. Obviously the state policies are understood as a process of turkification by the Kurds and sunnification by the Alevis. As a result of this re-politicisation of Alevism, the silent Alevi associations, which deal with the activities of culture preservation in the metropolitan districts, or struggling to improve the infra structure of their villages gained a new impetus and started to organize on the national level, by protesting the state policies or demanding the prevention of the discriminatory practices brought by the military coup d'etat. The main demand of Alevism was the prevention of the discrimination and reconstruction of the Turkish citizenship according to the civic-republican principles, which promoted secularism and created a channel for their inclusion to the national identity. Therefore, instead of demanding a differentiated policy

from the state, Alevis in Turkey created discourses that demand the finalization of differentiated policies that favour the Turkic and Islamic elements over those of Alevi. Their slogans were equality and freedom of speech and religion. Moreover, since the Alevi movement in Turkey emerged as a reaction to the state policies, it shows a greater diversity in reference to that of Germany. Alevi subjects previously enrolled within different political circles juxtaposed their previous ideological positioning with the elements of Alevism and as a result various discourses articulated around the main signifier of Alevism emerged in Turkey.

As a result of these different contexts, Alevi subjects migrated to Germany constructed a distinctive Alevism, which defines Alevism in reference to the key concepts such as “difference”, “identity” and “recognition” and developed political demands for the affirmation of the “Alevi difference” and recognition of the Alevi identity on legal grounds. On the contrary, in the Turkish context, Alevi subject constructed a more “traditional Alevism”, which employs key concepts such as “equality” and “religious freedom” and developed political demands for the affirmation of “state indifference towards Alevis”. Instead of the particularistic stand of the Alevis in Germany, which claims specific rights as Alevi subjects, Alevis in Turkey located themselves in the universalistic position of egalitarian citizenship and condemned the practices persecuting Alevi subjects.

CHAPTER V

TRANSNATIONAL ALEVI POLITICS

As a result of the military coup d'état, the migrant networks between Turkey and Germany experienced a short-term interruption. However, after the first elections in 1983, Turkey started to develop a more liberal ground, which encouraged the development of civil society organizations. Alevi associations also took part within the boom of civil society. With the establishment of the Alevi associations in Turkey, the Alevi transnational space between Germany and Turkey is fully actualised. Starting from the mid 1980s, leaders of the Alevi associations in Germany started to travel to Turkey, and have taken part in the discussions and provided financial resources for the establishment and/or development of Alevi associations in Turkey.

5.1 Understanding Alevi Politics from a Transnational Perspective

However, the existing literature generally explains this connection in the opposite direction, i.e. the conventional literature claims that Alevis started to organize in Germany as a result of the developments in Turkey. In fact, such a conceptualisation is a repetition of the culturalist fallacies that conceptualised immigrant population a product of their “exotic cultures” brought from the homeland. Most of these accounts provide either false information about the actual event or they are over interpretations reached without sufficient knowledge. For instance, Joppke (Joppke 1999: 220), while analysing the

contemporary politics within the immigrant groups from Turkey, extensively cites the German daily, die Zeit, and claims that “after the ... bloody pogroms by fundamentalist Muslims against Alevites in Turkey, sizeable sections of Alevites ... among the Turkish immigrants in Germany, suddenly discovered, and began to act on, their difference”. However, he ignores several factors, firstly, at the time of Sivas events, The Federation of European Alevi Union³¹ (later, changed its name to the Federation of German Alevi Union) was in preparation to make its third annual meeting. So, although the importance of Sivas event for Alevi movement is undeniable, it is clear that Alevis in Germany started to organize on their difference long before the Sivas event. However, several scholars recognized this fallacy within the literature and corrected the synchrony between associational life in Turkey and Germany. For instance, Karin Vorhoff (1998: 39) claimed that “[a]s associational activities and publication started a bit earlier in the Alevi diaspora than in Turkey, one can assume that migrants in Europe may have to some extent stimulated the Alevi awakening in their native country.” On the same way, Massicard (2003) worked on the Alevi movement in Germany and Turkey and claimed that for analysing the emergence of identity politics among the Alevis, we should look at the roles of diaspora population and localization processes. As a result of this observation, several studies investigated the European and Turkish Alevi movement in a comparative

³¹ The Federation of German Alevi Union is first established in 19-20.06.1990 with the name of the Federation of Alevi Communities and accepted by the German law in 17.01.1991. The first headquarter of the Federation was in the city of Mainz (Rheinland Pfalz, Germany). In 1993, the organisation started to organise in other European countries and changed its name to the Federation of European Alevi Unions and transferred the headquarter to the city of Köln (Nord-Westphalian, Germany). As a result of the protest of association from other European countries, the federation changed its name to the Federation of German Alevi Unions in 25.11.1997, and initiated the construction of the Confederation of European Alevi Unions, which gathered the majority of the Alevi associations in Europe under its roof.

perspective in the last decades (Rigoni, 2003). These studies focused on the connections between the Alevi associations in Germany and Turkey and some of them pointed out the material and information exchanges between them as well. For instance, Argun (2003: 108) states that:

...Alevi[s] [in Europe, particularly in Germany] nevertheless have made progress ... and gained significant experience in associationism. This experience has, under favourable conditions and from time to time, been transferred to the Turkish political arena, especially in the form of sharing organizational skills and leadership between Europe and Turkey.

Although these scholars, employing comparative perspective, rejected the understanding of a monolithic Alevi movement that occurred in various localities simultaneously and demonstrated the divergences within the Alevi movement, their main explanations are still bounded with their conceptualisation of the Turkish politics and they analysed the Alevi movement in Germany as the peculiar by-product of the political improvements in Turkey. Contrary to this main trend, I will propose an explanation that conceptualises the Alevi associations in Germany, especially the umbrella organisation AABF, as the main actor(s), affecting the direction of the Alevi movement in Turkey.

5.2 Symbolic Capital Transfer in the Transnational Alevi Space

The emergence of the German Alevi associations as active actors within the Turkish political arena became possible only after 1985 and especially during 1990s, when the Alevi associations in Germany and Turkey were established and institutionalised to some extent. Moreover, this date also coincides with the acquirement of the technological

preconditions, improved telecommunication channels and cheap transportation facilities. Consistent to the hypothesis proposed in the second chapter, instead of the individual Alevi subjects, continuous back and forth movements between the two countries are conducted by the leaders and prominent members of these associations or executed via sending facsimiles and e-mail messages, between the associations. By the 1990s, the leaders of the Alevi associations in Turkey and Germany were making continuous travels between the two countries (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000: 21). For instance, Turgut Öker, the leader of the federation, was almost always on the road to address Alevi audiences in Turkey and Germany or to represent Alevi in meetings with the political parties and government functionaries. Similar to the actors of the German associations, the leaders of Alevi associations in Turkey started to engage in continuous back and forth travels between the two countries. The most famous examples of them are Ali Doğan, the leader of the Anatolian Hacı Bektaş Veli Cultural Foundations and the leader of the Cem Foundations, İzzettin Doğan. Especially in the 1990s, observing Turgut Öker or the previous leaders of AABF: Ali Rıza Gülçiçek and Ali Kılıç, opening a new Alevi association in Turkey or providing financial source for a meeting on Alevism was an ordinary event. Right from the beginning the German organisations were important actors in initiating the Alevi movement in Turkey. For instance, the buying of the headquarter of the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Associations in Ankara became only possible with the financial aid, provided by the Alevi association from Wunppertal, Germany (Balkız, 2002:24). Similar examples can be increased by investigating the budgets of the Alevi associations in Turkey. Although the transnational Alevi space is started be constructed in the 1980s, the interaction between the

two countries is intensified after the 1990s and during this time the multicultural Alevism of Germany made its first public appearance in Turkey. Therefore, my main focus will be the interactions occurred in the 1990s.

To provide an analytical investigation of the interaction in the 1990s, I take three events that are accepted by the scholars working on Alevism as turning points and discuss these events in reference to the role played by the Alevi associations in Germany. These events are “The Declaration of Alevism” (1990), “The establishment of the Peace Party” (1995) and “The Constitution of Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council” (1994-1999). Although the importance and consequences of these events within the Turkish politics is dubious, they are the keystones of the Alevi movement. For instance, the declaration of Alevism is generally accepted as the turning point of the Alevi movement, which defends the Alevi identity explicitly for the first time. Similarly, the foundation of the Peace Party is the second attempt to establish a party that organized among the Alevi population after the TBP. Only after the establishment of the party, the issue of Alevism became more apparent in the Turkish public; more television programs dedicated to the subject emerged, more political leaders employed the word Alevism and Alevi in their speeches, which was almost absent in the previous decades. Finally, the constitution of Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council is a unique event in the history of Alevism, which gathered a vast number of Alevi associations under its roof with the claim of being the only legitimate actor to speak in behalf of Alevism. Moreover, it is also the first attempt to establish a

corporate unity, which combines the European and Turkish organizations under the name of the same association.

It is possible to figure out some other events that are effective on Alevism such as Sivas and Gazi events, and without doubt these events have tremendous effects on Alevism. However, although they renovated the interest of the Alevi population to organize and increased the membership to Alevi associations, these events do not provide a suitable ground for investigating the connection between Alevis in Germany and Turkey. Rather, these events created a general protest among the Alevi population and acquired spontaneous reaction from Alevis both in Turkey and Germany, by skyrocketing the number of Alevi associations and accelerating the pace of organization. On the contrary, the selected events occurred in a more institutionalised environment and in a long period of time with the cooperation of Alevis in Germany and Turkey. Therefore, they constitute the suitable ground for an institutional analysis of the connection between the transnational pairs.

5.2.1 The Declaration of Alevism

On May 6, 1990 in the daily Cumhuriyet a declaration with the name: ‘The Alevi declaration’ was published with the struggles of Rıza Zelyut³². Basically, the declaration describes Alevism in modern Turkey and demands some rights from the Turkish state on

³² Rıza Zelyut is a former Teacher and writer. Since 1968 he works as a journalist; mostly he writes about Alevism. He has published several books and articles on Alevism, he is a well-known Alevi activist (Vorhoff, 1995: 202).

the behalf of the Alevi population. In fact, this declaration is the first attempt that calls “for acceptance of the difference of the Alevi faith and culture, and equal representation and opportunities in education, media and in receiving their own religious services” (Göker, 1999: 196). Without doubt, the declaration is a controversial one in reference to the previous attempts to speak on the behalf of Alevism. Firstly, for the first time, the declaration speaks of Alevism directly and demands rights for Alevis, instead of using a more allegoric language, which would signify Alevism, without mentioning it, or instead of employing common symbols, as it was the case in the TBP. On the bases of these observations, the scholars accept the declaration as the first attempt to make Alevism public and demand recognition and right of self-determination from the Turkish state (Vorhoff, 1998: 31). Similar to Vorhoff, Göker (1999: 106) claims that the declaration is the first influential public appearance of the Alevi identity (See also Erman and Göker, 2000). Consistently, many scholars defined the declaration as the actual starting point of the Alevi movement (Şener, 1989a), or claimed that the declaration changed the direction and content of the Alevi movement radically. For instance, by naming the pre-declaration period as the emergence of the Alevi movement and post-declaration period as the judicial struggle for the Alevi identity Lütfi Kaleli, announces the declaration as the turning point of the Alevi movement (Kaleli, 2000). At that level we observe that the discourse of ‘difference’, ‘identity politics’ and eventual “demand of recognition from the Turkish state’, which were the key concepts employed by the Alevis in Germany, made their first appearance in the Turkish public scene.

The articles within the declaration illustrate this situation clearly. Basically, the declaration emphasises the “difference of Alevism” in reference to the Sunni majority and underlines that although Alevism is a branch of Islam and it is as old as the Sunni version, in terms of practice and religious teaching it includes considerable differences. Moreover, the declaration describes the discriminatory practices against Alevis: the absence of publications and television programs about Alevism in the Turkish media, the absence of Alevism in the religious textbooks, the absence of Alevism in the Directorate of the Religious Affairs and the continuation of policies of building mosques in the Alevi villages. The declaration demands the recognition of the existence of these discriminatory practices and asks for prevention by means of initiating new policies and measures. For instance, the declaration demands the building of schools and *cem evi*s to Alevi villages instead of mosques; the introduction of Alevi courses to the schools and representation of Alevis in the Directorate of the Religious Affairs. Although these demands utter the common protests of Alevis living both in Germany and Turkey, the suggested solutions contradict with the general schema of the Alevis in Turkey: “indifference from the state”, since all of the prescribed solutions require a differentiated policy of Turkey towards her citizens of Alevi origin and demonstrates a commonality with the demand of Alevis in Germany: “recognition of difference from the state”.

In addition to the demand of recognition of the Alevi difference, there are other elements that carry strong indexes of the German context. Similar to the declaration given by the

leaders of the Alevi associations in Germany, the declaration compares the situation in Europe to that of Turkey. For instance:

For the creation of a real, peaceful society in Turkey, the Alevi and Sunni masses should have positive thoughts for each other... The negative thoughts should be thrown away. Each belief and each culture should show respect to others. Today, the families in Europe belonging to the Protestant and Catholic sects are living peacefully and friendly, side by side. Such an honest cohesion is possible for Turkey as well.

Within the declaration, there are other references to Europe and particularly to Germany as well. For instance, the declaration claims that there are 350-400,000 Alevis living in Germany and enlists the problems experienced by the Alevis in Germany and on behalf of the Alevi population in Germany, the declaration demands some regulations and policies that would help them to teach Alevism to their children, such as Alevi courses or television programs on Alevism. These demands are in total conformity with those of the Alevi association in Germany.

Furthermore, the existence of the global ideoscapes is visible within the demands as well. For instance, the declaration makes reference to the universal human rights and claims that Alevis are not able to enjoy the freedom of speech and belief and the manifestation of Alevism is restricted by the pressures of the Turkish state. On the basis of this, the declaration demands the Turkish intellectuals to defend the existence of Alevism in reference to the universal human rights. In fact, since all of the demands in the declaration are concerning the group rights but not the individual ones, the very existence of such a statement within the declaration demonstrates the ability of the global ideoscapes in

articulating itself to the diverse political trends, even by creating paradoxical positions. However, the most important statements within the declaration are the demands concerning the institutions of *dede* and *ayin-i cem*. Basically, the declaration compares the position of Alevism with those of Christian and Jewish minorities in Turkey and claims that due to “the denial of the Alevi existence”, there are no institutions to reproduce Alevism. Moreover, the *dedes* are compared to the imams and a reformulation of the institution of *dede* that requires direct engagement of the Turkish state was demanded. The declaration even demanded, the training of *dedes* by the Turkish state to be sent to Germany for providing religious education for the Alevi residing there.

Not surprisingly, all of these demands correspond with those of multicultural Alevism, which is on the way of transforming itself into a denomination in the liberal context of Germany. Indeed, none of these are lucky coincidences, but a symbolic capital transfer from Germany to Turkey. Even the actual text of the declaration had written in Germany with the name of ‘the Alevi Declaration of Hamburg’ in December 1988 and a year later it was published in Turkey with slight differences (Kaleli, 2000:173-184). The scholars working on the issue also points out this transnational dimension of the declaration. For instance, Sökefeld (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000: 25) describes the discursive connection between the Alevi in Germany and Turkey and mentions that after the Alevi Declaration of Hamburg, a similar declaration is published in Turkey that created a great impact on the discussion on Alevism. However, he is reluctant to draw a direct connection between the two declarations and claims that the Alevi politics in Germany is always related to

developments in Turkey and explains the connection between the Hamburg declaration and that of published in daily Cumhuriyet as an indirect impetus created by the former (Sökefeld and Schwalgin, 2000: 25). Nevertheless, the connection between the two declarations is more than a discursive communality constructed within the transnational Alevi space between the two countries; on the contrary, it is a transnational symbolic capital transfer from Germany to Turkey and the Hamburg Alevi Culture Centre (HAKM) is the activist of this transfer. Even Rıza Zelyut³³, who enabled the publication in Turkey, was invited by the HAKM to Germany and later sent to Turkey to publish the declaration (Kaleli, 2000, 177).

5.2.2 The Establishment of the Peace Party (BP)

In the 1990s, for the second time in its history, Alevi movement established a political party, the Democratic Peace Movement (DBH). Similar to the TBP of the 1970s, founders of the party were influential Alevis and Ali Haydar Veziroğlu³⁴, an Alevi businessman, emerged as the main financier of the party³⁵ (Şahhüseyinoğlu, 2001: 85). However, unlike the case of the TBP, the easily recognizable signifiers of Alevism were absent in the party

³³ Rıza Zelyut explains this event as: “I and the Alevi Associations in Europe prepared a declaration that would utter the demands and problems of the Alevis to the public. I made all respectable businessmen and intellectuals, initially, Yaşar Kemal and Aziz Nesin, to sign this text, which was named as the Alevi Declaration” (Güneş, 31.10.2002)

³⁴ Although he was not known with his Alevi identity before the establishment of the DHP and he claimed that majority of the party staff were actually Sunnis, both the leaders of other political parties/movements and opposing Alevis defined the party as an Alevi party (For instance see Zelyut in Akşam, 28.08.1998).

³⁵ Ali Haydar Veziroğlu is known as the owner of a large construction company, which generally works in the construction of infra-structural facilities for municipalities. In a survey conducted in 1998 with the participation of 20,000 individuals, Ali Haydar Veziroğlu was declared in the first ten of the most successful businessmen of the last 75 years of the Turkish Republic (Cumhuriyet, Octobe2 9,1998). According to his own declaration, “he (himself) spent a treasure for the establishment and organisation of the party” (Hürriyet, 15.02.1998).

flag and the program, but still, there were many elements that directed the public and other political movements to label the DBH and later on BP³⁶ as an Alevi party. Indeed, both the party officials and activists extensively engaged in the public debates concerning Alevism. For instance, on August 10, 1998 in Çorum, the Party officials attended to demonstrations, organised by the Alevi associations for protesting the ongoing trial about Gazi events (Cumhuriyet, 15.08.1998). Similarly, in the proceeding days, the party provided free bus services for Alevi associations to organise a similar demonstration in Samsun (Cumhuriyet, 13.08.1998). Moreover, the party officials participated in ongoing discussions about Alevism by giving speeches or endorsing the declaration prepared by the Alevi associations. For instance, when Şevket Kazan, the minister of Justice of the period, uttered the words Alevi and deviant/psycho interchangeably in a speech about Turco-Syrian relations, Abidin Özgünay, the leader of the party, gave a declaration condemning Kazan and his party for representing the views of religious fundamentalists (08.10.1998, Hürriyet). Needless to say, neither the party officials nor the activists paid a similar attention to demonstration organised by other civil society organisations or by other political groups; other than those that were arranged by Alevi organisations or attended/supported by Alevis *en masse*. On the basis of these observations it can be

³⁶ The party was established with the name Democratic Peace Movement (DBH) on October 1996. However, as a result of the trial against the party, the party cadre resigned and instead established the Peace Party (BP) on May 1997. Although the trial finalised in favour of the DBH, since the party could not achieve its organisation in the national scale, the general attorney decided for its dissolution on December 1997. BP, the successor of the DBH, took all sub structure of the DBH and attended to the general and local election in 1999. However, due to the failure in these elections, the BP was dissolved on May 9, 1999.

claimed that the DHB was a political movement that engaged in making of Alevi politics though this stand of the party was not expressed as clearly as it was the case in TBP.

In general, instead of employing the Alevi lexicon and declaring itself openly as an Alevi movement, the party was more oriented to the discussions of ethno-religious pluralism and multiculturalism. This trend was visible, within the party program and the declarations given by the influential party members. For instance, on December 5, 1996, the Party gave full-page advertisement to the most prominent Turkish newspapers with a slogan, “Our names are different, but our surname is Turkey”. Without doubt this slogan, which calls for the diversity as the richness of the country, resembles to the multicultural slogans of Germany. Indeed, the slogan is almost the translation of the famous statement, “*Wir sind Berlin: wir sind helle und Dunkle*”; we are Berlin, we are bright and dark. Obviously, this statement and many other features expressed in the party program and declarations were symbolic capital transfers from Germany to Turkey. Not surprisingly, the AABF was an active participant in the establishment of the party from the beginning. Argun (2003: 112) explains this situation as:

The leadership of European Alevism also participated in the formation of an Alevi political movement in Turkey, which later became a political party. Under Ali Haydar Veziroğlu the Democratic Peace Movement (DBH) was formed in 1995. The European leadership took part in the DBH congress in 1995 in Turkey. But they later withdrew their support because of organizational disagreements.

In the same vein, Ali Kılıç, the leader of the AABF, explained the support of AABF to the Party as follows (Hürriyet, 23.01.1999):

With this slogan [our address would be, where our name is] we meant that we will support the parties that would accept the concrete demands of the Alevi society... Among the 21 parties, that were announced to attend the elections, there is only a single party that has articles in the party program concerning demands of the Alevi society such as the Directorate of Religious Affairs, secularism, democracy and national and sub-national identities.

The Turkish press also emphasized this dimension of the party. For instance, the meeting (Autumn 1995) in which the decision for the establishment of the party is held, was described by the daily Cumhuriyet as “the Democratic Peace Movement established by Hacı Bektaş Veli Association and the Federation of European Alevi Unions with the attendance of 500 buses and 18 airplanes from Europe” (Cumhuriyet 26.11.1995). In these meetings it was decided to join the national election with 30 independent candidates. The selected election districts were the places populated mainly by the Alevis and they demonstrated a perfect correspondence with the election districts that the TBP gathered the majority of its votes in the 1970s. The basic idea of this movement was to send at least 20 MPs and create a powerful block within the parliament that will raise the problems of the Alevis. However, since the surveys showed that the possible numbers of MP’s would be less than 20, Veziroğlu rejected to participate in the elections and instead declared his support for the Republican People’s Party (Kaleli, 2000: 93). This created a dispute between the Turkish and German parts and as a result, the AABF declared that they would continue to support independent candidates with the help of 73 associations dependent to the federation (Şahhüseynoğlu, 2001: 85). However, this claimed support could not be achieved and consequently the party withdrew from the election. After the elections in

1996 and heavy debates within the party, the movement started to institutionalise itself and took the name of “Democratic Peace Movement” (DBH). However, due to the paragraph in the article:

We are in favour of the abolition of the Directorate of Religious Affairs as a state institution. The institutions should be given to believers; only the volunteer community leaders, who want to participate in the institution, should determine the budget and the principles of representation.

the party was taken to the constitutional court with the charge of opposition to the 136. article of the Turkish Constitution. Within this process, 162 of 164 constitutive members resigned and established the Peace Party (BP). The Peace Party participated in general elections of 1999 and gathered only 80.000 votes, which is % 0.18 of the total votes, and after this dramatic failure, the Party abolished itself on May 9, 1999 (Kaleli, 2000: 95).

As it was the case in the Alevi declaration, there were various traces of the multicultural Alevism of Germany in the process of the BP. When the BP is compared to the TBP, this trend can be observed clearly. Unlike the TBP, which opened a branch in Germany to gather votes among the immigrants, living in Germany, the BP was interacting with the Alevis, living in Germany directly, by including them in the decision making processes and the preparation of party program etc. In fact, the level of interaction between the German and Turkish parts was so visible, so that the Turkish dailies reflected the establishment of the Party as; ‘the Federation of European Alevi Unions established the party’ (Cumhuriyet 26.11.1995). This creates an opposite picture in reference to the TBP whose shadow association in Germany, TALEP, abolished itself after the ban of the party with the

military takeover of 1980 (Gül, 1999: 84). However, there was not such a strict relationship in the case of the BP. For instance, even though the Turkish part of the party had rejected participating in the elections in 1996, the AABF insisted on continuing to participate in the elections with independent candidates (Şahhüseyinoğlu, 2001: 85). Therefore, it can be claimed that whereas Turkish part was the determining factor for Alevis living in Germany in the 1970s, in the establishment of the BP, Alevis living in Germany were more active in determining the process. An analysis of the party program of the BP reveals the symbolic capital that transferred from Germany. The most obvious traces are among the special emphases on the immigrant problem. For instance, in the party program, there is a specific section dedicated to the Turkish nationals living abroad, which was absent in any other part of the time. The party program was stating (Party Program, 1999: 86):

Our Peace Party will stop the perspective, that perceives our citizens abroad only as remittances machines and will initiate the necessary measures for regulating their status in the countries of residence...On the basis of various international organizations, efficient measures will be held against the racist attacks and discriminatory regulations and it will be fought insistently in order to protect and assure the recognition of their rights that arise from their minority position. On this basis, a great effort will be used to actualise the existing international agreements between the countries.

Since there is a large population of immigrants from Turkey in Europe, it is possible to claim that such statements should be one of the main issues of each Turkish political party, but none of the other political parties had statements concerning the issue. Due to the high concentration of immigrants from Turkey in Germany, when the statement, the problems of the immigrants is used, it means automatically the problems of the Turkish nationals residing in Germany. Indeed, most of the statements mentioned in the party program were

directly connected to the problems of the immigrants in Germany. For instance, the demand about the international agreement is a direct reference to the Ankara Agreement signed in 1963 between Germany and Turkey, which foresees the abolishment of the restriction on freedom of the movement for the immigrants from Turkey (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 37). However, the German authorities have never actualised the agreement. In addition to this, there are also other statements that reflect the situation in Germany (Party Program, 1999: 87):

Our Peace Party defends the right of dual citizenship. With the recognition of this right, all of the rights of the citizens living abroad such as dual retirement will be guaranteed. Our citizens will be given the right to attend elections via the consulates or similar institutions... Our Peace Party will ... rehabilitate the consulates abroad, in order to deal with its responsibilities towards the citizens. That is, these institutions will be the places where the problems of citizens will be solved.

In fact, Germany is the only European country that forces migrants to choose between the citizenship of Germany and the citizenship of the country of origin (Seifert, 1998). Moreover, the majority of the Turkish consulates are located in Germany and there is a heavy debate on their behaviours concerning the immigrants. Basically, consulate employees are not successful at communicating with the immigrants and there are endless complaints about maltreatment (Ostergaard-Nielsen, 2003: 107-111).

However, the most important element concerning our aim, i.e. investigating the transfer of the symbolic capital from Germany to Turkey, is the statements and articles dealing with the concept of multiculturalism. In the party program, it was claimed that the BP would employ multiculturalism for integrating minorities and different ethnic groups to the

mainstream society. Needless to say, this statement was not seen in any other party program of the time, though multiculturalism was the dominant paradigm in the German context (Seifert, 1998). There is a special section dedicated to the ethnic, religious and cultural pluralism in the party program (Party Program, 1998: 37-42):

Our Peace Party defends pluralism in politics and multiculturalism in the social life; it is in favour of a society in which different cultural and religious clusters can fully actualise themselves ... Our Peace Party, will end all of the procedures that create inequality and unfairness between different ethnic, cultural and religious clusters. On the basis of this, the justice system and policies of education and culture will be reconsidered and it will aggregate and improve the brotherhood, love and friendship between different ethnic, cultural and religious groups.

The lack of political rights and utterance of social multiculturalism or culture sensitive policies demonstrate a perfect correspondence with the understanding of multiculturalism in Germany. Basically, multiculturalism here is defined as the state of including more than one ethnic, cultural or religious group within the borders and their peaceful and friendly cohesion in the cultural realm, without any reference to the *de jure* political rights. The claimed aim of the multiculturalism in the social life is a clear manifestation of the multicultural Alevism.

Moreover, in terms of Alevism, there are some specific statements within the party program (Party Program, 1999: 40-41). For instance, the program states that the party will take the necessary measures to change the prejudices, caused by conscious or unconscious propagandas against Alevis. This statement is without doubt, a repetition of the demand first pronounced in the Declaration of Alevism in 1990. Basically, in order to change these

prejudices the party plans to investigate the textbooks and proposes the reformation of them in order to provide accurate knowledge about the Alevi faith and culture. However, the current textbooks used in the religious courses basically ignore Alevism and do not provide either positive or negative information about the issue, though there are heavy debates about the attitudes of the instructors. However, creating textbooks for Alevism was one of the main discussions among the Alevis in Germany and in fact, now there are Alevi courses offered within the German schools in several states as discussed in the previous chapter. This statement within the party program is a transfer of this discussion to the Turkish politics. Now there is even a textbook for the Alevi faith, with the name: ‘The Religion and Ethic from the Perspective of Alevi-Bektashism’ (1996).

More important than all, the main motive of the party was different in reference to the TBP. Whereas the TBP was aiming to get into the parliament and create a power block within the parliament, which will defend the interest of Alevis, in the BP the aim was creating an organ to defend the interest of Alevism either in or out of the parliament. In fact, the head of the Federation of German Alevi Unity explains this trend:

Our main motive in establishing a party was making Alevism a public debate that would be discussed in whole Turkey. In Germany before the elections everybody, even the gay and lesbians establish a party and after creating a public opinion they support one of the mainstream parties. What we wanted to create in the attempt of Peace Party was something like this.³⁷

³⁷ Interview with Turgut Öker, the leader of AABF, 23. 08. 2001, PSAD, Ankara.

As the quotation reveals, the aim of the party was not mobilizing Alevi to participate in favour of the BP, but to create a discussion and support in the public view to defend Alevi interests. With this features, it is possible to classify the BP as an interest party. The concept of the interest party is first used by Yashia, who was trying to investigate the peculiar interest group formation, which struggles within the political arena though it is not a party. In other words, an interest party consists of an interest group who joins to the elections and competes with the other parties for forming a public opinion in favour of the interest group (cited in Clives, 2001: 5). Indeed the observations of the participants in this movement are supporting this statement. For instance, Zeynel Gül (1999: 158) was saying that the idea behind the Peace Party was establishing a movement that has a strong support in Europe, like that of *Milli Görüş*, National Outlook, and Islamist mobilization in Turkey. The BP was an experience of interest party in Turkey, which worked in the transnational political space. The party was an instrument to transfer the symbolic capital of multicultural Alevism to Turkey. Since a party is more difficult to be closed down or censure, it is a valuable method in the Turkish field for creating large-scale public debates. Without doubt, the party was successful at that level and in the present picture; political parties create programs and statements concerning the Alevi and conduct special meetings with the leaders of the Alevi associations from Germany and Turkey before the election campaigns. Therefore, though the party never gained a significant political power, it achieved the mission of making Alevism a public debate.

5.2.3 The Constitutions of the Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council

After the 1990s, the associational life of the Alevis in Turkey increased to a great extent. Many new associations were established and the existing associations opened new branches. This trend was further activated with the Sivas and Gazi events. As a reaction to these bloody events, the membership of the Alevi organizations skyrocketed and Alevi associational life reached its peak. Statistically speaking, whereas the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association was a relatively small organization with only three branches before the Sivas event, it reached 25 branches and more than 20,000 members within a year. Similar trends can be observed within other Alevi organizations as well. Within this climate the constitution of an umbrella organization that will gather all of the Alevi organization under its roof became an important agenda for the Alevi movement. To discuss this possibility several organizations arranged a meeting on 18 November 1994 in Şahkulu Endowment in İstanbul. Similar to the previous two cases within this process the Alevi associations in Germany were also represented and the first leader of this umbrella organization was elected as Ali Rıza Gülçiçek, who was also the leader of the Federation of European Alevi Unions at the time (Kaleli, 2000: 88). Argun (2003: 108) claims that the Federation of the German Alevi Unions “presided over the formation of the first federative structure combining the Alevi associations in Turkey”.

During the meeting in the Şahkulu Endowment, the Representative Council was established and several decisions concerning the future and mission of the association were determined. Some of the statements were direct repetitions of the Declaration of Alevism,

such as condemnation of the compulsory religious courses and the policies and of the Directorate of Religious Affairs. However, there are some statements, which indicate that the attempt set a new agenda for the Alevi movement in comparison to the Declaration of Alevism. For instance, the attempt defined a new mission to the Alevi movement that were absent in the previous decades. Namely, this new mission is the struggle for the recognition of the Alevi identity. Basically, the Representative Council defined the “juridical and social acceptance of the Alevi identity” as its mission. Before the establishment of the Representative Council the three main Alevi associations did not mention such a mission before the establishment of the Representative Council³⁸. For instance, the editor of the monthly publication of the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Organization, which was also a constitutive partner of the Representative Council, next to the European organizations was in the article explaining the main objectives of the publication was stating in 1992 (Balkız, 1992: 3):

During this time when there is reactionary, racist and sectarian movement all around the world... Our world and our country was in a position like this [referring to the post coup d'état political climate] though it is not the time, though it was unnecessary, suddenly, intentionally, the discussion on Alevism is activated...Under these conditions, as revolutionaries, democrats, socialists, our urgent mission is keeping the peace, the human rights, the democracy, the brotherhood of the nations and struggle for the actualization of them...Our Association claims ... The Directorate of Religious Affairs should be abolished, the policy for the compulsory religious courses should be ended, the assimilation policy towards the Alevi citizens should be given up.

³⁸ In fact, since the Cem foundation was established after this early attempt, therefore the claim does not cover this foundation.

All of these demands clearly fit to the positioning of the Alevi movement of Turkey in the 1990s, where basic motive was regaining the rights that are lost due to the differentialist policies of the state. Moreover, the leader of the association claims that the organization of Pir Sultan Abdal is not an organization that utters the demands of a specific political party, a particular sect, a race or a region (Demir, 1992: 5). Similar to the Pir Sultan Abdal, the Anatolian Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture Foundations were not making any statement concerning the legal recognition of the Alevi identity. On the contrary, the foundations were engaging in the activities of the commemoration of the “martyrs of Sivas incident” and establishment of the headquarter in Ankara. Interestingly, after the first meeting of the Representative Council, the leaders of these two associations changed their positions and endorsed the constitution of the representative council, which was defining the juridical recognition of the Alevi identity as a primary mission. However, interestingly enough, the constitutional acceptance of the Alevi identity was a statement of the constitution of the Federation of German Alevi Union. The article defines this mission as: “AABF works for the acceptance of the Alevi belief as the constitutional right and for the protection of this right, in Turkey”. Moreover, there is another statement published after the first meeting (Kaleli, 2000: 88-9):

From now on, all issues concerning the Alevi society, be it political, social or cultural, the only legitimate institution that should be consulted is this Representative Council. None of the declaration that are delivered by individual persons and institutions, would interest the Alevi public.

Obviously, this statement is contradicting with the claim of not being an organization of a specific, group, sect or party, which are expressed by the leaders of Pir Sultan Abdal

Culture Associations, repeatedly. (See Cumhuriyet, July, 21, 1998) The very constitutions of the Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council was the repetition of the institutionalization process experienced in Germany and the statement about being the only legitimate actor to speak on the behalf of Alevism.

However, due to the political discussions within the Council and establishment of the Peace Party, the movement of the Representative Council have been come to an end within a year. The discussions on an umbrella organisation in Turkey were activated in 1998 again with the struggles of the Federation of the German Alevi Union and in 1999 the Union of the Alevi-Bektashi Institutions was established, with a larger representation than the former: the Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council. On 12-13 August 1999, the new constitution of the Union of the Alevi-Bektashi Institutions was first read to the public in the annual festival of Hacı Bektaş Veli. The leader of the Federation of German Alevi Union explained the establishment of this umbrella organisation as:

Instead of expressing ourselves with other names, by Making Takkiye and by rejecting Alevism, which is our essential identity, we decided to organise under the Alevi-Bektaş identity, like it has been the case in Europe. We, organise freely in Europe since the last ten years. We constructed a federation with the cooperation of representatives from 11 countries. Now, we will combine the organisations in Europe with that of in Turkey. So that, from now on, we will continue our activities under a single name (Radikal, 19.08.2002).

The objectives of the Council were approximately same with the previous attempt: one of the objectives was the recognition of the Alevi identity and the creation of the legal guarantee of the Alevi identity. This second attempt occurred simultaneously with the

discussion on Alevi religious courses in Germany. On the basis of this simultaneity, it is possible to read the event as the mirror image of the struggle of the Federation of the German Alevi Union to be recognized as a religious community, a denomination in Germany. The representative Council aims to get a position vis a vis the state similar to that of the Federation of the German Alevi Union has acquired vis a vis the German states, the legitimate representative of the religious community. Moreover, the constitution of this second attempt was including several statements that were never openly declared within the constitutions of the three main Turkish associations, due to the legal restriction in Turkey. For instance, there was the article that claims that the Union Alevi-Bektashi Institutions open Alevi prayer houses. Argun (2003: 108) as explains this position as:

The organization has also contributed to and presided over the formation of the first federation of Alevi associations in Turkey and the Union of Alevi-Bektashi Organizations (AAKB) in 2000, which was legally challenged by the Interior Ministry for its declared goal to foster the proliferation of Alevi prayer houses (cemevis) in Turkey.

Still the Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council is the largest umbrella association within the Turkish political arena. It only excludes some minor associations mainly organized locally and the CEM foundations, which position itself against the Representative Council and engages in close relations with the Turkish state. As a result of this processes, the claim of state indifference towards Alevis is replaced by the slogan of state difference towards Alevis. Now, almost all of the organizations that took part in the process of Representative Council adopted the main premises of the movement. For instance, the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Associations, which was strongly rejecting the label of Alevi organization, endorsed the constitution that claims to be the only legitimate representative

of Alevism in Turkey. Similarly, the Anatolian Hacı Bektaş Veli Culture Foundations adopted the slogan of the juridical recognition of the Alevi identity by the Turkish state as its main mission. So, in the 2001, both the Anatolian Hacı Bektaş Culture Foundation and the Pir Sultan Abdal Culture Association endorsed the corporate declaration that was claiming, “the only solution of the Alevi Enigma lies in the constitutional guarantee of the Alevi identity” (PSKAD, 2001).

CONCLUSION

This thesis emerged out of the dissatisfaction with the existing literature that explains political activities of immigrants as the peculiar outgrowth of the political realm of the emigration country. Instead of conceptualising immigrants as passive agents that have lost their ties with the emigration country and/or solely determined by the realities of the politics of the emigration country (eg. Turkey), this thesis claims that though they act within the immigration country e.g. (Germany), immigrants have the potential and capacity to direct and define the politics of the emigration country as well.

In order to discuss the critical interaction between immigrants and their counterparts remained in the emigration country, the thesis reviewed literature on transnationalism and discussed the main attempts to theorise transnationalism. Basically, the thesis accepted the approach of Thomas Faist, who employed the term transnational social space. By debating the delicate relationship between globalisation and transnationalism, the thesis drew the general schema of transnational social space. Since Germany hosts the majority of the immigrants from Turkey, the thesis discussed and summarized the preconditions and *conditions conducive* for the emergence of a transnational space between the two countries. Principally, by visiting the literature of migration from Turkey to Germany, the thesis confirmed the existing literature that points to the emergence of a transnational space

between the two countries within the last two decades. Moreover, by providing a crude typology among the immigrant population from Turkey on the basis of social stratification, the thesis claimed that the background of the immigrants in terms of social class is decisive in determining the extent and content of the transnational activities in which they participate. On the basis of this observation, the thesis focused on the lower strata of the immigrant population and defined their activities within the transnational space between Turkey and Germany as claimed as an inquiry of a symbolic identity within the Turkish political arena.

In order to discuss its main argument, the thesis took the case of the Alevi identity politics as a case study and discussed the content and scope of the transnational Alevi space binding the two countries. After providing the working definition of Alevism, the thesis concentrated on the distinctive discourses constructed in Germany and Turkey and discussed the main objectives and demands of the Alevi movement in Turkey and Germany. By discussing the role of different opportunity structures within these countries, the thesis claimed that whereas the main motive of the Alevi movement in Germany was the ‘demand of recognition of difference from the state’, the main motive of the Alevi movement in Turkey was ‘the demand of indifference from the state’.

After discussing the similarities and differences between the two versions of Alevism, the thesis investigated the institutional interaction between the Alevi associations in Turkey and Germany. Basically, the thesis concentrated on three main events: The Declaration of

Alevism, The Establishment of the Peace Party, and The Constitution of the Alevi-Bektashi Representative Council. By providing an in-depth analysis of these events, it claimed that the understanding of Alevism constructed in Germany became an effective factor in directing the discourses among the Alevi associations in Turkey. Basically, the thesis demonstrated that in order to fully understand the Alevi Revival, besides the factors prevalent in Turkey, the structural factors in Germany and the Alevi movement in Germany should be also analysed. In other words, instead of analysing the Alevi movement in Turkey and Germany by just investigating Turkish politics, the thesis claimed that the Alevi revival is a transnational event that occurred with the critical interaction between the pairs of the transnational Alevi space.

In order to defend the main argument, which conceptualises the Alevi associations in Germany as the political agents initiating the Alevi identity politics in Turkey, the thesis compared the main argument of the thesis with those of the conventional literature on Alevi politics. On the basis of the institutional analysis, the chapter challenged the validity of the conventional literature that claims the developments in Turkey and the global political transformation are the sole determinants of the emergence of the Alevi politics, and argued that by utilising the transnational space between Turkey and Germany, the particular understanding of Alevism in Germany was transferred to Turkey and tuned out to be an effective factor influencing Turkish politics.

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