

OPERATIONS OF LAW AND SOVEREIGNTY FROM BELOW:
YOUTH, VIOLENCE AND DISORDER IN URBAN TURKEY

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Deniz Yonucu
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OPERATIONS OF LAW AND SOVEREIGNTY FROM BELOW:
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Deniz Yonucu, Ph.D.

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Drawing on a fieldwork conducted in Narova, a working class Alevi neighborhood in Istanbul, Turkey and in Specially Authorized Assize Courts, specialized in “crimes against the state,” this dissertation analyzes a complex relationship among law, violence and sovereignty. Like other Alevi populations in Turkey in general, the residents of Narova are known for their active participation in socialist movements. In addition to discussing current militarized spatial control and its effects in Narova, this dissertation also illustrates social and historical processes and relations that contributed to the Alevi community’s affiliation and identification with leftist politics in Turkey, and sheds light onto the tradition of rule and violence in Turkey.

Approaching the state as an impossible promise of monopoly over violence and law and as a fantasy product (re)productive of relations of production, I focus on Narova residents encounters with those who gained the authority to act on behalf of the state. I discuss the ways in which manifestations of sovereignty in Narova’s streets and in the courtrooms produce a relationship of mimetic rivalry between the police forces and Narova youth and illustrate the ways in which this relationship contributes to the assimilation of the police as the external object within the revolutionary self. I also demonstrate that the revelation of the “men” in the state through repressive practices lead to the state’s simultaneous demystification and

mystification. I argue that the effect of mystification inherent to the fantasy of the state can thus be traced back not only to aspects of the representative system, such as the formal equality of citizens or welfare, but to its violent side as well.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Deniz Yonucu was born in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1979. She graduated from Istanbul Bilgi University with a degree in Sociology in 2002. She holds two MA degrees in Sociology from Bogazici University and in Social Sciences from the University of Chicago. Upon receiving her MA degree at the University of Chicago, she moved to Ithaca to join Cornell University's Department of Anthropology. After Cornell, she will reside in Istanbul on a Research Grant from SALT, a Turkey based art and culture institution and will work on her book project based on her dissertation.

For Mumtaz

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PREFACE

As a child born and raised in Zeytinburnu, a working class neighborhood of Istanbul, I grew up listening to stories about the revolutionary struggle that took place in Turkey during the 1960s and 1970s. When I was a child in the mid-1980s, my grandmother would tell me stories about Deniz Gezmis, a revolutionary student leader who was executed by hanging in 1972 at the age of twenty-five. She would also talk about the clashes between the revolutionary youth and the nationalist youth that took place in Zeytinburnu streets, mass strikes, marches organized by Zeytinburnu workers and torture in prisons. I would play with the handmade wooden toys made by my revolutionary uncles in prison while listening to my grandmother's stories. I do not remember her exact words. But I remember the tone she used when talking about the past, which sounded like a very distant past to me back then.

She was sad, angry and fearful at the same time. She was feeling sad for my uncles and for all those who filled the prisons or had to leave the country after the coup of 1980. She was angry. For her, all the generous and nice people were put behind bars and tortured. She was fearful. She was afraid that when I grew up, I might have to face similar violence. After all, I was named after Deniz Gezmis. She was continuously telling me that I should never speak about the state in critical terms and that if I did I would end up in prison and be tortured there. I suppose that was her way of protecting me; by telling me how brutal the soldiers and the police could be.

Zeytinburnu was among the most organized working class neighborhoods of Istanbul before the coup of 1980. However, in the 1990s, the socialist movement lived largely in the memories of Zeytinburnu residents. It was as if all the strikes, factory

occupations and clashes between the revolutionary youth and the nationalist youth were in the distant past. It was as if Zeytinburnu was inhabited by different people back then and that those people had left. When I entered high school in another neighborhood in 1994, I realized that there were still people in Turkey who believed that the revolutionary struggle was continuing and who considered themselves as part of the struggle. These people were my Alevi schoolmates from Alevi working class neighborhoods. That was the time I first learned that there were Alevis in Turkey. I remember listening to their stories about what had been taking place in their neighborhoods. They were talking about the barricades set up in their streets, marches organized to protest against the government and clashes between the police forces and their revolutionary sisters and brothers. They were also talking about kidnappings, tanks driving in the streets, house raids, torture and deaths in custody. While listening to their stories, I realized that there were Alevi-populated neighborhoods in Istanbul and that urban life in these neighborhoods was radically different from what I had witnessed in my own neighborhood, while being at the same time very similar to what my grandmother had told about the 1970s.

I wanted to learn more about these neighborhoods. An Alevi friend took me to her neighborhood, Yenibosna, in 1994. It was very similar to and yet very different from my own neighborhood. Like Zeytinburnu, in Yenibosna the streets were muddy and most of the houses were makeshift shanty houses or incomplete apartment buildings. However, there was one big difference. There was not a single wall in the neighborhood without spray-painted leftist slogans, such as: “Long live our revolutionary struggle,” “The murderous state will pay the price,” “The people’s justice will call for an account,” etc. My friend took me to a café. While drinking tea in the café that day I watched high school kids discussing the possible paths to revolution. In my following visits to my friend’s neighborhood, I often found myself listening to intense conversations about the difference

between democratic revolution and socialist revolution, the legitimacy of revolutionary violence, the disagreements between Lenin and Rosa Luxemburg, and so on. After my visits to Yenibosna, I thought that revolution might not be as far away as it seemed from my neighborhood. The ghost of revolution was still haunting the minds and souls of Alevi youth.

Although those young people at the café were optimistic about the future, the 1990s were, indeed, dark times in Turkey. Some of the young people I met at that café were imprisoned, others had to leave the country and many of them were confronted with the most brutal forms of police violence. In 2012, when I was examining the human rights abuse application documents of the *Turkish Human Rights Foundation* (THIV), I understood that the police were especially violent towards high school kids in those years. In the 1990s, hundreds of leftist high school kids were left in highways or graveyards after being kidnapped and tortured by police forces. Hundreds of young people had to escape to Europe illegally even before reaching the age of eighteen. They were afraid of one day being killed by undercover police officers.

Fear is one of the most difficult feelings to live with.

After I graduated from high school in 1997, my second visit to an Alevi-populated working class neighborhood was in 1998. In March 1998, I went to the Gazi neighborhood to participate in the demonstration organized to protest against the killings of fifteen Gazi residents by police forces in 1995. That day, for the first time in my life, I saw hundreds of masked policemen, located on rooftops and street corners, pointing their rifles at people. It was also the first time in my life that I heard elderly people publicly talking about “the state” as a perilous enemy. That was something my grandmother would be too afraid to do.

I do not know exactly why, but hearing uneducated people over the age of sixty

talking about the state in that way affected me. I suppose that until then I had believed that arguing that the state was an enemy was a Marxist theoretical conclusion. I thought that my schoolmates and their college student brothers and sisters were against the “state” because they believed in Marxist ideas and ideals. However, hearing old people who had no knowledge of Marxism talking about the state as an enemy made me think that such a perception is more than a mere theoretical conclusion. After talking to a sixty-four-year-old Alevi woman in the Gazi, I started thinking that some people were against the state not because of their ideological convictions, but because of state practices. Two years later, in 2000, I went to the Kurdish region, which was currently held under marshal law. There, I spent hours and days with Kurdish women talking about everyday life in the region. While I was listening to their stories under the gaze of masked and armed policemen located at the street corners, I once again realized that it is the violent acts of the police and soldiers that turn the state into an enemy in the eyes of the people. In addition to my grandmother’s stories, the stories I heard in those places have compelled me to think about the relationship between state and violence.

The things I witnessed and heard in Alevi-populated working class neighborhoods and in the Kurdish region have haunted me ever since. I always thought about possible ways of making these stories and the stories of police and military violence visible. I suppose this is the reason I chose to become an academic. Even when I was an activist during my college years, I believed that in a country like Turkey, where activists are always marginalized and forced to be silent, I had to find a more influential way to make what I had witnessed known. However, violence is an agent that actively forces those who are subjected to it and who have witnessed it to deny it, to forget it and to repress the memories of it. Therefore, while the stories of political violence had been in my luggage since the mid-1980s, I tried to keep that luggage unopened for years. As years passed, new

stories were added to the luggage. It became heavier.

Until I went to Narova in September 2011, I was not planning to conduct a research about political violence. While I was searching for a neighborhood suitable for conducting a study on the criminalization of working class youth, a friend's father, Ali, told me that he had heard that crime was a significant issue in Narova, a predominantly Alevi-populated neighborhood associated with revolutionary Marxist organizations. Ali is a trade union activist and has friends from Narova who work in the same trade union. He offered to take me to Narova. Upon receiving his offer I simply could not resist going there. We met in one of the central districts of Istanbul and took the public bus to Narova. As our bus approached the neighborhood I began to see the revolutionary slogans written on the buildings and shanty houses. The writings on the walls took me back to the 1990s. They made me remember what I had witnessed as a high school kid. Only ten minutes after we stepped into the neighborhood I saw small tanks, locally termed *akrep*, patrolling the streets.

I realized that what I had witnessed in the 1990s was still continuing. I was struck by the realization that there are still neighborhoods in Istanbul where *akreps* drive in the streets. I was also struck by the fact that nobody had yet written about such neighborhoods. At that moment I decided that I *had to* write about these neighborhoods. In October 2011, in Narova, my luggage was finally opened. I had finally reached a point where I could not escape from writing about political violence. Scheper-Hughes argues that

so-called participant observation has a way of drawing the ethnographer into spaces of human life where she or he might really prefer not to go at all and once there doesn't know how to go about getting out except through writing, which draws others there as well, making them party to the act of witnessing (1992: xii).

Scheper-Hughes's argument is also true for me. I was drawn to Narova. I suppose the only

way of getting rid of my baggage, the burden I've carried with me since I was a child is writing about the events I've witnessed and making them visible.

However, I have realized that researching and writing about violence is not an easy task. Violence is sticky. It sticks in one's body and soul. It sneaks into dreams, imaginations and fantasies. It has been very difficult for me to put distance between what I witnessed during the fieldwork and myself. The attempt to translate the injustice and human suffering I witnessed into an academic language was a painful process for me. I felt that such a translation would be unjust. I did not want my own "academic" voice to suppress the people's voice. Hence, I found myself often resisting analysis of what I had witnessed.

The writing process became even harder when the current government's violence and injustice, spreading all around society, became more and more visible. Towards the end of my fieldwork in 2012, a new wave of terror operation began and thousands were put behind bars as terrorist convicts and terrorist suspects. Towards the end my writing process, at the end of May 2013, large-scale uprisings began in Istanbul. This time, it wasn't the Kurds or the working class Alevis who occupied the streets. A significant percent of the people who took part in the summer resistance were white middle class Turks who felt that their lifestyles were being threatened by the government. Istanbul's middle class Turks were, for the first time in their lives, subjected to police violence and saw tanks chasing people. Interestingly, but not coincidentally, all five of the young people killed with police bullets in the uprisings were Alevis. While I was writing this dissertation political violence, concentrated in the locations populated by Alevis and Kurds for more than twenty years flooded over everywhere. All of a sudden, Istanbul's central locations became similar to Istanbul's Alevi-populated neighborhoods. Now, since May 31st, the policemen with their long-barreled weapons, plastic rubber bullets, tear gas,

tanks and other local military vehicles became part of the ordinary in Istanbul. What we witnessed in the summer of 2013 was a real state of emergency, a process of coming forth; the violence hidden in the Kurdish and Alevi zones emerging in other parts of Istanbul to make a public appearance.

INTRODUCTION

Drawing on fieldwork conducted in Narova, the pseudonym of a working class Alevi neighborhood in Istanbul Turkey and in *Specially Authorized Assize Courts*, which specialize in crimes against the state, in this dissertation I analyze complex relationship among law, violence and sovereignty. Narova is populated by rural Alevi migrants, who migrated to Istanbul to seek jobs or who had to leave their hometowns due to pogroms targeting Alevis in Anatolia during the 1960s and 70s. Alevis are the second largest religious group after Sunni¹ Muslims in Turkey. As I elaborate in Chapter II, Alevis have been perceived as the first internal enemies of the Ottoman Empire. Although various other ethnic and religious communities enjoyed relative autonomy, Alevis were not recognized as a minority group, thus neither enjoyed majority rights as Sunnis nor minority rights as non-Muslim communities. Due to the long history of oppression and violence against Alevis both in the Ottoman Era and in the Turkish Republic, Alevis are known for their support of left-wing politics in Turkey (Van Bruinessen 1996). Much like Alevi towns and villages of the time in Anatolia, Narova became a shelter for revolutionaries soon after its establishment and it is still known as one of the most politicized neighborhoods of Istanbul. While listening to the daily conversations of Narova residents, one can easily think that there is an aggressive, demonic entity called the state, which actively wages a war against Narova residents. In this dissertation, focusing on the violent and intimate encounters between the police forces and Narova residents, I discuss the operation of law and sovereignty in Turkey and analyze the ways in which the state appears as a god-like entity with demonic powers in the eyes of Narova residents. Discussing the ways in which the Turkish ruling elite manifest and maintain their power in Narova through various

manifestations of violence, I illustrate the ways in which such manifestations have been productive of a relationship of rivalry between the police forces and Narova's socialist youth. I argue that violence, as an act, which attacks the person's dignity and threatens her very being, is a call for counter-violence. Violence produces a mimetic desire amongst targeted populations to be as powerful and as violent as those who manifest and maintain their power through violence. Accordingly, in this dissertation, after illustrating the ways in which the State "becomes a subject" (Aretxaga 2005: 256) in Narova, I demonstrate the attempts made by Narova's youth to become like the state in the neighborhood. I question the formation of the modern state in Turkey in relation to the counter-violence, injustice, desires and fantasies this formation has been (re)productive of.

I approach the state as an impossible promise of monopoly over violence and law and as an "imagined reality" (Kapferer 2005) (re)productive of relations of production – including production of exploitation, domination and desire. The state is not an actor or an entity in pursuit of its own interest; it rather is a fantastic and abstract "field of power" (Bourdieu 1986), in which some actors (such as the police, military officers, law enforcers, bureaucrats, bourgeoisie) gain the authority to speak on behalf of (or even claim an ownership of) this abstraction. As Sangren (1995) argues, an analysis of power without examining the human agency embedded in power relations has a reification effect; "the study of the operations of power *requires* identifying the subjects (collective or individual) that exercise it" (26). Accordingly, in addition to residents of Narova, the other protagonists of this dissertation are those who have gained the authority to speak on behalf of the state, especially the police and law enforcers (judges and prosecutors). Looking at real and imaginary relations and encounters among these three parties, I ask: a) how is the state as a product of fantasy produced and reproduced in Narova residents' "minds and souls" (cf. Taussig 1992b: 135)? b) and through what kind of techniques, performances,

operations and manifestations of power does the state become a real and material entity in Narova residents' lives? c) what kind of political subject positions emerge in relation to these operations and manifestations?

This dissertation underlines the central role of violence in making and maintaining the political power associated with the state. I argue that state-making and state-maintaining processes -bound to violence- are productive of counter-violence. In other words, the processes of forming and maintaining the state create and recreate their own enemies and/or rivals. The monopoly over violence is an impossible promise and it is always contested. Modern state formation and maintenance processes intervene in people's lives as a colonizing and/or external force. Due to the externality of the central ruling elite and to their strangeness in the eyes of some populations, these populations may consider local rivals of the state as more legitimate, especially those who have been ruled and controlled by local leaders for centuries. Utilizing Benjamin's concept of the *great criminal* as an outlaw, who does not seek for individual gains and benefits and whose violence and law receive sympathy from the public, in this dissertation I elaborate on the rivals of the state. Focusing on the encounters between Narova residents and the police I examine the practices and processes that put certain groups of people in a relationship of rivalry with those who speak on behalf of the state. I ask: Who are rendered as internal enemies/rivals/ terrorists²? Who threatens and challenges the power of the ruling elite who present themselves as the sole representatives of the state? Why? What kind of practices and performances challenge the power and violence associated with the state?

Law, I argue, is a privileged sphere of violence, hence, of state making. It is a field of the unspoken warfare between the people, subjected to exploitation and domination, and those who attempt to rule them. Hence, law has nothing to do with justice even though this is the pretense of the lawmakers. On the contrary, it is productive of injustice. Like the

fantasy state, law is productive and reproductive of relations of production. Accordingly, throughout this dissertation, I illustrate the ways in which law in Turkey is instrumentally used in making and maintaining the social order. I demonstrate how the Turkish ruling elites, no matter how competitive they have been among themselves, continuously wage war against certain populations who do not consider the “state” as legitimate and who attempt to make their own law.

Violence is a relation transformative of social relations and productive of desire and fantasy. Police or military violence against the rivals/enemies of the state is first and foremost informed and legitimized by the fantasy of a unified social whole. This fantasy, informative of the fantasy of the state, always assumes the existence of enemies who prevent the realization of a whole and unified society. Hence, the state emerges as the (impossible) promise that would eliminate the enemies and help us to realize our goal. According to official discourses, the terrorist (in our case Narova residents) appears as the Other that prevent the state from realizing its promise. I demonstrate that as a result of violent and intimate encounters between Narova residents and the police, Narova residents see the state as the Other who prevents their wholeness/*jouissance*. This relation between the police and Narova youth is informative of the political projects and subjectivities developed in Narova. It produces the desire among Narova’s young residents to deactivate police/state power and give rise to various mimetic performances of sovereignty among Narova youth.

The State as an Ideology

The state is a highly contested theme in the social sciences. Although Weber’s notion of the state as a legitimate monopoly over violence in a given territory, which secures the territorial border and governs a particular population, was widely accepted in

academia in the first half of the 20th century (Weber 2004), more recently Althusser's thinking on the relationship between the state and ideology has been influential.

Althusser's main contribution to the theory of the state was his attempt to problematize the (capitalist) state in relation to the (re)production of relations of production. In other words, Althusser (2006) approaches the state as an apparatus of capitalist exploitation/expropriation that contributes to the production of "political conditions of the reproduction of relations of production." (149). For Althusser the state is productive of repression and ideology that serves ruling class's or bourgeoisie's' ends. It operates through repressive (i.e., army, police) and ideological (i.e., churches, schools) apparatuses.

Abrams (1977), who also underlined the state's contribution to the (re)production of relations of production, criticizes the Althusserian argument that the state is an apparatus. For Abrams, the state is not something that acquires agency or intentions. On the contrary, the state as such does not exist; the state itself is an ideological product. Problematizing the very notion of the state, Abrams opens new critical trajectory in questioning the reality of the state. For Abrams, the state is an abstraction that produces the false impression that there is a coherent and concrete political entity, an independent political agency that acts over and above people. Such an impression, for him, obscures the "actual disunity of political power" (79) and prevents us from seeing the realm of politics and of power as a realm of constant struggle. Hence, according to Abrams the state is an idea that conceals the practices of power. It is "the mask which prevents our seeing political practice as it is" (Abrams 1977: 82). Accordingly, for Abrams, the task of social scientists —especially of the sociologist— is to demystify the state, to unveil the mask that appears in the name of the state.

Following Abrams's call to demystify the state and his emphasis on the power and effects of the state as an abstraction and/or ideology, Corrigan et.al (1980), Sayer (1987),

Corrigan and Sayer (1991) contributed to the theory of the state by problematizing the very process of abstraction and, accordingly, the separation of the state from the social, economic, cultural and moral spheres. Invoking Marx's theory of ideology, and hence commodity fetishism, Sayer (1987) argues that abstraction is intrinsic in and unique to capitalist relations. He refuses the distinction between base and superstructure and argues that the social forms associated with superstructure, such as nation, state and law, are commodity-like abstractions, constructed by human beings in and through social relations. Separating them from one another and from the wider realm of relations of production (not only from commodity production, but also from the production of social, cultural and moral relations which, according to Sayer, are all interconnected) leading to their appearance as natural and universal entities over and above individuals.

In a similar fashion, Taussig (1992), too, underlines the ideological character of the concept of the state. For Taussig (1992), the state is the greatest fetish of contemporary modern society, with the idea of the state replacing the idea of god. That is to say, the idea of the state, like the idea of god, is a human product, a product of relations of production and reproduction. Like god, the state is imagined to be a universal and natural force over and above individuals — a fetish character to which omnipotent power is attributed. Arguing that the state's fetishistic qualities are produced and reproduced through the works of colonial officers, governors, public administrators, the army, etc., and Taussig, too, emphasizes that the task of ethnography should be to demystify such reification.

Practices, performances and manifestations of power and the (fantasy) state

The path opened by Abrams is widely acknowledged by critical scholars (Aretxaga 2005, Bourdieu 1999, Coronil 1997, Mitchell 1991, Steinmetz 1999, Navora-Yashin 2002, Trouillot 1990). However, some dispute Abrams's implicit expectation that

the state as an idea/fetish/abstraction would lose its power solely through the processes of demystification and/or reification (Mitchell 1991, Trouillot 1990, Navoro-Yashin 2002, Aretxaga 2005). For instance, Mitchell (1991) argues that although Abrams's approach to the state as an idea is suggestive, his argument does not explain "why the state still haunts us" (85). Invoking Foucault, Mitchell argues that students of the state should examine "particular practices and techniques that have continually reproduced the ghost-like abstraction of the state" (85).

Navaro-Yashin (2002) and Aretxaga (2005) also, while engaging the question, "why does the state still haunt us?" emphasize "the centrality of fantasy to the political" (Aretxaga 2005:133). They approach the state as a fantasy product in the Lacanian sense of the term. For Lacan, "fantasy is not the realm of pure ideas and representations" but "it is the mechanism of 'production' and canalization of enjoyment, and this way it may hold the key to our status as subjects-both as political subjects and subjects of desire" (Grosrichard 1998:x). According to Lacan, the self can only grasp itself through its reflection in and, recognition by, the other person (Elliot 2007). The other, in Lacan, is the prerequisite for the development of a sense of self. The self-imaginary develops through the mirror of the Other. However, the mirror is also a reminder of Otherness, the impossibility of being one and the same with the Other, and of the lack — a constitutive lack, which cannot be separated from the subject's attempts/desire to eliminate it. For Lacan, identity is formed in and through the processes of one's attempts to eliminate the lack, namely the lack of *jouissance* (enjoyment) (Stravakakis 2012). *Jouissance* is always already lost, or "stolen" by the other and fantasy promises to cover over the lack in the Other; the lack created by the loss of *jouissance*" (Stravakakis 2012: 45). In other words, fantasy provides a convincing explanation for the lack of total enjoyment (Zizek 1994). It is the imaginary promise of (the fantasy) recapturing the lost and/or impossible enjoyment

that provides the support for many political projects, political fantasies and social roles and etc. In other words, the lack produces political projects informed by the desire to compensate for the lack. Žižek (1989), carrying the Lacanian notion of fantasy into a broader field of social relations, argues that “social-ideological fantasy” constructs “a vision of society which does exist, a society which is not split by an antagonistic division, a society in which the relation between its parts is organic, complementary” (126). It also provides an explanation for the symptoms. For instance, Žižek argues that Jews are symptoms of Europe. The Jew is the embodiment of “the impossibility, which prevents the society from its full identity as a closed, homogenous totality” (*ibid*: 127). In this sense, the “Jew” is a fetish, which simultaneously denies and embodies the structural impossibility of “Society” as a whole.

Accordingly, for Arexaga (2005) and Navaro-Yashin (2002), the state gains its power through its fantastic production, its promise to compensate for the lack stolen by the Other, i.e. the state's foreign and domestic “enemies.” It is due to this fantastic power, for Navara-Yashin, that the state is more powerful than Abrams assumes. That is to say, for Navara-Yashin, due to its impossible promise to compensate for the lack, the state is produced and reproduced as a symptom. Hence, demystification of the state is not an easy task. The state as a symptom easily escapes demystification. Navaro-Yashin explains this process with reference to psychoanalytic therapy practices. In psychoanalytical therapy, healing is made possible through a process of interpretation/analysis. In this process, the analyzed eventually becomes aware of his/her symptoms and/or fantasies, which are based on childhood events that construct and shapes the psychic life of the analyzed. As a result of a long interpretation process —we can also read it as a demystification process— the symptoms will disappear. But, the procedure of interpretation does not always result with healing. For Lacan (1977), the analyzed, sometimes, wants to keep his/her symptoms as

they are. The analyzed unconsciously fears that she/he would no longer exist if her/his symptoms disappear. The analyzed continues reproducing the symptom (as fantasy) in order not to risk the unknown. (Navaro-Yashin 2002: 186). Hence, for Navaro-Yashin, the fantasy of the state is kept active and alive by those who do not know how to replace this fantasy. As I demonstrate throughout the dissertation, this fantasy is not only (re)produced by those such as military men, police, bourgeoisie, who want to keep the fantasy of the state alive due to their own interests. The fantasy of the state is also (re)produced by those who consider the state as an enemy, as such a fantasy also provides them with an explanation for the lack.

Aretxaga (2005) asserts that “the being of the state is, [...], being a symptom” (106). Following Zizek (1989), she (2005) argues that “if the symptom is a stage setting of fantasy”, then “the state is a privileged setting for the staging of political fantasy in the modern world [.]” (106). However, although the state is a fantastic product, Aretxaga (2005) specifically underlines that “the question is not the reality or unreality of the state-subject” but we should “take the reality of insubstantial state-being seriously and question how it is imagined by the people who experience it, what its particular manifestations and forms of operation are” (216). Hence, Aretxaga invites us to examine the practices, which reproduce the ideological fantasy of the state.

Anthropologists increasingly tend to examine the idea of the state in relation to the operations, practices, performances, techniques, and effects of power (Aretxaga 2005, Coronil 1997, Coronil and Skurski 2006, Das and Poole 2004, Feldman 1991, Hansen and Stepputat 2009). Feldman (1991) and Blom-Hansen (2004), for instance, illustrate how the state acquires material existence through displays of violence and sovereign power by police and military forces. Das and Poole (2004) point out the significance of analyzing various manifestations of power associated with the state, emphasizing the “political,

regulatory and disciplinary practices that constitute, somehow, that thing we call, ‘the state’ ” (3). Hence, for Das and Poole (2004) the task of the anthropologist is not to show that the state actually does not exist, but rather to locate the “stately practices” that gave rise to the imagining of the state as a thing/an entity (6).

Accordingly, in analyzing how the state gains a material character in the eyes of Narova residents, I follow the anthropologists’ emphasis on the “stately practices,” performances, manifestations, and techniques of power, which combine to give rise to the fantasy of the state. In Chapter IV, for instance, I illustrate the militarized spatial practices that contributed to the perceptions of the Turkish state as an external and brutal force among Narova residents. In Chapter V, analyzing the ways in which the state is perceived as a force that actively plans projects against Narova residents, I illustrate how the Narova residents see the state as a force that steals their *jouissance*. In other words, I demonstrate how Narova residents see the state as the embodiment of an impossibility, which prevents Narova residents from actualizing their political demands.

Political Subjectivities, Mimicry and Desire

The state, like fantasy, is unreal. However, like fantasy, it has real effects. It informs reality and is constitutive of material experiences of (political) subjects. It was first Althusser (2006) who emphasized that modern subjects are formed within the organizational terrain of the state and ideology. Althusser does not consider the state as an ideological product. But for him the state produces ideology, which he defines as an imaginary relation to real relations. For Althusser ideology is imaginary and material at the same time. That is to say, for Althusser ideology is productive. It is productive of practices; imaginary relations are materialized in various practices. These practices shape our very beings as subjects; “ideology interpellates the individuals as subjects” (Althusser

2006: 177). Inspired by Althusser's emphasis on constitutive relations between ideology, practice and subject, Butler (1997) in *Psychic Life of Power* argues that "power is both external to the subject and the very venue of the subject" (15). For Butler (1997) power penetrates in our psychic lives and is constructive of our subjectivities.

In a similar fashion, Lacanian political thinkers underline the significance of fantasy and the desire it implies, in shaping our political subjectivities (Ahiska 2010, Glynos 2001, Glynos and Stravakakis 2008, Khan 2010, Madra 2006, Zizek 2000). The subject's desire is structured around the unending quest for the lost, the impossible, *jouissance* (Elliot 1992). Accordingly, the fantasy organizes, canalizes and supports the desire. It is the "imaginary promise" of covering over the lack that provides the fantasy support for political projects and political subjectivities (Glynos and Stravakakis 2008:261). As Sangren (2000) argues, desire, as a constitutive part of fantasy, is also a "systematic product of social production" (232); it is productive and reproductive of social life.

Students of political violence illustrate the ways in which political violence produces the desire to manifest power through violence among those who were subjected to violence. They illustrate that paramilitary forces, such as revolutionary militants and pro-independence guerrillas, mimetically reproduce performances of state sovereignty (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004, Aretxaga 2000, 2005, Buur 2006, Feldman 1991, Zilberg 2007, Smith 2008). Aretxaga (2000), for instance, analyzes mimicry between state and non-state actors. She illuminates how the practices of state terror in Spain were a "mimetic desire" to reproduce the violent acts of the separatist groups in the Basque region. Accordingly in Chapter V, I discuss how police violence, by threatening the very being of the Narova community, produced desire among Narova's young radicals to become like the police. I demonstrate that the young radicals of the neighborhood have

reproduced the role/performances of the police by checking identities of people on Narova's streets, stopping and frisking pedestrians, carrying guns or beating up criminals, hence becoming like the police.

The State, Law and Violence

*“There is a cruel one who dwells within justice”
Birhan Keskin, poet³*

Benjamin's path-breaking essay *On the Critique of Violence (OCV)* and his concept of the “*great criminal*,” as an outlaw who gains the sympathy of the public, lie at the heart of this dissertation. This essay, which signifies a radical break from liberal understandings of law that tie law to justice, provides a thought-provoking analysis of the constitutive relation between violence and law/the state. The essay is particularly important in discussing the ways in which the law/state owes its presence and the maintenance of its power to acts of violence. In addition, the essay provides significant insight regarding who are considered enemies of the state. Like Weber, Benjamin argues that modern politics were characterized by the state's attempt to monopolize violence and/or law. However, as Greenberg (2009) notes, “unlike Weber, who viewed the coupling of violence and law as an inevitable part of modern rational politics, Benjamin viewed law's monopoly over violence as a grotesque and perverse tyranny on the part of the law-makers” (312). Moreover, with his notion of *the great criminal*, Benjamin also reminds us that monopolization of violence and law is not possible, it is an impossible promise, a fantasy.

For Benjamin, like Weber and Schmitt, the state is founded and maintained by violence, which he views as implemented by law. In other words, lawmaking, which is

inextricably linked to violence, is power making. Benjamin defines two forms of violence in relation to the law: Lawmaking violence and law-preserving violence. Lawmaking violence is against already existing law. It is a founding violence. And, law-preserving violence acts to enforce existing laws (i.e., the courts). Lawmaking violence is a form of violence that exists at the threshold of the legal and the illegal. It is illegal because it is a violation of already existing laws. It is legal because it is itself constitutive of a new law. This form of violence maintains the authority of the legal system and the state. States are built on a founding violence, the lawmaking violence. For Benjamin, the relation between lawmaking violence and law is not an ends-means one. Although initially violence may be seen as a means to lawmaking, Benjamin argues that

for the function of violence in lawmaking is twofold, in the sense that lawmaking pursues as its end, with violence as the means, what is to be established as law, but at the moment of instatement does not dismiss violence; rather at this very moment of lawmaking, it specifically establishes as law not an end unalloyed by violence but one necessarily and intimately bound to it under the title of power. (1978:248)

That is to say, in order that law, hence state power, be preserved, law must be bound to violence. In other words, law and violence are inseparable. There is no law, which is not productive of violence.

In contrast to conventional wisdom, law, according to Benjamin, is not an independent institution that regulates society. Whereas liberal understandings of law assert that law protects “society” and provides justice by punishing those who transgress the law, for Benjamin law has nothing to do with protecting “society” and providing justice. The main concern of the law is not punishing those who transgress the law. More than transgression, the lawmakers are concerned with affirming the place of power. As Derrida (1992), following Benjamin, insists that “the *essence* of the law is not prohibitive it is affirmative” (929) (Emphasis mine). It is in essence not prohibitive because, as Comaroffs (2006) explains it in Durkheimian terms, “the system [...] demands ‘violators’ to sustain

itself” (24). “The law and lawlessness [...] are the conditions of each other’s possibility” (21).

The lawmakers’ main concern is to affirm and reaffirm the place of the power holders (cf. Newman 2004). For instance, as I illustrate in Chapters II and V, today, in Turkey hundreds of former high rank military men were put behind the bars as terror convicts. These men, all of whom were responsible for the deaths and torture of thousands, were not tried because of these human right abuses but because of their alleged aim to organize a coup against the government. Hence, the cases of these military men offer a perfect example to the affirmative aspect of law. The current government has affirmed and/or declared its power within the very sphere of law by putting the former representatives of the state behind bars. By doing so the AKP government announced itself as the (representative of the) state.

Hence, as Benjamin underlines, there is no connection between law and justice. What lies in the origin of law is not justice, but violence –violence that is used to maintain and preserve the relations of domination and exploitation. As the poet Birhan Keskin puts it in Benjaminian terms, cruelty is internal to “justice.” That is to say, law, which according to the liberal, conventional understandings is the field of justice, is indeed the very origin of injustice. Law is the regulation of violence for the sake of power/violence. The law is “an immediate manifestation of violence,” hence, “the highest violence occurs in the legal system” (Benjamin 1978: 295). For Benjamin, the police are the privileged figures within the sphere of the law/violence. The police are the “cruel” ones who sit within the sphere of the law. The police stand at the threshold of lawmaking and law-preserving violence. As “all-pervasive” and “ghostly” figures, the police are lawmakers and law-preservers at the same time. Although the official duty of the police is law

enforcement, as Benjamin notes, police power goes well beyond law-enforcement. As Benjamin puts it,

The “law” of the police really marks the point at which the state, whether from impotence or because of the immanent connections within any legal system, can no longer guarantee through the legal system the empirical ends that it desires at any price to attain. (1978:243).

Hence, the “law” of the police preserves the legal authority of the state by going beyond legality. Granting the police the authority to act in the name of the state effectively places police above the law.⁴ For Benjamin, the police stand at the threshold of the law, transcend the dichotomies of legal and illegal. In this regard, the police embody sovereignty as defined by Schmitt.

State of exception and the sovereign

As a communist Jew in the Nazi Germany, Benjamin was a witness to, and a target of, the most brutal forms of organized police violence. Nevertheless, he argues that the state of emergency in which he lived was not an exception but the norm. For Benjamin, “the tradition of the oppressed” claims that violence and oppression are immanent in the normal order of modern capitalist societies and/or modern state formations. Hence, for Benjamin, Nazi Germany was not an exception but representative of the modern state. Schmitt, as a Nazi jurist who was concerned with the establishment and perpetuation of an all-powerful state, also underlines the significance of state of exception⁵ as a constitutive of the normal order and rule.⁶ For Schmitt, the state of exception, which is based on suspension of the law, is in fact constitutive of legal order. The state of exception guarantees the order. As Agamben (1998) explains, although the exception is exclusion, the exception is not contra the rule. On the contrary,

what is excluded in the exception maintains itself in relation to the rule in the form of the rule's suspension. The rule applies to the exception in no longer applying, in

withdrawing from it. The state of exception is thus not the chaos that precedes order but rather the situation that results from its suspension. (18)

Hence, like Benjamin, for Schmitt, too, law always goes outside itself and requires an exteriority in order to persist. He argues that the law –and the legal order– is maintained and preserved due to the suspension of the law. However, whereas Benjamin problematizes legality itself and calls for a “real state of emergency,” violence unbound to law, which would abolish the legal order without establishing a new law/state, for Schmitt the state of exception is inevitable and necessary. For Schmitt, the one who “decides on the exceptional case” (cited in Agamben 1998:1) is the sovereign. For Schmitt (1985), “all law is situational law” (13). That is to say, there is always a human intervention in applying the law; law always involves a decision. The sovereign guarantees the legal order by its capacity to make a decision about suspending the law. The sovereign, like the police in Benjamin’s essay, stands at the threshold of the legal and the illegal, hence it goes beyond these dichotomies.⁷ It simultaneously oscillates between the legal and illegal, hence remains extra-legal. It is the one whose violence is not restricted by law and whose criminal acts do not count as a crime. In other words, the sovereign is the one who exercises violence freely, free of any legal restrictions and punishments (Hansen and Stepputat 2005, 2006).

Agamben (2000) points out “the extermination of the Jews was conceived from the beginning to the end exclusively as a police operation” (106). He argues further that the sovereign is materialized in the figure of the police:

[T]he police –contrary to public opinion– are not merely an administrative function of law enforcement; rather, the police are perhaps the place where the proximity and the almost constitutive exchange between violence and right that characterizes the figure of the sovereign is shown more nakedly and clearly than anywhere else (104).

Moreover, Agamben (1998) notes that sovereign power can maintain and manifest itself indefinitely without ever passing over into actuality. Hence, for Agamben, sovereign

power is an actuality and potentiality at the same time. The sovereign, for instance, in the figure of a gun-holding policeman, reminds us of the potentiality, hence actuality of violence, thus manifesting and maintaining its power.⁸ In other words, the sovereign power preserves and maintains its power by showing us that there is no law, which can restrict and control its violence. As Das and Poole (2004) put it clearly, the sovereign who appears in the figure of the police challenges “the very possibility of the law itself” (13). Accordingly, in Chapter IV, V and VI, I demonstrate how the presence of *akreps*, house raids and armed policemen serve as reminders of the potential for violence, making the police/state present as a sovereign figure in Narova residents’ lives.

Hansen and Stepputat (2001) point out the ways in which sovereignty is claimed and manifested through performative acts of violence. For them sovereignty, like the state, is a fiction and a tentative, unstable, and ambiguous project made real through “ritualized, everyday confirmations of [...] violence” (7). For them, sovereignty must be performed publicly to prove the existence of the sovereign (state). In a similar vein, Feldman’s works (1991, 1995, 1997), which provide illuminating analyzes on the performative construction of the state in Ireland, demonstrate that the state achieves reality among the Irish population through the performative displays of police power and violence. For Feldman, potentially resistant populations perceive the state as a real and material entity through the performative acts and displays of arrests, killings, interrogations, or torture. The performativity of sovereignty is due to the counter-violence the sovereign violence provokes. In other words, sovereign violence selectively targets the populations the state does not consider a legitimate power. Hence, as Graeber (2011) argues the war between the sovereign and the people is a war that the sovereign can never truly win.

Sovereign performances of violence cannot be used against all populations. As Gramsci (1992) argues, ruling requires legitimacy, hence consent of the entire population.

Using the notion of hegemony, Gramsci explains that ruling elites and their supporters aim to develop a positive program that actively wins the consent of the population. Hence, for Gramsci, the success of capitalist society, which is based on the exploitation of the masses by a [small] group of people, is based on the production of hegemony, the process by which a particular class's interests become universalized and articulated as the general interest of society. Tugal (2009), demonstrates that some segments of the working-class populations, especially Sunni Muslim Turks, have gradually been incorporated into the system after the coup of 1980. He illustrates how members of the current government party, the AKP, gained the support of some segments of the working class. From a Gramscian point of view, he argues that the success of the AKP is due to its members' ability to represent their own interests as the interest of the masses. This dissertation focuses on the other side of the coin: on those who do not consider the representatives of the state as the legitimate representatives of the people. In other words, this dissertation focuses on those who could not be pacified and/or taken under control by the ruling elites. Hence, being aware that the relations of domination and exploitation are not only reproduced through performative acts of violence/sovereignty, I argue that manifestations and performances of sovereignty specially target the populations who remained potentially or actually resistant.

The "great criminal" as the rival of the fantasy state

In the course of examining how and why Narova residents have been targets of police and military violence, I employ Benjamin's concept of the "*great criminal*." As I argued above, the *great criminal* is an outlaw who gains the sympathy of the public. Hence, she/he is neither a criminal per se nor does her/his greatness derive from the scale of his/her criminal acts. The *great criminal's* uses of violence have the potential to form

new laws. Her/his challenge derives not only from her/his use of violence but also from the public admiration he/she gained. As Derrida (1992) argues in his interpretation of Benjamin's concept of the *great criminal*, what threatens the state is not simply crime, no matter how large-scale (24). For Derrida,

what the state fears (the state being law in its greatest force) is not so much crime or brigandage, even on the grand scale of the mafia or heavy drug traffic, as long as they transgress the law with an eye toward particular benefits, however important they may be. The state is afraid of fundamental, founding violence, that is, violence able to justify, to legitimate or to transform the relations of law and so to present itself as having a right to law (1992:989).

Hence, the crime of the *great criminal* is not simply a violation of law. The violation of law, indeed, is the very affirmation of law. The *great criminal's* violence signifies a break from existing laws. Thus, the *great criminal* is the rival of the state. Because first of all, like the ruling elites who claim to use violence not for individual gains and benefits but for the general interest of the people, the *great criminal* also claims that she/ he do not seek individual gains and benefits. In other words, like the fantasy state, which according to liberal understandings was established to provide law and order, the *great criminal* also attempts to provide law and order and presents herself/himself as the one who has the right to make law. Hence, for Benjamin, the *great criminal* as a Robin Hood figure, is the rival of the state. Moreover, the *great criminal* is not only threatening due to her/his potential to make new law. The *great criminal*, by using force, also reveals the areas that escape from control of those who represent the state, such as the military and the police.

Benjamin, like Weber, underlines violence's constitutive relation to the state. However, Benjamin, with his concept of the *great criminal* specifically emphasizes that the monopolization of violence can never be completed. There are always rivals of the ruling elites who are committed to the maintenance of the idea and/or fantasy of a unified powerful state (cf. Abrams 1989). That is to say, although ruling elites attempt to legitimize their sovereign power and the violence associated with it in the name of general

interests and order and peace, for Benjamin there are always people whose violence is considered more legitimate than that of the ruling elites by certain populations. Hence, monopolization of violence is an unfinished task, an incomplete project, which ruling elites continuously attempt to complete. In other words, Benjamin emphasizes the incompleteness of a state project, the impossibility of the promise of the state fantasy — the impossibility of absolute monopoly over legitimate violence or the impossibility of capturing/dominating the whole. Goudsblom (2001) puts it more explicitly, “monopolies of violence are always contested, and pacification is never complete” (746). Hence, there is always an active competition for power within modern state formations. In other words, for Benjamin, like Foucault (2003) “politics is war continued by other means” (23). This war is waged both among the ruling elites themselves and against the people whose activities contribute to de-legitimizing and de-mystifying state power.

As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, the people who challenge the existing ruling elites’ attempts to monopolize violence are considered enemies of the state. These enemies may be either powerful figures who wish to declare their own sovereignty (either at the local or at the central level) without challenging the existing forms of relations of domination and exploitation or who those who challenge the very foundation of the existing political order. In Chapter III, for instance, I demonstrate how some generals and admirals who had been considered the protectors and representatives of the state are now accused of “crimes against the state” as the former ruling elites have gradually been replaced with new ones. I claim that internal enemies do not become internal enemies simply because they consider the representatives of the state as illegitimate or simply because they are minorities. They become internal enemies due to practices that challenge the authority of the representatives of the state. Accordingly, rather than focusing on the beliefs and ethnic, religious or racial identities of those who are considered internal

enemies, I focus on their practices. In other words, I do not simply say that Narova residents have been targeted to police violence because they belong to an unorthodox religious sect and because they are sympathetic to socialist ideas and ideals. Rather, I question what kinds of practices turn this population into internal enemies. In Chapter II, I describe traditional Alevi local law making and law maintaining practices. In Chapter V, I discuss Narova's socialist youth's attempts to provide law and order in the neighborhood. I conclude that practices which deactivate the authority of the police and the state's law enforcers have been influential in Alevi communities' and Narova residents' stigmatization as internal enemies. In other words, I argue that a significant number of Narova youth are accused of "crimes against the state" due to their local lawmaking and law-maintaining practices, which turns them into rivals of the state at the local scale.

The Great Criminal and the "artificial balance theory"

The Marxist organization THKP-C⁹ (People of Turkey's Liberation Party/Front) has been highly influential within the socialist tradition in Turkey. The ideas of Mahir Cayan, one of the founders of the THKP-C, have inspired many other subsequent socialist organizations, including the PKK. Mahir Cayan's argument, known as the "artificial balance theory" is similar in some respects to Benjamin's concept of *the great criminal*. For Cayan, there is an artificial balance between the state, which he views as an apparatus of the ruling class, and the people. According to Cayan, the state — seemingly all-powerful— in fact does not possess a monopoly over violence and is much less powerful than are the people. In other words, the state's powerful appearance is based on an artificial balance. For Cayan, the reason the state appears as a power over the people is because of the social services it provides and its uses of violence. In order to contest this power or (in more Marxian anthropological terms) to demystify the state, people must be

shown that the state is not as strong as it appears. Hence, for Cayan, armed propaganda activities, which are selectively directed at those who represent the state and its imperialist and capitalist allies, such as policemen, high rank soldiers, banks and US consulates, will show that the state cannot control or prevent violence directed at its representatives. This demonstration would prove that the state actually does not have a monopoly over violence. For Cayan, such acts reveal the vulnerability of the state apparatus and give people the courage to side with revolutionaries. That is to say, the working classes are potentially on the side of revolutionaries would see that the state is not an all-powerful entity and would participate in the revolutionary organizations/movement. Cayan-inspired groups gained popular support in Narova and in other Alevi populated neighborhoods during the 1990s. Accordingly, in Chapter IV, I demonstrate that one of the reasons why Narova and other Alevi populated neighborhoods turned into militarized zones in the 1990s, was these groups' active attempt to demystify the state.

The Great Criminal and territorial sovereignty

As Vandergeest and Pelusa (1995) point out, scholars who have focused on the spatial/territorial extent of sovereignty often link the state's control over territory to the drawing and protection of external boundaries, and repressing rivals who challenge these boundaries, whether external enemies or imaginary or real separatists (42). Vandergeest and Pelusa (1995) demonstrate that state territoriality is also about effecting, influencing, or controlling people and relationships by delineating and declaring control over a geographic area (43). In this dissertation I aim to answer the following questions: What happens if there are non-state groups who are not separatist and who do not seek individual benefits and gains, yet have their own territorial control, hence security

mechanisms? What happens if there are actors independent from the state that demarcate and declare control over a specific territory?

This situation is, indeed, familiar to us from the context of less-centralized state formations or empires. Vandergeest and Pelusa (1995), in their historical work on the formation of a nation-state in Thailand, illustrate how respected local leaders and notables, who once controlled specific territories, were deemed bandits and internal enemies during the process of founding a centralized nation-state in Thailand. They argue that consequently state territoriality is also about eliminating the power and territorial control of local powers within the boundaries of a nation-state. The case is similar to the Ottoman situation. Ungor's (2012) recent and path-breaking work on the modern state formation process in Turkey situates Armenian genocide and the massacres of Assyrians and Kurds in the context of building modern territorial sovereignty. His work demonstrates that the history of the Turkish nation-state is, in part, the history of several waves of violence against various ethnic and religious groups such as Armenians, Kurds and Jews who lived under a relatively autonomous rule during the Ottoman era. He argues that in the process of building a nation-state, Turkish ruling elites considered Armenian, Assyrian and Kurdish local notables as obstacles. These notables and the populations who supported them were declared enemies of the state. Studies on nation-state formation processes in general point out that local authorities, due to their ability to control territories through legitimate violence, were considered threats against their own sovereign power. Thus they were demonized during central state formation processes. As I illustrate in Chapters II and IV, local leaders or any other organized group who can control the territories and the people in them by using violence legitimately are rivals, hence the most dangerous enemies of the centralized state. In Chapter III, I discuss how the local power holders or local ruling elites who once had control over certain territories were deemed as bandits

and internal enemies during the formation process of the Republic. In Chapter V, I focus on attempts by Narova's youth to gain territorial control of their neighbourhood. In Chapter V, I illustrate how these attempts ended before the anti-terror law.

War on terror/ Law on Terror

Today, especially after the 9/11 attacks in the USA, the fantasy of terror has become a global phenomenon. The feelings of emergency provoked by the fantasies and/or fear of terror have given rise to the development of the need for extraordinary legal instruments such as emergency laws and powers that contribute to the resurgence of totalitarian, repressive forms of governance all around the world¹⁰ (Aretxaga 2005, Diken and Laustsen 2005, Feldman 1991, Zulaika and Douglass 1996). In this process, law has emerged as the privileged sphere of the counter-terror policies. As much as a “distant and overwhelming force,” the law is also as Bourdieu (1986) argues, a field, an arena of structured, socially patterned activity and practice. For Bourdieu, law is a historical and social construction produced in part by legal agents in competition with other agents. In other words, for Bourdieu (1986), law is grounded in the “juridical field,” “the site of a competition for monopoly of the right to determine the law” (817). The law is relatively autonomous and it is not always shaped according to the interest of those who hold political power. In a similar vein, Nader (2002) from an anthropological point of view, emphasizes the idea that law is often not a neutral regulator of power but instead the vehicle by which different parties attempt to gain and maintain control and legitimization of a given social unit.

In this dissertation, however, I argue that regardless of the differences between the agents competing for a “monopoly of the right to determine law,” Turkey’s history of juridical or extra-juridical political violence has been more continuous than discontinuous

since the late 19th century, since the beginning of the central state formation process. Current legal regulations and new anti-terror laws, contribute to the corrosion of the military's political power, granting police with enormous power within the juridical field. In Chapter VI, analyzing the current anti-terror law of Turkey, I discuss how the juridical field in the case of anti-terror law becomes the showground of police power in Turkey. Accordingly, in Chapter V, I focus on the cases of a group of terror suspects from Narova to illustrate the operation of the anti-terror law on the ground.

Bourdieu (1986) points out the “neutralization effect” of the law and argues that the very operation of law is based on a high degree of concealment. The seemingly neutral, impersonal and normative language of the agents of the juridical field create the impression that law is separate from politics, thus from social, historical and material relations that inform the power struggles that takes place within the juridical field. In other words, the law creates the impression that there is an opposition between the “rule of law” and “rule of man.” Similarly Merry (1992) argues, “law as an ideology contributes to the social construction of the world as fair and just and at the same time provides a language and forums for resisting that order” (85). However, drawing on the operation of anti-terror law in Turkey, I illustrate that the law does not always have a neutralization effect. On the contrary, the agents of the juridical field actively attempt to demonstrate that the “rule of law” is indeed the “rule of man.”

In sum, I utilize Benjamin's concept of *the great criminal* in this dissertation to I argue that the fantasy of the state, which is translated into attempts to monopolize violence and law within the territories of nation-state is productive of its rivals. The people do not always experience the state as a legitimate body. For some populations, especially those that are subjected to domination and exploitation, the reproductive effect of the fantasy of the state is visible. This visibility, which gives rise to counter-state projects, turns certain

groups of people into enemies and/or rivals of the state. Pointing to the processes and relations that led Narova residents' rivalry and enmity with the police/state, I examine various operations, manifestations and techniques of power that contributed to the containment and management of Narova residents. I argue that what turns the state into a real and material entity in Narova residents' everyday experiences are the sovereign performances of the police. In deploying the concept of the sovereign, I am inspired by Schmitt's conceptualization of the sovereign. As I argued above, for Schmitt the sovereign is located at the lawless sphere (threshold) of the law. Following Schmitt, I argue that the ability to commit crimes and the "right to kill" without liability are performances of sovereignty. For Schmitt, the sovereign is a necessary and inevitable component of social order.

Diverging from Schmitt at this point, I argue that the sovereign is not an inevitable component of the social order but is an inevitable component of the societies based on relations of domination and exploitation. Furthermore, in Schmitt's theory, the sovereign emerges as an a-historical, even natural and god-like figure. I argue that the sovereign is not an abstract, ghostly figure over and above individuals. The sovereign does not actually exist. Sovereignty/the sovereign is an effect of the performances of sovereignty — performed by a group of people, who are devoted to the reproduction of existing relations of exploitation and domination. In other words, I argue that in addition to producing legitimacy and consent, relations of domination and exploitation have been maintained through the performance of sovereignty, which give the impression that that there is a sovereign granted with the power of unrestricted violence.

In examining the performance of sovereignty I focus on two spheres: Spatial and legal manifestations of sovereignty. I demonstrate that manifestations of unrestricted violence and injustice in these two spheres contribute to the normalization and

naturalization of violence among certain groups of people. The militarized spatial control of spaces occupied by actually or potentially resisting populations, turning violence into an everyday reality, marks the bodies and souls of people. Violence inscribed in space does not only control people but also transform their subjectivities and social relations. Manifestations of violence and sovereignty within the sphere of law are another privileged instrument of domination and exploitation. This is precisely because the law promises justice. My analysis of lawlessness manifested within the sphere of law will demonstrate both the mystifying and demystifying effects of law.

Finally, I argue that the fantasy of the state cannot be grasped without examining the effects and subjectivities this fantasy has been productive of. Drawing on psychoanalytical theory, I illustrate how the manifestation of sovereign violence reproduces the fantasy of the state and the desire to perform “stately” violence by the young radicals who fight against the state.

The arguments and insights of three European Jews, Arendt, Benjamin and Kafka, are diffused into this dissertation. Their influence on my writing is not a coincidence. I believe there are a lot of commonalities between the Alevis of Turkey who were born into the stories of injustice and massacres their ancestors were subjected to, and Jews in Germany, as the symptoms of Christian Europe.

Chapter Outline

Chapter I, introduces the field sites and discusses the research methods. Discussing how Narova residents directed my research, I explain why I chose not to focus on Alevi cultural identity but on the issues of crime, police violence and “stately practices.” I also elaborate on the difficulties of writing on violence and conducting a research in a

neighborhood where the undercover police, revolutionary youth and gangs are important segments of social life.

In Chapter II, I focus on the Alevi religio-cultural identity to point out the historical Alevi practices/*habitus*¹¹ and beliefs that turned Alevi into constant targets of political violence. Demonstrating how the Alevi community has remained at the margins of law and order imposed by central authorities for centuries, I point out traditional and extra-legal Alevi lawmaking and law maintaining practices that later survived in the big cities in the form of revolutionary people's courts. I approach these practices as an Alevi *habitus*, a centuries long structured structure. Due to the absence of sufficient research on traditional Alevi lawmaking practices, I argue that these practices may still be informative of Narova youth's attempts to deactivate the police power in the neighborhood. This chapter also discusses the ways in which the Alevi community has been an integral component of Turkey's socialist movement and examines the emergence of Alevi-populated working class neighborhoods in Istanbul during the 1970s. Finally, the chapter discusses the establishment of Narova and local lawmaking and law maintaining practices in Narova of the 1970s.

Chapter III provides an outline of the Turkish ruling elite's war against the populations whom they consider "enemies of the state." The chapter briefly discusses how the local ruling elite, once notable intermediary powers, and the populations who consider their law and violence as legitimate, became internal enemies during the central state formation process that began in the 19th century. This chapter also examines Turkey's martial laws and discusses how militarized rule has been integral to Turkey's allegedly democratic order. Finally, the chapter focuses on the ongoing terror operation against high rank military officers and describes the replacement of the military's political power with that of the police.

In Chapter IV, I discuss the ways in which Narova turned into a state of emergency zone during the early 1990s. Pointing out how Narova became one of the centers of the revitalizing socialist left during the 1990s, I illustrate the ways in which Narova has been separated from its surrounding areas through militarized spatial techniques and stigmatized as a dangerous and/or enemy zone in the views of the general public. I argue that militarized spatial control is not only about managing and controlling unruly populations in the present, but shapes and transforms the future.

This chapter illustrates various performances of sovereignty and discusses how the state is experienced and subjectivized in Narova. Approaching violence as a relation transformative of social relations, I demonstrate how such performances have contributed to normalization of violence, the weakening of historical social support networks and the culture of solidarity among residents. I argue that the segregation of Narova, by “imprisoning” the residents into this isolated place, set the ground for intimate violent encounters with the police. Such encounters have been productive of the mimetic relation between the police and the revolutionary youth.

In Chapter V, I examine the ways in which the criminalization of Narova youth and introduction of criminal gangs in the neighborhood had transformed social relations in Narova since the early 2000s. Discussing how Narova residents perceive the state as an enemy responsible for the criminalization of the neighborhood, I focus on crime prevention campaigns organized by Narova youth. I illustrate how Narova youth, in their attempts to end crime in the neighborhoods, also attempted to deactivate the power of the police and establish their own law and order in the neighborhood. These attempts, which turned hundreds of Narova youth into the rivals of the state and/or *great criminals*, lead to their confinement as terrorist suspects and convicts. In analyzing the relationship of rivalry between Narova's youth and the police, I point out how historical Alevi

fears/fantasies of eradication were informative of young Narova residents' desire to eliminate the police's power. I also discuss how this desire was translated into mimetic practices of police power by Narova youth.

In Chapter VI, I focus on the case of a group of anti-crime activists who ended up in prison after being accused of beating an undercover policeman and seizing his gun under orders from a terrorist organization. This chapter examines the implementation of anti-terror laws on the ground. First of all, I analyze Turkey's current anti-terror laws to illustrate how the current government manifests its totalitarian tendencies within the legal sphere. I demonstrate that the anti-terror trials operate as the showground of the police's sovereign power within the juridical field. In other words, I demonstrate how the sphere of law serves as the ground for demonstrating the violence and injustice immanent in law. I also argue that the current anti-terror law creates a group of "undesirables," categories of people outside the protection of the law (cf. Arendt 1973) by depriving them of their juridical rights. Finally, I claim that on the one hand, violence and injustice manifested in the courtrooms demystifies the law in the eyes of terrorist suspects and of the audience of terror trials by showing them that the rule of law is indeed the rule of human agents. However, on the other hand, the revelation of the sovereign, a group of people who want to maintain relations of domination and exploitation and who decide on the exception within the sphere of law, also has a mystifying effect. Such a manifestation of injustice worms itself into courtrooms, trials, and dark and cold cells, making one feel entrapped in the Kafkaesque labyrinths of the law, and gives rise to the perceptions of injustice and violence as an ill-fate. Needless to say, fate belongs to the domain¹² of the sacred. Accordingly, as injustice is perceived as an inevitable fate, the revelation of the men in the law also contributes to the mystification of power. That is to say, as the law of men

manifests that men of law do not obey and cannot be restricted by the law, the state is perceived as a god-like and evil figure that determines the fate of its subjects.

Notes To Introduction

¹ Sunnism is the dominant, Orthodox form of Islam.

² Since the concept of terror is deeply contested, I would like to use it in quotation marks. However, in order to make it easier to read, hereafter I will not use quotation marks. Please read the concepts of terror, terrorism and terrorist as if they were in quotation marks.

³ Translation mine.

⁴ A recent dispute that took place in Turkey between a policeman and a deputy from the Kurdish party, BDP, is highly symptomatic of the connection I attempted to describe above. The police intervened in a peace demonstration organized by the pro-Kurdish Party, BDP, in August 7, 2011 and started to hit the demonstrators with their batons. During the police's aggressive attack, Idris Baluken's, a Kurdish deputy, eyeglasses were broken. He went to the policeman who broke his eyeglasses and told him that he broke his eyeglass. Before the policeman could say a word, his chief came and told the policeman not to talk to "such persons" and that "those kinds of people" were "not to be spoken to." The deputy got angry and yelled at the policeman saying: "What are you saying? I am a deputy! I am a representative of the people." And the policeman yelled back at him: "If you are deputy, I am the state!" Information available at: http://www.dha.com.tr/sen-milletvekiliysen-ben-devletim_218543.html Last Accessed: May 15, 2013.

⁵ Marxist social scientist Neocleous (2006), in his article on the emergency rules as a part of the normal order in capitalist societies, attracts our attention to the difference between the concepts of emergency and exception. Pointing out that the etymological roots of emergency derives from the verb to emerge, he argues that as the verb "emerge" connotes "the process of coming forth, issuing from concealment, obscurity, or confinement," the state of emergency actually indicates the normality of the emergency rules and policies. Neocleous criticizes Schmitt by arguing that Schmitt sees the state of exception as opposed to the normal order. However, as I shall discuss, I agree with Agamben's reading of Schmitt, which argues that exception is the very constitutive of normalcy. In other words, Agamben (1998, 2002, 2004) demonstrates that exception is not external to the norm.

⁶ Agamben (2002) illustrates that in developing his notion of the sovereign and state of exception Schmitt was influenced by Benjamin's article OCV.

⁷ The sovereign, according to Schmitt, is a person, a Hitler-like ruler. I, however, imagine the sovereign as a monster-like figure and sovereignty as a place that is attempted to be occupied by various people or groups of people who engage in monstrous acts in their claims for sovereignty and therefore who eventually turn into monsters/monster-like persons. That is why, I refer to the sovereign as it instead of referring as she or he.

⁸ In a similar vein, Das (2007) illustrates that the potentiality of violence is the actuality of it. As she demonstrates, in order for it to constitute "the ecology of fear in everyday life" violence doesn't have to be actualized in events (9).

⁹ THKP-C, established at the beginning of the 1970s, has been one of the most influential socialist organizations within the socialist tradition in Turkey. The leading founders of the organization were killed in 1972 after they kidnapped a NATO radar technician. The THKP-C does not exist anymore but there are a number of socialist organizations, which splintered off from the THKP-C tradition.

¹⁰ See for instance, Muller's interview with Germany's Federal Constitutional Court Vice President, Winfried Hassemer about the need for developing extraordinary legal instruments in Germany's war on terror (Muller 2004).

¹¹ For Bourdieu, habitus is recognized as an embodiment of structure. "The habitus is not only a structuring structure, which organizes practices and the perception of practices, but also a structured structure" (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 170). The habitus, structured structure by experience, operates like a generative grammar of behaviors. The individuals see and make meaning of the world through the glasses of their habitus.

CHAPTER I

Research Methods

Ethnographers have noted that ethnographic research and ethnographic writing are always subjective, fragmentary and partial (Clifford 1986, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Scheper-Hughes 1983, Marcus 1986, 1988). What ethnographers see and what they do not see, what they hear and what they do not hear in the “field” is closely related to their own personal and cultural histories. As Geertz (1998) argues, we listen to some voices and ignore others. Each ethnographer writes her/his own story. Each ethnographer translates what she/he witnessed and heard into her/his own language. In this translation process, there are always some voices, some stories, some characters and images left outside either consciously or unconsciously. During my research and writing processes, I also ignored some voices and stories. I cannot write about what kind of stories and voices I unconsciously ignored. However, while discussing my ethnographic experiences I also want to point out what I chose to leave out of my research and this dissertation.

I conducted two years of fieldwork in Istanbul, Turkey. The first period of my research (October 2010-September 2011) took place in Narova, the pseudonym of a working class Alevi neighborhood. The second period of my research (September 2011-August 2012) continued with additional sites: the Specially Authorized Assize Courts, which specialize in “crimes against the state;” the non-governmental Turkish Human Rights Foundation, which investigates state violence, and Mannheim, Germany, where former Narova residents seek asylum from extrajudicial and (more recently) legal state violence in Turkey.

Fieldwork in Narova: Culture talk and divide and rule

This study is not the first to be conducted in an Alevi-populated working class neighborhood of Istanbul. However, anthropologists and sociologists who have conducted research in Alevi-populated working class neighborhoods have mainly chosen to write about the Alevis' cultural differences, such as Alevi religious rituals, their communal ties, family relations, etc. (Alatas 2011, Coskun 2003, Dubetsky 1977, White 1996). Others, have written about the culture of poverty in these neighborhoods (Erder 1996, 1997, White 2004). I decided not to contribute to a literature that emphasizes cultural differences of the Alevi community, a community that has been the cultural other of the Orthodox Muslim community in Turkey for centuries. In other words, I intentionally avoided any stories and narratives that would attract attention to the cultural identity of Narova residents. One of the most crucial reasons behind this decision was, as I illustrate below, the reluctance of Narova residents to being defined with reference to their religio-cultural identity.

Today, anthropologists rightly underline that culture is not the collection of the essential characteristics of a given community. It rather is a product of historico-material relations and processes (Abu-Lughod 1991, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Herzfeld 2000, Marcus and Fischer 1999). However, as Mamdani (1996, 2002) warns us, talking about cultural differences is deeply rooted in colonial history. The notion of culture attracts attention to a group's real or imaginary differences and obscures the historical and material processes formative of collective identities. As Mamdani (2002) puts it, "culture talk dehistoricizes the construction of political identities" (766). It effectively contributes to the legitimization of the relations and processes that turn certain groups into the targets of colonial and/or imperial projects.

One of the most repeated expressions I heard from Narova residents during my fieldwork in Narova was "divide and rule," a phrase familiar to us from the history of colonialism. Many Narova residents of various ages underlined that the division of people

along ethnic and religious lines is a technique of governance. In effect, many people in Narova told me that they did not consider themselves Alevi or that they did not like to emphasize their Alevi identity. Instead, they argued that they believed in the unity of humankind. The sixty-two-year-old construction worker Ibrahim's words summarize the Narova residents' general attitude towards religious differences and what they mean by "divide and rule" policies. He says,

state always likes to divide people. They tell Sunnis "look at Alevi, they do not go to mosque." They do it to make Sunnis dislike Alevi. Why? What happens if a Sunni worker gets along well with an Alevi worker? They would stand united against the boss! Right? The bosses of course do not want it. It is the same everywhere. I went to Erbil to work there. It is the same there. The Arabs hate the Kurds; The Kurds hate the Arabs. And what happens then? What happens when people hate each other? It is good for the interests of the rulers, of the rich, of the bosses...They want it that way. So, my dear daughter, I am an Alevi, yes. But before that I am a human being. It is the state that wants to divide us into Alevi and Sunnis, Turks and Kurds...It is for their interest. The rich own the state. It is the bosses' state. It is the bosses' world! And they want to divide us.

During my fieldwork in Narova, many old and young people, like Ibrahim, gave me informal lectures about the ways in which "states" divide people according to their religious and ethnic identities. For them, such divisions have always made it easier for states, bosses and the bourgeoisie to rule people by creating and provoking enmity among people from different religious and ethnic backgrounds. I see a correspondence between Mamdani's warning about the effects of "culture talk" and Narova residents' emphasis on "divide and rule" policies. I interpret their arguments about the insignificance of religious identities and their emphasis on the "divide and rule" strategy as their resistance to being seen as cultural Others. I take their comments on religio-cultural differences as an intervention in this research and I respect their intervention. Hence, instead of focusing on the themes related to Alevi culture and history which, I came to believe, is a very thought-provoking topic, I chose to put institutionalized political violence at the core of this dissertation. However, this does not mean that I ignored Alevi culture and history in

understanding the experience of the Narova residents In Chapter I, I elaborate on the Alevi belief system and Alevi history. I outline several waves of anti-Alevi massacres and pogroms that have been influential in the formation of the Alevi collective identity. I point out traditional Alevi habitus of providing law and order at the local base and question its relation to recent local lawmaking and law maintenance activities of the Narova youth.

As I explained in the preface, in my very first visit to the neighborhood, I decided that I would focus on violence in Narova. In addition to my initial decision, my preliminary interviews and informal chats with Narova residents have also been influential in my final decision about writing on violence. During the initial stages of my research, in our daily conversations, I asked Narova residents general questions about the neighborhood, such as: How would you define Narova? What are the most important problems of the neighborhood? How would you define the youth of this neighborhood? How would you describe the transformation of the neighborhood over the years? While talking about Narova's past and present, the residents mostly repeated three actors: the police, the criminals and the revolutionaries. In effect, these three actors occupy a central place in this dissertation.

Conducting research in a neighborhood where its residents consider criminals, police and revolutionaries as the most dominant figures in the everyday life is a difficult task. I felt that spending time with these three figures, especially with the police and criminals, would put me in danger. But how would I write about them without actually spending time with them? Intuitively, I found a way. I did not get close to them and I tried to avoid spending time with them. Yet, I stayed around them by going to the neighborhood regularly and spending time in the public spaces such as cafés and parks where I could have spontaneous encounters with all three groups. I never went to the parks and cafés alone. There was always at least one person with me from the neighborhood. The

company of residents, who have more information about the neighborhood, has protected me from risky encounters.

The people who helped me most were a group of young people who ran an education co-op in the neighborhood. Because the neighborhood was under constant police surveillance, I did not reside there. I worked as a volunteer teacher in an education co-op in the neighborhood for a year, and this co-op became the center of my life in Narova. Although the people who work in this co-op were members of a Marxist organization, the organization had not yet attracted the attention of the police. That is to say, while members of other organizations had been continuous targets of police violence, there are no single Narova residents from this organization who were taken into custody or subjected to arbitrary police violence. Hence, the co-op provided me with a relatively safe refuge in the neighborhood while those who were more visibly politically engaged were under the threat of imprisonment as terrorists. Moreover, being a teacher-researcher enabled me to be a part of the everyday life in the neighborhood and to observe daily events and experiences relevant to my research. These included a) residents' encounters with the representatives of the state, b) various manifestations and performances of sovereignty, c) the ways in which the residents make meaning of these manifestations and performances, d) operations of spatial control, e) feelings that emerged within the context of the neighborhood, and f) everyday responses to the atmosphere of fear and violence in the neighborhood.

The police

The police, first and foremost, have been the most dominant figure of this research. Since the establishment of the neighborhood there has been no police station in the neighborhood. Besides, unless a police operation is taking place, it is impossible to see a

police officer with his/her official clothes in Narova. Moreover, there are no police cars to be seen in the neighborhood. On an ordinary day in Narova, the police are present in the neighborhood either as undercover officers or in their *akreps*. During the days of demonstrations or house raids thousands of police accompanied by tanks and helicopters pour into the neighborhood. As I elaborate on Chapter III, *akreps* and house raids give the impression that Narova is a war zone, a place of anticipated violence. As Arendt (1973) argues, in totalitarian countries where the secret police appear as a figure controlling social relations, “mutual suspicion, [...] permeates all social relationships [...] and creates an all-pervasive atmosphere even outside the special purview of the secret police” (430). Similarly, in Narova the presence of the undercover police officers makes the police present everywhere in the neighborhood. It makes everyone suspicious of everyone else. For instance, when I decided to conduct a fieldwork in Narova, the people familiar with the neighborhood warned me to keep in mind that anyone in the neighborhood could easily be an undercover police officer or collaborating with the police. In effect, from the very beginning of my fieldwork in Narova, the ghost of the police and of the violence they carry with them was always with me.

I did not talk to a single police officer during my fieldwork in Narova. I thought that any person who chose to go to a neighborhood as stigmatized as Narova and build a rapport with the residents there would be considered suspicious by police officers. Besides, I had already heard that the police were forcing a lot of Narova residents to spy on other residents. Knowing that these kinds of police attitudes are not uncommon in Turkey, I ignored talking to the police. I thought that if I informed the police about my fieldwork, they might want me to collaborate with them or to prove my loyalty to them by providing them with information about the residents. By not going to the police office, I

avoided the police's possible demand for collaboration. However, this also means that I missed the opportunity to listen to their side of the story.

A few months after I started to do my fieldwork, I realized that undercover policemen had been following me for some time. As I discuss in Chapter III, when I realized that I was being followed, I felt that my life was in danger. The day I noticed that undercover policemen were following me, I talked to my lawyer friends. They told me that if the police let me realize that they were following me, it meant that they were not interested in the data I was gathering, but that they wanted to scare me. They advised me to continue going to the neighborhood to show the police that I had nothing to hide or to be scared of. I also informed the people in the co-op about the situation. Their suggestion was similar. I followed their advice. I continued to go to the neighborhood and to conduct interviews. The police continued to follow me and probably listened to my telephone conversations. I tried to ignore my fear as much as I could.

The police constitute a key figure in Alevi communities in Istanbul. As I elaborate on in Chapter I, since they left their villages in the 1960s, Alevis have been targets of a series of nationalist and Islamist pogroms and police violence. Moreover, after the great Alevi massacre took place in the 16th century, Alevi communities retreated to isolated areas away from the reach of the soldiers and state law enforcement. As I discuss in the following chapter, as Alevis lived clandestinely, under the threat of destruction by soldiers for centuries, secrecy is key to Alevi culture. Accordingly, Narova residents were always very careful when talking to me. They did not let me learn any information that could be used against them. Thinking that any secret insider information might possibly put me in danger, I also had no interest in learning anything more than what the police already knew. I conducted eighty in-depth interviews with women and men whose ages were between eighteen and seventy-eight, and who had lived in the neighborhood for more than ten

years. Except for two people, all of the informants let me tape record the interviews. However, all of the interviews comprised two phases: recorded conversations and conversations off the record.

Although I did not willingly include the police in my fieldwork, the figure of the police was always present during the research and writing processes of this dissertation. I did not request official consent from the police while conducting my research, but nevertheless I feel that I was unofficially forced to act according to their consent. Thinking retrospectively, I now understand that there was an unspoken deal between the police and me: I would stay away from the criminals and some radical revolutionary groups¹ and they would not intervene in my research. In other words, they would not intervene in my business as long as I would not try to learn about the alleged gang and police collaboration or about their relation to various radical revolutionary groups organized in the neighborhood. I now realize that I took being followed by the undercover policemen as a warning reminding me of the limits of my research and telling me that I was not free to talk to whomever I wanted to. As a result, I tried to see the neighborhood with the eyes of the police and created a danger scale in my mind. I categorized people according to their potential to put my research and my personal safety at risk. Criminals and members of radical revolutionary organizations constituted the most risky groups.

The revolutionaries

Narova residents refer to the members of legal or illegal socialist organizations as revolutionaries. Most of the revolutionaries are between the ages of fifteen and thirty. This is mainly because members of a socialist organization are easy targets for police violence and repression. Hence, many revolutionaries either go to prison or must eventually leave the country. Those who cannot or do not leave must manage the constant fear of being

imprisoned, kidnapped or tortured. They usually end their political activities as they grow older. For the young people in Narova, being a revolutionary is more than just an individual choice. It is part of the culture they were born into. For instance, while explaining to me why he became a revolutionary, Hakan, a twenty-two year-old young man, told me how he did not have much of a choice:

Why I became a revolutionary? Actually, when I was younger, when I was a teenager, I was not very interested in politics. Well, all of the young people in my family, such as my elder brothers, my uncle's daughters, my uncle's sons, they were all revolutionaries. But I was apolitical. Do you know when exactly I decided to be a revolutionary? You know the neighborhood association, right? I decided to be a revolutionary on the day when the police organized an operation against the association. Those people, those who ended up in prison did nothing wrong, they simply tried to protect this neighborhood. They wanted to prevent crime. When I saw that the association's building, which had always been packed with people before the operation, I decided to work for the association. I was preparing for the university exam then. I stopped working for the exam. And I volunteered to work in the association. If you are born in Narova, you have three choices. If you are lucky enough, you will get into college and leave the neighborhood and never come back again. Chances for that are very low. Your second option is to work with the gangs. You will sell drugs, use drugs, steal cars, whatever. If you want to stay clean, if you want to listen to your conscience you will be a revolutionary. It doesn't stop there though. If you decided to be a revolutionary then you have two paths in front of you. You will end up in prison or escape to Europe or you will quit politics and become a depressed alcoholic. This neighborhood is full of depressed alcoholics. I am ready to be put in prison. I don't mind that. They can come and take me any time.

During my fieldwork in Narova, I often caught myself thinking like Hakan. I felt that there were not many options in front of someone born and raised in Narova. If she/he is lucky enough to get into a good school she/he can have a relatively secure life. However, in Turkey the university entrance exam strongly favors the more privileged classes. In order to get into a good school, one has to take private classes while preparing for the university entrance exam. This makes it much harder for working class kids to receive a good college education. Hence, being a criminal or revolutionary appear as more likely options for the youth of Narova.

As I illustrate throughout this dissertation, there are various legal and illegal Marxist-Leninist organizations organized in Narova. Some of these organizations are in

favor of armed struggle and they sometimes engage in violent attacks against business people, police, soldiers, banks, U.S. consulates, etc. There are also many legal associations in the neighborhood in which members of illegal organizations work. The offices of these associations usually function as café houses where people gather together, have tea, discuss politics and spend time together. These offices are under constant police surveillance. Besides, according to the rumors circulating in the neighborhood, there are always police spies working these associations. During my fieldwork, I avoided going to these offices and spending time with the members of illegal organizations. First of all, I thought the people there would suspect me of being a police spy. If I went to these places regularly, I would have felt the need to prove to them that I was not collaborating with the police. Besides, if I went to these places more than once, the police, in turn, would suspect me of working with those revolutionary groups. Hence, I could not find a better option than that of not going to these places more than once or twice and not spending time with the people that are usually there.

The Criminals

According to the residents, the gang leaders come from elsewhere and the people working for them are a composite group. Some of them are residents and some also come from outside Narova. I had no interest in meeting with the gang leaders or gang members in general. Having conducted a study on this issue before, I felt that talking to the gang members would jeopardize the research. However, I spontaneously met with six young people, whom I later learned were drug addicts and engaged in crime in order to finance their drug consumption. I had long conversations with these people about the issue of crime and life in general in the neighborhood. However, as I thought that criminals might

be connected to various different actors, such as the police, gangs and revolutionary groups, I wanted to stay away from them in general.

Interviews with political refugees and asylum seekers in Germany

I spent a month in Mannheim (June 2012) and conducted interviews with ten former revolutionaries from Narova and similar neighborhoods. One of these “interviewees” was a very good friend of mine whom I had not had the chance to see for thirteen years. I had two objectives: i) to trace the history of the 1990s by talking to former residents from that period, and ii) to understand more recent changes in political violence by talking to radical revolutionaries who had recently left Turkey due to long prison sentences. The interviews focused on several themes: a) the processes of their political engagements and radicalization, b) imaginaries and fantasies that are shaped within the context of the neighborhood and that inform activists’ political motivations and practices, c) their encounters with those whom they perceive as the representatives of the state, d) their imaginations and fantasies of the state, and e) their narrations of the neighborhood in the 90s.

However, the stories I heard there were very hard to listen to. Especially, listening to my friend’s story in a very detailed way made me feel extremely depressed. Although these stories have been influential in shaping the dissertation and developing my arguments, I could not find a way to directly integrate those stories into the dissertation.

Archival research at the Turkish Human Rights Foundation (TIHV)

Established in 1990, the TIHV is a non-governmental organization that advocates for the survivors of human rights abuses and keeps the records of these “state crimes.” As the first researcher to conduct archival research at the TIHV, I examined the human rights

abuse complaints of socialists from 1991 to 2011. These complaints include detailed descriptions of the events from the moment the “victims” are taken into custody or kidnapped by paramilitary forces. Their accounts shed light on the extent of the police control in the Alevi neighborhoods during the 90s and 2000s. These anonymous files, which also include detailed notes of the TIHV psychologists’ sessions with the “victims,” show how state violence in Turkey is employed selectively against certain ethnic and religious groups (especially against Kurds and Alevis) and the working class. Yet, these documents were also very depressing and I could not find the courage to go back to these documents and incorporate them into the dissertation. As I mentioned in the preface, violence is sticky, it permeates the body and soul. While I was reading the TIHV documents, I had terrible nightmares about police and prisons. Plus, during the process another big wave of terror operations started and I felt that the police could appear at my door at any time. I spent months waking up every morning at 5 a.m., the operation time, and waiting for the police to break in my door, get into the house and lean a gun against my forehead. As there were many other people feeling the same way, in this process the Istanbul Bar Association organized public lectures to tell people what to do in case of a house raid. These developments, needless to say, increased my fear and anxiety. Hence, I did not dare to open that baggage while writing the dissertation. Like the interviews I conducted in Germany, TIHV documents have also been influential in shaping the dissertation and developing my arguments. Yet, I also could not manage to directly integrate the data I gathered from TIHV into the dissertation.

Observations in the Specially Authorized Assize Courts

The Specially Authorized Assize Courts are charged with handling “crimes against the state.” With 12,897 terror convicts in 2011 and with ongoing “terror operations,”

courtrooms have become epicenters of the performances of the state and the police since the 2006 anti-terror law. With such a dramatic shift from the extralegal enforcement of state violence of the 1990s, these courts offer a critical site for research on the transformation of state power in Turkey. In addition to following the cases and hearings of fourteen terrorist suspects from Narova, I attended eight other hearings related to terror crimes. My observations on these hearings focused on understanding: a) the operation of the anti-terror law, b) performances and affirmations (cf. Derrida 1992) made in the courtrooms regarding state sovereignty, c) encounters between the state and its “enemies,” d) effects of these encounters on terror suspects and on their families and friends, and d) the ways in which terrorist suspects and their friends and families make meaning of the state performances taking place in the courtrooms.

In sum, as I point out in the preface, in spite of its difficulties, the reason I wanted to complete this dissertation is the debt I carried as a witness. As Isbell (2009) underlines in her article on the difficulties of writing about violence, being witness to violence burdens one with a debt. I suppose the burden of debt was more important to me than my fears and the desire to escape from what I had witnessed. However, while writing this dissertation I often felt that I had lost my way and my voice. When I tried to distance myself from what I had witnessed I felt guilty for being distant; when I did not distance myself enough I lost my voice as an anthropologist. As Ghassem-Fachandi (2009) argues, “the special authority established by the ethnographer of violence can unsettle a sensitive balance, a sound academic composure, an assumed distance to and disinterest in the object of study” (6). Accordingly, my writing process has also been a process of the struggle to find a balanced academic language, which would not colonize the voice of Narova residents. This is one of the reasons why I first and foremost wanted to focus on the police/state violence against Narova residents. I did not yet feel equipped to handle other

issues, such as the deep root of “intimate pathologies of power” (cf. Scheper-Hughes 1993) in the neighborhood, although they sound more appealing anthropologically.

Notes Chapter I

¹ I call revolutionary Marxist-Leninist groups that are pro-violence and whose members engage in violent actions (i.e. bombing, assassinations, etc.) radical revolutionary groups.

CHAPTER II

Alevi: A community at the margins of central authorities

This chapter focuses on the Alevi community in Turkey and on their belief system. I discuss the ways in which the ruling elite has seen Alevi community as a threat against “national security.” I also discuss Alevi communities’ sympathy with the leftist politics in Turkey and the emergence of Alevi working class neighborhoods as shelters for urban guerrillas in Turkey. Alevism historically refers to a heterodox, syncretic faith with a mix of mystical Sufi Islam, polytheist beliefs of Mesopotamia and Central Asia, Shi’ite Islam and Christianity (Melikoff 1998, Markussen 2010, Yildiz and Verkuyten 2011). Alevi are the second largest religious group after Sunni¹ Muslims in Turkey. They are ethnically Turkish or Kurdish² and mostly inhabit Eastern and central Turkey. Since the Ottoman era, they have been stigmatized as infidels and perverts. Due to this stigmatization, Alevi still tend to hide their identity. Thus, the exact size of the Alevi population in Turkey is still unknown. Different sources range from at least 10 per cent to over a quarter of the total population³ (Erman and Goker 2000: 99). Aringberg-Laanaatza (1998) demonstrates that “the roots of Alevism have to be sought in the context where a mingling process took place in large areas of Anatolia between abandoned Christian communities and Muslim Turkish and Kurdish tribes” (46). Since the 16th century, when the Ottoman state elite adopted Sunnism as the state religion, Alevi have been regarded as heretics whose beliefs diverged from the path of true Islam. Moreover, poor and rebellious “heterodox” Anatolian peasants’ sympathy with the Safavid state, the neighbor and enemy of the Ottoman state, has been influential in the ongoing stigmatization of Alevi communities as internal and potential enemies. As they were seen as internal enemies during the Ottoman Empire where various

ethnic and religious communities enjoyed a relative autonomy, Alevis were not recognized as a minority group, thus neither enjoyed majority rights as Sunnis nor minority rights as non-Muslim communities. As Ottoman rulers and law have ignored their very presence, the Alevi communities developed their own extra-legal law and order mechanisms.

Accordingly, in the following parts of this chapter I argue that in addition to Alevis' centuries long stigmatization, Alevis underground and/or extra-legal law and order mechanisms contributed to their further stigmatization as well as their participation in leftist politics. In other words, in analyzing how being a leftist became part of Alevi identity, I argue that the ways in which Alevis' distance from state law and authority and their habitus of local law and order making have been influential on the association of leftist identity with Alevi identity.

There are four unique characteristics of the Alevi community in Turkey. First of all, Alevis were the first officially declared internal enemies of the Ottoman State. In fact the very categorization of Alevis as a distinct group coincides with their being declared internal enemies by the Ottoman Sultan. Second, although Alevis are Muslim, they do not follow all of the orders of the Quran. Third, Alevi communities lived out of reach of Ottoman soldiers and law enforcers, and had their own lawmakers and law enforcers for centuries. Fourth, Alevis are known for their active participation in leftist organizations.

This chapter focuses on these four characteristics of the Alevi community, and illustrates the ways in which Alevis have been the most constant targets of political violence in Turkey. I demonstrate that Alevis' position at the margins of the central authorities, their distance from the law and the dictates of the Quran and to that of the central authorities and their traditional attempts to make and maintain their own law and order have been influential in their demonization by the Ottoman and Turkish central authorities as well as in their active participation in left-wing organizations. After briefly

introducing the Alevi belief system and illustrating the processes that contributed to the transformation of the Alevi community into the original internal enemies of the Ottoman State, I elaborate on Alevi traditional local courts, which existed in Alevi villages for centuries, as well as the establishment of *people's courts* and *committees* in Alevi neighborhoods during the 1970s. Hence, this chapter specifically points out Alevi local law making and law maintaining practices, which possibly became a habitus among Alevi communities, transferred from generation to generation. Accordingly, this chapter is not only designed to provide⁴ insight into Alevi culture and identity but also to provide background for what will be discussed in Chapter V, which focuses on alternative law and order techniques developed by Narova youth in the mid-2000s.

Alevism and the law and orders of Quran

Although we cannot speak of a common Alevi belief system, there are still some common beliefs among the communities who call themselves Alevi. First of all, all Alevis consider themselves Muslims and they believe that the prophet Mohammed is the representative of God. However, their religious practices and beliefs differ significantly from Sunni and Shi'ite interpretations of Islam. Similar to the Shi'ites, Alevis venerate Ali, the cousin of the Prophet Mohammed. Nevertheless, unlike Shi'ites and Sunnis they do not practice the Islamic duties ordered in Quran. Instead of the Quran, the Alevi belief system is largely inspired by the philosophy of Haci Bektashi Veli, a 13th century dervish. Although he was a Muslim philosopher, Haci Bektashi Veli was not trained in a religious school and did not agree with some common Islamic practices. He developed a version of Islam that synthesized Christian and Muslim religious practices. According to Bektashi philosophy, love, not a sovereign God, is the root and cause of all existence (Bilici 1998). The value of an individual is to be judged not by her/his piety as is taught in Orthodox Muslim doctrine but

by the love she/he bears (Melikoff 1998). Bektashism emphasizes the social and more egalitarian aspects of Islam. It is in favor of a “city of consensus,” where everything is shared and all property held in common (Bilici 1998). The categorical imperative of this philosophy is contained in the expression *eline, diline, beline sahip ol*, meaning: control your hands (do not steal), control your tongue (do not lie) and control your loins (do not commit adultery). In brief, basic principles of Bektashi philosophy are more concerned with peace keeping than showing reverence to the God and its alleged representatives in the word (Cornell 2006).

Alevis do not accept sharia law, the law of the Quran. They, accordingly, reject the religious duties described by the Quran as conditions of being a Muslim.⁵ In addition, unlike other Muslim groups, they do not accept the mosque as a place of worship and therefore do not attend mosque. They, instead practice their religious ceremonies either in private houses or in larger houses called *cem evi* (gathering house). As different from Sunni and Shi’ite forms of prayer, which are performed individually in various kneeling positions, Alevi prayers take the form of an ecstatic whirling dance called *semah* performed by men and women together. There is no requirement for women to wear a veil during the prayer. Furthermore, radically different from Sunni and Shi’te traditions, drinking alcohol during or after the *semah* is a part of a religious ritual among some Alevi communities (Bozkurt 1990, Öztürkmen 2005, Tambar 2010).

The price Alevis have had to pay for their critical stance against the dictates of the Quran has been a heavy one. For refusing the law of the Father/God, they have been accused of breaking the incest taboo, the “universal” and “natural law” of humanity. They have been stigmatized as perverts who participate in orgies with their parents, children and siblings during *cem* gatherings. However, it was not until the 16th century that the Alevi community’s rejection of the sharia law was considered a sign of heresy. In other words, it was not until they rebelled against another Father, the Ottoman Sultan, that they were

accused of breaking the allegedly universal law of the humanity, and thus considered as the illegitimate and or/undesired members of the Muslim community. Ottoman stigmas associated with Alevi still survive in the shape of rumors, prejudices and deprecatory judgments (Altunsu 2007, Erdemir et.al 2013, Sirin 2013, Zeidan 1999). For instance, in Turkey there is a stereotypical belief called “the candle went off” (*mum sondu*). According to this belief Alevi turn off all the lights and engage in incestuous relationships during *semah*.

Alevi: against the Ottoman Sultan

When the Turkish migration to/invasion of Anatolia started in 1071, the majority of the Anatolian population was Christian. The Turkish tribes were heterogeneous in terms of their religious beliefs. Some were shamanistic and the others believed in various interpretations of Islam. Until the 16th century, there had been no clear-cut separation of heterodoxy from the orthodoxy in the Ottoman State (Kafadar 1995). Until then the Ottoman rulers “did not need to correct the Islam of [their] subjects” (Kafadar 1995:72). The orthodoxy and heterodoxy schism dates back to the establishment of the Safavid State near the eastern borders of the Ottoman Empire at the beginning of the 16th century.

Around 1500, Shah Ismail founded a new state ruling the Eastern Anatolia, Azerbaijan, and Iran. As the leader of a Shi’ite mystical religious order, he sought supporters in Anatolia and contacted local religious and/or spiritual leaders. The early 16th century was also an era of peasant discontent in Anatolia. The poor peasants of Anatolia were discontent with the Ottoman State’s harsh taxation and land expropriation policies. Nomads were also unhappy about Ottoman rule as the Ottoman government was forcing them to leave their traditional life styles and to settle down. Accordingly, the early 1500s witnessed a series of peasant and nomad revolts in Anatolia. The Shah was seen as a

messiah who would bring justice by some of the Anatolian peasants. These peasants and nomads, finding the Shah's call for building a more just society attractive, sided with the Shah Ismail. They fought against the Ottoman soldiers beside the Shah's army (Karolewski 2008). The revolts were suppressed with the killing of around fifty thousand peasants and nomads. In this process, around fifteen thousand people from Anatolia left for the Safavid State to live under the rule of Shah Ismail⁶ (Öz 1992).

After the suppression of the revolts, Ottoman rulers adopted legalistic Sunnism⁷ as Ottoman state doctrine (Karolewski 2008). These revolts were the starting point of anti-Alevi attitudes in the Ottoman Empire (Karolewski 2008, Shindeldecker 1998). The very designation of Alevis as a distinct religious group dates back to these revolts. In order to refer to the followers of the Shah Ismail in the Ottoman lands, they coined the term *Kizilbas* (red head).⁸ In Ottoman documents, *Kizilbas*⁹ is used in a pejorative sense to mean “heretics,” “heretic rebels” and “allies of the Safavids” (Aksoy 2008, Melikoff 1998, Olsson et.al 1998). The Sultan of the time, Yavuz Sultan Selim (Sultan Yavuz), registered all the *Kizilbas* on Ottoman soil and obtained two *fetvas*, formal religious ordinances, by influential theologians, condemning *Kizilbas* and sanctioning their persecution (Imber 1979, Karolewski 2008, Kehl-Bodrogi 2003). The *fetvas* declared, “a Muslim's individual duty was to kill *Kizilbases*” and that *Kizilbases* are “even worse than infidels” (Sahin 2001:35). Additionally, with these *fetvas* Ottoman rulers pronounced themselves “the defenders of Sunni Islam against the Safavid Shi'a State and the related heterodox sects and orders” (Sahin 2001: 35). Sultan Yavuz killed more than forty thousand *Kizilbases* in the Ottoman lands (Ergul 2012, Lowry 2013, Parlar 2005). Following severe persecution and massacres, “*Kizilbas* went underground using dissimulation as a means for self-protection” (Sahin 2001:40). They retreated to isolated rural areas, usually infertile, mountainous, hard-to-reach regions and turned more and more inward, developing their

unique structures and doctrines.¹⁰ In addition, many Alevis assimilated into Sunnism and relinquished their heterodox beliefs (Karolewski 2008).

As Erdemir (2008) demonstrates, the memory of Sultan Yavuz's massacre still informs the Alevi collective identity in Turkey. In addition, Ottoman-Safavid conflict has informed, hence legitimized, the anti-Alevi attitudes in modern Turkey. For instance, the Muslim youth who participated in the violent attacks against the Alevis during the 1960s and 1970s, referred to the conflict by chanting "[k]eep history in mind. You used to say Shah, Shah... Now you no longer go to the Shah but to communism. We will prevent this" (Bozkurt 2000:98). Moreover, recent debates about the name of a third bridge to be built over the Bosphorus brought Sultan Yavuz's massacre back into the memories of Alevis once again. Prime Minister Erdogan, in May 29, 2013, announced the government's decision to name the third bridge after Yavuz Sultan Selim. Reacting to criticism from the Alevi community, Erdogan argued that Sultan Yavuz was an excellent warrior and that it was an honor for him to announce that the bridge would be named after such a brilliant commander.¹¹

Studies on Alevis have shown that *Kizilbas* groups disappeared from the scene until the 19th century and they lived in a state of isolation (Karolewski 2008, Melikoff 1998, Sahin 2001, Zeidan 1999). Thus, we cannot learn if there were any encounters between Ottoman state officials, such as tax collectors, law-enforcers and soldiers, and Alevis between the 16th and 19th centuries. There is only one small-scale study conducted on official attitudes towards the Alevi community in that period (Öz 1995). This research is a collection of Ottoman official orders about the Alevi community. According to this study, the *fetva* announced during the Sultan Yavuz era remained in effect until the 19th century. The study demonstrates that there were incidents where some Ottoman subjects wrote to the Sultan, informing him that they had encountered Alevis. In such cases, the

Sultans ordered them to kill those persons after they made certain that they were Alevis. However, this study does not provide any information about whether Ottoman soldiers and law enforcers actually visited Alevi villages or not.

In the 19th century, during the years of Ottoman modernization, Sultan Abdulhamid II developed assimilationist policies targeting heterodox Muslim communities such as *Kizilbases*, Yezidis and Nusayris. The Abdulhamid II government financed the construction of mosques in the villages populated by Alevis. Sunni Imams were appointed in these mosques in order to teach *Kizilbases* the “true path to Islam” (Deringil 1998).¹² The founders of the Republic of Turkey and their followers inherited both Abdulhamid II’s assimilationist policies and Sultan Yavuz’s destructive policies against *Kizilbases*.

Dersim Massacre

As I discuss in the following chapter, the founders of the Republic of Turkey were intolerant of local power holders. The founding years of the Republic of Turkey witnessed several waves of violence against communities that had been ruled autonomously for centuries. As I demonstrate in Chapter III, in the 1930s, a decade after the establishment of the new state, the Turkish army gained territorial control in all parts of Turkey except Dersim, the sole exclusively Alevi-populated province of Turkey.¹³ In order to bring Dersim effectively under the authority of the central government, the Turkish founding elites committed one of the greatest massacres in the history of the Republic of Turkey.

In their attempt to monopolize violence and law in Dersim, the government of the time placed Dersim under a military governor in 1935. In addition, thousands of citizens from Dersim were deported and resettled in western Turkey. However, in spite of the deportations and the military rule, the Turkish army did not succeed in taking control in

Dersim.¹⁴ The tribes of Dersim, which “had never been subdued by any previous government,” (Van Bruinessen 1994:2) were reluctant to give up in the face of the Turkish army’s interventions in the region. They organized a series of rebellions against the government. In 1938, after two years of clashes between the soldiers and local militias, Dersim was air bombed.¹⁵ Around 13,000 people from Dersim lost their lives due to the air bombings and a further 3,470 people were deported to western provinces (Van Bruinessen 1994:2).¹⁶ Before the Dersim Massacre, the Gendarmerie General Command prepared a “Dersim Report.” This report clearly demonstrates that the founders of the Republic inherited the anti-Alevi attitudes of the Ottoman era and considered the Alevi internal enemies. The Report defined Alevism as a major threat to Turkishness and argued, “*Kizilbas* does not like Sunni Muslims, feeds a hostility to Sunnis” and, thus “*Kizilbas* is the enemy of Sunnis” (cited in Sahin 2001: 36).

Assimilationist policies targeting Alevi in Modern Turkey

The founders of the Republic of Turkey declared that their aim was to build a modern, secular nation-state. As they believed that the principles of secularism were the best guarantors of putting an end to the discrimination they have faced for centuries, Alevi communities welcomed the establishment of the Republic (Krisztina-Bodrogi 2003). Studies on secularism in Turkey demonstrate that secularism of the founding elites not only aimed to restrict the political role of religion but also to bring religion under the control of the central authority (Berkes 1964, Gole 1996, Keyman 2007, Mardin 1981). In their attempts to take control of religious affairs, the founding elites prohibited popular interpretations of Islam and encouraged “a new nationalist, modernized version of Sunni Islam” (Parla and Davison 2008: 64). They closed popular religious centers and shrines used by both Sunni and Alevi brotherhoods, suppressed unorthodox influential dervish or

mystical orders, abolished locally-based religious education and executed esteemed unorthodox local religious leaders (Acikel and Ates 2011: 723).

The new ruling elites did not recognize Alevis as an official minority group and they continue not to be so recognized.¹⁷ As Kurban (2003) notes, the Alevis' not being recognized as an official minority "effectively [has] exclude[d] the Alevis from the protection of rights granted to other religious minorities" (Kurban 2003:182). Alevi religious institutions do not enjoy legal status in Turkey. For instance, although it is legal to open churches and synagogues, it is still illegal to open a *cem* house as a place of worship in Turkey.¹⁸ Additionally, throughout different periods in the history of modern Turkey, various governments continued the tradition of Abdulhamid II by opening mosques in Alevi villages (Kiesser 2002, Krisztina-Bodrogi 1993 et.al 1997). For instance, soon after the coup of 1980, the *Directory of Religious Affairs* built hundreds of new mosques, and appointed *imams* in Alevi towns. In those years, in many central Anatolian villages Alevis were given the choice between allowing a mosque to be built or being deprived of basic amenities such as roads, clean water and schools (Cakır and Bozan 2005). It was not until 2011, under intense pressure from the EU on the issue,¹⁹ that either history or the religious course books mentioned Alevis.²⁰ In brief, as Kurban (2003) notes "the state involvement in religious affairs not only exclude[d] Alevis from public space in which to practice and teach their religion, but also trie[d] to 'bring the Alevis into the Sunni fold' (Van Bruinessen 1996)" (187).

Alevis' attempts to gain public visibility have been suppressed by a series of violent nationalist and Islamist attacks. For instance, one of the first Alevi festivals organized to celebrate Alevi cultural values ended with a massacre in 1993. In July 1993, Alevis organized a festival commemorating Pir Sultan Abdal, the Alevi poet-rebel of the 16th century. An angry mob chanting Islamist slogans attacked the hotel, where many

Alevi intellectuals and artists were staying during the festival. The crowd set the building on fire and thirty-seven people lost their lives. Today, with the exception of just one lawyer, all of the lawyers who defended those responsible for the deaths are now members of the governing party, the AKP. Eight of these lawyers are deputies in parliament. To make things worse, one of the lawyers of the mob organizers, Sevket Kazan served as Minister of Justice in 1996 and 1997 (Kose 2010). As I discuss in Chapter VI, the ongoing violence in Narova gives rise to the perception that violence is an inevitable fate among Alevi youth. Needless to say, the examples above have been influential in the development of such perceptions.

Habitus of local law making: Cem gatherings as local courts

As students of Alevism argue, Alevis' rejection of sharia law, their unorthodox beliefs and practices and their revolt against the Ottoman state are the reasons behind the continuing anti-Alevi attitudes in Turkey (Benhabib and Isiksel 2006, Gunes-Ayata 1992, Karalowski 2008, Vorhoff 2003). However, I think that there is a less visible reason behind continuing anti-Alevi policies that remains unexplored by scholars. Local lawmaking and law-maintaining practices of Alevi communities, which has been transferred through generations, have been influential in their demonization by the ruling elites. To support this hypothesis, I argue that local lawmaking and law-maintaining practices are deeply structured in Alevi culture. These practices have become a *habitus* of the community. This *habitus*, preventing Ottoman and Turkish law enforcers from intervening in the Alevi community, contributed to their stigmatization by the ruling elites. Unfortunately, there are no thoroughly-researched and analyzed studies on Alevi local lawmaking and law-maintaining practices.²¹ However, oral history projects and anthropological studies on rural Alevi communities illustrate that Alevi communities

traditionally had their own law and order mechanisms that rendered certain aspects of the central law, especially those related to maintaining everyday order, inapplicable among Alevi communities (Bozkurt 1998, Shakland 2007, Yıldırım 2010). According to these studies, and according to the interviews I conducted in Narova, local religious men called *dedes*²² actively eschewed appealing to Ottoman and Turkish officials and their courts, trying instead to “keep the community going without appealing to the state security forces and without state support.” (Bozkurt 1998:85). *Cem* gatherings had functioned as a “local court,” where people discussed and resolved their problems under the guidance of the *dedes*. Hence, *dede* not only lead the religious ceremonies, but they used to have the judicial authority to settle disputes and issue punishments in local settings. In other words, *dedes* had local/ autonomous law enforcement, law preserving and punishment roles. As Shakland (2010) puts it, Alevism is “a system of thought which claims legal authority” (35). Alevis rarely identify with the state, and seek to define their social order according to their own tradition. Rather than following the Quran as the book of law, Alevis’ authoritative account is based on the book called *Buyruk*²³ (Yıldırım 2010; Shankland 2010; Karakaya-Stump 2010). There are multiple different copies of *Buyruk* and as Karakaya-Stump 2010 notes, these texts are not treated as a prime resource but rather as an *aide-me’moire*. Besides, the *Buyruk* does not offer detailed and exact information about punishment (Yıldırım 2010). Hence, Alevi law enforcement is not only autonomous from the central state but Alevi law enforcers also have certain autonomy within the Alevi community, as there are various interpretations of the Alevi law.

Yıldırım (2010),²⁴ in his study on Alevi legal systems,²⁵ demonstrates that law enforcers of the central authorities had traditionally been considered outsiders among Alevi communities. One had to avoid sharing any information with the “outsiders’ judiciary.” If a community member committed a crime, Alevis traditionally hid it from the Ottoman and

Turkish law enforcers and applied their own judgment and punishment processes in solving the case. Accordingly, one of the biggest crimes within Alevi communities was appealing to the state's courts, to the "outside court." Anyone who went to the state court instead of going to the traditional courts would be excluded from the community. Unfortunately, there are no anthropological studies on the operation of the local courts in the villages. In addition, there are no studies which analyze the ways in which *cem* gatherings had challenged the Ottoman and Turkish central authorities. Acknowledging that this subject requires further research, I still want to make some comments on the challenging effects of the local courts. As I demonstrate throughout this dissertation, law is affirmative of power. Law as a "distant but overwhelming" (cf. Das and Poole 2004) power addresses the power holders. Alevi local courts held in *cem* houses, by preventing Ottoman and Turkish soldiers, police and judiciary from intervening in the Alevi community might have stood as an obstacle in front of the central authorities' affirmation of their power among the Alevi community. This is probably why Ottoman rulers were strictly against the *cem* gatherings.²⁶ Moreover, this is probably one of the reasons why opening a *cem* house as a place of worship is still illegal in Turkey.

Yildirim (2010) argues that *cem* gatherings doubling as local courts survived until the early 1970s, until rural-to-urban migration and left-wing politicization led to the breakdown of the *dede* system²⁷ (see also Camuroglu 1997, Masscard 2012). However, the 1970s witnessed the establishment of new kinds of local courts in the newly emerging Alevi populated working class neighborhoods of the big cities. These were the local courts established by Alevi youth, who rapidly filled the ranks of socialist organizations when they arrived in big cities.

Alevis and Leftist politics

Alevi have been known for their support of leftist organizations since the early 1960s when socialist movement became popular in Turkey. In fact, as Markussen (2012) argues, being a leftist became a part of the Alevi identity by the 1960s and it continues to be so. Before pointing out how Alevi began to take active part in socialist organizations, I discuss the emergence working class neighborhoods in Turkey in the 1950s and 1960s. These years were the years of rapid urbanization in Turkey. In these years, the technological innovations in the rural areas decreased the need for agricultural labor. Thousands lost their jobs and migrated to big cities in search of jobs in the newly established factories²⁸ (Senyapili 198, Keyder 1987). In the absence of any state or factory sponsored worker housing projects, the new dwellers of the city constructed their own makeshift shanty houses called *gecekondu*.²⁹ In a short time, *gecekondu* neighborhoods flourished in Turkey's large urban areas.³⁰ The building of *gecekondu* neighborhoods at first faced strong opposition from the government. However, as the rural migrants provided a cheap means of cutting the labor deficit at the time, they gradually began to be accepted. The massive and rapid proletarianization of the city contributed to the development of the socialist movement (Yonucu 2008). Soon after their establishment, *gecekondu* neighborhoods became the centers of the socialist mobilization and hundreds of thousands of *gecekondu* residents were organized under revolutionary Marxist organizations (Aksoy 2008, Aslan 2004, Gonen and Yonucu 2011, Yonucu 2008). Although Marxist organizations gained support in many of the *gecekondu* neighborhoods, the main centers of the urban guerrilla struggle were Alevi-populated *gecekondu* neighborhoods. Studies of the relationship between leftist organizations and Alevi demonstrate that in addition to their working-class identity there are other reasons behind Alevi's sympathy for leftist politics (Aksoy 2008, Jongerden 2003, Van Bruinessen 1996). According to these studies, the memory of the massacres of Alevi is one of the main reasons underlying this sympathy. Socialist and communist criticism of state domination

easily gained the support of Alevi who saw themselves as victims of state domination (Yildiz and Verkuyten 2011). Moreover, socialist and communist discourses, which criticized religion in general, but more importantly Sunni Islam in particular,³¹ was another aspect that made leftist calls to action attractive to Alevi. In addition, as Van Bruinessen (1996) argues “the radical left, perceiving in the Alevi rebellions of the past proto-communist movements, saw the Alevi as its natural allies” (9) and invested resources in gaining supporters from the Alevi population. The Alevi identification with left-wing movements contributed to their further stigmatization as internal enemies (Acikel and Ates 2011, Markussen 2012).

After the massacres of the 16th century it wasn't until the 1960s that Alevi began to leave their remote and isolated villages and move to towns populated by Sunni Muslims.³² Some Alevi directly migrated to big industrial cities such as Istanbul and Ankara. Others migrated to the Sunni towns close to their villages. However, these towns were not safe places for Alevi. As Alevi became engaged with socialist politics, they were perceived as a security threat to “the religious, ethnic, and political identity of the nation” (Dressler 2008: 285). Alevi, along with Kurds and communists, were labeled as one of the three main threats to national security in the official discourse (Erdemir 2004).³³ Accordingly, they became the targets of nationalist and Islamist attacks. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, small Anatolian towns and cities such as Malatya, Corum, Sivas, Tokat and Maras witnessed a series of anti-Alevi pogroms organized by Islamists and nationalists. As a result of these pogroms, several hundred Alevi were killed and thousands of shops and houses owned by Alevi were destroyed. There was also an economic dimension to the pogroms. As Alevi began to be successful in business, Sunni populations considered Alevi as their rivals. The stigmatization of Alevi as communists and atheists paved the way for local business people to eliminate their economic rivals under the pretext of defending the

country from the “communist threat” (Bozarslan 2003, Oktem 2008, Smith 2005). Military officials and some high-ranking bureaucrats at the time interpreted these pogroms as spontaneous acts motivated by “understandable” religious and nationalist sentiments of the citizens (Van Bruinessen 2000). Consequently, punishments received by the organizers and participants of the pogroms were disproportionate to the gravity of the offenses.³⁴ The Alevi community interpreted these pogroms and government officials’ responses to them as evidence of the continuation of “the state’s hostility” against Alevis (Bozarslan 2003). Hence, such pogroms contributed to the Alevis’ further distancing themselves from what they have perceived as the state and to increasing Alevi participation in leftist organizations. As a result of the pogroms, thousands of Alevis migrated to big industrial cities, where they could build their own *gecekondu* houses and live with their relatives and fellow villagers (Aksoy 2008).

Emergence of Working Class Alevi Populated neighborhoods

As studies of *gecekondu* neighborhoods in Turkey demonstrate, familial ties are influential in rural migrants’ decisions about where to settle in the city. Rural migrants usually move to places where their relatives or fellow-villagers have already settled in (Erder 1997, Erman 1998, Fliche 2009, Tugal 2009). This is particularly true of Alevis. In order to find a secure place in the city, Alevi migrants moved to the *gecekondu* areas, where some of their relatives or fellow-villagers had already settled. In time, they built new *gecekondu* neighborhoods, which predominantly consist of Alevis.³⁵ These neighborhoods were built with the help of the socialist college students. All of my informants who were socialist college students in the 1970s told me that they considered the Alevi community as the most oppressed group in Turkey. They, therefore, felt it was their responsibility to help Alevi migrants find shelter in the city. Additionally, shortly

after they moved to the city, young Alevi migrants joined socialist organizations. This, consequently, made the socialist college youth more aware of the housing problems of Alevis.

Construction of these neighborhoods faced strong opposition from the government. The second half of the 1970s, witnessed the establishment of a number of *gecekodu* neighborhoods, such as 1 Mayıs,³⁶ Gazi, Guzeltepe, Nurtepe, Cayan,³⁷ Gulsuyu, Armutlu and Okmeydani, associated with Alevis and socialist organizations. Throughout the 1970s, these neighborhoods witnessed a constant fight between the soldiers who came to demolish the houses and the people who wanted to protect their houses. The soldiers went to these neighbourhoods so frequently that, as a middle aged Narova resident Ihsan relates, even the children were taking part in the fight against the soldiers. Ihsan tells his story:

When I was a small kid, my friends and I used to go and play in the empty land at the outskirts of the neighborhood. We sometimes would hear the sounds of *panzers* driving towards the neighborhood. They were coming to demolish our houses. We would start running towards the neighborhood, shouting '*the state is coming!*' The women of the neighborhood, who heard our voices, would start collecting stones to throw at the *panzers*. We kids were also collecting stones to throw at the soldiers.

As Ihsan's words illustrate, in these neighbourhoods, from the very beginning the state has been experienced as an external force with destructive capacities against which one has to protect herself/himself.

In addition to the government's continuous attempts to demolish the neighbourhoods, these neighborhoods were not officially recognized until the early 1980s. Thus, until the 1980s, there were no schools, no hospitals and no police stations, and no government-sponsored infrastructural services, such as water, electricity, sewage, etc., in these neighborhoods. With the absence of any government sponsored infrastructural and social services, the socialist students and professionals occupied the place left empty by the government. Urban planning students helped the residents in urban planning-related issues, doctors and medical students provided the residents with free health care services

and education students and teachers provided the residents with alternative education. The lack of any government sponsored social and infrastructural services and regular attacks by soldiers, which sometimes resulted in the killings of the residents,³⁸ further reinforced the perceptions that the state was against Alevi. As I illustrate in Chapter V, this perception still continues today.

Alternative Local Security: Revolutionary People's Committee

Soon after the establishment of Narova and other predominantly Alevi neighbourhoods, the residents established *people's committees* and *people's courts* attached to these committees. The members of the *people's committees* were elected mostly, if not exclusively, among male Narova residents.³⁹ Yasin, a 72-year-old male Narova resident explains why they felt the need to form a *people's committee* in the neighborhood:

The soldiers were coming to the neighbourhood to demolish our houses. We had to stand together against the *state*. The *state* [soldiers] killed the people who wanted to protect their houses. But we were organized. We got together and discussed what had to be done. We had to stand united. Otherwise, they would not let us stay here. They did not want us in here. We decided to form a *public committee*. We also had to defend ourselves against fascist attacks. The residents of the neighbourhood next to ours were all fascists. They were watching the neighbourhood and when they caught us alone, they would beat us. The *state* was behind them. The *state* has always been behind them! Nothing has changed! Similar things were happening in other Alevi neighbourhoods. Anyway, we got together and talked about what to do. Most of us were already organized. We decided to form a committee to defend ourselves. All of the revolutionary organizations organized in this neighbourhood had representatives in the committee.

As the citation above illustrates, the *people's committees* were formed first and foremost for security reasons.⁴⁰ As the government did not officially recognize the neighbourhood, there were no police stations in the neighbourhood. In the absence of any police to keep the peace, the residents of Narova and of similar neighbourhoods formed their own local policing groups. Additionally, the presence of the police would not have made them feel

more secure. For instance, when I asked Yasin whether the police were helping them in the case of “fascist” attacks, he got angry and said:

Police! What police? Where on earth did you see that the police helped the revolutionaries? The police are against the revolutionaries. Police mean the state, the bourgeois state. Police protect the bourgeoisie and the state, not the poor, not the revolutionaries. Police only bring trouble to the poor.

Yasin’s response to my question about the police is representative of Narova residents’ views of the police. In the very first weeks of my fieldwork in Narova, I learned not to use the words police and help in the same sentence. I learned that police represent nothing but violence in Narova.

In order to protect themselves from the violence of soldiers⁴¹ and “fascists,” *people’s committees* formed volunteer neighbourhood patrolling groups, consisting of young male residents most of whom were members of socialist organizations. Soon after the formation of these committees, Narova and similar neighbourhoods began to be known as *liberated zones*—zones liberated from the police, hence state control. These groups watched the peripheries of the neighbourhoods. They would check if there were any soldiers, unknown groups or strangers coming towards the neighbourhood. If they saw any unfamiliar people approaching to the neighbourhood they would investigate them before they let them in. This was because they were afraid that any stranger could be an undercover policeman or a member of the national intelligence agency who came to the neighbourhood to collect information about the revolutionary organizations. The only non-residents who were allowed to go to Narova and similar neighbourhoods were either the relatives of the residents or members of revolutionary organizations known by the residents. Although Narova residents do not want to talk about the issue, there are rumours that the People’s Committee killed five right-wing soldiers. When faced with larger

groups and soldiers, the patrolling groups would blow their whistles and the community would gather to stand united against the attacks.

Although Narova residents were reluctant to talk about violent acts committed by these neighbourhood patrolling groups, there are rumours that these groups committed acts of violence while trying to protect their neighbourhoods.⁴² For instance, Aslan (2004) in his study on the establishment of the May Day neighbourhood argues that there were rumours that some members of the people's committee killed five right-wing workers who wanted to enter the neighbourhood. Aslan argues that the right-wing newspapers fabricated the story. These newspapers' aim was to turn public opinion against the neighbourhood. However, many middle-aged socialists today admit that the use of violence among socialist communities was common during the 1970s.

We can argue that the Alevis, who went underground and lived isolated lives to protect themselves from Ottoman soldiers for centuries, continued to live in a similar way, only this time in the big cities of Turkey. The overlap of the socialist struggle's demands to go underground and the continuation of anti-Alevi attitudes furthered the isolation of Alevis in urban areas throughout the 1970s. However, we cannot claim that Alevis lived in total isolation in those years. As I argued above, revolutionary college students and professionals regularly visited these neighbourhoods to help the residents to improve their living conditions. In addition, these students organized political discussions and artistic activities, such as performances, plays, and concerts in these places. Thus, Alevi-populated working-class neighbourhoods were also places that allowed encounters between the middle class – and even the upper class – and the working class Alevis in the 1970s.

In addition to protecting the neighbourhood from possible attacks the *committee* also established *people's courts*. These courts functioned as places where the internal

disputes among the residents were solved. In line with the Alevi local court tradition, the residents, instead of going to the state courts, would take their problems to the *people's courts* organized by the *people's committees*. For instance, if someone stole something from her/his neighbour, the neighbour would go to the members of the local committee and the committee members would assemble a public court. Although *people's courts* were ideally open to the participation of all residents,⁴³ all of the elderly Narova residents I interviewed argued that they were actually led by nine or ten men, all of whom were representatives of various socialist organizations. The courts were open to the participation of all residents. However, the decision-making process was hierarchically organized. Those who led the courts made the decisions.

These public courts also had alternative punishment techniques. For instance, if someone had stolen something from a neighbour she/he first had to inform the audience about the motivation for his/her criminal act. According to the explanation s/he provides, s/he either would be warned about not committing such a crime again or was told to return twice as much as the value of the stolen thing. Or, if a man had beaten his wife he had to stay away from the house he shares with his wife and children for a week.⁴⁴ As I discuss in Chapter VI, alternative internal security and punishment techniques still continue in the neighbourhood. Hence, from the beginning of its establishment the residents of Narova and other Alevi-populated neighbourhoods developed their own local law and punishment mechanisms that emerged as an alternative to that of the central authority.

As studies on Alevi engagement in left-wing politics demonstrate, when Alevi migrants —especially younger generations— devoted themselves to revolutionary Marxist ideologies they pushed religious and identity issues aside. Arguing that in order to be a good socialist one has to be an atheist, they did not make claims based on their Alevi

identity (Melikoff and Kehl Bodrogi 1997, Seufert 1997, Carkoglu and Bilgili 2011). This attitude still continues among the socialist youth of Narova.

Nevertheless, many senior residents who have witnessed the operation of the *people's courts* confused the *people's court* of the 1970s with the Alevi local courts that were held in the villages. When I asked about the operation of the *people's court* in the neighborhood, some residents argued that the original *people's courts* took place in the villages and suggested that I go to the villages and interview the seniors there. It is also worth noting that all of the *people's courts* established in the working class neighborhoods during the 1970s were established in Alevi neighborhoods. I believe that the establishment of *people's courts* exclusively in Alevi-populated neighborhoods and Narova residents' confusing of these two courts are more than coincidences. Although there were similarities between traditional Alevi and the *people's courts*, the founders of the courts ignore and/or deny these similarities, probably because they wanted to be associated with the socialist tradition more than the Alevi tradition. Although the *people's courts* were established with reference to socialist ideals, Alevi local court tradition and the practices shaped around this tradition might have been influential in establishing these courts. In other words, Alevi migrants' attempts to provide law and order in their new social settings during the 1970s may be due to their inherited cultural practices and institutions. Such practices, which have survived to this day, can be seen as an Alevi *habitus*—a centuries long, embodied “structured structure” (Bourdieu 1985).

The *people's committees* and the courts were abolished after the coup of 1980. Members of these committees as well as many other Narova residents were either imprisoned or had to leave the country. The coup suppressed political mobilization all around the country. In the 1980s, the government brought infrastructural services to Narova and other neighborhoods alike and opened schools and hospitals in these neighborhoods. As

the socialist organizations began to reorganize in these neighborhoods during the 1990s, these neighborhoods gradually turned into state of emergency zones. In Chapter VI, I discuss the ways in which Narova became a state of emergency zone. However, before that, in order to situate my arguments in a broader political and historical context, in the following chapter I illustrate how violence and state of emergency policies are integral to the tradition of rule in Turkey.

Conclusion

This chapter focuses on the Alevi religio-cultural identity and point out historical Alevi practices/*habitus* and beliefs that turned Alevis into constant targets of political violence. I argued that the first step of Alevis' stigmatization as internal enemies took place when Ottoman rulers adopted legalist Sunnism as the state religion as opposed to the Shi'ite order in the Safavid State, the enemy-neighbor of the Ottoman state. In this process the poor peasants of Anatolia, who had more synthetic beliefs and who sided with the Safavid state and rebelled against the Ottoman rulers due to the harsh taxation policies of the Ottoman state, were labeled as heretics who threatened the security of Ottoman subjects. The Sultan Yavuz massacre against this allegedly heretical population has been influential in the Kizilbas/Alevi retreat to mountainous isolated areas, which paved the way for the underground/illegal law and order making processes among Alevi communities. I demonstrate that Alevi communities left their isolated villages only in the 1960s, almost 500 hundred years after the retreat. Alevis, who became workers in the big cities of Turkey in the 1960s, received support from young revolutionary middle class militants, and eventually became integral to leftist politics in Turkey. In time, being a leftist became an inseparable part of the Alevi identity.

In addition, while demonstrating how Alevi communities have remained at the margins of the law and orders of the central authorities for centuries, I pointed out the traditional Alevi lawmaking and law maintaining practices that later survived in the big cities in the form of revolutionary people's courts. I approach these practices as an Alevi *habitus*, a centuries long, embodied "structured structure." I argue that these practices still inform attempts on the part of Narova youth to deactivate police power and provide their own law and order with reference to socialist ideals in their neighborhood.

Notes to Chapter II

¹ Sunnism is the dominant, Orthodox form of Islam.

² Although a significant percent of Alevi communities are Kurdish speaking, the Kurdish speaking Alevis, do not consider themselves as Kurds in general. In other words they experience Kurdishness and Aleviness as two mutually exclusive identities. See Van Bruinessen 1996, Leezenberg 2003.

³ According to the official records of Turkish Statistics Institute, the population of Turkey was 75.627.384 in 2012. Information available at <http://www.tuik.gov.tr/Start.do;jsessionid=fdKJRW3Qb0ddJgvZKgzv2m8pJSMC64hm3WpHrh7kcTNY61s7TQtJ!1324812529>. Last accessed: May 16, 2013.

⁵ According to the Quran, the conditions of being a Muslim are: 1) Believing in God and Muhammad as the messenger of the God 2) Praying daily 3) Fasting in the month of Ramadan 4) Alms giving 5) Pilgrimage to Mecca. Alevis only observe the first one.

⁶ One of the most repeated themes in traditional Alevi songs is the longing for going to the Shah.

⁷ Until then, the law and order in Ottoman lands were maintained through local customary laws. With the adoption of sharia law, Ottoman subjects were subjected to a dual legal system until the 19th century. Community related matters, such as marriage, divorce and inheritance were solved within the community under the guidance of the customary laws of each community. However, criminal offenses related to maintenance of social order, such as thievery, murder, and banditry, were subjected to the sharia law regardless of the ethnic, religious or communal identity of the accused.

⁸ The term Kizilbas was drawn from the red headpiece with twelve gores commemorating the Twelve Imams, who were considered holy figures according to Shi'ite beliefs. The red headpiece was used to show allegiance to the Shah by Ottoman peasants (Faroqhi 2006).

⁹ The term Kizilbas was replaced by the term Alevi in the 1920s. Today, Alevis use Kizilbas and Alevi interchangeably (Dressler 2013).

¹⁰ These villages were mostly located in the hard-to-reach areas of Kurdish or Turkish-Sunni populated towns. They not only were located away from the Sunni populated villages but also from one another. Today, in Anatolia, Alevi villages are still located at isolated and mountainous areas.

¹¹ *Radikal*, May 30, 2013.

¹² Unfortunately there are no studies on the *Kizilbases'* reactions to Abdulhamid II's assimilationist policies.

¹³ Dersim also once had a significant Armenian population. However, after the Armenian genocide of 1915 there were no Armenians left in the region. While a significant number of Dersim Armenians were killed during the genocide, the remaining ones converted to Alevism and hid their Armenian past (Deringil 2009, Van Bruinessen 1988). Dersim was the only exclusively Alevi populated province in the 1930s.

¹⁴ In addition to the presence of well-armed tribal leaders, the other reason that Dersim remained inaccessible to Turkish soldiers was the location of the province.

¹⁵ One of the pilots who air bombed Dersim was Sabiha Gokcen. Sabiha Gokcen was the adopted daughter of Ataturk and the first woman pilot of Turkey. She was actually a daughter of an Armenian family killed during the genocide (Kieser 2002). One of the two airports in Istanbul is named after Sabiha Gokcen.

¹⁶ These people had to carry a special ID, which indicated that they were from the Dersim province of Turkey. As Van Bruinessen (1994) argues "Even today, a person whose identity card shows that he was born in Tunceli

will be treated with suspicion and antipathy by officials and will not easily find employment.” (12). See also Secor 2004.

¹⁷ The definition of the concepts of minority and minority rights in Turkey is based on the Treaty of Lausanne signed, between the British Empire, France, Italy, Japan, Greece, Romania, and the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes on one side, and Turkey on the other. As Oran (2007) argues, “[w]hen the League of Nations was formed after the First World War, a tripartite criterion was employed to define minorities in racial, linguistic and religious terms. Minorities fitting into any of these three categories were granted not only equal rights with the majority but also internationally guaranteed rights that did not apply to the majority (e.g., building their own schools and using their own language). [...] However, the Turkish delegation in Lausanne did not accept the full criterion as applicable to Turkey; it recognized only ‘non-Muslims’ as constituting a minority and had this position accepted at the Conference.” (35).

¹⁸ The first *cem* house with official recognition was not opened until 2007. However, this *cem* house was opened as a cultural center, not as a place of worship (Carkoğlu and Bilgili 2011).

¹⁹ With Turkey’s full accession in process, the European Union (EU) got involved in the Alevi question and produced progress reports criticizing the government’s unwillingness to recognize the Alevis’ cultural-religious rights. The EU, together with the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), urged the government to end discrimination against Alevis (Acikel and Ates 2011). Although Alevism is now being introduced in religion books, the inclusion of Alevism in these books remains a mere gesture, as these books do not provide much information on Alevism.

²⁰ Religious instruction was originally introduced in schools in the 1940s. At first, children belonging to families who wished their children to attend religious instruction lessons had to bring a letter from their parents. This was later switched around when the 1982 constitution made it compulsory in all primary and middle schools. Non-Muslim students have the right to skip compulsory religion classes, Alevi students have to participate in the religion classes as Alevis are considered Muslims (Kuru 2007).

²¹ Alevi local lawmaking and law-maintaining practices are beyond the scope of this dissertation. Besides, the Alevi legal system is neither thoroughly researched nor analyzed. Hence, it would not be correct to make a point about Alevi lawmaking and law-preserving practices. However, as local lawmaking processes and practices among Alevi youth are directly related to the subject matter of this dissertation I find it important to note that local lawmaking practices have been a distinctive feature integral to Alevi community.

²² *Dede* means grandfather in Turkish. They are religious leaders, who are believed to be the descendants of the prophet Muhammad. Traditionally dedes are considered superior to all men and women in Alevi communities. They are also accepted as the source of knowledge as well as an intellectual leader (Caha 2004).

²³ *Buyruk* means command in English.

²⁴ Yildirim is the first researcher who wrote about the Alevi legal system. However, his study does not provide a detailed analysis of Alevi legal systems and the ways in which they operated on the ground.

²⁵ Alevis do not have a common guidebook on the maintenance of the social order. Instead, there are different customary laws based on local or tribal tradition. Dede, instead of following the rules/laws shared by all Alevis, based his judgment on the customary law (Caha 2004). However, Yildirim (2010) notes that Alevi communities’ customary laws were more or less the same.

²⁶ Cem gatherings were not allowed in the Ottoman era. Thus, these gatherings were held secretly and outsiders were never allowed to participate in these gatherings. As the studies on Alevi culture argue, this secrecy also contributed to the strengthening of stigmas associated with Alevis.

²⁷ As Bozkurt (1998) demonstrates, the authority of the dedes began to decline in the 1970s. With the adoption of left-wing views by Alevi youth, dedes began to be regarded as part of the system of exploitation” (86).

²⁸ During the second half of the 1950s, the population of the cities of Turkey rose 80.2% (Senyapili 1981:13) and one of every 10 villagers had migrated to big cities (Keyder 1987:131). Moreover, in this period, the number of workers who worked in factories that employed more than ten people rose from 163.000 to 324.000

(Keyder 1987:136).

²⁹ Gecekondu literally means “perched on at night.” The term was coined by the *gecekondu* people themselves. *Gecekondu* shows the way in which *gecekondu* people at that time were naming, describing, and hence owning their own settlement experiences. As Karpat (1976) notes, during the 1950s and 1960s “[i]t has not been unusual to see empty hills covered over a single night with a great number of shacks in which tens of thousands of people moved with their belongings in a matter of hours” (15).

³⁰ The number of the *gecekondus* in Turkey: 1955: 50,000; 1960: 240,000; 1965: 430,000 1970: 600,000; 1980: 950,000 (Payne 1984:181).

³¹ Leftists have been particularly critical of Sunni Islam in Turkey as it has been the dominant form of Islam.

³² As I discuss in the following chapter, due to the territorial control policies of the government some Alevis were forced to leave their villages and resettled in the Western parts of Turkey during the early 1930s.

³³ As Erdemir (2004) points out, the official Cold War slogan identified 3Ks, the Kurds (Kürtler), communists (komünistler) and the Alevis (Kizilbas), as the main threats to national security in Turkey.

³⁴ For instance, the organizers of the Maras pogrom of 1978, in which Sunni Muslims killed 107 Alevis and destroyed 500 houses and shops owned by Alevis, did not stay in prison for more than fifteen years (Sahin 2001).

³⁵ The non-Alevi residents were working-class Sunni Muslims who were members of various socialist organizations.

³⁶ The name of the neighborhood comes from the workers' day celebrations, which traditionally take place on the first day of May.

³⁷ Cayan Neighborhood is named after the young revolutionary leader who was killed by the soldiers in 1972.

³⁸ In September 2, 1977, the soldiers who went to 1 Mayıs Neighborhood to demolish gecekondu houses killed 15 gecekondu dwellers (Aslan 2004). For a documentary on the event see: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7kjd_bICUw0 Last accessed : August 15, 2013.

³⁹ Here, I have to note that although Bektashi philosophy emphasizes women’s equality to men, in practice Alevi families and communities are still structured around patriarchal relations. See Erman (2001) for the patriarchal relations within the Alevi community.

⁴⁰ See Aslan (2004) on the neighborhood patrolling practices of the People’s Committee in 1 Mayıs Neighborhood during the 1970s. Aslan demonstrates that in 1 Mayıs Neighborhood, too, the people’s committee was mainly concerned with providing security, hence with neighborhood patrolling.

⁴¹ As I illustrate in the following chapter, until the 1990s, the military was in charge of the problems related to “internal enemies.”

⁴² None of the elder residents of Narova wanted to talk about this issue. A 69-year-old resident told me that he did not want to talk about the issue because “there is no statue of limitations when it comes to political crimes in Turkey.” His response implies that the people’s committee in Narova engaged in violent acts. It is also important to note that this man considers the criminal acts, such as beating the “fascist” or threatening the strangers, as political crimes because leftists committed them. However, there may be one more assumption hidden in his argument. As I illustrate in Chapter III, being Alevi or Kurdish is considered suspect by the state’s security forces. We can argue that he considers such criminal acts as political crimes maybe not only because those who committed crime were leftist but also because they were Alevis. That is to say, in a country like Turkey where Alevis are generally treated as if they were guilty of wrongdoing during their encounters with police or the soldiers, Alevis may feel that their very presence is a political crime. Thus, a criminal act committed by an Alevi to defend the existence/ the very being of his community might as well be perceived as a political crime in this man’s mind.

⁴³ According to the Bektashi philosophy, all crimes committed are committed against the community. Hence, the trial had to take place in front of all community members and the decision about the punishment had to be taken with the participation of all adult villagers. Thus, Alevi local courts also took place with the participation of all villagers.

⁴⁴ Yildirim (2010) shows that the logic of punishment is similar in Alevi community courts.

Chapter III

The History of Modern Turkey as the History of Emergency Rules

“The Turkish Armed Forces are the most effective guarantor of the Republic in Turkey, which is a secular, social, and lawful state.”

Ismail Hakki Karadayi, Ex-Chief of Staff.¹

“The police are the guarantor of the regime”

Recep Tayyip Erdogan, Prime Minister.²

The ruling elites, who are committed to the maintenance of the idea of a unified powerful state (cf. Abrams 1977), actively and continuously wage war against those who actually or potentially delegitimize and demystify the power attributed to the state. Police institutions, military organizations and emergency laws have been used instrumentally against those who challenge the authority of the ruling elites of capitalist countries who are committed to perpetuating a paradigm of domination and exploitation. This chapter provides an outline of the Turkish ruling elites’ war against populations whom they consider “enemies of the state.”

The traditional Ottoman way of rule, which was based on the rule of the Ottoman territories through intermediary local powers, could not survive the era of nationalism. The late Ottoman rulers, who attempted to build a centralized nation state, and their successors saw the ethno-religiously diverse Ottoman society as an obstacle to the building of a more centralized modern state. Hence, in their attempts to modernize the state, the late Ottoman ruling elite and the Turkish nationalist elite attempted to take the territories occupied by non-Muslim and non-Turkish groups under their direct control through force. The forceful policies, which included violent destruction of the masses, led to the perception by various minority populations that the state is an alien and aggressive enemy. Due to the absence of

any reconciliatory politics, the Turkish state remained an illegitimate external force in some population's minds and souls, such as Armenians, Alevis, Jews and Kurds, who experienced the state as a violent and aggressive enemy. Accordingly, since the establishment of the Republic, the Turkish ruling elites have maintained their power through the use of force and emergency laws that systematically and continuously suspend citizens' most basic rights. In other words, modern Turkey's history of violence has been more continuous than discontinuous, as the state has not considered legitimate by a significant percent of population. Accordingly, this chapter outlines the forceful and destructive policies of the Turkish ruling elite against minority populations such as Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks, Jews and Kurds, as well as provide an outline of lawmaking and law maintaining violence in the history of Turkey.

The chapter has three aims. The first aim is to demonstrate the Turkish founding elites' attempts to monopolize violence by eliminating local power holders from the nation-state building process. I briefly illustrate how the Turkish founding elites attempted to establish territorial sovereignty in the Eastern provinces through a program of violence targeting Armenian, Assyrian and Kurdish populations, who had been ruled autonomously by local power holders for centuries. I specifically focus on the Eastern Provinces, because violence against these populations is symptomatic of the Turkish ruling elites' attempts to establish territorial sovereignty in territories where they previously had no military power. In other words, these cases shed light on the continuing practices of the Turkish ruling elites when they encounter local power holders who challenge the authority of the state.

The second aim is to provide an overview of the roles of military and emergency laws in Turkish political life. I illustrate how the capitalist nation-state formation process of Turkey has been maintained through a series of emergency laws that perpetuated martial law. Today, as the citations above indicate, the power of the police as an institution

has gradually replaced the privileged political status of the military. Accordingly, the third aim of the chapter is to point out the current power struggle between the high-ranking military officers who represent the secular founding elite and the police.

Attempts to establish a centralized modern state in the Ottoman Era

The Turkish modern nation state formation project, which was aimed at “eliminating and neutralizing” (Tilly 1985: 174) local powers within the imaginary national territories, goes back to the 19th century. Until the 19th century, various ethnic and religious communities, such as Armenians, Jew, Kurds and Assyrians, had autonomous self-governance, which by and large depended on their own customary laws and preserved the administrative autonomy of the local ruling elites. By the 19th century, however, under the influence of growing nationalist movements and spirit across Europe, some Ottoman subjects began to organize their own nationalist independence movements against the Empire. By the end of the 1800s the Ottoman Empire had lost a significant portion of its Balkan territory, which had been under Ottoman rule for over 500 years (Erickson 2003). In their effort to restore their power and to protect the remaining territories, the Ottoman rulers strived to build a centralized state, which would bring all Ottoman subjects under direct Ottoman authority (Quartet 2005). However, their attempts to establish direct rule were not welcomed by some religious and ethnic communities, such as Armenians and Kurds, or by their local power holders, who had enjoyed semi-autonomous rule for centuries.

In Ottoman cities and towns the monopoly of violence was often sufficient. But in the highland areas of the East, especially where Kurds, Armenians and Assyrians resided, the empire faced a series obstacles in establishing a monopoly over violence (Barkey 2007). In these areas, the Ottoman army first attempted to take the Kurdish territories

under their control. However, in the Eastern provinces there were a number of tribes who were “able to mobilize both quantitatively and qualitatively superior resources and means of violence” (Ungor 2012: 747). While trying to take local Kurdish groups under their control, the Ottoman rulers faced another threat. This threat was the internationalization of the Armenian Question (Bloxham 2005). In 1878, the Treaty of San Stefano was signed by The Ottoman Empire and Russia. Under this treaty, Armenian land and people came into the Russian sphere of influence. Afraid of the Russian-Armenian alliance and possible Armenian nationalist movements, the Ottomans began to consider the Armenians as the most important obstacle to Ottoman territorial sovereignty in the eastern provinces. In their fight against Armenians they “radicalized Kurdish leaders out of a fear of Armenian demands for political power over the eastern provinces” (Ungor 2012: 749). In this process, the Kurds who became afraid that the Armenians would take over control of the Eastern territories with military support from western imperialist powers began to fight against the Armenians. In 1890 The Ottoman army established a special army of Kurdish militias called the *Hamidiye Corps* (named after the Sultan Abdulhamid). With the establishment of the *Hamidiye Corps*, Kurds dismantled the Armenian local power-holders and took control over the Armenian territories (Deringil 1998, 12009). The Armenians who experienced the new Kurdish authority in their lands as an external and brutal force formed guerrilla units and revolted against the Ottoman-Kurdish authority.³ The tension between the Ottoman-Kurdish rule and Armenian masses resulted in genocide against the Armenians. In order to pacify Armenian forces the *Law of Expulsion* was introduced in May 1915. According to this law, which specifically targeted the Armenian community, the whole Armenian community would be moved from their homes and relocated. Around one and a half million Armenians died during the deportation (Akcem 2006, Astourian 1998, Dadrian 1989). Furthermore, between the years 1909 and 1915,

thousands of Assyrians who also inhabited Eastern Turkey were unlawfully killed by Turkish and Kurdish soldiers or were deported, leading to their death. In sum, Ottoman rulers who could take the Armenian and Assyrian territories under their own control, in the end, attempted to establish a monopoly over violence in the Armenian lands by destroying the Armenian community.

Although the Armenian genocide took place during Ottoman rule, it is important to note that speaking about the atrocities committed against Armenians is still one of the biggest political taboos in Turkey. Despite the historical data that proves that the 1915 mass deportations amounted to genocide, neither the founders of the Republic nor their successors accepted that Armenians were subjected to such violence in Turkey.⁴ The denial of the Armenian genocide by the founding elites and the contemporary ruling elites is symptomatic of the continuities between the late Ottoman rule and the modern Republic.

Establishing the Modern Turkish Nation

Ottoman authority was replaced by a new, young, western-educated ruling elites who mostly came from military backgrounds and who identified themselves as Turks. The aim of this new ruling elite was not only to control and maintain a monopoly over violence in the former Ottoman territories but also to create a *Turkish* nation-state. The elite not only saw local power holders as an obstacle to the realization of their aims but also they considered all minority populations a threat to the “nation's well being.” Hence, for them ethno-religiously diverse society inherited from the Ottoman Empire had to be turned into a homogenous national community (Cagatay 2004). In their attempts to turn the ethno-religiously diverse lands into a homogenous territory they followed four main paths: 1) Destruction of the populations who did not accept direct state control 2) Forced

assimilation policies 3) Population Exchange 4) Emergency Laws. In the following section I unpack these policies.

First of all, the Armenian genocide did not enable the Ottoman rulers and their successors to gain control over the eastern provinces. After the genocide, Kurdish local leaders stood as an obstacle to the Ottoman government's authority in the region. After the fall of the Ottoman Empire a few years after the genocide, the new ruling elites continued the Ottoman attempts to take the Eastern provinces under the direct control of the new state. Kurdish tribal leaders, who became the sole power in the Eastern provinces after the Armenian genocide and Assyrian massacres, were declared bandits and enemies of the state by the new elite. In a parliament meeting in 1925, it was asserted that the "system of the sultanate had always neglected the east [...] and left this place under the authority and influence of usurpers" and that local authorities in the Eastern provinces had to be destroyed (Cited in Yegen 1999: 561). Turkish rulers' attempts to eliminate the local Kurdish leaders were met with a series of large- and small-scale Kurdish revolts. The biggest Kurdish revolt, organized under the leadership of well-respected Kurdish tribal and religious leader Sheikh Said in the city of Diyarbakir was violently suppressed in 1925. Ten thousand Kurdish civilians were killed by air bombings and thousands more were deported to the Western parts of the country. The leaders of the uprisings were killed after being tried in emergency courts named *Courts of Independence*, established to judge the internal enemies who allegedly threatened the imaginary "national unity."

Very similar to the *law of expulsion*, which aimed expel Armenians from their homelands; the government enacted the *Law on Resettlement*, in 1934. According to this law, Kurdish people who lived in the Kurdish region would be resettled in Turkish districts, where they could be assimilated. As I have argued in the Introduction, the "monopolies of violence are always contested and pacification is never complete"

(Goudsblom 2001). Graeber (2011) argues the sovereign is always external to the populations and the war between the sovereign and the people is a war that the sovereign can never truly win. Accordingly, the war between the Kurdish people and the Turkish army still continues. The Turkish military, after waves of violent attacks against the Kurdish population, is still struggling to establish territorial sovereignty in the Kurdish provinces of Turkey.

Second, Turkey's nation-building process involved the negation of the ethno-religious plurality of the society. "The ethnic, religious and linguistic diversity of the society were considered as a source of instability and a barrier to progress" (Zeydanlioglu 2010: 70). The "national unity" was to be achieved through forced cultural assimilation. Zeydanlioglu's citation of Turkey's second president, Ismet Inonu, describes this policy in the following words:

We are frankly nationalists and nationalism is our only factor of cohesion. In the face of a Turkish majority, other elements have no kind of influence. Our duty is to Turkify non-Turks in the Turkish homeland no matter what happens. We will destroy those elements that oppose Turks or Turkism (5).

Accordingly, the presence of ethnic minorities has been denied, and until very recently non-Turks have been forced to hide their identities and to claim that they were Turks. For instance, until very recently the expression of Kurdish ethnic identity and culture has consistently been met with both political and legal prosecution. Today, Turkey's ethnic minorities have begun to affirm their identities and announce their differences publicly. If one reason behind this positive change is the EU pressure on the government the second reason is the inspirational example of the Kurdish struggle. However, as I illustrate below, it was harder for the ruling elite to forcibly assimilate the non-Muslims into Turkishness.

The non-Muslim populations were forced to leave the country by different means. For instance, signing a population exchange treaty with Greece in June 30, 1923, the

parliament initiated the deportation of 1.5 million of Greek citizens from Turkey (Akcem 2007). Moreover, on November 11th 1942, the Turkish legislature passed the Capital Tax Law (Ahmad 2002). According to the law, committees were formed to determine the amount of taxes that the country's citizens would be obliged to pay. The taxpayers were divided into four categories: Muslim, non-Muslims, those Converted to Islam and foreigner. The rate at which those non-Muslim-Turkish professionals, merchants, and industrialists were to be taxed was set at four times that of their Muslim counterparts. In the event that they were unable to pay the full amounts assessed, they would be legally obligated to work off their outstanding debt through physical labor. This consequently led to the massive migration of the remaining non-Muslim populations from Turkey (Bali 2011). Additionally, state-sponsored anti-Jewish riots and looting of June-July 1934, and again state sponsored nationalist anti-Christian and Jewish riots of September 6-7, 1955, were also influential in non-Muslim migration from Turkey (Bali 2011). Hence, from the very beginning the Turkish ruling elites have been influential in creating and fostering enmity between the Turkish population and non-Muslim and non-Turkish minorities.

Finally, as I discuss below, emergency laws have been a constitutive part of Turkish "democracy" since the establishment of the Republic. Immediately after the formation of the first parliament in 1920, parliament granted the government and the president with exceptional powers and declared war against "internal enemies" such as Kurdish local authorities, unorthodox Muslim dervishes and brotherhoods, socialists and communists, non-Muslim ethnic minorities and many others (Barkey and Fuller 1997, Urhan and Celik 2010). In its fight against these internal enemies the first parliament enacted a series of emergency laws and established a number of institutions that were given emergency powers.

Military Rule and emergency laws in Turkey

From the establishment of the Republic of Turkey in 1923 to 1950, the country was ruled by a single party, the CHP (Republican People's Party). The CHP mostly consisted of former military men. The military has been an integral part of politics in Turkey's rule (Harris 1965). Since the establishment of the constitutional order, the operation of the constitution has been suspended by a series of emergency laws that military officers were granted, bestowing them with exceptional power. These laws paved the way to the emergence of institutions such as the National Unity Committee (NUC), National Security Council (NSC) and State Security Courts (SSC) that enabled military officials to intervene in the government and in the judiciary. Among the most significant of these institutions were the *Independence Tribunals*, the equivalent of the French Committee of Public Safety.⁵ These trials granted local judges with enormous powers and led to the arbitrary execution of tens of thousands of people across the country between 1922 and 1927.⁶ In addition, the *Law for the Maintenance of Order* (Takrir-i Sukun Kanunu), which was enacted in 1925 and remained in force until 1929, provided the government with enormous powers through the declaration of martial law in order to prevent possible social opposition and to contain all existing forms of political opposition. The law authorized the government to prohibit any organization or publication leading to rebellion or violation of the country's social order and security, and to send the accused to the *Independence Tribunals*⁷ (Ahmad 2002, Kadioglu 1996, Zurcher 1996). The *Law of Maintenance of Order* and the *Independence Tribunals* led to the silencing of political opposition and enabled the CHP to rule the country for 27 years. The party that came to power after the CHP, the Democratic Party (DP), a center-right party, remained in power for 10 years until the military intervention of 1960.

As a result of the relatively more liberal atmosphere that followed CHP rule, the 1950s witnessed the emergence of various socialist organizations, organized mainly by college students and trade unions.⁸ However, although the DP government emphasized civil liberties and organizational rights when they first came to power, the DP's "policies practically emulated the preceding single-party period" (Urhan and Celik 2010:10). In response to increasing political mobilization, the DP proclaimed martial law in Ankara and Istanbul, where the socialist students and workers were found in greatest numbers. The army, arguing that the DP was not capable of governing the country, carried out a coup on 27 May 1960. After the coup, the army held *de facto* political power and formed a committee called the *National Unity Committee* (NUC), which consisted of 38 military men, and was responsible for drafting a new constitution (Narli 2000). The NUC introduced a new constitution in 1961. This constitution bestowed extensive powers upon the army, rendering it the most powerful institution in the country, with more powers than any body of elected officials. It initiated the establishment of the *National Security Council* (NSC), which consisted of high rank military officials functioned as a second cabinet in addition to the council of ministers. The NSC was designed to "serve as a platform for the military to voice its opinion on matters of national security" (Cizre-Sakallioglu 1997:157). In the following years, the NSC gradually extended its influence over government policy and became a powerful regulator (Karaosmanoglu 2000).

The end of the 1960s and the beginning of 1970s was the period in which socialist mobilization and the labor movement reached their peak in Turkey (Karpaz 1964, Samim 1981, Lipovsky 1992, Yonucu 2008). Worker and student demonstrations with hundreds of thousands of participants dominated the public arena throughout the 1960s and 1970s. The Workers Party of Turkey (TIP), a socialist party established in 1961, got 3% of the vote in 1965 elections and won 15 seats in parliament. The Revolutionary Youth

Federation (*Dev-Genc*),⁹ an umbrella-type Marxist youth organization founded in 1965, gained hundreds of thousands of supporters all across the country. The *Dev-Genc Journal*'s circulation reached about 100,000 in the 1970s (Muftuoglu 2011). In 1967, *Confederation of Revolutionary Trade Unions* (DISK) was established. In 1970, only three years after its establishment, the total number of its registered members reached more than 100,000 (Urhan and Celik 2010: 9). In response to the increasingly strong socialist movement, the Turkish military submitted a memorandum on March 12th 1971, which caused the government to resign¹⁰ (Burak 2011).

In March 1971, a new government was formed without the existing parties. This new government declared martial law in eleven provinces.¹¹ In 1973, the 1961 constitution was amended. With the amendments the primary function of the NSC was extended to making recommendations to the government (Lombardi 1997, Nye 1977, Narli 2000). In the same year, the SSCs were established and entrusted with “the task of trying the crimes related directly to the national security and crimes against the republic [...]” (Yildiz 2012: 25). In these courts, military judges could try civilians for crimes related directly to “national security” (Ozbudun 2003). With the establishment of these courts, significant judicial authority was given to the military in prosecuting political crimes (Benhabib and Isiksel 2006).

The new regulations, however, did not end socialist mobilization in Turkey. Instead, the socialist youth established their own guerrilla units and moved further from university-based struggles toward rural and urban guerrilla struggles (Aksoy 2008, Aydinoglu 2007, Bozkurt 2008, Savran 2010). In 1980, in order to suppress socialist mobilization, the military took control and declared a national state of emergency (Karabelias 1999, Mavioglu 2006). Between the years 1980 and 1983, a military

government ruled the country. In this process, the military government restricted freedoms and curbed basic rights. As a result of the coup,

a total of 650,000 people were detained and most suspects were either beaten or tortured. Over 500 people died while in detention as a result of torture, 85,000 people were placed on trial mainly in relation to thought crimes. 1,683,000 people were officially listed in police files as suspects, 348,000 people were banned from traveling abroad, 15,509 people were fired from their jobs for political reasons, 114,000 books were seized and burned, 937 films were banned, 2,729 writers, translators, journalists and actors were put on trial for expressing their opinions. A few months after the coup, a total of 171 prisoners across the country were reported to have died (Zeydanlioglu 2008: 69).

Although the military regime lasted for three years, the new constitution, introduced in 1982, institutionalizing the NSC as the most decisive leg of executive decision-making, strengthened the place of the military in governing the country (Cizre-Sakallioglu 1997). According to the new constitution, the NCS's recommendations would be given priority consideration by the council of ministers. Until the 2003 amendments to the constitution, the NSC remained as a regulative force, which could intervene in various fields, including education and media. Until 2003, it could intervene in determining the curriculum in schools, regulating television stations' broadcasting hours, abolishing the penal immunity of Kurdish members of parliament, closing down certain television stations, suggesting the formation of electoral alignments between political parties, stating the substance of laws on terror, and so on (Burak 2001).

State of Emergency Rule in the Kurdish Region

After the 1980 coup led to the disappearance of the revolutionary left from the public scene, the *Kurdistan Workers' Party* (PKK)¹² emerged as the only radical left-wing organization surviving the repression that followed the coup. The PKK was not only a guerrilla organization but also a representative of Kurdish mass mobilization, which

gained the popular support of Kurdish workers and peasants (Bozarslan 2001, Ergil 2000, White 1999). The Turkish army and the police did not only fight with PKK militants in the mountains; Kurdish towns and cities were turned into war zones as well. One of the most significant techniques the ruling elites developed in their fight against the Kurdish movement was the isolation of the region from the rest of Turkey. The isolation of the region was achieved through strict militarized spatial control and through the concentration of violence in these isolated territories. The concentration of violence in the Kurdish region was enabled by the state of emergency rule within the predominantly Kurdish provinces of between 1987 and 2002. According to the state of emergency law, the “[c]ouncil of ministers were granted the authority to issue decrees having the force of law on any matter without adhering to the normal legislative procedure set out in the constitution¹³” (Hughes 2006: 80). The emergency law granting the emergency governor with enormous powers led to the suspension of most basic human rights in the region. The emergency governor possessed martial law-type powers, with no provision for independent judicial review of his actions (Muller and Linzey 2007: 16). Accordingly, the state of emergency rule in the region was characterized by an oppressive military presence, checkpoints, curfews, lack of access to the courts, prohibition of any kind of assembly, prohibitions and limitations on the distribution of publications or broadcasting, searches of persons and of their property, mandatory carrying of identity cards, etc. (Magnarella 1994, Celik 2005, Hughes 2006). In addition, very similar to the indirect rule of the British colonial policies,¹⁴ the state of emergency government formed “village guard” units, consisting of local armed men. In addition to the presence of Turkish soldiers and police in the region, the emergency governor attempted to control the Kurdish region indirectly through arming villagers selectively. The Kurdish villagers who resisted being

village guards were confronted with forced evictions and violence (Jongerden 2001, Ayata and Yukseker 2005).¹⁵

The testimonies of Kurds and journalists who worked in the region portray the Kurdish region of the 1990s and early 2000s as a place of pure state terror and violence in which the only law was lawlessness (Cemal 2003, Jongerden 2007, Tuzcuoglu 2011, Oktem 2011). Hundreds of thousands of Kurds were subjected to the arbitrary violence of security forces and thousands were killed, kidnapped and disappeared. More than a million Kurds had to leave their hometowns and villages due to forced evacuation by the government, including the burning of thousands of villages by village guards throughout the 1990s.¹⁶ Although the state of emergency law was lifted in 2002, and although the PKK and the current government are currently in the process of negotiation, serious human rights violations have continued in the Kurdish region.¹⁷ The village guards have remained armed and active despite being officially disbanded with the lifting of the state of emergency, “operating in a legal vacuum, outside any higher authority and with total impunity” (Hughes 2006).

Post-1980 transformation of the police institution

As the studies on police power in Turkey illustrate, the coup not only increased the power of the already powerful military but also increased the power of the police (Berksoy 2007, 2010, Demirbilek 2011, Gonen 2011, Uysal 2010). Until the coup, The *Turkish National Police Department* (TNPD) remained as a small scale organization whose power was incomparable to that of the army. However, the TNPD’s power increased substantially with the introduction of series of regulations that paved the way for arbitrary and flexible uses of police power (Berksoy 2007). The bill titled the “*Re-organization and Modernization Project of the General Directorate of Security*” (EM-RE-MO), enacted in

1980, increased the police's authority by expanding their search and seizure capacities and by implementing the right to shoot those who do not obey a command to stop by security forces. In this process, the TNDP's share in the investment expenditures of general budget rose from 10% in 1982 to 37% in 1986 (Gonen 2011). In accordance with its extended budget, the TNPD has added new equipment and weaponry and increased the number of police personnel drastically since the 1980s. The number of police personnel was 13,500 in 1960, 50,000 in 1980, and reached approximately 170,000 in 2006 and 229, 965 in 2011 (Gonen 2011).

Moreover, two highly militarized police units were established soon after the coup: *Rapid Action Forces* (Cevik Kuvvet, RAF) and *Special Operations Unit* (Ozel Harekat Birimi, SOU) (Uysal 2010). The RAF, established in 1982, has been responsible for urban unrest and social movements. Having been recruited from the members of the Nationalist Movement Party (MHP),¹⁸ the RAF members are notorious for their aggressive attacks against civilians and disproportionate use of force, including even killing civilians during political demonstrations (Berksoy 2007, Gonen 2011). The SOU, established in 1983, was formed as a paramilitary unit equipped with special technology and weaponry, and trained in guerrilla warfare. The SOU has been responsible for large-scale human rights abuses, including the disappearance and extra-judicial killings of thousands of activists (Unver 2009).

The increase in police power went hand in hand with the political homogenization of the police department, ensured by a strict personnel-hiring strategy. Since the coup, personnel selection, recruitment, appointments, disciplinary penalties and promotions have depended on the political views of the police personnel and their families (Uysal 2006, Caglar 2003, Tugal 2007). As Caglar (1993) in his dissertation on the recruitment process within the TNPD illustrates, background investigation for recruitment was specifically

designed to eliminate applicants who were sympathetic to leftist ideas. Leftist police officers were expelled from the TNPD immediately after the coup.¹⁹ Instead, “hardline nationalists and Islamists were recruited in their place” (Tugal 2007:12). Moreover, during the 1990s, followers of the U.S based cleric Fethullah Gulen, a nationalist-Muslim cleric who until recently had close ties with the current AKP government, acquired considerable influence in the TNPD (Gonen 2011).²⁰ Consequently, since the mid-1980s, the TNPD became an overtly nationalist-Islamist organization.

The post-1980 increase in police power was not without tension. Thanks to attempts by human rights organizations to publicize police violence in Turkey, the global human rights community became aware of the scale of police violence in Turkey in the 1990s. The European Union (EU) considered the Turkish police’s systemic human rights abuses and the absence of punishment for police violence as an obstacle for Turkey’s EU membership.²¹ At the early stage of the changes a set of amendments was introduced to the *Law on Criminal Procedure* (CMUK) in 1992. These amendments were pushed by the EU and aimed to eliminate the police’s use of arbitrary power and improve the conditions of arrest, detention and interrogation (Magnerella 1994). However, the amendments brought up by the CMUK did little to curb abuses of police power. On the contrary, during the 1990s illegal and arbitrary uses of police power, especially against Kurdish activists, reached its peak. During those years, “disappearances,”²² extra-judicial political executions, kidnappings and illegal detentions²³ emerged as the new patterns of police violence (Sik 2012).

These years are known as the years of the “deep state” in the political history of Turkey. This term is used to describe “the executive power that clandestinely operates as a part of the state to do illegal action” (Sabuktay 2012:2). The term was widely circulated in the media after the Susurluk Event of 1996. This was a well-known car accident, which

revealed that a high-rank police officer, Abdullah Catli, an internationally sought-after mafia leader known as Yesil, a former police deputy, Huseyin Kocadag and Sedat Bucak, the head of a “village guard” unit, were traveling together in the same car. The accident was widely seen by the public as evidence of close ties between bureaucrats and criminal gangs (Soyler 2013).

The AKP government: Police Versus Military

Since 2002, the AKP (Justice and Development Party), the Muslim counterpart of Christian democrats has been the governing party of Turkey. As part of the EU harmonization process, the AKP pushed through some democratic reforms between 2002 and 2005, including abolition of the death penalty and a clampdown on the police's use of torture, the release of political prisoners, and greater freedom of expression (Akca and Balta-Paker 2012). In this process, illegal detentions, disappearances, kidnappings were largely put to an end. In addition, in 2003, in line with the Seventh EU Harmonization Package (Law No. 4963), the government, made significant amendments to the structure, role, and functions of the NSC. The NSC was transformed from an executive decision-making board into an advisory board, the majority of its members became civilians and the chairmanship of the NSC was given to a civilian. Furthermore, after the July 2007 elections, the AKP began to challenge the political power of the military directly through a series of trials, publicly known as *Ergenekon* trials.

The military, remaining committed to the secular CHP tradition, has considered the AKP government a threat to the secular foundations of the Republic. Accordingly military officials undertook actions ranging from coup attempts to the promotion of anti-AKP public campaigns when the AKP came to power. *The Ergenekon* trial was based on allegations of a planned military coup against the AKP government. Since 2008, several

waves of arrests have resulted in charges against military officers, including high-ranking generals and admirals who have been accused of being the members of an alleged terrorist organization, *Ergenekon*. As of January 2013, there are 404 military officers, 58 of whom are generals and admirals that have been tried in the *Ergenekon* case.²⁴ These trials can be seen as the declaration of the AKP's war against the army. In other words, they are symptomatic of the competition for the monopoly over the right to control the law and violence between the military and the police.

Those who are accused of being *Ergenekon* members are also responsible for the large-scale human rights abuses that took place during the 1990s. Many of them are also among the organizers of the coup of 1980. While at first sight, the *Ergenekon* trials might be considered as a democratic move towards demilitarization of the political sphere, when we look at the operations of these trials we can easily say that AKP's concern is not democratization but consolidation of its power. No military officials have been judged for violating human rights and none of the perpetrators of the coup of 1980 were prosecuted. In addition, the amendment of the anti-terror law in June 2006 and the police law, *Law on Police Duties and Powers (PVSK)*, passed in July 2007, hint at the authoritarian tendencies of the AKP government. Both of these amendments, which granted the police with exceptional powers, confirm the police institution's evaluation that is now found in many critiques: an institutionalization of the "police state" (Gonen 2011).

The amended PVSK increased the authority of the police agencies at the expense of oversight mechanisms and citizens' rights and liberties (Demirbilek 2011, Gokcenay 2011, Gonen 2011). It reduced restrictions regarding the police's use of lethal force, expanded the police's search-and-seizure capabilities and permitted the use of force and firearms "to the extent of causing serious threat to the right to live" (Gokcenay 2011: 196). Following these amendments, reported cases of infringement of citizens' rights and liberties as well

as the police's disproportionate use of force significantly increased.²⁵ Moreover, after the PVSK, the police began to publicly display its power. Since 2007, the police's use of disproportionate and excessive force during peaceful demonstrations has increased drastically. Demonstrations organized by Kurds and socialists often end with violent police attacks including rubber bullets and gas bombs.

As I illustrate in detail in the Chapter VI, the amended anti-terror laws, grant the police enormous latitude in taking action against political crimes or crimes related to the "security of the state." This law declares the police to be the lawmaker beyond the law. The judicial proceedings, accompanied by massive displays of force on the part of the police, replete with armed riot squads, highlight the connection between the law and police. In addition, their various interventions in the judicial process also make the police force highly visible within the juridical sphere.

Conclusion

In sum, this chapter illustrates how military interventions, including the destruction of populations and the declaration of emergency law, have been integral in the tradition of rule in Turkey. I conclude that modern Turkey's history of violence has been more continuous than discontinuous. The Turkish ruling elites, no matter how competitive they have been among themselves, continuously wage a war against certain populations who do not consider state power and violence legitimate. The continuity of the emergency laws demonstrates that the neither the founding elites nor their successors could have gained the full consent of the populace. The externality and brutality of the Turkish state have always kept the resistance movement active and alive in Turkey. I also argue that the emphasis on the police as the sole organ of power destroys the distinction between internal and external enemies. When the police become "the guarantor" of the regime, all citizens become

potential enemies. Or, to put it in Agamben's words, "the *police* now becomes *politics*, and the care of life coincides with the fight against the enemy" (Agamben 1998: 47). The police's domination of public life is a colonial project; it is an attempt to colonize the political space and turn it into a police space. In the following sections, I illustrate how the police have continuously attempted to dominate the political space in Narova.

Notes to Chapter III

¹ Cited in Burak 2011:143.

² Cited in Aydin 2012:24.

³ The first Armenian uprising against the Kurdish-Ottoman dominion took place in Adana in 1909. In response to the uprising, thousands of Armenian dwellings were torched and around thirty thousand Armenians were killed. This massacre did not pacify Armenian guerrilla units. On the contrary, it contributed to the growing of Armenian nationalist sentiments. Many more Armenian youth volunteered to participate in the guerrilla units after the massacre (Dadrian 1993, 1994, Ungor and Polatel 2011).

⁴ Many Kurdish intellectuals and the representatives of the Kurdish movement, however, accept the Kurdish role in Armenian genocide. In February 2013, Ahmet Turk, a prominent Kurdish politician and a member of the pro-Kurdish party BDP, publicly apologized for the Kurdish role in the Armenian genocide. Information available at: <http://www.aina.org/news/20130204195340.htm>. Last accessed June 21, 2013. During my visit to Kurdish region in June 2013, many young Kurds told me apologetically about their great grandparents' role in the genocide and massacres. They told that their great grandparents confessed that they participated in the killings of the Armenians. According to these young people, Ottoman soldiers and bureaucrats convinced their great grandparents that Armenians were extremely dangerous and that they would go to heaven if they killed Armenians.

⁵ The Committee of Public Safety was formed during the *reign of terror* (1793-1784) in France. It was a *de facto* executive government aimed at eliminating the rivals of the Jacobins and suppressing internal uprisings (Palmer 1941).

⁶ Archival research on the independence tribunals is not allowed. Only one historian, Professor Aybars, has been allowed to examine the archival documents related to these tribunals. According to Aybars (1975) 59,164 people were tried in these courts between 1920 and 1927. 19,630 of the tried were executed while the rest were sentenced to heavy punishments (Aybars 1975). However, oral histories and memoirs on the *Independence Tribunals* point out the arbitrary executions of these courts and indicate that the total number of executions was far more than indicated in Aybars's work (Adak 2003, Ahmad 2002, Akcam 1999, Arakon 2011). The restrictions on archival research can also be interpreted as a way to hide the actual number of the executions.

⁷ One of the three articles of *Law of Maintenance Order* read: "The head of the government -with the approval of the president- is entitled to ban any organization, provocation, encouragement and publications aimed at reactionism, rebellion, and disruption of the social order, social peace, security and public order. The government may hand over persons suspected of these actions to the Independence Tribunals" (Elmas and Kurban 2011:5).

⁸ In 1952, *Turk-Is*, the Labor Unions Confederation of Turkey, was established.

⁹ Throughout the second half of the 1960s, Dev-Genc functioned as an organizer of the meetings and land occupations of peasants and small producers across the country. It also contributed to working class actions such as factory occupations, strikes and meetings (Bozkurt 2008).

¹⁰ In 1971, the government party was a center-right party, the Justice Party.

¹¹ Six of these cities (Ankara, Istanbul, Izmir, Kocaeli, Zonguldak, Eskisehir) are located in Western Turkey. A significant percent of the population in these cities consisted of industrialized labor force in the 1970s. Three of them (Adana Diyarbakir, Siirt) are located in the relatively industrialized parts of Eastern Turkey. The socialist organizations gained popular support in the Kurdish region during the 1960s and 1970s. The founding members of the PKK were all organized in Marxist-Leninist organizations before they founded the PKK. And, the last one is Hatay, located at the Syrian border of Turkey, inhabited by Arab Alevis. Leftist organizations are still powerful in Hatay (Nye 1977).

¹² PKK, a guerrilla organization, began to organize in the late 1970s, fighting against the Turkish State for cultural and political rights for the Kurds in Turkey. The founders of the PKK were former members of the THKP/C. The PKK first emerged as Marxist Leninist guerrilla organization, which aimed to establish a communist federal state in the Middle East. Later in the 1990s, the party removed the communist symbols of

hammer and sickle from the party flag and opened itself to religious Kurds and the Kurdish bourgeoisie. See: Marcus 2007.

¹³ Article 4 of the State of Emergency Law.

¹⁴ For a discussion on the indirect rule of British colonialism that attempted to control and contain colonized populations through arming some local men see: Crowder 1964, Mamdani 1996.

¹⁵ It is widely reported that village guards were responsible for committing serious human rights violations during the conflict. Some were involved in the forced evacuation of villagers, drug trafficking, rape, corruption, and theft. Village guards have been rarely investigated or brought to justice (Hughes 2006, Jongerden 2001).

¹⁶ These people ended up as tenants in shantytown areas of big cities. According to the Turkey *Migration and Internally Displaced Population Survey*, between 1991 and 2000, 1,201,200 Kurdish people were displaced from the eastern and southeastern regions of Turkey for security reasons (Yilmaz, 2006, p. 18).

¹⁷ Heavy police and soldier presence in the region still continues. In addition to this, the soldiers and police continue to attack civilians. For instance, in December 2011, 28 Kurdish civilians were killed in Roboski, a Kurdish town near the Syrian border, as a result of aerial bombardment of the town by Turkish air force. While the AKP chairman Huseyin Celik argued that “it was an operational accident”, the Prime minister did not apologize for the event. To make things worse, hundreds of people who wanted to march in Roboski were subjected to police violence. Information available at: <http://bianet.org/english/human-rights/143200-timeline-what-happened-in-roboski> Last accessed: July 24, 2013.

¹⁸ The MHP is known as a pro-fascist party with Islamist sentiments (Gonen 2011). Members of the MHP have participated in numerous assaults and pogroms against Kurds, Alevis and socialists.

¹⁹ Leftist police officers were organized in the Police Association, Pol-Der (Demirbilek 2011).

²⁰ As Avci (2010) a former Istanbul chief of police, suggests that because it would be much harder to gain power within the overtly secular army, the Fettullah organization strategically invested in getting organized in the TNDP by the 1980s. Ahmet Sik, a socialist journalist was arrested as a terror suspect in 2010, because he wrote a book about the Fethullah organization within the TNPD. He was put in prison before he published his work. Hanefi Avci is also in prison on charges of terrorism.

²¹ According to research conducted by *Center for Truth, Justice and Memory* the number of “enforced disappeared” since 1990 is 1,353. It reached a peak in the period from 1993 to 1998, with the year 1994 recording 518 as “gone missing.” Information available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-321036-enforced-disappearances-a-wound-still-wide-open.html> Last accessed: July 18, 2013.

²² According to TIHV there were 1258 extra-judicial political executions between the years 1991 and 2001 in Turkey. Information available at: http://ob.nubati.net/wiki/Extra-judicial_Executions. Last accessed: March 1, 2013.

²³ Illegal detentions were taking place in two ways: 1) by kidnapping activists and taking them to places such as empty buildings and forests, and interrogating and torturing them there. 2) by not filing any arrest report and denying the arrest even if the arrested was taken into custody by legal police forces and was kept in a police office (Taqi 2000).

²⁴ Information available at <http://sozcu.com.tr/2013/gundem/turkiyede-kac-asker-tutuklu.html>. Last accessed August 1, 2013.

²⁵ For instance, between 2007 and 2009, a total of 416 police brutality and torture cases were recorded and 53 people were killed by the police (*Bianet*, June 17, 2009).

CHAPTER IV

Narova, the Gaza of Istanbul: The Creation of “State of Emergency” Zones in Istanbul

“In those years [the 1990s] terrible things were happening”¹

“They turned this neighborhood into Gaza. In 1993, in 1994, in 1995, in 1996 the Special Operation Units were walking on rooftops.”²

It was March 12, 1995, in the Gazi Neighborhood of Istanbul, where mostly working class Alevi people live. The neighborhood was known as a place in which radical Marxist organizations were powerful. An unknown gunman fired upon a coffee house frequented by *Alevis*. An Alevi *dede* was killed and many Alevis were wounded. Word spread quickly, and thousands of Gazi residents took to the streets of Gazi in protest. Believing that the police were responsible for the shooting, they started to march towards the neighborhood police station. That night, the police shot and killed a demonstrator. The next day, hundreds of people, most of them Alevis and socialists, came to Gazi to join its residents in their protest. Rioting continued in the following days, with the police and their gunmen firing into the crowd, killing another 18 people and severely beating many others (Dural 1995, Marcus 1996).³ The streets of Gazi turned into a war zone, evoking scenes of the state of emergency rule in the Kurdish region of Turkey.

Except for Hanefi Avci,⁴ the then head of the Istanbul police department, all of the other high ranking police and military officers, as well as the Governor himself, had argued that the unrest was symptomatic of the religious tension between Alevis and Sunnis. Hanefi Avci, however, argued that the police did not think of the neighborhood as

an Alevi neighborhood but as a hotbed of revolutionary organizations. In line with the security officers' arguments, the newspapers reduced the issue to an issue of religion. However, as Marcus (1996) demonstrates, Gazi residents' reaction to the coffee house shooting and their subsequent march towards the police station arose from long-term tensions between Gazi residents and the police forces.

Residents of Gazi were routinely subjected to arbitrary police violence, which included torture, kidnappings, arbitrary arrests, interrogations, and legal and illegal detentions during the 1990s. As several Gazi residents I interviewed told me, during those years, dozens of young socialists from Gazi were kidnapped and found severely wounded, and even dead, along nearby highways days after being kidnapped. Additionally, a 35 year-old well-respected socialist from Gazi was killed while in custody at the Gazi police station two months before the coffee house shooting. Thus, the tension between the police and Gazi residents was already at its peak at the time of the event. Hence, Gazi residents' reaction to the shooting was symptomatic of the long-term tension between them and the police.

On March 15th 1998, the 3rd anniversary of the Gazi Events, I decided to participate in a march organized to protest the killings. A friend of mine from Gazi told me that the entrance to the neighborhood would be closed during the day of the protest and that I should go there the night before the event. I remember asking myself: How could the entrance to a neighborhood be closed? It was not as though it had gates. Following the suggestion of my friend, I went there the night before the protest and stayed with his family. I still remember the dinner conversation about what the police would do the next day. Listening to the conversation, which portrayed the police as a violent enemy, capable of anything, I realized that the next day would be an exceptional day for me.

I still cannot forget what I saw when I stepped out from the house the next day. The rooftops of the neighborhood were occupied by masked policemen pointing their rifles towards the street, blurring the line between terrorism and policing (Aretxaga 2005). Masked policemen with heavy arms were also standing at street entrances. The presence of these faceless black figures told us that the only law in Gazi that day was the law of the Police—the untouchable, god-like side of the law, which has the right to decide to kill or let live (Foucault 2003). I was full of fear. I thought I might easily die that day. The policemen of the Turkish State were there, during the anniversary of the killing of innocent people by police forces, reminding us that death is never far away, but an immanent possibility. I wanted to run away, to flee the neighborhood. However, I realized that it was impossible. I overheard that there had been clashes between police and people who wanted to enter the neighborhood. Watching a military tank chasing a group of youth I understood how the entrance of a neighborhood could be closed. I saw the gates of the neighborhood, and the gatekeepers. I was stuck there. The “gates” were under the control of armed men.

On September 2011, in Narova, a friend’s father took me to an education co-op run by a group of young people. We sat on the balcony, drinking tea and chatting. I saw a small white military tank pass by. The back door of the tank was half open, and there was a policeman sitting in the back, holding his rifle. Surprised, I asked what had happened that day. Something exceptional must have had happened – exceptional enough to bring tanks to the neighborhood. A young man, smiling at my “naivety,” replied: “Nothing. This place is the Gaza of Istanbul. They are always here.” From that moment on, I would be surprised by many things I saw and by many stories I heard. My new friends would always find me naïve, and tell me that the Turkish state, which according to them is an enemy, an inherently violent and aggressive entity, would of course be brutal and violent.

That is how the enemy behaves. How could I expect otherwise? In my very first day in Narova, I realized that what I witnessed on March 1998 in Gazi was not exceptional for some inhabitants of Istanbul. It was the norm.

As I discuss in Chapter I, Narova and similar neighborhoods were known as liberated zones---zones free of the state hence police control--- during the 1970s. As opposed to this image, two common terms used by Narova residents to describe Narova in the 1990s are Gaza Strip and semi-open prison. Both Gaza and prison are places in which peoples' movement are under heavy surveillance by security forces of all sorts: undercover and masked, legal and extra-legal. They both have boundaries or walls that separate them from surrounding areas. And both are known for brutal forms of violence and large-scale human rights abuses. Additionally, Gaza is a place under occupation by the military forces of a foreign country.

In this chapter, I focus on the “state practices” that make Narova residents use the Gaza strip and semi-open prisons as analogies to describe Narova of the 1990s. Although some of these practices (i.e. identity checks at checkpoints, kidnappings, illegal detentions) are not applied anymore, some others (i.e. house raids, the constant presence of armored vehicles, undercover police surveillance) are still present. Thus, this chapter not only provides insight about the state practices of the 1990s but also of today. Scholars who critically reflect on the relationship between space and sovereignty argue that militarized control of territory is key to establishing and maintaining state power (Elden 2009, Fanon 1968, Lefebvre 2003, Newman 1989, Mbembe and Rendall 2000). Mbembe (2003), for instance, in his analysis of Gaza, following Fanon, argues that space is the raw material of sovereignty. For him one of the key dynamics of Israeli attempts to demonstrate and construct their sovereign power in Gaza is territorial fragmentation; creation of a collection of isolated zones and population enclaves physically disconnected

from one another. He explains that the objective of this process is twofold: to render any movement impossible and to implement separation along the model of the apartheid state. In this chapter, I demonstrate that in their attempts to assert state power in Narova—one of the centres of the revitalizing revolutionary left in the 1990s—the Turkish police also turned Narova into an isolated space, separated from its surrounding areas. Accordingly, I illustrate the ways in which Narova has been separated from the surrounding area through militarized spatial techniques and stigmatized as a dangerous zone in the eyes of the general public.

As I discuss in the Introduction, sovereignty, like the state, is a fiction and a tentative, unstable and ambiguous project, which is made real through “ritualized, everyday confirmations of [...] violence” (Hansen and Stepputat 2001:7). Sovereignty has to be performed publicly to prove its existence. In the places, inhabited by “internal enemies,” state sovereignty is constituted of performative displays of police or military violence and power (Butler 1997, Coronil and Skurski 2006, Taussig 1992, Feldman 1991, Aretxaga 2005). Accordingly, this chapter also demonstrates various performances of sovereignty contributed to the materialization of the Turkish state as an enemy force in Narova. Jimeno (2001) argues that violence transforms existing relationships. Accordingly, when I discuss performances of sovereignty in Narova I also illustrate how violent state practices effect social relations in Narova. Most particularly, I demonstrate how such practices have contributed to the normalization of violence, the weakening of historical social support networks and solidarity among residents. Since one of the main reasons behind systematic police violence in Narova during the 1990s was the popular support that revolutionary organizations regained in the neighborhood, I start with brief discussion of the revitalization of the revolutionary left in the 1990s.

Revitalization of the Revolutionary Left in the 1990s

As I discuss in Chapter II, after the coup of 1980, hundreds of thousands of socialists in Turkey were imprisoned, tortured and forced to leave the country. The coup pacified the socialist movement during the 1980s. However, it did not succeed in preventing the socialists from reorganizing. By the late 1980s, with the release of revolutionaries from prisons, the socialists began to reorganize. Demonstrations in the spring of 1989⁵ saw the participation of around six hundred thousand workers. The coal miners' march, attended by forty-two thousand miners, general strikes in several factories, and mass campus occupations of the early 1990s were the harbingers of a socialist revival in the country (Arslan 2006). Consequently, in the early 1990s, a number of new socialist and communist parties were founded. Among the reorganizing left there were two main tendencies. On the one hand, there were radical, illegal Marxist organizations in favor of urban guerrilla struggle as well as organization of the masses. These included the Revolutionary Left (Dev-Sol),⁶ Marxist Leninist Communist Party (MLKP),⁷ Workers and Peasant Liberation Army of Turkey (TIKKO),⁸ etc. On the other hand, legal socialist parties were established such as Freedom and Solidarity Party (ODP),⁹ Labor Party (EMEP)¹⁰ and Socialist Power Party (SIP).¹¹

Among the newly emerging revolutionary organizations, Dev-Sol gained the most popular support.¹² Dev-Sol's policies were fundamentally influenced by Cayan's "artificial balance theory" and "armed propaganda strategy." This strategy also influenced other illegal groups that emerged in the 1990s. Accordingly, the early 1990s witnessed a series of armed attacks selectively targeting those who represent the state, such as soldiers, police officers and members of intelligence agencies. The following list of Dev-Sol assassinations and assassination attempts in 1990 gives a sense of the targets of illegal revolutionary organizations during the 1990s:¹³

1. January 30 1990: The policeman Mehmet Kazım Cakmakci was shot to death. This policeman murdered Mehmet Akif Dalci, aged 18, during the May Day demonstrations of 1989.
2. August 26, 1990: Dev-Sol militants attempted to assassinate Adnan Ozbey, a retired army major who had served at Metris Military Prison, notorious for the torture of political prisoners.
3. September 22, 1990: A member of the National Intelligence Agency (MIT) was killed.
4. October 30, 1990: Bayrampasa Prison Judge, known for his support of police torture, was shot to death.
5. December 18, 1990: Another member of the MIT, Ferdi Tamer, was shot to death.¹⁴

Narova residents who lived in the neighborhood during the 1990s told me that Dev-Sol was the revolutionary organization that enjoyed the most support in their neighborhood during the 1990s. According to their narratives, every year on May Day, Narova residents rented around 70 or 80 buses to go to the demonstrations. As each bus takes around 50 people, around 3500 people participated in these demonstrations from Narova during the 1990s. According to a number of residents, half of these buses were filled with those who were sympathetic to Dev-Sol/DHKP-C. After 1995, I participated in all of the May Day demonstrations in Istanbul until 2005. DHKP-C was always among the most crowded groups in these demonstrations.¹⁵ Dev-Sol and other groups were also organizing demonstrations and political activities in other neighborhoods. A picture of Narova in the 1990s emerging from the accounts of Narova residents can be described as follows: On the one hand, a series of mass street demonstrations organized by various legal and illegal socialist organizations on numerous current political issues ranging from

Palestine to the economy, from the hunger strikes of political prisoners¹⁶ to the problem of education were taking place; on the other hand students and workers were organizing reading and discussion groups at their schools and workplaces and were actively trying to recruit people. A number of young people from Narova, who were high school students during the 1990s, told me that there was no single student in their school who was not affiliated with a socialist legal or illegal organization in some way.

Studies on political violence often find that those who consider themselves victims of state violence and who believe that their collective suffering is unrecognized, may engage in vengeful activities as a redress (Wilson 2000, Gunther 2001, Fletcher and Weinstein 2002). As Goldstein (2003) puts it, for such populations “revenge is a stand-in for a legal system that is absent or dysfunctional” (2003: 189). Hence, it is no coincidence that in the absence of a peace and reconciliation process after the brutal coup, and in the context of continuing police and military violence, Cayan’s strategy gained sympathy among the working class —especially among working class Alevis, who have been subjected to police and military violence since the Ottoman era. In other words, the political assassinations that marked the political atmosphere of the early 1990s, met the thousands’ desire for revenge.¹⁷

In addition to satisfying the desire for revenge, these organizations’ calls for justice also helped increase their rise in popularity in the 1990s. Like the *great criminal*, Cayan and his followers claimed not to use violence for their own benefit and gain, but with the aim of abolishing an unjust order and establishing a new one.¹⁸ The presence of these organizations was perceived as a threat against the “security of the state” by the ruling elites. They threatened “state security” in three ways. First of all, their armed attacks exposed areas the “state” did not control. Hence, these attacks contributed to the demystification of the state, as they showed the state to be less powerful than it claimed.

Second, the journals published by these groups and the discussions based on these journals and socialist activity were also effective in delegitimizing the state. These journals along with other socialist texts contributed to the development of a critical perspective on the capitalist state. This is probably why employees of socialist journals were among the most common targets of police violence. Finally, their aspiration to forcibly demolish the existing order and to build a new one was a way to declare themselves as rivals of the state. As these rivals gained support among the masses, the ruling elites attempted to “reactivate [their] political potency, which ha[d] been suspended by the ‘terrorist’ act” (Feldman 1991: 89). In their attempts to reactivate their political potency, the Turkish ruling elites two main techniques: 1- militarized spatial control of neighborhoods inhabited by supporters of Dev-Sol and similar organizations, 2- spectacular displays of police violence.

Sovereignty and territorial control

Fanon (1968), in his discussion of the spatial extents of sovereignty, describes the colonizer and the colonized as belonging to two distinct worlds. The colonial space as a manifestation of this distinction is divided into two; borders, posts and barracks being the main internal frontiers. For Fanon, the principles of the colonizers’ system work for the constitution of an atmosphere of obedience and prohibition around the colonized person in the colonized space. The atmosphere of obedience and prohibition is constituted through the continuous presence of the police and army in colonized spaces. As Mbembe (2003) argues, for Fanon the space is the raw material of sovereignty. Compartmentalization of the colonial space, contributing to the maintenance of the language of pure violence inscribed in this space, constitutes colonial sovereignty over the colonized.

Mbembe, (2003) demonstrating that militarized colonial spatial politics survived after “decolonization”, attracts our attention to the ongoing militarized rule in occupied Palestinian territories. In addition to Palestine, we can argue that the state of emergency rule in Turkey’s Kurdish region is another contemporary example of what Fanon describes. As I discuss in Chapter III, one of the most significant techniques the ruling elites of Turkey developed in their fight against the Kurdish movement was the isolation of the region from the rest of Turkey. The isolation of the region operated through strict militarized control of the region and through the concentration of violence in these isolated territories. Security forces surrounded Kurdish towns and villages and peoples’ moves were under strict military control. In addition, the movement/circulation of information about what had been going on in the region was also severely regulated. The news, which could provide public awareness about the region, was strictly censored and the Kurdish press was severely repressed.¹⁹ Police or counter-guerrilla violence against human rights activists was carried out with the aim of silencing witnesses who might communicate the scope of violence taking place in the region to the wider public. Hence, the isolation of the Kurdish region, preventing those living elsewhere from learning about it, facilitated a concentration of violence in specific territories. Moreover, the isolation of the region and restriction of information about the region contributed to the stigmatization of the Kurdish movement in the eyes of the Turkish public (see Cemal 2004, Oktem 2011, Danisman and Akin 2011).

After having served as the state of emergency governor in the Kurdish region for four years, the Governor Hayri Kozakcioglu was appointed as the Governor of Istanbul in August 1991.²⁰ Right after his appointment, Kozakcioglu declared that Istanbul, too, had become a city of emergency and that the city was in need of more police forces. In a press release the following year, Kozakcioglu argued that in order to solve the terror problem in

Istanbul, the government was developing special techniques. He announced that he would not share these techniques with the public, further explaining, however, that Istanbul's police department would create pilot areas to test these new methods. He did not name the pilot areas. However, it is easy to surmise that Narova and many other predominantly Alevi populated working-class districts were among them. (Aslan 2004, Berksoy 2007). In this process, in Narova, like in other predominantly Alevi populated neighborhoods, police forces with the power to take anyone from the neighborhood at any time, cruising white Renault cars used to kidnap activists, identity checks, wandering panzers and house raids became a part of ordinary life.

Checkpoints as the markers of Narova as a no-go area

One of the most crucial developments that led to segregation of Narova and contributed to its separation from the surrounding areas was the construction of checkpoints at the entrances and exits of the neighborhood. By the early 1990s members of the Special Operation Units (SOU) located at the entrances and exits of the neighborhood began to check IDs. These identity checks, which were implemented rather unsystematically and arbitrarily, continued until the early 2000s. As I illustrate below, the checkpoints, first of all, drew the boundaries of the neighborhood and separated it from the surrounding areas. Secondly, the SOU members waiting at the checkpoints with their rifles, recalling the images of war zones —zones of encounter with the enemy— or of borders separating the homeland from alien territories, contributed to the stigmatization of the neighborhood as a “terrain of anticipated violence” (Jeganathan 2004:72), a no-go area and a place of strangers and/or enemy-like people. In other words, checkpoints, by reminding everyone of the possibility of violence and recalling the images of war and borders, in a country, which according to dominant nationalist discourses, is surrounded by enemy countries, contributed to the association of Narova with violence and to the

stigmatization of its residents as internal enemies. Hence, it is no coincidence that during the 1990s, even bus and cab drivers avoided going to the neighborhood, as they believed that it was not a safe place to go.

The very presence of the checkpoints was enough to prevent non-residents from going to the neighborhood. However, those who were not discouraged by the checkpoints sometimes had to contend with police violence. A thirty year-old man name Ihsan who used to live in a neighborhood close to Narova told me why he stopped going to Narova in the 1990s:

I used to go to Narova to take guitar lessons when I was a high school student. Once the policemen waiting at the checkpoint stopped me and asked me to show them my ID. One of them examined my ID and asked me where I lived. I told that I lived in the neighborhood nearby and that I came to Narova to take guitar lessons. The policeman, staring at me angrily, told me that I had to answer some questions at the police office. They put me in a car and took me to a police station. At the police station, another policeman interrogated me. I do not remember exactly what he asked. I was so scared. I was only 15 then. And it was the 1990s, you know... We were hearing all sorts of stories about torture and things like that. I was afraid that they would beat me. They didn't. The policeman yelled at me, saying things like: "What are you doing in Narova? Don't you know that that place is a terror den?" Then he told me that if I went to Narova again, they would kill me. I did not go to the neighborhood again. I later heard that the same thing happened to many people who wanted to go to the neighborhood. Later, for instance, a friend of mine was severely beaten at the same police station...

The story above is one of the many similar stories I heard from non-residents who wished to enter the neighborhood at some point during the 1990s. As the story illustrates, in addition to the checkpoints, another technique of marking Narova as an enemy and/or foreign zone was to prevent encounters between Narova residents and other people. Ahmed (2013), in a very different context, in the context of women's attempts to gain respectability to "stay safe" argues that "movement becomes a form of subject constitution [for women]: *where* 'one' goes or does not go determines *what* one 'is', or *where* one is seen to be, determines *what* one is seen to be"(33) (Emphasis in original). In the case of Narova, one can argue that by telling the non-residents to *not to be seen* in Narova, the

police were defining what Narova is: an exceptional place, from which a woman has to keep herself away. By not letting the non-residents in, the policemen were telling them that in order to remain citizens deserving of respect —citizens who do not deserve to be beaten, tortured and interrogated— one had *not to be seen* in Narova. In other words, according to the police, being seen in Narova made one a potential, even a deserving target of violence. Hence, the policemen waiting at the checkpoints actively separated those who were to be seen in Narova from those who were not. These separations, preventing everyday encounters between Narova residents and non-residents contributed to the stigmatization of Narova as a dangerous place filled with strange people or terrorists.²¹

The checkpoints as the markers of sovereignty

As Sidaway (2003) argues, “the checkpoint is a technology of government, the embodiment of a claim to sovereign power—the practice of sovereignty” (165). The checkpoints surrounded by armed policeman remind the people of the police’s sovereign power, the power to use arbitrary and unrestricted power over life and death. Halime, a forty-eight year old woman who has lived in the neighborhood for twenty-four years, tells how police located at the checkpoints were concerned with demonstrating their power:²²

Halime: A lot of people from the neighborhood told me that there were policemen checking IDs at the entrances and exists of the neighborhood throughout the 1990s. Do you remember them?

Halime: Ah...Those identity-checks... How can I forget them? It was a pain every single day.

Me: Were they in the neighborhood every day?

Halime: Well, almost every day. They were supposed to be here on the days of demonstrations. But according to the state, every day was a demonstration day in our neighborhood. If you wanted to go home, they would stop and frisk you. Then they would ask for your ID. You would show your ID. Before putting your ID back into your wallet, they would start searching you again and ask for your ID once again.

Then they would say that they wanted to search your identity in a more detailed way. That meant that they wanted to check your identity information stored at the GBT [General Information Gathering System].²³ It meant that they wanted to kill you.²⁴ You would wait with them until your identity information was faxed. It took at least half an hour. While you were waiting they would ask all sorts of silly questions, like, “what do you do? Where are you coming from? Where did you get your coat? What is this? What is that?” They did not even wait for the answers. They would just ask them to bother you. They knew that you had to answer their questions. You had to answer! Otherwise... They were enjoying it! They enjoyed it when you had to show them respect! And then after keeping you there for half an hour, they would tell you to go. Well, I think they did not even ask for the detailed identity information, they just told you that to make you wait there, to torture you. It is a psychological war! It is the war of the state against the people! They show their power by humiliating you! The state sees us [socialists], as their enemies.

Halime’s experience cited above, which took place in 1996, reflects the experiences of a large number of Narova residents I talked to. Like Halime, dozens of Narova residents complained about arbitrary interrogations and body searches and humiliating behaviors of the policemen at the checkpoints. Dozens of Narova residents told me that they were taken under custody from the checkpoints while going to their homes in the 1990s. Police custody meant further humiliation, torture and even death in those years. As Halime, and many other Narova residents observed, by asking arbitrary and seemingly silly questions, the policemen were indeed making it clear that interrogations were not done for security reasons; rather, for manifesting their power.

Checkpoints as the messengers of the state

Jeganathan (2004) argues that the checkpoint is a location that “ties citizens to the state” (75). For him, people are subjected as enemies and friends of the state at the checkpoints. Government issued IDs in Turkey indicates one’s place of origin. As is commonly known in Turkey, the information about the place of origin in the ID cards turns ethnic and religious minorities into potential targets of police violence (Secor 2007). It is not unusual in Turkey that people are taken into custody just because of their places of origin. In Narova, too, a lot of people complained about police mistreatment and

harassment at checkpoints due to their places of origin. For instance, when I asked Halime what else she could tell me about the checkpoints she added that she had been humiliated several times because of her place of origin. She said that,

They look at your place of origin and they make comments about it. “Oh you are from Tunceli? ²⁵They don’t say Dersim, you know. They say Tunceli. Are you a terrorist? There is no single person who loves this state in Tunceli! All the people from Tunceli are traitors!” I know that a lot of people in this neighborhood were taken into custody and get tortured there just because they are from Tunceli.

What Halime said was not new information to me. It is commonly known among left-wing circles in Turkey that if a person from Dersim is stopped by the police and asked to show his/her ID, it is most likely that he/she would end up in custody (See Chapter II for the significance of Dersim).

Secor (2007), citing the words of one of her Kurdish interlocutors from Turkey – “our sin, our guilt is being Kurdish” (45) – argues that “the ritual of the checkpoint and the showing of identification [...] serve not to secure innocence before the law but to reproduce the stain of an abstract, unearned guilt” (45). For Secor, the identity checks in Turkey serve as the places of interpellation, in the Althusserian sense of the term. In these places, the police as representatives of state sovereignty convey to certain groups of people that they have an “unearned guilt.” They are guilty of being from the same region as the populations who once resisted or continue to resist the state. Accordingly, the checkpoints, by holding some “subjects in a relationship of guilt” (Secor 2007:27) give rise to the perception of a state subject, which intentionally uses violence against certain populations.

While giving examples of mistreatment of Narova residents by the police, dozens of Narova residents all said the same thing: “The state does not like us.” For some, the state did not like them because they lived in a place like Narova. For others, the state did not like them because they were Alevi or they were Kurds. When I asked them why the state did not like Alevi, the replies were usually as the follows: Because “Alevi are

rebellious,” “Alevi are revolutionaries,” “Alevi are leftists,” or “Kurds are fighting for their rights,” “It sees the Kurds as its enemies.” I also asked them since when had the state has perceived them as such. For most of the Alevi, the answer was that the state had not liked them since the Ottoman era. Interestingly, even the young ones, who seemed proud of being ignorant about Alevi culture and history argued that the state has not liked Alevi since the Ottoman era. According to them, this was due to the fact that Alevi were revolutionaries even back then. In line with such beliefs, the discriminatory and violent police practices during the ID checks give the impression that there is a state subject over and above the ruling elites that has maintained similar attitudes toward Alevi since the Ottoman era. In other words, such practices make the minority populations think that there is a sovereign, a monstrous entity, that has occupied the realm of the state for centuries, transforming Turkey into an unsafe place for them. Such perception contributes to the normalization of police violence in targeted communities. For instance, after telling me that one of his friends were severely beaten by the police located at the checkpoints, Ihsan, the young man I cited above, added that “but he was from Diyarbakir, you know.” The “you know” implies that being beaten by the police is the expected fate of someone from Diyarbakir, a Kurdish town.

Today, there are no checkpoints or ritualized identity checks in the neighborhood. But, *panzers*, *akreps* and undercover policemen still contribute to the separation of the neighborhood from the surrounding areas as well as give rise to the fantasies of the omnipotent state that wages a war against Narova residents.

The Akrep and the Panzer

The schools of Armutlu were police stations
There were panzers laying in their playground
The kids were growing up under the shadow of
panzers
The panzer took the child's ball

The child ran to take her ball
The panzer walked
The child remained seven²⁶

Constantly strolling *akreps* and *panzers* have become part of the everyday life in Narova and in other predominantly Alevi populated neighborhoods since the early 1990s. The Turkish police, who stroll the neighborhood in these military vehicles, look more like soldiers than police. These military vehicles contribute to the perception of the Turkish state as a colonial occupational force in Narova residents' eyes. A thirty-three years old young woman from Narova, Evrim, argues that:

Erdogan, [the prime minister] talks about the violence in Palestine as if he has no clue about what has been taking place in this country. What is the difference between Gaza and Narova? Or, what is the difference between Gaza and Kurdistan? See, there are *akreps* all around. They come with helicopters to take five kids into custody! It is as if they are at war. The state sees us as their enemies. It is obvious!

As I discuss in the Introduction, citing Foucault (1999), “politics is the continuation of war by other means” (23). The armed policemen, the checkpoints and military vehicles such as *akreps* and *panzers* make it clear to the internal enemies that there is a constant struggle between the ruling elites who want to maintain a certain order and those who pose a challenge to that order.

Although the mere presence of these vehicles in the neighborhood was enough to remind the residents of the possibility of violence, these vehicles have been used in numerous violent acts. Among these acts, the most commonly known is the story of Sevcan, which took place in Armutlu, a predominantly Alevi neighborhood. As the lyrics of the song describe above, Sevcan, a seven-year-old kid, was run over by a panzer located at the school playground while trying to catch a ball in 1993. After this event, the people of Armutlu organized a demonstration in the neighborhood, which ended with the police attacking the residents. As it usually happens in Turkey, this act of protest against police

violence brought yet more police violence. The police made no apologies about the accident and the policeman who killed Sevcan was not put on trial (Iseri 2010).

A similar event took place in Narova in 2006. According to witnesses, there was a demonstration against cell-type prisons in the neighborhood on December 10, 2006. Soon after the demonstration started, the policemen used tear gas on the demonstrators. Affected by the tear gas, the crowd began to run around. An *akrep*, driving fast, started to chase a young man among the demonstrators. The young man, running away from the *akrep*, entered a one-way street and got stuck there. He leaned against the wall of a shanty house. The *akrep* drove towards him, ran over his foot²⁷ and went into the house.²⁸ This is a well-known story in the neighborhood. Alkan, who lived in that house, was among the people who told me this story. Alkan was 14 years old when the event took place. He was playing in front of the house when he saw the *akrep* chasing after the young man. As he told me, when the *akrep* went inside, his father was sitting on the couch and watching TV. He was completely shocked when he was hit by the *akrep* and started to yell at the policemen. The policemen got out of the *akrep* started to swear at the man. Alkan's father went to the police office to file a complaint against the officer and to demand reparations. The policemen at the police station got angry and began yelling at him, telling him that if he did not leave he would be taken into custody. He was not allowed to sign a complaint and no reparations were provided to fix to house. His neighbors raised money for the repairs.

According to Alkan, the police's behavior was entirely to be expected and completely normal. He said, "what do you expect? If you are from Narova you are already deemed guilty. The police would always treat you as if you committed a crime even though you are innocent. If you are from Narova you better stay away from the police." As I wrote above, I heard this story from various residents. It is likely that these residents thought that this is a kind of story that would attract my attention—stories designed to

appeal to the anthropologist who sought stories about violence. Yet, like Alkan, other residents, too, after telling me the story, added that those kinds of things always happened in Narova and that there was nothing extraordinary about it.

The violence of the state, embodied by the presence of the *akreps* and *panzers* does not only contribute to the appearance of the police as an omnipotent figure beyond the law, but also serves to normalize and render violence routine within the neighborhoods. The children, who socialize under the shadow of these vehicles, grow up thinking that police violence is natural and inevitable. Hume (2008), making a similar point in her work on violence in El Salvador, argues that widespread impunity not only “deepens mistrust of agents of the state” but also increases people's threshold for tolerating violence and transforms the perceptions of ordinary. For her in the places where arbitrary violence becomes a part of the routine, violence also becomes normalized. For the context of Narova, too, we can argue that *akreps* and all other reminders of violence, such as checkpoints, house raids, armed policemen, effectively contributed to the normalization of violence.

House Raids

House raids have been a part of ordinary life in Narova since 1990. House raids, being another practice of the sovereign, have torn Narova's social fabric apart: the isolation of those within the community who are activists from those who are not politically engaged. They have been instrumental in stigmatizing Narova's politically active residents and in asserting state sovereignty in the neighborhood. Halime's experience, for instance, is revealing in that it helps to better understand the operation and effects of house raids. She describes how her house was raided in 1995,

They [the policemen] were playing with our nerves every single day. Once, I was coming back from the office of the party [Socialist Power Party]. I guess the

undercover policemen were following me. They probably told the police at the checkpoints to stop me. I was on the bus with my friends. The police stopped the bus. They yelled my name and asked me to get out of the bus. Can you imagine that? The police stop the bus and yell your name! I asked, “What happened?” They told me that I had to go with them. Everybody in the bus started staring at me as if I was a terrorist. Imagine that policemen standing next to an *akrep* with rifles stop a bus and call a woman’s name and tell her to get out. What would you think of her? If you were not a political person [politically engaged], you would of course think that the woman is a terrorist! And they are doing it for that very reason. I mean to show you that they will make you a terrorist!

Anyways, after I left the party office, I went shopping. I was carrying two plastic bags of fruits and vegetables. I got off the bus with those bags. They brought me into the *akrep*. They did not ask me anything on the way home. They knew where I lived. There were five or six policemen and me with my grocery bags! I was a terrorist carrying watermelon and grapes! Can you believe that? I must have been very dangerous with those bags! But you know, what if there was a bomb hidden in the watermelon? As soon as we got home, Cahit [her husband] showed up. It turned out that my friends on the bus had called and told him what had happened. When Cahit showed up at the front door [of their shanty house], they drew their guns. One held his gun to Cahit’s forehead. I started screaming: “He is my husband! Stop it!” You can’t imagine how loud I shouted. Standing at the door, Cahit started yelling, “What are you doing? Stop it!” He was experienced. He was not scared, he continued shouting at them... Everybody on the street started watching us. He yelled “I am a president of the X district organization of the Socialist Power Party! I am a member of a legal party!” The policeman turned to me, he said “why didn’t you tell me that?” Stupid! I said “you did not ask. If you did, why wouldn’t I?” [Long silence].

We became terrorists. Cahit turned to the neighbors, started shouting: “hey can you see it? Can you see how the police protect you! The police protect you from this terrorist! From your neighbor! See how dangerous she is!” They [the neighbors] began to think of you as a terrorist. Even your relatives become afraid of being seen with you. They think that if they are seen with you they might be perceived as the supporters of a terrorist. You are stigmatized. He [one of the policemen] started laughing, “we didn’t eat any watermelon. Why didn’t you serve us watermelon?” I said “eat shit” on the inside. On the outside, I said, “take it, eat it, if you want.” Eat shit! Eat donkey shit!

Deniz: It must have been very difficult... [Long silence] What did they do afterward?

Halime: What could they do? They made their show and then they left! They didn’t take me into custody. Their aim was to annoy us! To show us their power! They want to tell the others to keep themselves away from socialist politics.

Halime’s story is neither an unusual story nor an example of the most brutal forms of police raids that took place in the neighborhood. It is actually among the most “peaceful” stories of house raid. House raids have been effective in silencing and depoliticizing the communities. First of all, as Halime’s case illustrates and as I have heard from many other Narova residents, the house raids have usually taken place as a public spectacle. In the case of Halime, by calling Halime by her name on the bus, the police

showed Halime and the other riders that they track and can identify “suspicious” people by name. They allowed various bystanders to become witnesses to the process. The people in the bus, the people on the street and finally her neighbors became witness to this spectacle of state violence and intimidation. As Foucault (1995) argues, “in the ceremonies of public execution, the main character was the people, whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance” (50). In a similar vein, Walter (1969) argues that the “main function of state terror is not only to punish acts of disobedience and resistance but also sap the potential for disobedience in advance and to break the power to resist” (19). These witnesses, indeed, as Halime noticed, were among the main characters of the story. As Halime explained, the police, by turning Halime’s alleged interrogation into a public spectacle, sent a message to the witnesses, which said that if they engaged in political activities, they too would face police violence as a result. Hence, one of the most important aims of house raids is to prevent potential disobedience by provoking fear and intimidation.

Second, the house raids contributed to the stigmatization of politically engaged people and lead to their isolation within the community. We can adopt Ahmed’s arguments that I cited above to the house raids as well. As the reader may remember, Ahmed (2013) argues that for women, where one goes determines what one is. In this context, we can argue that whom one is to be seen with determines who one is. As Halime states very clearly, the house raid was intended to send a clear message to her neighbors to not to be seen with Halime in order not to be labeled as a terrorist. Such acts turn people, even the relatives, into stranger to one another. When people become strangers to one another it is always easier to project an aura of danger on the other and justify violence against those who are recognized as potentially dangerous strangers (Ahmed 2013). Like Halime, many other Narova residents told me how their relationship with their neighbors and relatives had changed after their

houses were raided. Today, house raids usually take place with the participation of thousands of police forces accompanied by tanks and helicopters. Such raids create the impression that those, who are taken under custody are extremely dangerous— too dangerous to be taken from their houses by a few policemen—and lead to further stigmatization and isolation of the politically engaged. Hence, it is no coincidence that Narova residents today often emphasize the erosion of the strong solidarity relations of the 1970s and 1990s. It is also no coincidence that as I have argued in the Introduction, “divide and rule” is one of the most repeated phrases in the neighborhood. They often argue that while the neighborhood was like a big family in the past, today people are like strangers to one another. They say that while in the past, if someone was subjected to police violence, all the residents would gather together to protect her/him. They argue that while in the past it was impossible for the police to gather information about the community, today no one can trust anyone else (see also Jimeno 2001, Hume 2008, Feldman 1991). A seventy-three years old woman, after talking about the comradely relations of the past, summarized the transformation of the social relations that Narova residents complain about as follows:

in the 1970s, we used go to bed with our doors open. Some of us did not even have doors to their houses. Our houses were open to all. Now, we all have steel doors in our buildings. It is not only the house but also our hearts that have steel doors. As the years passed we all locked the doors of our hearts and turned inward.

Furthermore, as I discuss in Chapter VI, such police operations give rise to fantasies among young radicals where they are threatening enough to bring thousands of policemen to the neighborhood, yet these too further contribute to their marginalization.

The undercover police as a Gatekeeper

Although at the first glance, the neighborhood seems as a relatively safe and peaceful place, I, myself, always have a hard time feeling safe in the

neighborhood. Constantly prowling *akreps*, surveillance cameras and the presence of undercover policemen, which make me think that any unfamiliar gaze directed my way could potentially be the gaze of the police, had always kept my fear alive while in the neighborhood; however, to my surprise Narova residents repeatedly told me how safe they felt in their neighborhood. In fact, many residents told me that even in the 1990s the only place they felt safe in Istanbul was in their neighborhood. Asya, a middle aged, activist woman, for instance, while telling me how she was feeling safer in the neighborhood in the 1990s, told that “at the very moment I stepped into the minibus that would take me to Narova, I began to feel relieved! Getting into that mini-bus was such a relief!” When I asked her why she felt safer in the neighborhood, she told me that there are always one or more familiar faces in the streets of Narova and “if something happens, there would always be people around to help.” I heard the exact same words from almost all of the Narova residents I talked to. When explaining why they feel safer in Narova, almost everyone I talked to, but more specifically the activists, told me that people knew each other in the neighborhood and “if something happened,” there were always friends, relatives and neighbors to help.

For a long time, I thought that they felt safer in the neighborhood because seeing familiar faces at the streets made them feel at home in Istanbul, where as most of the residents argued that they feel like a refugee. For a while I did not question what they meant by “if something happened.” In retrospect, I understand that I probably did not want to understand its meaning too clearly. Because I was also afraid that something bad might happen to me. Yet, I was not ready to confront my own fears.

One day, in February 2011, while I was walking in one of the central districts of Istanbul, I noticed a man walking behind me in the crowd. I immediately felt that I had seen the man somewhere else before and that he was an undercover policeman following

me. Surprised by my own reaction, I thought that I was under the influence of stories I heard about Narova in the 1990s and that was why I was overly suspicious of strangers. Nevertheless, I wanted to be sure that he was not a policeman. I slowed down and let the man walk in front of me. He walked a few steps farther ahead of me and then bent over, pretending to tie his shoes. Still, my mind could not fully accept that he was an undercover officer. Once I had moved past him, I stopped to talk on phone and again let him pass me. He stopped once again and waited for me to continue walking. At this point I was convinced that he was a policeman. That very evening, while I was walking home, I saw the same man waiting in front of my apartment. I was so scared, of the policeman waiting there that I did not dare enter my building. The streets were empty and I did not have any neighbors or friends who lived close by. I felt extremely alone. I felt like Istanbul was a huge dark hole and that I was completely alone with the policeman inside. I felt that he had the power to do anything he wanted. I turned around and started walking in the opposite direction, thinking that the police would come and kidnap me—though I knew that the police kidnappings were not common anymore. But, still, what if the police changed their “policy” I wondered. What if they had begun to kidnap again?

A couple of days later, while I was waiting at a subway station in one of the central districts of Istanbul, a young activist woman from Narova passed by. A few seconds later, I saw a man walking behind her telling someone on the phone “she is now walking toward the end of the station, keep an eye on her.” I realized that he was an undercover policeman communicating with another one. I was afraid for her safety. What made me feel more worried than seeing her being followed by the police was the fact that she was alone in a subway station packed with people she did not know. If I was not there and if they kidnapped her, there would not be any witnesses who knew her. A couple of weeks after I first saw the undercover policemen following me, I realized that as I left the neighborhood

another undercover police officer followed me. This time, the policeman made it clear that he was following me by making the bus stop between two bus stops and by not giving a ticket to the bus driver.²⁹ Standing next to my seat, staring at me angrily and showing his fist to me as if he was going to punch me in the face, he also made it clear that the police did not want me in that the neighborhood. Once again I was terrified and avoided looking at him. I got off the bus at a station close to the house of a friend, who was at home at the time. The police officer also got off the bus and started to follow me. While walking in the direction of my friend's home, I called her and told her to look out from the window as I approached. I wanted to have a witness in case *something happens*. Then, I realized why Narova's especially activist residents have always felt safer in their neighborhood. As potential targets of police violence, they want to have witnesses in case the police assault them. Moreover, having familiar faces around and knowing that you can ask for help, eases the feeling of loneliness that emerges when one feels endangered. Hence, I realized that one of the reasons why Narova residents have felt safer in their neighborhoods might be due to the fear provoked by the presence of undercover policemen. But no one ever cited this as a reason for their fear. Why was that?

The following year, in 2012, when I started investigating the human rights abuse application documents of TIHV, I realized that fear is one of the most difficult things to talk about. While investigating the therapists' notes taken during the sessions with those who were subjected to police violence, I noticed that even though these people were afraid of being followed by the police, they never spoke of this fear with their friends and relatives. Many people told their therapists that they did not want to leave their homes or neighborhoods because when they do they feel like the police are following them. I realized that I developed the same sense after being followed by the police. I became suspicious of persons walking behind me. I also realized how difficult it was to deal with

that fear while walking alone in unfamiliar locations, where no one could help you in the case of an assault or kidnapping. The fear of being followed by the police caused me to restrict my movement about the city, just like so many other targets of police violence. Hence, the fear created by the undercover policemen was also another force that contributes to the perception of the state as a powerful entity that controls the space and the movements of people. In other words, the undercover policemen on the one hand prime people's imaginations to perceive the state as a ghostly figure that chases after its enemies. On the other hand, by making some parts of the city more dangerous for Narova residents it contributes to the further isolation of Narova's (activist) residents, as well as preventing encounters between them and other inhabitants of Istanbul. I did not meet anyone else besides me who did not live in Narova but went to Narova as often as I did. But my experience with the undercover policemen also proves that, like the SOU members who were trying to prevent non-residents' visits to the neighborhood, the police still attempt to prevent visits to Narova—all of which further contributes to the marginalization of the neighborhood.

“Varos: Bombs that are ready to explode”

The media also played a significant role in separating Narova in particular, and similar neighborhoods in general, from the rest of the city. This was achieved by stigmatizing these places as dangerous zones. By the mid 1990s, the media had begun to use the concepts of *varos* and “the Other Turkey,” to define working class neighborhoods. *Varos* is a Hungarian term in origin, and it literally means “behind the city walls” (Erman 2001). While the concept of *varos* applied to the city's working class neighborhoods, as Aslan (2011) demonstrates the mainstream media mostly referred to Alevi populated neighborhoods as examples of *varos*. According to the discourses of *varos* and of “the

Other Turkey,” the urban poor harm urban culture and the state's ideology, and “challenge the authority of the state” (Erman 2011). The term was first used by the mass media in Turkey, and it has strong pejorative connotations. Briefly, *varos* implies that the urban poor are both culturally and politically distinct and marginal people, with roots in a “backward” rural past, and that they pose a threat to the state with their support of radical political organizations (Demirtas and Sen 2007).

The emergence of the term and its widespread use coincides with the Gazi events of 1995 and the May Day demonstrations of 1996. After these two events, Narova and similar neighborhoods began to be portrayed by the media as dangerous zones, and the people who live in these neighborhoods were represented as dangerous, uncontrollable, and ready to strike at any given moment (Etoz 2000, Erman 2001). As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, although during the Gazi events Gazi residents protested the police violence that had been taking place in the neighborhood for some years, state officials insisted that the problems arose from religious tension. And the Gazi riot was portrayed by the media as the riot of the “Other Turkey,” the “unruly,” urban poor who were totally different from the “normal Turkey.” For instance, a famous journalist, Yalcin Dogan, in an article on his visit to a *varos* tells readers in an astonished way that “*varos*” is not and/or cannot be a part of Istanbul: “*Varos* is a different world. When I came here, I realized that this place is a different world. Is this Istanbul? Is this a place that will be integrated into Europe? Is this place part of Istanbul?”³⁰

On May Day 1996, the police shot three young men to death. Those men were probably members of illegal Marxist organizations before the demonstration started. After the shootings, the members of the illegal groups began to clash with police forces by throwing stones at them. The clash between police and the people soon spread to the whole demonstration area. Despite the murder of three young men and the clashes

between the police and the people, the young people who shattered the windows and destroyed the tulips in the demonstration area became the major images of May Day 1996 in the Turkish media. The images of these young people from the *varos* who were destroying the tulips and throwing rocks were used to symbolize the “Other Turkey” (Gonen and Yonucu 2011). After these two events, working class Alevi neighborhoods began to be depicted in the media as a destructive and “dangerous bomb” that would explode and damage the entire city. For instance, the news coverage of the demonstrations organized to protest the Gazi events in other Alevi populated neighborhoods took place in the newspapers with melodramatic, incendiary headlines such as: “Umraniye exploded,”³¹ “Pendik may explode,” “*Varos*: Bombs that are ready to explode”, “*Varos* said I will explode” (Aksoy 2001).

As is clearly seen by the metaphors used to describe Alevi populated neighborhoods, these kinds of representations attributing destructive powers to the people who reside in *varos*, contributed to the stigmatization of these areas as no go-areas and zones populated by the enemy-like strangers of the “Other Turkey.” Such descriptions contributed to the legitimation of police violence taking place in these neighborhoods and strengthened the boundaries between the middle and upper class Turkish urbanites, who supposedly deserve to live in the city, and the residents of *varos*. Additionally, they prevent building a bridge of understanding between different groups.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I argued that in their attempts to activate their sovereign power in Narova, the Turkish ruling elites initiated militarized spatial control of the neighborhoods. The spatial isolation of Narova through militarized techniques led to the stigmatization of the neighborhood as a no-go area. Arbitrary police violence, which has dominated the

social life of the neighborhood since the 1990s, transformed the social relations of Narova. As violence became ordinary and normal in Narova, strong community ties were weakened and the community became fragmented. The demonstrations that took place in Narova with the participation of thousands in the early 1990s, were gradually replaced with demonstrations of just a few hundreds people. Moreover, erosion of solidarity among Narova residents negatively affected the camaraderie among revolutionary groups. Today, relations among various groups organized in the neighborhood are noticeably weak. Although in the past members of different organizations worked in collaboration, today each group organizes their activities separately, and even tries to sabotage other groups' activities.

As Narova and similar neighborhoods turned into zones where violence was routinely anticipated and no-go areas, everyday encounters between residents of these neighborhoods and others became limited. In this process, Istanbul's non-Alevi populations and Alevi populations became strangers to one another. Due to this this process, the everyday experiences of working-class Alevi neighborhoods residents have been radically altered and no longer resemble those of residents living in other working class neighborhoods.

As Coronil and Skurski (2006) argue, violence is a force that that ruptures the flow of everyday life. Violence as an autonomous agent disrupts order and overwhelms meaning. This powerful agent, violence, has become one of the most significant forces that affected Narova residents' perceptions of reality. Their everyday experiences with arbitrary violence became key to informing their daily concerns, political subjectivity and political objectives. Hence, the isolation of Narova, did not only contribute to the fragmentation of the community of Narova, but also the fragmentation of the socialist movement in particular, and society in general. Turnout at today's May Day

demonstrations in Istanbul is evidence enough of how fragmented the Turkish left has become. The corteges of illegal revolutionary organizations almost exclusively consisted of working-class Alevis,³² and the corteges of legal socialist parties generally consisted of middle and upper class professionals, intellectuals and college students.

As the ties between the middle class and working class socialist were weakened the members of illegal organizations' political projects and subjectivity began to be informed by the reality in Narova and their projects and political practices began to be organized around the demands of these neighborhoods. In the following Chapter I discuss what happens when the members of illegal revolutionary organizations develop their projects according to the demands of Narova like neighborhood. By the 1990s, in addition to arbitrary police violence, the introduction of criminal gangs and the criminalization of Narova's youth began to dominate the social atmosphere of Narova. Accordingly, the following chapter, which focuses on the anti-crime campaigns initiated by some Narova residents, will highlight the processes that turned around 300 hundreds of Narova youth into terror suspects and convicts. As I elaborate in a theoretical discussion with reference to Aretxaga (2003), in places where political violence informs and affects social relations, police forces and their threatening Other become fetishes to one another and their political subjectivity is constructed through an "endless play of mirror images." Accordingly, I also illustrate, the ways in which, Narova's young radicals whose political subjectivity and fantasies were molded by arbitrary police violence, attempted to declare their own sovereign power in the neighborhood by trying to deactivate the power of the police/state in the neighborhood.

Notes to Chapter IV

¹ A seventy- two years old woman from Narova.

² A fifty-two years old man from Narova.

³ The only person who is still in prison regarding the Gazi trial is a young socialist who is accused of “having attempted to change the constitutional order by armed means” Among the policemen who shot at the crowd, only two were found guilty and sentenced to four years of imprisonment; however, they were not imprisoned (Tuleylioglu 2011).

⁴ Hanefi Avci is now in prison on charges of terrorism. Notorious for using torture against socialists, Avci has been found guilty of being a member of a radical Marxist organization in favor of armed struggle, *Revolutionary Headquarters* (DK).

⁵ Spring demonstrations were not only limited to workers’ marches. Throughout the spring of 1989, the workers organized a series of actions such as collective half-naked marches, barefoot marches on the highway, closing the busiest streets of Istanbul to traffic, going to work late, slowing down production, etc. Information available at: <http://www.emekdunyasi.net/ed/guncel/454-39-89-bahar-eylemeleri-boyle-olur-iscilerin-bahari>. Last visited September 26, 2012.

⁶ Established in 1978, Dev-Sol, became active by the late 1980s again. Dev-Sol was a splinter group of THKP-C. Later, in 1994, it became The Revolutionary People’s Liberation Party’ Front (DHPK-C).

⁷ Established in 1995, the MLKP was, like the DHKP-C, in favor of urban guerrilla organizations and mobilization of the masses.

⁸ Established in 1972, the TIKKO became active again during the late 1980s. The TIKKO is a Maoist organization in favor of urban and rural guerrilla struggle.

⁹ Established in 1996, the ODP is an umbrella socialist party, which included various socialist groups ranging from Stalinists to Trotskyites, from feminists and LGBT activists to libertarian socialists. Though ODP s still active, it is now a much smaller party. In the national elections of 1999 and 2002, ODP got 0.80% of the general vote, which means approximately 250.000 people voted for the ODP in the elections of 1999 and 2002. In the 1999 and 2002 elections, some groups within the ODP voted for the pro-Kurdish Party, DTP, as they believed that the Kurdish struggle needed the support of the socialists. In 2007, this number decreased to 0.15 %. Information available at <http://www.secimsonuclariturkiye.com/> Last accessed: March 1, 2013.

¹⁰ Established in 1996, the EMEP is an Albanian-oriented socialist party with Stalinist tendencies. In the national elections of 1999, EMEP got 0.17 % of the general vote, which means approximately 52.000 people voted for EMEP in 1999. The party did not join the election in 2002. And, in the 2007 election it received 0.08 % of the general vote, which makes approximately 26.000 people. Information available at <http://www.secimsonuclariturkiye.com/> Last accessed: March 1, 2013.

¹¹ Established in 1993, the SIP, which has been re-named the Communist Party of Turkey, was a Soviet style Stalinist Party. In the national elections of 1999, SIP received 0.12 % of the general votes. SIP, gained 0.19% and 0.21 of the general votes in 1999 and 2002.

¹² Unfortunately there are no independent social science studies on the post-coup revolutionary organizations of Turkey. However, there are a number of dissertations written by Turkish and American police and soldier academics on DHKP-C/ Dev-Sol. These dissertations mostly focus on understanding the recruitment processes of DHKP-C and why it became a popular organization. Police interest in DHKP-C/Dev-Sol can be seen as evidence of the threatening power of the organization. See: Teymur 2007, Sevinc 2008, Yayla 2001, Cline 2004, Ekici 2009, Kenville 2000.

¹³ DHKP-C continued similar assassinations throughout the 1990s. The most recent violent action of the organization was a suicide bombing attack to the US embassy in February 1, 2013 to protest the imprisonment of the members of Progressivist Lawyer's Association who are accused of being members of the DHKP-C. Information available at: <http://www.todayszaman.com/news-305927-leftist-terrorist-group-dhkpc-claims-us-embassy-bombing.html> Last accessed: March 1, 2013.

¹⁴ Information available at: <http://almanakturkiye.wordpress.com/1990-2/> Last accessed: March 1, 2013. For a detailed list of the DHKP-C's targets see Kenville (2000), a dissertation submitted to US Naval Academy.

¹⁵ It is impossible to determine the exact number of the members and supporters of these organizations. However, participation in May Day celebrations give us clues about the approximate number of the supporters of such organizations. For instance, in 1996, around 70 thousand demonstrators participated in the May Day demonstration in Istanbul. This demonstration was probably the most crowded May Day demonstration took place after the coup. DHKP-C was among the most crowded groups in the May Day demonstrations with the participation of no less than a thousand people. After 1996, the participation to May Day demonstrations gradually declined. See: <http://www.sendika.org/2002/05/1-mayisin-ardindan/> Last accessed March 1, 2013. Further evidence that these organizations did not remain marginal in the 1990s was the popular support *Grup Yorum*, a branch of DHKP-C, gained. *Grup Yorum*, with some of their songs being directly based on the personal stories of DHKP-C militants, was among the top selling bands throughout the 1990s (*Milliyet*, July 02, 1999). *Grup Yorum* has released 20 albums since 1987. The band's members have frequently been arrested, imprisoned, and tortured. Their albums have been confiscated and their concerts raided. The group's 25th anniversary concert on June 12, 2010, which drew an audience of fifty-five thousand people, proves that the band's political music still holds popular appeal in Turkey.

¹⁶ In 1996, political prisoners started a hunger strike in Turkey. While 12 prisoners died due to starvation, 14 prisoners, four of whom were beaten to death, were killed by the state's security operations. *Annual Report of TIHV*, 1996.

¹⁷ Among the most common slogans of the 1990s were: We will drown fascism in the very blood it shed, The murderer state will pay the price, Mothers' anger will strangle the murderers. These slogans, I believe, hint at the people's desire for revenge.

¹⁸ During the mid-1990s, DHKP-C, even published its own constitution to be used after the revolution, titled "Constitution of the People."

¹⁹ The story of *Gudem*, a pro-Kurdish journal, offers an example of the control over and pressure on the Kurdish press in the 1990s. The emergency governor banned the distribution of the journal in the region. More than 75 of *Gudem*'s employees were killed from 1992 to 1994. Newspaper sellers and distributors joined reporters on the list of those murdered for doing their jobs. In 1993, Turkey was number one on the list of journalists killed by country. Information available at: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=press-tells-the-story-of-kurdish-journalists-in-19908217s-2010-10-13>. Last accessed: September 25, 2012. See also Cemal 2003, on the control over the Turkish mainstream media on Kurdish issue.

²⁰ Hayri Kozakcioglu, who is responsible of large scale human rights abuses both in the Kurdish region and in Western Turkey, was found dead at his home in May 22, 2013 soon after the negotiation process between the PKK and the government started (*Hurriyet*, May 23, 2013). Kozakcioglu's testimonies would be crucial in throwing light on the disappearances extralegal killings and political murders took place during the 1990s.

²¹ I believe that the prevention of human encounters between potentially threatening populations and others are key to the Turkish elites' ruling strategies. While examining the archival material in THIV, I came across the cases of two men, around the age of 70, who applied to THIV after being severely tortured by the police on different occasions. What made me read the details of their case was that both of the men were from villages in Western Turkey. Having encountered only a very few torture cases of those who are originally from Western Turkey, I read the details of the case. These two men were tortured in different times by the police after having seen with a Kurdish man. They were both accused of helping the PKK and their torturers warned them that they must not make friends with the Kurds again.

²² Halime was a member of the Socialist Power Party between the years 1995 and 2002.

²³ This system lists extensive personal data such as information on arrest warrants, previous arrests, foreign travel restrictions, avoidance of military service, desertion, refusal to pay military tax and delays paying tax. Served sentences are as a rule removed from this information system and entered onto the database of criminal records (Gonen 2011). Moreover, as Inanici (2011) explains “subjective notes of the police about the persons, which do not have any legal value, are also recorded in the GBT. Even though a person is acquitted of a political crime, the record is never erased from the database. What is more, intelligence is also recorded even on people about whom no criminal investigation exists ” (238).

²⁴ Here she makes a word play. The slang way to say to kill in Turkey is *gebertmek*, which sounds similar to GBT.

²⁵ Tunceli is the official new of Dersim. In 1935, a law was passed to change and Turkify the name of Dersim (Ayata and Hakyemez 2013).

²⁶ The lyrics of the song written by the socialist band *Ozgurluk Turkusu* [The song of freedom], after the death of Sevcan, a seven years old kid, who was run over by a panzer in Armutlu, an Alevi populated neighborhood, in 1992.

²⁷ The young man’s left leg was injured severely and he cannot walk properly anymore. For the injury report see Turkish Human Right Association, Dossier Number 2006/378. The young man later left for Germany under the status of political refugee.

²⁸ Information available at: http://www.evrensel.net/v2/haber.php?haber_id=1486 Last accessed: May 25, 2013.

²⁹ In Turkey, public transportation is free of charge for the police.

³⁰ *Milliyet*, March 15, 1995

³¹ The story of this headline, for instance, is about the demonstration organized in Mustafa Kemal Mahallesi in Umraniye to protest the Gazi events. This demonstration resulted in the fatal shooting of five people from Mustafa Kemal Mahallesi at the hands of the police.

³² It is not possible to understand whether or not a person is Alevi by looking at her/his physical appearance. However, as I argue in a theoretical discussion with reference to Tugal (2011) Turkey’s Sunni working classes gradually turned to moderate Islam or right-wing politics after the coup of 1980s.

CHAPTER V

The police, gangs and revolutionary organizations: A furious competition over law and territorial control

The French philosopher Badiou (2002), in his article on the global war on terror, pointing out that the war on terror has replaced traditional wars waged between the states, asks “indeed, how does one declare war on a few delinquent civilians or fanatical bombers or on a group of anarchists?” (23). The declaration of war against a small group of individuals might seem irrational at first. There is a significant difference between the power and destructive capacities of well-organized armies and police institutions and a group of people —no matter how well armed. This chapter, focusing on the processes and relations that turned around three hundred young people from Narova into terrorist suspects and convicts by the late 2000s, demonstrates that there is indeed a rationale behind the declaration of war against a group of people/terrorists. The chapter, first of all, critically engages with the questions: Who are rendered as terrorists/enemies of the state? What kind of practices and performances challenge the political power associated with the state? How do the ruling elites who continuously attempt to make and preserve their own law (cf. Benjamin 1978) respond to the populations who challenge and threaten the power associated with the state?

In order to seek answers to the questions above I focus on the criminalization of Narova youth by the early 2000s and on the anti-crime campaigns developed by Narova’s politically engaged youth. Demonstrating that criminalization of Narova has been perceived by its residents as a project developed by the state in order to depoliticize and even destruct the community in Narova, I ask: What happens if the state is perceived as an enemy actively engages in projects to destruct the community? After discussing how the

state is perceived as contra the community and pointing out historical Alevi fears informative of such perceptions, I illustrate Narova youth's attempts to establish law and order in the neighborhood. I argue that such attempts threatening the police power in the neighborhood turned some Narova youth into the rivals of the state and/or great criminals.

As Girard (1987) theorizes, the relationship of rivalry produces the mimetic desire to be like the rival. This is precisely why for Girard violence is always reciprocal. Accordingly, this chapter illustrates that the relation of rivalry between Narova youth and the state's security forces does not only originate from Narova youths' attempts to establish their own law and order but also from their mimetic performances of police violence. Anthropologists, inspired by Girard's notion of mimesis, which induces the subject to take the same posture toward the object as the rival takes toward the object, underline the mimetic relation between the representatives of the state and their enemies and/or rivals (Feldman 1991, Taussig 1993, Zilberg 2009, Robben 2010). As Girard (1987) underlines, the mimetic relation is not a mere imitation of the performances of the rival/Other. Mimesis or mimetic rivalry goes beyond mere imitation; it is "an assimilation into one another, a circulation between selves and anti-selves feeding of each other's correspondence" (Zilberg 2007:65). I argue that police violence, which often operates through intimate encounters — as in the case of torture, house raids, body searches— is productive of mimetic desire among the targeted populations to manifest their own power. This chapter also illustrates the ways in which young radicals of Narova imitate policing practices and display their power through mimetic performances of sovereignty/violence. I argue that through the mimetic desire provoked by the continuous cycles of police violence, some Narova youth engaged in a relationship of mimetic rivalry with the police in which their desire became one and the same with that of the police —to manifest and hold power. In other words, the relationship of rivalry between the police and Narova

youth contributes to the assimilation of the police as the external object within the revolutionary self.

Criminalization of poverty

The early 2000s marks a beginning of a new era in Narova, and indeed, in all of the other working-class neighborhoods of Istanbul. By the early 2000s, working-class youth began to engage in criminal activities such as pickpocketing, dealing drugs, prostitution. In addition, in this process, marijuana and other drugs, especially ecstasy and speed, became readily available in working-class neighborhoods in especially the big cities of Turkey (Yonucu 2005, Yonucu 2008, Gonen 2013). Scholars of crime and criminalization underline the connections between neoliberal reorganization of society and the criminalization of poverty (Bauman 2013, Bourgois 2003a, Comaroff and Comaroff 2007, Gonen 2013, Hiemstra 2010, Parenti 1999, Wacquant 2009). Wacquant (2001) argues that a significant portion of the working class “has been rendered redundant and composes ‘an absolute surplus population’ that will probably never find work again,” with reference to this societal reorganization (1642). In this process, crime has emerged as a substitute for welfare provisions and as an alternative income-generating activity for those who have become “permanently redundant” (Auyero 2000, Bourgois 1989, 2003b, Bauman 1997, 2005, Giroux 2008, Parenti 1999, Wacquant 1999).

Furthermore, as scholars of crime and criminalization underline criminalization of poverty is a technique of governance, a means of “social control” (cf. Parenti 1999) that contributes to the creation and containment of dispossessed and “dishonored” groups. Parenti (1999), for instance, points out that criminalization and criminal justice are “about managing and containing the new surplus populations created by neoliberal economic policies, even when the populations are not in rebellion” (15). He argues that street crime

in the USA has been as effective as the state terror in Central America in preventing activism. As crime frightens the people away from streets and puts the disadvantage, hence potentially resistant groups behind the bars, it emerges as a significant obstacle in front of political mobilization. In a similar vein, Comaroff and Comaroff (2006), Garland (2001), Siegel (1998), Mauer (1997) and Wacquant (2001) underline the depoliticization effect of crime and discourses about crime. In their works focused on different parts of the world, they all illustrate that crime displaces attention away from the material and social effects of neoliberalism and “translate[s] a *political* issue into a criminal one” (Hall et al. 1978:224, emphasis in original).

Although Turkey’s neoliberalization process began right after the coup of 1980, the criminalization of poverty did not begin in earnest until the 2000s. Until then, familial and neighborhood solidarity networks had prevented the working class from falling into absolute poverty, and thus from engaging in crime (Pinarcioglu and Isik 2001, Bugra and Keyder 2006, Yilmaz 2008). Today, however, we are witnessing the emergence of a new kind of poverty in Turkey (Keyder and Adaman 2006, Bugra 2007, Keyder and Bugra 2008, Yilmaz 2008). Studies on urban poverty in Turkey illustrate that the social solidarity networks that had been bridging the gap left by a lack of state welfare provisions, are weakening (Yilmaz 2006, Keyder and Bugra 2008). As working-class neighborhoods transform into places of poverty, working-class youth begin to engage in underground activities to generate income (Yonucu 2008, Gonen and Yonucu 2011). The drug trade and the emergence of petty crime gangs in working-class neighborhoods, which are by and large divided according to ethnic, religious and regional homeland ties, have affected these various neighborhoods in distinct ways (see Gonen 2011, Yonucu 2008). This chapter focuses on the ways in which crime has transformed social relations in Narova, a

neighborhood where the state is experienced as an “alien body”—an enemy poised to attack the people.

Anti-crime campaigns in Narova: Contra the state

Scholars of crime and criminalization demonstrate that facts and fictions about crime provoke fear and give rise to demands for more security (Buur and Jensen 2004, Comaroff and Comaroff 2004, 2006a, 2006b, Hansen 2006, Parenti 2000, Lemanski 2004, Low 2006, Luur 2006). These studies illustrate two main tendencies in citizens’ demand for security. First, the increase in police control, which includes civilians’ collaborations with the police (Cattelino 2004, Comaroff and Comaroff 2007, 2009, Hansen 2006, Sagar 2005). Second, development of alternative security systems in the absence of police who provide security. Comaroff and Comaroff (2004), in their article on the circulation of crime discourses in South Africa, illustrate that such discourses give rise to fears that in turn create a demand for more police. The demand for more police, contributing to the expansion of police power legitimizes police or civilian violence against criminals and allegedly potential criminals (Parenti 2000, Gonen and Yonucu 2011, Hansen 2006). Cattelino (2004), for instance, in her work on civilian crime prevention campaigns in Canada, illustrates that these campaigns giving rise to police-citizen collaborations contribute to a division between legitimate and illegitimate citizens. They effectively turn the underprivileged populations, such as Blacks, immigrants, and working classes into potential criminals.

Goldstein (2003), in her work on everyday life in a Brazilian favela, illustrates that the poorest populations “who thoroughly reject a corrupt police force [...] seek some organized entity that can administer ‘justice’ in the local arena” (207). Similarly, Leeds (1996), Shirley (1990) and Buur (2006) in their works on poor, marginalized communities, point to the need for an alternative justice system among communities who perceive the

police as incompetent and corrupt. These scholars demonstrate that in the absence of the police that gain the trust of the community local gangs or vigilantes meet the demands for more security. Hence, according to Leeds (1996), in providing an alternative system of justice, these groups create a “parallel state.” Agreeing with Leeds’s concept of “parallel state” Goldstein (2003), too, demonstrates that local gangs “perform internal security and crime control functions” within the favelas in the “absence of the state” (209).

However, the case of Narova does not exactly fit it these two tendencies. As one might imagine, in Narova where the state is experienced as an “alien body,” the residents of Narova did not ask for more police. They, rather, attempted to create their own local crime control and punishment processes. However, their attempts to bring justice in the neighborhood were not a parallel state activity but instead ran *contra* the state. Instead of filling the space left empty by the police, they themselves appropriated the role of the police by actively attempting to exclude the police from the neighborhood, hence by deactivating police power in the neighborhood. As I will illustrate below, such attempts lead to hundreds of Narova youths’ legal accusations with the “crime against the state.”

Narova residents did not immediately run their activities contra the state. Instead, believing that the police would not do their job to control crime in the neighborhood and that the police collaborate with criminals, they organized parallel state/policing activities. These activities were first initiated by the Neighborhood Beautification Association (NBA). As I discussed in the Introduction, Narova is home to various revolutionary organizations. While these organizations sometimes collaborate with each other, they do not always get along well, and each organizes its own campaigns and activities separately. Accordingly, during the early and mid-2000s, a number of anti-crime/anti-degeneration activities were simultaneously organized by different neighborhood organizations. While some of these attempted to provide alternative justice and/or security by relatively

peaceful methods, others appropriated more violent techniques. This chapter focuses on the crime prevention activities of the Neighborhood Beautification Association (NBA), which appropriated relatively peaceful methods. I focus on the NBA, because the organization's activities gained it wide public support within the neighborhood. It was also one of the main targets of gang and police violence. Besides, I only had the access to the court documents of the NBA members who have been tried as terrorist suspects. During the course of my fieldwork, the lawyers of other associations' were put in prison with the accusations of supporting a terrorist organization. I, therefore, could not reach to their court documents. In addition, in order not to be seen associated with such groups I avoided talking to them in-depth.

Establishing the Neighborhood Beautification Association

In 2003, around twenty middle-aged residents of Narova initiated an anti-degeneration campaign. While most of those involved had no political attachments at the time, they had all been members of different revolutionary groups during the 1970s. In order to trace the history of the campaign I met Hasan, who had been an active participant in its initial stages. Thinking that it might be helpful for me to talk to more than one person about the process, Hasan also invited his three friends Bilal, Ercan and Huseyin, all of whom had also taken active part in the campaign. I listened their story at a coffee house owned by Hasan. While having our teas, Hasan explained how and why he and his friends decided to do something about local crime:

I came to this neighborhood when I was 18. We built this neighborhood all together back then. And, of course, we want to protect what we have built collectively. [...] All of a sudden at the beginning of the 2000s several new coffee and gambling houses were opened here. These new coffee houses were not ordinary coffee houses. Gambling and other sorts of dark things were going on in these places. Also, some guys from outside the neighborhood began to sell drugs here. We realized that our youths were also hanging out with them, using, and even selling drugs. My friends and I gathered together, talked about the situation and came to the conclusion that if

we did not do anything to stop it, it would become worse. The neighborhood would become uninhabitable and our youth would end up either in prisons or hospitals. We wanted to protect our neighborhood and our youth.

Hasan and his friends thought that by developing a crime prevention campaign within a legal association, their activities would be considered legal and legitimate both by neighborhood residents and the police. They thus established the association in 2003 and organized within it. In 2003, the NBA had around 50 members. Two years later, this number reached 500. The NBA became the most acknowledged center of crime prevention activities in the neighborhood until its eleven most active members were imprisoned as terror suspects after an October 2007 operation. The association is still open today. It has 45 members and is no longer active.

As an initial step in their crime prevention activities, Hasan and the other members of the NBA identified the drug addicts in the neighborhood. As community relations and communal ties are still strong in the neighborhood, this was not difficult for them. They identified 127 habitual users,¹ most of whom were from families who had lived in the neighborhood for more than 20 years. These users, as Hasan recalled, were between the ages of 13 and 22, mostly male. NBA members visited their homes, talked to their parents and tried to convince them to stop using. They also elicited the support of psychologists working at the neighborhood community center, who in turn offered free rehabilitation to some. With the help of doctors working at the community center, five drug addicts have received addiction treatment. Although Hasan and his friends repeatedly argued that they believed in employing peaceful methods in their fight against gangs and criminals, they also felt that force was sometimes necessary. Ercan, a 57-year-old man who also worked with the NBA in 2003, explained how and why this was so:

I remember times when we went out with our sticks to chase glue sniffers. We would start to chase a glue sniffer with, let's say, 6 people and then on our way tens of other people would join us. Those days were great. We were determined to protect our neighborhood. The neighborhood was acting all together. We even came to the point

that we learned the gang members' code names. I'll never forget; there was one dealer called "Lanky." We went to his house with the neighborhood headman and a group of people from the neighborhood. We knocked on the door. Someone opened it and we asked if Lanky or whomever was there. He yelled at us and said that he was not there. In a few seconds, Lanky showed up. He looked at us and asked us very aggressively what we wanted from him. The headman started to say, "What you do is not good, it is a crime" and so on. Lanky began yelling at him. I got mad. I pushed him towards the wall, punched him in the face. I said, "Listen! We are all behind our headman. You cannot yell at him. Those who built this neighborhood will not abandon it. We will not let you stay here. He then totally changed his tone and started to ask in an apologetic manner, "What did I do? What crime did I commit?"

According to Ercan, it would have been impossible for them to scare gang members and criminals without showing force. It was also understood they had the collective power necessary to use force against them. However, they emphasized that apart from beating the most notorious criminals, whom the residents often complained about, they did not use any other kinds of force. My interviews with other people about NBA activities also testify to their words. As the NBA began to appear as a force going head-to-head with gang members, it also began to receive more support from residents. NBA members, in addition to going out and talking to the parents of youth involved in crime and to gang members about leaving their neighborhood, also made a list of coffee houses, casinos and pubs.² They went to these places to make speeches about the importance of protecting their community and the possible dangers of gambling and drug consumption. According to Hasan and his friends, as the NBA gained public support, the gangs began to see them as a threat and challenged the organization to stop them "with their bullets."

In order to raise public awareness, NBA members organized a concert in December 2003 with the participation of around 1500–2000 people. During the concert, gunmen fired randomly inside the coffee house owned by Hasan, then head of the NBA. Luckily nobody died. The next week, a group of masked men raided the coffee house at night, ransacking the empty establishment. A couple of days after that, Hasan's wife was shot in the leg while walking down the street.

Like many Narova residents, Hasan did not expect justice from the law/state. After listening to numerous stories about how the police saw Narova residents as “enemies,” and after realizing that the police represent the potentiality for violence in the neighborhood, I knew that I would sound too naive if I asked Hasan whether they received any help from the police. Nevertheless, after I listened to the story, I asked what the police did in response to the assaults and shots. With a very familiar look in his face—a look I knew from other Narova residents—he responded, “The police? What do you expect from them? They came to the coffee house, they took notes and nothing happened.” Neither those who raided the coffee house nor those who shot his wife have been found. This event was interpreted in the neighborhood as evidence of police collaboration with the gangs and reinforced the perceptions that the police collaborate with the gangs.

The state against the community and the fear of eradication

Studies on crime and poverty illustrate that poor populations tend to complain about systems of police corruption and of corrupt officers who work in collaboration with criminals (Andving and Fjeldstad 2008, Bordua and Reiss 1966, Davis 2006, Dixon 1999, Kashem 2005). As Goldstein (2003) shows, Rio’s poor favela dwellers, for instance, use the term “police bandit” to highlight the “corrupt nature of the police” (189). When I did fieldwork in the Istanbul district of Zeytinburnu in 2003, most of the drug addicts and small-scale dealers I talked to told me the police were involved in the process. During the initial stages of this project, as I was searching for a field site and before I had settled on Narova, I visited Hekimbasi—a mostly Sunni Turkish-populated working-class neighborhood where residents also testified to the police’s connection with criminal gangs. They complained about police corruption and interpreted their involvement as a method for officers to make money. Narova residents, however, do not perceive the relationship

between the police and gangs simply as police corruption, or as wrongdoings of individual corrupt police officers. For them, the introduction of gangs to the neighborhood was part of a state project, which was planned in advance, with the aim of criminalizing Narova youth in order to depoliticize them and cause the neighborhood to deteriorate. As I will illustrate below, nearly all of the Narova residents I talked to were convinced that the state was solely responsible for the crime in the neighborhood.

As I have argued above, criminalization of potentially resistant groups is used as a technique of governance in many different parts of the world. In Turkey, too, as I have illustrated in my previous research, criminalization of working class youth effectively contributes to their depoliticization (Yonucu 2008, Gonen and Yonucu 2011). In a neighborhood like Narova, which is under constant police surveillance, the presence of gangs and crime illustrate that the police are indifferent to the non-political crime. At the initial stages of my fieldwork, I conduct an informal interview with one of the highest rank police officers in Istanbul. This police officer told me “central locations and middle and upper class neighborhoods of Istanbul are now free of crime. Because we succeeded in constraining crime in *varos*.” It was not the reduction of the crime rates³ but “constraining the crime in *varos*” was a success for him. During the interview, I understood that his concern was not to end crime in *varos*, but to prevent potential uprisings in these neighborhoods. Because, after telling me that the crime was constrained in *varos*, he asked me if there would be uprisings in Istanbul’s *varoses* as there were in the suburbs of Paris and London. He later added that the police organization should develop preventive techniques to prevent possible uprisings.

In Narova, as well as in other Alevi-populated neighborhoods and towns, crime prevention campaigns organized by citizens, some of whom are members of various revolutionary organizations, are called “campaign(s) against degeneration.” This rhetoric

implies an authentic cultural identity that is under threat of eradication. The assumption of an authentic culture and the fear of its eradication become clearer in the title of a campaign organized in Narova in 2005: “Defend Your Own Culture Against the Attack of Degeneration.” The title not only hints at a fear that their authentic cultural identity might be lost, but also considers “degeneration” to be an active agent, an external force that *attacks* culture, and hence also the community, with purpose. For Narova residents the agent of degeneration was the state.

For instance, when I asked Hasan about whether he had received any help from the police after the assault, Ercan jumped into the conversation, saying,

State forces are on the inside of this thing! They allow gangs to sell drugs in the neighborhood to end [oppositional] politics in here. All these gang members are directed here by the state. They are trained by the state. They act according to state initiative. Go, go talk to the people in Gazi, Okmeydani, Nurtepe.⁴ You will see the same thing there too.⁵

Bilal continued,

The state plans this whole thing. They act according to a plan. The state is not the old state any more. They do not only use force anymore. In the past, they used to terrorize. Now they also criminalize. They’ve gotten smarter. They could not end the resistance by using force. Now they want to degenerate our youth. This is their new method to keep them away from politics. A very well planned method!

Nodding at Bilal’s words above, Huseyin, with visible anger on his face, said,

Very true! What he says is so true. You know what, this is a one-sided operation led by the state. Since 1980, they have wanted to integrate the people into the capitalist system. This is the politics of the state. They wanted to create a new generation that cuts ties with its past, who neglects its own culture, who is alienated from its essence.

All three of the people I cited above imagine the state as an enemy that actively wages war against Narova residents, as well as the residents of other Alevi- and leftist-populated neighborhoods. I heard similar opinions from multiple people of various age groups around the neighborhood. At first I thought this was a connection primarily drawn by the neighborhood’s more politicized residents, who had witnessed the violent

atmosphere of the 1980 coup era and of the 1990s. After all, although Hasan and his friends had not been members of any political organizations for at least 15 years, they still define themselves as socialists. However, after I talked to more people, I realized that Hasan's and his friends were representative of the views of Narova's Alevi residents in general. For instance, before I talked to Ceylan, an 18-year old girl who is uninterested in politics, I would never have guessed that she would make a similar association. I knew Ceylan fairly well from the education co-op at which I was teaching. She used to come in every day to study while she was preparing for the university entrance exams. Before the interview, I saw her nearly every day for three months, during which period we chatted about her exams, what to expect from life at university, etc. Unlike some of the other young people at the co-op, I had never heard her talk about politics. I decided to invite her for an interview to see how young people who were less politically engaged thought about crime in the neighborhood. The following is an excerpt from our interview:

Me: I heard that there used to be a lot of gangs in this neighborhood in the past. Do you remember those times?

Ceylan: Yes, I do. It is the police's business. The crime incidents have increased since the police began to come to the neighborhood. Before then there were no thievery, for instance.

Me: How so?

Ceylan: Let me give you an example. One day, a friend of mine was going to the market. He saw a policeman smoking pot on the way to the market around the high school. He could not say a word. How could he? If he had, they would have taken him into custody. Another friend of mine also told me that once a police officer stopped him on the street and told him, "You are from Narova. I have an offer for you. I will give you a monthly salary and you will tell me what has been going on in your neighborhood. I will save your future. My friend, of course, refused his offer. There are plenty other events like this.

Me: What has thievery to do with the police?

Ceylan: We have two relatives who have grocery stores in this neighborhood. They both got robbed. You know that the police do not like us. We do not like them either. They want to harm us. The police give orders to the thieves. They tell them to go and rob our places. I witnessed such things many times. In Armutlu, for instance, a policeman stopped a young woman walking and harassed her. I saw it with my own

eyes. But what can you do? You cannot file a complaint against him. *How can you complain about the state to the state?* (Emphasis mine).

Ceylan could simply have interpreted these incidents as the wrongdoings of individual corrupt police officers, or as examples of police transgressions of the law. However, in order to persuade me that the police are responsible for the crime in the neighborhood, in addition to giving examples about police misconduct, she also asserted that the police did not like them (the residents of Narova). When I asked her why this was the case, her response was that

[t]hey do not like us because there are a lot of revolutionary organizations here. It is the same in places like Okmeydani, Gazi or Armutlu. They do not like the people there either. These neighborhoods are all the same. There are revolutionary organizations in these neighborhoods. They do not like the revolutionaries.

Me: There is one more commonality among these neighborhoods. All of them are Alevi-populated neighborhoods. Do you think it has anything to do with their Alevi identity?

Ceylan: I guess so. I guess it is mostly the Alevis who get organized in this country because Alevis are oppressed by the state. In general Kurds and Alevis get organized. Take Sunnis for instance. They are not oppressed. Why would they be oppressed? Take the Maras massacre: it was against Alevis. Take the Sivas massacre: it was also against Alevis. There have been Alevi massacres continuously. In order to stand against the police, they have to get organized. I think this is the main reason why Alevis are organized.

For Ceylan, the police/the state do not like the neighborhood because of the revolutionary organizations based there. Although she does not directly relate the state's assumed enmity against Narova residents with the neighborhood's Alevi identity, she associates Alevis with revolutionary organizations. Moreover, she defines Alevi people as oppressed, and as the "victims" of continuous massacres. This definition, as well as her argument about the police's dislike of revolutionaries, I believe, explain why residents of Narova, perceive corrupt police behavior as evidence of a state project to destroy their community. That is to say, the perceived collaboration of some police with gangs, the ongoing police violence against political activists, the police's indifference to the gang attacks against

NBA activists, all of these keep memories of violence against the Alevi and socialist communities fresh in people's minds.

As Aretxaga (1995), with reference to Lacan explains, “subjectivity is always grounded in history—a history that includes the scars left by forgotten episodes and hidden discourses as much as conscious narratives.” (125). In her analysis of the “dirty protest” of Irish political prisoners, she demonstrates that the protest was informed by and organized against the historical British attempts to erase the Irish political identity. Similarly, we cannot think political subjectivities of Narova residents independent of the massacres and pogroms against Alevis. As members of Alevi community, I believe the Narova residents' recent fear of their communities' eradication is provoked by more deeply rooted historical fear of eradication informed by a series of violent attacks against the Alevi community. Hence, memories of police violence that has taken place in the neighborhood since its establishment are taken together with the history of Alevi massacres to be symptomatically⁶ expressed in the concept of “degeneration,” which contributes to perceptions of the state as an enemy with the intent to harm the community at large. There is a significant difference between perceiving police collaboration with criminal gangs as corruption and perceiving it as a planned state project against the community. My question here is, what happens when the state is perceived as an aggressive enemy, which actively develops projects against the community?

As the police's indifference to and alleged collaboration with the criminal gangs evoked the historical fear of eradication, the Alevi habitus of local law-making and law-maintaining practices entered the scene. These practices, as I discuss in Chapter II, aimed at providing law and order within the community not only by making local law but also by not letting the law enforcers and the security forces of the Ottoman and Turkish central authorities to intervene in the community. As Narova residents began to be

convinced that the crime is a state technique, the Narova youth began to attempt to exclude the police from the neighborhood while they were trying to provide law and order.

The second phase of the NBA: The NBA as the local justice provider

The violent event I described above marked the first break in the history of the NBA. Hasan and several friends who were all around the same age, and with whom he had initiated the campaigns against degeneration in the neighborhood, began to feel powerless against the criminal gangs and the police. Feeling that their lives to be under threat, decided to stop working through the association. Ercan explained his decision:

There have always been people in this neighborhood who want to stop the wrongdoings here, but those they are fighting against are not disorganized. They are not simple gangs, not simply drug users. They are as organized as the people gathered at Silivri⁷ prison right now. They work as systematically and with as much organization as those at Silivri. You have to take them seriously. There is a big force behind them.

Huseyin continued,

He is right! It became impossible to do any good in this neighborhood. Whenever you want to do something the state is always there against you! I got tired ... Look at the people of our age in this neighborhood. They have all become alcoholics now. They are all depressed. Even I drink. How can I not drink, my beautiful sister? How can you stand it without drinking?

After hearing his words, I remembered how much the idealistic young activists in the neighborhood criticized the middle-aged, former activists for their excessive alcohol consumption. And after speaking with some more middle-aged men d who also feel there is no longer a place for activism in Narova, Huseyin's words echoed in my mind: "How can I not drink, my beautiful sister? How can you stand it without drinking?"

As the interview transcriptions above illustrate, in Narova, the series of violent attacks that formed the turning point in the NBA's organizational history reinforced existing perceptions of the state as an all-powerful enemy with dark, underground

connections. Hasan and his friends, like many other Narova residents who used to be members of various political organizations and who are now cynical about political activism, felt weak against this omnipotence and abandoned their efforts with the NBA. Younger members, however, especially those who are politically engaged, interpreted the assaults as confirmation of their influence and were encouraged to continue their fight against “degeneration.”

After Hasan and his friends left the association, Halil and his friend from the Socialist Party of the Oppressed⁸ began to take a more active role in the association. In line with the original NBA policies they continued to a) talk and try to convince drug users to stop, b) work in collaboration with the community center to provide free rehabilitation for drug addicts, c) talk to neighborhood casino owners to try to convince them to close their businesses, d) talk to the people who frequent coffee houses in which gambling was allowed and warn them not to gamble there, e) organize community meetings, f) organize rallies against crime and g) beat up drug dealers in an effort to curb this activity in the neighborhood.

NBA members did not use guns in their attempts to resolve what they saw as criminal issues in the neighborhood. However, as all nine members I spoke with argued, in some cases they “had to” use force in their fight against criminals. For instance, if they saw a drug dealer in the neighborhood, 10 or 15 young guys would spontaneously gather and beat him. The NBA also became a center where residents would go to complain about domestic violence, sexual harassment and mistreatment by their bosses. In such cases NBA members would also go to talk with the violent partner in a threatening tone, beat up the sexual harasser, organize a rally against sexual harassment and so forth.

As I have argued above, the NBA is no longer active and no campaign against “degeneration” in the neighborhood currently exists. Nevertheless, I witnessed people still

going to NBA members to elicit their help with the daily injustices they faced in the local arena. The following event sheds some insight on how NBA members went about resolving some of these daily injustices. On a summer night in 2011, I was sitting and chatting with a group of young people at the neighborhood park. A young woman came over and wanted to talk privately with Kazim, who is an NBA member. Kazim left the group and talked with the young woman for around half an hour. After the conversation, he came back, telling me and two other young women in the group, “Girls, I am sorry, we have to leave you alone here. I will take the guys with me. We will be back soon.” Without a word, and without asking Kazim what had happened, all of the three young men in the group stood up and left. It seemed to me they are accustomed to such events. After they left, I looked with confusion to the women. Esma, who also once worked at the NBA, detected my confusion and explained, “Don’t worry Deniz! They are probably going to beat someone up then come back. Some pervert probably harassed that girl. We will learn about it when they come back.”

Esma’s guess was right. A man had followed the girl and said nasty things behind her as she walked through a nearby neighborhood. The girl, scared and angry, went to Kazim and his friends and asked them to “punish” him. Kazim, having known her for years and also feeling responsible for protecting the women of the neighborhood, did not hesitate to jump to her aid. As he told me later, they found the guy in a coffee house and asked him to step outside. At first, he refused, but relented upon their insistence. In front of the coffee house, Kazim told him that they heard about what he had done to the girl. The guy reportedly panicked and denied the accusation. Kazim told him they heard about everything that happened in and around the neighborhood, and that no crime would be left unpunished. He added, “I also told him that if he even dared to look at a woman on the

street again we would not be as kind with him next time.” After Kazim finished speaking, one of his friends punched the guy in the face and they left.

In addition to “punishing” the “criminals,” the NBA also organized social activities. In 2005, with the call of the NBA, 12 local organizations gathered in support of a platform they called “Defend Your Culture Against Degeneration.” This platform, according to NBA members and some other Narova residents, was an attempt to strengthen the culture of solidarity in the neighborhood. As part of the effort, football tournaments and concerts were organized to get youth involved in social rather than criminal activities. In 2006, the NBA also began to publish a weekly newspaper that organized essay and drawing competitions for youth and children. Members also tried to attract attention to what had been going on in the neighborhood by way of press releases and public discussions held at their office.⁹

As the activities organized by the association gained public sympathy in Narova, young and active members of the NBA became a very popular in the neighborhood. Halil especially, who became head of the NBA in 2005, also became a very respected figure in the neighborhood. Halil and his friends’ success in mobilizing residents around the organization, and their determination to end crime in the neighborhood, even attracted the attention of the national media. One national newspaper, for instance, printed a one-page interview with Halil and his friends about the NBA in November 2005.¹⁰ The article presented the organization’s members as local agents of justice.

As the NBA continued to gain popular support, it became the center of police attention. Dilek and Hakan, 18-year-old twins who used to live on the same street as the NBA office, told me how difficult it was for them to live there when they were small kids:

When we used to live there our parents didn’t allow us to go out and play on the street, because there were always some men either standing or walking in front of the NBA office. They were undercover policemen. You could never guess what might happen. You would see the men walking up and down all day long and hear the noise of their transmitters. They were constantly watching the people who went there and

spying on them. Once—I remember we were 12 or 13, something like that—I saw tens of policemen shattering the association's windows with their batons. They even beat up a young guy from the NBA in front of the association and left him all bloodied. He was lying there in a pool of blood for 10 or 15 minutes. I guess people were scared to go out and help him. Finally some women from the building across from ours, went down and took him upstairs to their house to help him.

NBA members also told me that undercover policemen watched them every day, and that on several occasions they had found surveillance cameras hidden in buildings across from theirs. According to what a number of members told me, they had been threatened by undercover policemen, who told them that if they did not stop working for the NBA they would be imprisoned. Some members were also asked to collaborate with the police and spy on the members of illegal revolutionary organizations and their activities.¹¹

In addition to the police repression, the NBA also continued to be targeted by local gangs. On July 15, 2005 as Halil and three friends were walking down a neighborhood street, a group of young men stopped them and warned them not to intervene in their business at the risk of being shot. Halil and his friends told them that they would continue to work against the gangs. In response, one of the young men pulled out a gun, while another took out his knife. Halil and his friends held their ground. "We had gotten so used to seeing guns in the neighborhood back then," Halil told me during our conversation about his experiences in the NBA, "when they took the gun and the knife out we just stood still. We did not run away." Halil and two of his friends were shot and the fourth man was stabbed.¹² That night, in protest, militants from several illegal groups took over the streets, setting garbage cans ablaze, throwing Molotov cocktails and chanting, "The gangs will be accountable to the people!" Hundreds of policemen poured into the neighborhood, which according to what witnesses told me, turned into a war zone. After spending three months in the hospital, Halil and his friends went back to work on their crime prevention campaign.

However, the gangs continued to threaten the NBA members. On February 25, 2006, three members, including Halil, along with two attorneys from the *Progressivist Lawyers Association*¹³ and two representatives of the *Human Rights Association*, went to talk to the police chief in charge of the neighborhood about the threats they had been receiving from gang members. He explained the reason they asked for the police chief's help this way:

We began to get scared. Those guys could have killed us. We went to the police because what we were doing in the neighborhood was completely legal. What we did, whom we were going to talk to, the campaigns we organized, were all totally public. We did not have anything to hide. We wanted to show the police that we were confident enough to go and talk to them. We were confident because we had the support of the people in Narova.

Although Halil believed their actions to have been completely legal,¹⁴ and that they had nothing to hide from the police, it is nevertheless telling that they did not go to see the police chief on their own, but escorted by lawyers and human rights activists. Hence, while on the one hand they needed assistance from the police against the gangs, they also needed assistance against the police. As Halil put it,

We knew that the police did not like us. We, therefore, wanted to show them we had the support of lawyers and human rights activists. We knew that they saw us as a threat against their power in the neighborhood. We had control of the neighborhood. We were not allowing gangs into the neighborhood. And we also had control over the illegal groups. The revolutionary youth respected us. If we told them they went too far they listened to us. They were more considerate the next time. We could control them. The police knew it. That police chief himself had called me several times and told me to ask the kids [the young illegally operating revolutionaries] to stop their demonstrations.

As his words demonstrate, Halil was aware that public sympathy for his organization constituted a challenge to police power in the neighborhood. He also predicted that the police would take some action to recapture this power. He believed, however, that as long as he did not transgress the law, he would be under its protection. Having been raised in Narova, he also knew the police to employ extra-legal methods against activists. In such cases, human rights advocates assist local activists. So, by

bringing them along, I believe Halil to have been sending the police a message that if his visit resulted in any threats of violence, such indiscretions would be made public.

Two month after his visit, gang members once again stabbed Halil. On his third day in the hospital, he was taken into custody. He spent that day in a cell. The following day, he was taken to court, accused of being a member of a terrorist organization. He was released the same day. Undaunted, he continued to work in the NBA until being arrested and imprisoned as a terror suspect in October 2007. In their attempts to maintain order in the neighborhood, which came in the form of threatening criminal gangs and containing some illegal organizations, NBA members earned the sympathy of residents but emerged as a rival to police power in the neighborhood.

Revolutionaries as lawmakers

While the NBA's active members aimed to establish law and order in the neighborhood through the active participation of residents, and with minimal force, many other small-scale legal and illegal groups in the neighborhood were on the sidelines advocating the use of force as a crime-fighting measure. Although some of these groups remained marginal, they all had their own supporters. Studies on political violence illustrate that paramilitary forces, such as revolutionary militants and pro-independence guerrillas, mimetically reproduce performances of state sovereignty (Scheper-Hughes and Bourgois 2004, Aretxaga 2000, 2005, Buur 2006, Feldman 1991). Buur (2006), for instance, in his work in local vigilante groups in South Africa, demonstrates that while "punishing" the criminals, local vigilantes applied the forms of torture learned in the exile camps of the apartheid regime or in apartheid's torture chambers. Bourgois 2001, in his work in political violence in El Salvador, argues that "[t]hrough an almost mimetic process, the government's brutality was transposed into the guerilla's organizational structures and internal relations"

(11). In a similar vein, Zilberg (2007) illustrate mirroring between gangsters and guerillas in El Salvador.

As I discuss in the Introduction, Feldman and Aretxaga, from a Lacanian perspective, argue that such mimetic practices are due to a mirror relation between police and soldiers and those who fight against them. For Aretxaga (2003) both nationalist violence and state violence are produced not arbitrarily, but “through what Derrida (1994: 97) has called a ‘phantomatic mode of production’: a structure and modus operandi that produces both the state and its threatening Other as fetishes of each other” (402). The relationship of rivalry among the militants and the state security forces, by reminding the lack/the *jouissance* stolen them by the Other, continuously produce the desire to cover over the lack. The all-powerful Other, as is in the cases of state security forces of repressive authoritarian regimes, is the very productive of the desire to manifest power/violence. The forceful presence of the police forces by threatening the very presence/being of Narova residence appearing as the Other, who stole their *jouissance*, produce the desire among the young radicals of Narova to steal the *jouissance* of the Other by imitating its forceful techniques. Accordingly, as I illustrate below, various youth groups in Narova, by checking identities of the people at Narova streets, stopping and frisking the potential gang members, carrying guns or beating up the criminals mimetically reproduce police practices. Through these practices they enjoy becoming-like the Other, a sovereign-like being who threatens the very being of the Other. These practices, contributing to the assimilation of the police into the revolutionary, turn Narova’s young radicals into illegal police.

i) Public displays of “revolutionary” punishment and extra-legal custody

In addition to the NBA, the other legal association that once fought crime in the neighborhood was the Basic Rights Association (THD) known as the legal organization of

the DHKP/C. Different than the NBA, the THD is not a neighborhood based association. It works in several other Alevi populated neighborhoods. As I argued in the previous chapter, the police had been constituting and manifesting their sovereignty in the neighborhood through displays of power and violence throughout the 1990s. The members of the THD¹⁵ made similar public displays of power in the neighborhood. In contrast to the NBA, they applied physical punishments against the criminals and suspects. They had adopted the technique of publicly exhibiting the “punishments” they dealt out to those whom they determined to be “guilty.” They beat drug dealers, drug users, pimps, and thieves, they shaved prostitutes’ hair, etc., and they put the beaten and/or tortured bodies of their victims on display around the neighborhoods in which they operated. THD members, for instance, after beating one drug dealer, took him to the main street of the neighborhood. There, they handed him a microphone and forced him to apologize to the people of Narova and assure them he would not be involved in such activities again. In order to further publicize their acts of punishment, the THD members also share such activities with the public on their monthly journals. Also, similar to the extra-legal custodies of the 1990s, THD members forcibly kept some alleged criminals in secret locations for “interrogation.” They used the term “custody” in their journals.

In their journals, the THD members argue that the decisions regarding the punishments are taken in the “people’s court.” However, unlike the people’s courts of the 1970s, their courts are not held publicly, but secretly. I do not have enough information regarding the operation process of their courts, however, according to what I heard from other residents, when residents apply to THD for help, the THD members establish an interrogation committee among themselves. After the interrogation, the punishment committee, again consisted of the members of the THD, decides on the punishment method and punishes the alleged criminals accordingly. Although many Narova residents

dislike the THD's techniques, there are also some people who consider the THD as the protector of the community. Journalist Ahmet Sik, in his article series on THD activities in Okmeydani, illustrates that there were a number of parents in Okmeydani who were grateful to the THD as the THD members helped their children to quit drug consumption.

Buur (2006), in his work on a local vigilante group in South Africa, demonstrates that these groups, in spite of the public support they gained, apply punishments away from the public gaze. For Buur, this is because the vigilante groups do not want to have eyewitnesses in the case of a complaint against them. This shows that these local groups, which like the Narova youth challenge the authority of the police, were afraid of the police and law. The example of the THD, however, demonstrates that the THD members were either not afraid of the police, or they wanted to be seen so. I did not have the chance to talk to them about this issue. However, drawing on another example I can confidently claim that their argument would be that they were not afraid of being publicly seen. I will explain why I think so.

During my fieldwork there had been several occasions when I saw and heard some youth groups chanting the names of the illegal revolutionary organizations, which are legally considered as terrorist organizations. Such chants usually took place during the demonstrations in Narova. In a country like Turkey, where any one can easily be accused of being a member of a terrorist organization, I found it very interesting to witness that these young people were publicly declaring their sympathy for "terrorist organizations." When I asked a number of Narova youth why they risked themselves by chanting the names of illegal organizations, they all argued that it was because they were considered as legitimate by the residents. Hence, they were sure or they appeared to be sure that no one would witness against them. However, the neighborhood is under constant surveillance of undercover policemen and police cameras. I asked them what they thought about chanting

while the undercover policemen and police cameras are in the neighborhood. All of them, in different times, replied “if the police want to accuse you with membership to a terrorist organization they would do it anyways. They need no evidence.” This clearly indicates that they did not believe that the police obey the law and that they thought that the juridical processes operate according to the police’s decision. Furthermore, they also wanted to demonstrate that they were not afraid of the police and their law, that they can freely show their side. Hence, the demonstrations in the neighborhood were the stages where the young radicals show how brave they were and that they were proud of their organizations. The presence of the police, which provokes fear and intimidation in the neighborhood, produces the desire among the young radicals show their bravery. One of the ways to show bravery in a neighborhood like Narova is to act like the police, the source of fear and intimidation.

Here, we can turn back to the case of the THD. We can argue that the THD members, also not trusting the law, probably, believed that if the police wanted to put them behind the bars they would do it anyways, regardless of evidences. But more importantly, their public punishments were also means to demonstrate and construct their power in the neighborhood. As I discuss in the previous chapter with reference to Foucault’s *Discipline and Punishment*, public executions demonstrate the “unrestrained presence of the sovereign. The public execution did not reestablish justice; it reactivated power” (49). Hence, we can argue that the THD’s publicly displayed punishments are indicative of the THD’s concern with demonstrating and establishing their sovereign power in the neighborhood. In a friendly chat with a NBA member about the activities of the THD, referring to THD’s punishment techniques the NBA member said “ such a state [Turkish state] would have such a revolutionary organization. What do you expect? While fighting against another they became the same.” This sentence clearly underlines the

mimetic rivalry between the THD members and the police forces, which contributes to the assimilation of the police as the rival, into the identity of revolutionary self of the THD members.

ii) Identity-checking revolutionaries, neighborhood patrolling

Identity checks and neighborhood patrolling were additional ways in which some revolutionary groups attempted to activate their power. The identity checks, as I illustrate in Chapter IV, are indeed familiar to the residents from the 1990s. Narova's young radicals identity checking activities are also very similar to what took place in the 1990s. According to residents, in the years between 2005 and 2007, at least three or four different illegal revolutionary groups could be found conducting armed neighborhood street patrols on any given night. Additionally, rumors circulated among residents that some revolutionary groups were collecting taxes from criminal organizations. Young revolutionaries from various organizations, bearing guns and masks,¹⁶ took it upon themselves to check the identity cards of people and/or collect tax from them on the streets, at coffee houses and in casinos. As I discuss in the previous chapter, identity checks with masks and guns are indeed performative acts of sovereignty. The mask and the gun, granting a psychology of impunity (and anonymity), provides one the freedom to transgress the law, the mask situates one as above the law. Besides, identity checks and neighborhood patrolling are performances of control over the population in a specific territory. S/he who checks the identities decides who is to be kept in and who is not, who is an enemy and who is not or who is to be punished and who is not.

The identity checks endangered the police's physical presence in the neighborhood and challenged their authority. Caner, who was involved in anti-crime campaigns in mid-2000s and who later had to flee to Germany after he learnt that he is sentenced to 35 years of

imprisonment told me in our interview in Germany that they were particularly searching for the police, and were trying to turn the neighborhood into a police-free zone.

Caner: Police was the source of all sorts of ugliness and dirtiness in the neighborhood. We wanted to free the neighborhood of the police. In those years [mid 2000s] there were a lot of strangers in the neighborhood. Many of them were gang members and police. In order to keep the neighborhood clean we had to push them away. At nights the young guys were walking with their guns and stopping the strangers and investigating them.

Me: Investigating?

Caner: You know, the questions such as “where do you live? Why they did you come to the neighborhood? Are you working with the police? If we found them suspicious, we would threaten them.

Me: What do you mean by threaten?

Caner: You know, we would tell them if we see them in the neighborhood again we would beat them, things like that. Once I remember, the guys stopped an undercover police. He got so scared. He was in his car. We stopped the car and asked his identity card. He did not want to give it. He was so scared, he left his car in the neighborhood and he ran away.

In turn, undercover officers who are discovered by revolutionaries are expelled and warned not to come back. As many residents explained it, the police lost control of the neighborhood in 2005 and 2006. A friend of mine interviewed a policeman, who had previously worked undercover in Narova, and his testimony supported the residents’ version of events; he confirmed that police feared entering the neighborhood during the mid-2000s. The youth groups’ actions continued until the “terror operations” started soon after the amendment of anti-terror law in 2006. One of the first operations was organized against the NBA with the participation of two thousand heavily armed policemen, accompanied by several military tanks in October 2007. This operation was followed by several other police operations — targeted the youth from various organizations— who were actively engaged in crime prevention campaigns. Although, crime prevention activities of Narova youth have by and large ended, a similar struggle among the police,

criminals and gang members continue in many other Alevi populated neighborhoods of Istanbul.

Conclusion

This chapter illustrates the processes and relations that turned a significant number of Narova youth into terrorist suspects and convicts. I argued that criminalization of the neighborhood, provoking the historical Alevi fears that the state is developing projects to eradicate their community, gave rise to projects to protect the neighborhood against the state. In their attempts to protect their neighborhood, Narova youth became rivals of the state/police in the neighborhood. The rivals of the state, as I explained earlier, are those who can control the territories and the people in them by using violence legitimately. The rivals reveal the areas that escaped from the control of the fantasy state. Narova youth's attempts to provide law and order in the neighborhood, through use of force, is a manifestation of their rivalry with the state, a manifestation of their attempts to declare themselves as the "state."

Newman (2004) and Badiou (2002) point out that that the very word terror was historically used during the state formation process in post-Revolutionary France in the 1790s. They hint at the structural relation between terror and state formation. Newman (2004) argues "the Terror of the French Republic was a way of masking or covering over the symbolically empty place of power that was left in the wake of the Ancien Régime" (569). The non-state terrorist exposing the empty place of power is the rival of the state. Accordingly, it is no coincidence that the young people of Narova, who exposed the areas "escaped" from the state's monopoly of violence, are accused of being terrorist. Newman also notes that terror embodies the fantasy of "a social whole, of a society reconciled with itself" (572). Modern state formations grounded informed by the fantasy of terror always

assumes an enemy. As this chapter illustrates, the relationship enmity is an intimate one. The relationship enmity, and its various manifestations in the form of violence, is productive of mimetic desire. Accordingly, this chapter also discusses Narova's young radicals' mimetic desire to be as powerful as the state. I argued that in a neighborhood where performative displays of police violence are taken as evidence of the sovereign presence of the state, young radicals expected to acquire power by mimetically reproducing these performances. Violence is not only a call for submission but is also a call for counter-violence. It is, indeed, a call for a vicious cycle of violence. The decades long police violence in Narova have been productive of the desire among Narova youth to be as powerful as the police and to defeat the enemy/Other police who stole the *jouissance* of the community.¹⁷ This desire manifested itself in counter-violent activities of Narova youth urged the police to declare their own sovereignty/violence. As I illustrate in the following chapter, this time the performance of police violence moving away from the streets, has been staged in the courtrooms.

Notes to Chapter V

¹ Including users of soft drugs like marijuana.

² According to their list there were 213 coffee houses in the neighborhood, eight casinos and 27 pubs.

³ The police institution does not share crime rates with researchers. At the initial stages of my fieldwork I wanted to conduct police ethnography. Although, I quickly got special permission to conduct participant observation within the police institute, which includes participation in their professional meeting, when I requested information about the crime rates, I was told that that might be an issue and that they had to make investigation about me to see if I am connected to a terrorist organization or not. Explaining me that such an investigation would take months, the police officers suggested me not to request data about crime rates.

⁴ Gazi, Okmeydani, and Nurtepe are all Alevi-populated neighborhoods.

⁵ For a description of the introduction of a small-scale drug gang to Gazi neighborhood, and of the Gazi residents' fight with the drug dealers, see the special report in the journal *Nokta*, November 2, 2006.

⁶ I employ symptom in here as a trace of the repressed history. As Žižek (1989) argues, "in working through the symptom we are precisely bringing about the past, producing the symbolic reality of the past" (157).

⁷ The military generals and some other alleged members of Ergenekon are being held at Silivri prison.

⁸ The Socialist Party of the Oppressed is a legal socialist party. It is also known as the legal wing of the MLKP.

⁹ The video records of these public discussions, which take place with the participation of around one hundred people, are still available on YouTube. In order to protect the privacy of the members I will not cite the URL.

¹⁰ Here again, in order to protect the privacy of the individuals I will not cite the newspaper.

¹¹ The press releases regarding the police threats towards the NBA members are still available online on Youtube. In order to protect the privacy of the individuals I will not cite the URL.

¹² The event was covered by the socialist media.

¹³ The lawyers who went to the police office to support the NBA members are now in prison as terror suspects.

¹⁴ Punching people is not actually a legal activity in Turkey. When Halil says that what they were doing was legal he means that their activities are all public and that unlike what the members of illegal revolutionary organizations do they do not use guns. Plus, as Halil and many other Narova residents told me, Halil was never involved in an act of beating someone.

¹⁵ As the THD was under constant police surveillance due to its association with the DHKP/C, I preferred not to interview its members. I, therefore, could not reach a number of THD members in the neighborhood. Although THD is not active nowadays in Narova, it is still active in many other Alevi neighborhoods.

¹⁶ There was even a group called *The Masked Five*, which was named after a mainstream Turkish movie. In spite of the ambitious acts of the group members (i.e. neighborhood patrolling) the name of the group also indicates the naivety of its members.

CHAPTER VI

Before The Anti-Terror Law, In the Justice Palace¹

“The state is the life itself”
Idris Naim Sahin, Ministry of Interior.

Date: January 12, 2011. Place: The 9th Specially Authorized Assize Court² (SAAC) in Istanbul. It is Halil’s turn to defend himself before the law for the 10th time. “Do you know the story of the rabbit and zebra?” asks Halil to the judge. The judge, hidden behind the screen of his laptop, raises his head and looks at him confusedly. Talking very fast, Halil tells the story of the rabbit and the zebra to the judge. “Once upon a time, in a very big forest, a monkey sitting in a tree sees a rabbit running very fast. She yells after the rabbit and asks ‘Hey rabbit! Rabbit! Why are you running so fast? What happened?’ The rabbit yells back at the monkey while was still running: ‘I heard that the hunters are around and shooting all the zebras.’ The monkey gets confused. ‘But you are not a zebra,’ she says. ‘Why are you still running away?’ The rabbit, without stopping, replies ‘Ah! By the time I proved that I am not a zebra, I would already be dead.’” Halil continued without a breath, “Yes, Mr. Judge,” he said, “I was not as smart as the rabbit.” The judge, getting angry, yells at him in a patronizing tone. “What are you saying? Be respectful! We are in a courtroom! Behave yourself!”

After the terror operation against the NBA in 2007 Halil spent four-and-a-half years in a cell with his two friends due to accusations of beating a policeman and seizing his gun upon the orders of the terrorist organization, the Marxist-Leninist Communist Party (MLKP). He has been on pretrial release since April 2012. He might go back to prison and stay there for approximately twenty more years. I personally met Halil and his friends a month after their release. Before I met them, I heard their names many times from the

neighborhood residents. Because of their relatively peaceful fight against the gangs, Halil and his friends are highly respected figures in the neighborhood. Numerous people told me about their contribution to the decline in drug consumption and in the number of the drug gangs as well as the closing of gambling houses in the neighborhood. Halil's choice to explain his situation before the law with reference to a fable reveals much about the current condition of law and (in)justice in Turkey. As I mentioned in the previous chapter, today there are around three hundred young people in Narova behind the bars with the accusations of "crime against the state." There are also hundreds of other young people from various Alevi populated neighborhoods who are in prison due to same accusations. While I was writing this dissertation several waves of terror operations took place in Istanbul's Alevi populated neighborhoods. The targets of these operations were the youth who were engaged in fight against crime in their neighborhoods.

This chapter, focusing on the case of Halil, illustrates the operation of the anti-terror law on the ground. First of all, analyzing the current anti-terror law of Turkey, I illustrate how the current government manifests its totalitarian tendencies within the legal sphere. I demonstrate that the anti-terror trials operate as the showground of the police's sovereign power within the juridical field. Second, drawing on the court documents, interviews with Halil and his friends and their attorneys and my observations during the MGD trials, I analyze Halil's and his friends' case. I argue that the current anti-terror law creates a group of "undesirables," categories of people outside the protection of the law (cf. Arendt 1973) by depriving the terrorist suspects and terrorist convicts of their juridical rights. Finally, pointing out the current governments' aspiration for total domination and continuous cycles of violence in Narova residents' lives, I illustrate how this aspiration manifested in the courtrooms contributes to the perceptions of injustice and violence as an ill-fate among those who were subjected to political violence.

The new anti-terror law and Turkey's ever increasing numbers of "terrorists"

Turkey is among the countries which has the highest number of those convicted as terrorists. According to research conducted by the *Associated Press* in 66 countries, which accounts for 70 percent of the world's population, Turkey alone accounted for a third of all convictions, with a total of 12,897 in 2011.³ The drastic increase in the number of terror convicts after the amendment of the anti-terror law is noteworthy. Although in 2005 there were only 273 terror convicts, the number of convictions for terrorist activity reached 6,325 in 2009 and this number has doubled since the big wave of the *Union of Communities in Kurdistan (KCK)*⁴ operations began in 2009⁵ (Insel 2012: 34). This sharp increase in the number of terror convicts, is, of course, directly related to the changes made in the anti-terror law, which initially was introduced in 1991.

Wide and vague definitions of terrorism

Focusing on the case of the USA, Badiou (2002), points out the vague and elusive essence of the war on terror. For Badiou, it is precisely the vagueness of the category of the terror/ist opens up a space for the "American imperial power." In a similar fashion, analyses of anti-terror laws of different countries, such as of the UK, the USA, Germany, Canada and Australia, underline the wide and vague definitions of terrorism in terror legislation and demonstrate how this vagueness leading suspension of the most basic human rights and civil liberties and contribute to the re-emergence of anti-democratic, authoritarian state formations (Golder and Williams 2007, Pue 2003, Roach and Trotter 2005, Safferling 2004, Zoller 2004). In Turkey, too, the anti-terror law, which considers all kinds of political crimes as acts of terrorism (Ertekin 2011), contains a very wide and vague definition of terrorism. Article 1 of the law defines terrorism as

any kind of act done by one or more persons belonging to an organization with the aim of changing the characteristics of the Republic as specified in the Constitution, its political, legal, social, secular and economic system, damaging the indivisible unity of the State with its territory and nation, endangering the existence of the Turkish State and Republic, weakening or destroying or seizing the authority of the State, eliminating fundamental rights and freedoms, or damaging the internal and external security of the State, public order or general health by means of pressure, force and violence, terror, intimidation, oppression or threat.

Legal scholars have criticized the vague phrases in this definition -- e.g., “pressure,” “terror,” “intimidation,” “weakening the authority of the state,” “general health” -- for paving the way for arbitrary applications of the law, and hence for human rights violations (Ertekin 2011). Given the broad and nebulous definition of terrorism, the profile of terror convicts is also varied. Those categorized under the abstract notion of terrorist include: former state officials such as generals, police officers who are critical of the current government, Kurdish people who are organized in an illegal or even legal pro-Kurdish organization, people who are supposedly sympathetic with the pro-Kurdish movement, socialists, human rights activists, human rights lawyers, and critical journalists and academics who have access to a wide public audience. Under such a loosely defined definition of terrorist, some of the accusations seem arbitrary, if not completely illogical, and give the impression that anyone who is critical of the government can be a terrorist suspect. For instance, a former police chief, Hanefi Avcı, notorious for using torture against socialists, has been under arrest since 2010. He was arrested not for being a torturer but for allegedly being a member of a radical Marxist organization, *Revolutionary Headquarters* (DK).⁶ A renowned left-wing journalist, Ahmet Sik was arrested for writing a book at the bequest of the nationalist right-wing organization, *Ergenekon*. The book, which criticized the Turkish police organization, had not even been published yet. And, sadly, the new anti-terror law knows no age limit. There are hundreds of detained Kurdish kids who are accused of being members of the PKK for merely throwing stones at police cars.⁷

The arbitrary accusations effectively provoke the fear that anyone, who is critical of the government, can potentially go behind the bars. Accordingly, Istanbul Bar Association organized a series of workshops titled “*Usual Suspects*,” to inform the public about their rights and what to do in the case of a police raid.⁸ I illustrate below, the police, indeed, selectively approach to those who are critical of the government. The main targets of the terror operations are those who challenge the authority of the government on the ground. In other words, the terrorist suspects become suspects due to their practices that actually or potentially challenge the authority of current government.

When intentions get into the law

The new anti- terror law is distinctive in its focus on the intentions and alleged aims of the people/suspects (Inanici 2011b, Aydin 2012, Ertekin 2011). The law defines over sixty additional crimes, including even sexual harassment and prostitution, as terrorist acts⁹ if they are “committed with the *intention* of terror” (emphasis mine)¹⁰ (Inanici 2011a, Aydin 2012). By introducing the concept of *intention* as a potential act of terrorism, Article 6 of the Law declares that something as subjective as intention is a valid criteria for prosecution. Accordingly, Kanar (2011), the former head of the *Human Rights Association of Turkey* and a prominent attorney working on political crime/terrorism cases, argues that since the amendment of the anti-terror law interrogations and hearings concentrate on revealing the (terrorist) intentions of suspects.

At first sight it seems that by doing so, the law attributes the judicial authorities, such as judges and prosecutors, a god like character —as for believers it is only the God who has access to the persons’ inner world. However, actually it is not the judicial authorities, who were attributed with God like power, but the police. The emphasis on the intentions actually limits the judges’ and prosecutors’ participation in the decision making

process in terror cases. Taking the intentions as valid criteria for prosecution eliminates the need for material evidence of an overt act against the defendant. This is mainly because terrorist suspects have found suspicious according to the information gathered by the undercover police. The undercover police usually gather information about the suspects by following them daily bases and listening to their phone conversations. In the absence of the need for material evidence, the undercover police's opinions become the sole evidence against the accused.

The operation of terror trials full with the examples of decision made according to the police's opinions about the suspects. For instance, although in Turkey the prosecutors have to collect evidence both against and for the suspect, Inanici (2011)' s investigation of indictments of the prosecutors shows that some indictments are the exact copies of the police's written accusations and even have the same typos (21). The case of Necati Abay, the spokesperson of the *Solidarity Platform of the Imprisoned Journalists*, who is sentenced to eighteen years and nine months for being a member of the MLKP, also offers a perfect example of this logic in action. Necati Abay has officially been sentenced according to his alleged intentions. With the absence of any material evidence against Abay, the judge in charge of the case, relying solely on the police accusations, argued "there was no evidence other than conviction" and passed a guilty verdict based on Abay's alleged intentions.¹¹ Halil's case is yet another example to this logic, which, as I explain below, is familiar to us from Arendt's analysis of totalitarian regime. Moreover, as it has been revealed recently the juridical field in Turkey is increasingly turned into a field dominated by pro-government judges and prosecutors. Over the last couple of years, a significant number of oppositional judges and prosecutors, who served in the big cities, were appointed to small provincial towns away from the center (Ertekin 2013). The story of a young woman judge candidate who recently committed suicide also revealed how the

AKP cadres have dominated the juridical field. This young candidate, although she completed the necessary procedures to be appointed as a judge, was not appointed for three years due to her critical stance against the AKP. Her friends' attitude after the candidate's suicide was even more revealing of the current situation within the juridical field. A colleague of the candidate interviewed with a journalist with a mask covering her face and told her that she, herself, and the judge-candidate's other colleagues could not go to her funeral. They were afraid that if they were seen in her funeral, they would be punished and appointed to a small town by the government.

Twin Track System of (in)Justice

As is underlined by critical legal scholars, the feelings of emergency provoked by the fantasies and/or fears of terror have given rise to re-emergence of a twin-track criminal justice system (Campbell and Connolly 2006 and 2007, Guardiola-Rivera 2005, Hussain 2007, Neocleous 2007). This system divides the population into two as citizens and potential terrorists who are subjected to different criminal laws and regulations. By replicating over sixty crimes defined in the Turkish Penal Code (TPC) and by imposing heavier sentences and longer imprisonment for the very same crimes, the new anti-terror law creates a twin track and/or "fragmented" (cf. Walker 2002) criminal justice system. In addition, due to terror regulations terrorist suspects do not possess the rights granted to the other criminal suspects. For instance, they cannot have more than three attorneys although regular suspects can. They can be detained for ten years without trial whereas the longest duration of pre-trial detention is a year and six months for regular suspects.¹² Needless to say, ten years pre-trial detention already operates as a heavy punishment. Hence, in addition to being legally defined as a terrorist, being a suspect itself becomes a crime.

Arendt (1973) arguing that punishment for *possible crime* is intrinsic in the totalitarian rule demonstrates a similar logic in the totalitarian regimes. She says

Totalitarianism's central assumption that everything is possible thus leads through consistent elimination of all factual restraints to the absurd and terrible consequence that every crime the rulers can conceive of must be punished, regardless of whether or not it has been committed.

This logic is best expressed in the words of the Minister of Interior, Idris Naim Sahin,'s words: "The best crime is the one which has not been committed yet." By counting an uncommitted act of terror as a crime, Sahin defines the potential to act to be equivalent to the act itself. Sahin's words were, indeed, a warning against the public. By warning the "potential criminals," in this case all citizens, that they can be punished before they commit crime, Sahin, announced that the polices' eyes are on the people, and that they follow them so closely that they can catch them before they turn their criminal aims into action. In another speech, Sahin specifically pointed out where one has to stay away in order not to become a terrorist suspect; he defined the universities, associations, trade unions and NGOs as the "backyards of terrorism."¹³

Soon after Sahin's speech several terror operations took place in the trade unions, bar association and universities. As result, several hundreds trade union activists, attorneys, students and professors, most of whom were allegedly associated with the pro-Kurdish movement, were put behind the bars as terrorist convicts in 2012. According to Sahin's and/or the government's logic, in spite of the "warnings" if one still continues to work as an activist, it is a transgression —transgression of the unwritten law of the (totalitarian) government. Although it is completely legal work in a trade union or in a labor organization, after the Ministry of Interior's words, it became a transgression that deserves to be punished. This unlawful law has been applied within the sphere of the law, in the juridical field.

One of the biggest consequences of this transgression of this unwritten law is not being recognized as a citizen granted juridical rights. As Arendt (1973) argues, “first essential step on the road to total domination is to kill the juridical person in man” (447). For her, one of the ways to kill the juridical person is to put certain categories of people outside the protection of the law. What we have recently witnessed in Turkey is very similar to Arendt’s analysis of the Nazi Germany. The anti-terror law producing a category of the terrorist deprives certain populations of their juridical rights. As I demonstrate in the case of Halil, the anti-terror law appears as an overwhelming power by not recognizing the suspects as juridical person.

The killing of the juridical person

One of the most influential ways of depriving the suspects of their juridical rights is denying the suspects’ right to defense. The anti-terror law in Turkey strictly limits the suspects’ right to defense. First of all, pursuant to Article 10 of the anti-terror law, attorneys’ communications with defendants may be restricted if there is a suspicion that the attorney is also connected to the terrorist organization. According to the same article, a judge may order a partial or total restriction of access to the prosecution file by the defense attorney and he/she without any justification may prohibit defense attorneys’ attendance in the hearings. To make things worse, defending a member of a terrorist organization considered as an evidence for being a member of terrorist organization. Accordingly, there are hundreds of lawyers are in prison as terrorist suspects or terrorist convicts. Furthermore, the hearings in the SAACs are carried out with the participation of several suspects charged under the same or similar case. Due to the time pressure, the collective hearings do not permit all attorneys who want to speak to have the opportunity to address the court. Accordingly, all sixteen of the defense attorneys I interviewed admitted that

they had already given up seeking justice. As Kozakcioglu, the head of the *Progressivist Attorneys Association (CHD)*,¹⁴ argues that under such unfriendly conditions, the defense attorneys primarily serve as the witnesses to the injustice their clients face and as recorders of the current conditions in Turkey (Kozagacli and Bora 2012: 38). Kozakcioglu, himself, along with eight other members of the *CHD*, were arrested as terrorist suspects in January 20, 2013 and they are still in prison as of September 2013.

The Case of Halil: a Beaten Policeman and a Captured Police Gun

As I discuss above the protagonist of the anti-terror law is the undercover police. In Halil and his friends' case, too, undercover police appear as the prominent figure of the case from the very beginning. Halil and his friends case starts with the capturing of an undercover policeman's gun in the neighborhood in October 8, 2007. According to the Halil and his friends' the policeman later told them that the police had set up the whole event to arrest Halil and his friends. Either the police organized the event or not, it still is symptomatic of what was happening in the neighborhood then. Either the youth seized the police's gun on purpose or not, as I discuss in the pervious chapter, the police's power, which is symbolized in his gun, was already deactivated in Narova when the event took place.

Haydar, the young man who admitted to the court that it was he who had beaten the policeman, described the event as follows:

I was in the neighborhood all day and saw a guy following me wherever I went. He was staring at me indignantly. Since we had gotten used to the threats of the gangs in the neighborhood, I thought the guy was a gang member. I got pissed at one point and went and asked him who he was and why he was staring at me. He responded that it was not my business to ask him who he is. I got mad and started punching him. His transmitter fell off and I realized that he was a policeman. It all happened spontaneously.

The event happened on the main street of the neighborhood. As Haydar started to beat the policeman, a crowd gathered to watch what was happening. According to Haydar's testimony, some people among the crowd joined in the fight to protect him after another undercover policeman intervened, trying to protect his colleague. In the courtroom, the beaten policeman and all of the other five witnesses, agreed on Haydar's narration about how the fight started. However, the policeman claimed that the other people did not spontaneously join the quarrel, but that it was planned in advance. Contrary to this argument, in his testimony, the policeman also stated that after his transmitter fell down, he heard Haydar shouting with surprise, saying "Oh! He's a policeman!"¹⁵ As Haydar's and the other suspects' attorneys argued during the proceedings, this statement, indeed, proves that the assault was not organized in advance, as the official written police accusation suggests, but happened spontaneously. However, that morning at around 1:30, seventeen people, all of whom were active members of the NBA and also members of the Socialist Party of the Oppressed, were taken into custody accused of participating in a terrorist act. Two thousand heavily armed policemen, accompanied by several military tanks, participated in the operation.¹⁶ They raided several houses and internet cafes to look for the people on their list, all of them were members of the NBA. The massive participation of police forces was so effective that it was still fresh in the neighborhood residents' memories in 2011. A middle-aged resident's words illustrate how powerless the residents felt vis-a-vis thousands of police forces:

All the street entrances were occupied by thousands of policemen. It was as if there was a war. There were tanks. The helicopters were flying above. They came here to terrorize the neighborhood. And, we couldn't do anything. We simply watched those kids being put in the police cars. Can you believe that? In a neighborhood like this... It made it clear that the revolutionaries do not have any power in this neighborhood anymore. It is so sad. We just watched them being taken away. We could not protect them.¹⁷

Seven of the people who were taken into custody were released after three days and ten of them were arrested accused of organizing a terrorist act against the police. Four of those who were arrested and tried spent four-and-a-half years in a high security prison and the rest are still in prison as pre-trial detainees. What counted as a terrorist act in this case was beating a policeman by allegedly following the orders of a terrorist organization. Besides, other active NBA members, who were not found during the operation, were later arrested with allegations of membership to a terrorist organization.

Halil and the nine other people arrested and taken to trial for participating in this allegedly organized police beating are, in legal terminology, accused of: 1) *Being members of an illegal armed organization*, the MLKP¹⁸ 2) *Qualified plunder*¹⁹ a) by use of weapons, b) by taking advantage of terror action carried out by the existing and allegedly existing criminal groups, c) by securing benefits for criminal groups. 3) *Resisting public officials and preventing them from performing their duty* a) by using force or threat against a public officer to prevent him from performing a duty,²⁰ b) commission of this offense against judicial authorities,²¹ c) commission of this offense by concealing one's identity, or jointly by more than one person,²² d) commission of offense by use of a weapon or taking advantage of terrorist activities of organized criminal groups.²³ 4) *Felonious injury* a) by causing harm or pain to another person or executing an act which could lead to deterioration of health or mental abilities of others,²⁴ b) by virtue of public office.²⁵ As is the case in the other terrorism cases, the individual files are combined and the hearings take place collectively with the participation of all suspects and defense attorneys.

The undercover policemen's testimonies as the sole crime evidence

The sole evidence of Halil's participation in the event are police testimonies along with the testimony of a witness who first testified against him but later, in the very first

court hearing, argued that his testimony was taken under psychological torture and thus did not represent the truth. According to this witness, the police officers at the police office told him that they are going to harm his seven month-old baby unless he testifies against Halil and his friends. Neither this witness's accusation did put the allegedly torturer policemen in a suspicious position before the law nor the two witness policemen's inconsistent testimonies led the judge question the reliability of the police testimonies. The two witness policemen, in their first written testimony dated October 8, 2007, argued that Halil was among the crowd and was hitting one of them. However, almost a year later, in the hearing dated July 24, 2008, one of the policemen argued that he knew Halil from his activities at the NBA and that he was not sure if Halil actually hit him. The second policeman did not change his testimony. These two policemen, also, gave contradictory testimonies about other suspects' presence during the assault. However, both of them agreed on seven of the suspects' membership in the MLKP.

The only evidence submitted regarding the accusation about Halil being a member of a terrorist organization is a CD promoting the MLKP, which police claimed was found in his apartment when his house was raided. According to Article 17 of *Judicial Preventive Search Regulations*, policemen have to copy hash values (digital signature) of the CDs they want to collect as evidence and make the people in the house sign a document testifying that the CD was found at the home. However, the policemen did not copy hash values of the CD and they did not ask anyone in the household to sign a document indicating that the CD was found in the home. Hence, this evidence is legally invalid. In response to Halil's attorney's question to the police about whether there were any other items of evidence of Halil's membership in a terrorist organization, the policeman replied that he has been following Halil for sometime and that there were no other items of evidence other than seeing Halil in public demonstrations and at press

releases. According to him, such participation proved that he was a member of a terrorist organization.²⁶

According to Halil's self-defense given at the first hearing on April 4, 2008, six months after his arrest, he left his job at 5 pm, took the bus and went home, which was ten minutes driving distance from the main street where the event took place. Before going home, he stopped by his friend's apartment for 10 minutes. His friend also confirmed that he stopped by at her place around 7 p.m. and his parents also testified that he was at home with them by 7.30. In addition, none of the five witnesses who were watching the beating claimed to have seen Halil there. More importantly, the route he followed after he left work and his exact location at the time of the event was revealed after his attorney documented Halil's cell-phone conversations on the day of the event. His GSM records show that he was nowhere near the event. However, the documentation of the GSM records was not taken into consideration by the judge.

The police testimonies were not only privileged over the testimonies of the witnesses and material evidence but also over the conclusions of the two prosecutors of the case. Although Turkey's current legal system is notorious for its biased prosecutors in terrorism cases,²⁷ the first and the second prosecutors of the case concluded, "there is not sufficient information and evidence for the accusation that the assault was planned in advance by a terrorist organization and that the assaulters acted on behalf of a terrorist organization" on February 4, 2010 and on May 3, 2011 respectively.²⁸ Both of them urged the judge to drop the charges of terrorism against Halil and his friends. However, after the prosecutors announced their conclusions, both of the hearings ended with the judge's verdict that there was a "cause for strong suspicion of guilt" and a "well-grounded suspicion of evasion of justice and tampering with the evidence."²⁹ As in all of the previous cases, the judge did not state the grounds for suspicion justifying his decision.³⁰

The judge's negligence of prosecutors' decisions, material evidences, witnesses' testimonies give the impression that he does not think that he needs to obey the legal procedures. According to the suspects and their families, the judge is simply following the orders of the police who want the suspects to be punished. Indeed, we can argue that judge's attitudes throughout the trials can be read as an open manifestation of his decisions' reliance on the police's judgments about the case and his taking the side of the police no matter how unreliable they sound.

The examples above are only a few examples from this case replete with procedural violations. Indeed, it is not even necessary to analyze the court documents to see how the law functions by suspending itself. Participation in only one of the hearings would be sufficient to see how the law abandons itself in the courtroom. Only two consecutive hearings of the case took place over the course of my fieldwork in the neighborhood. In the following section drawing mainly on my observations of the trial, which took place on December 11, 2012, I illustrate the operation of the trial.

The Trial in the (justice) palace

The trial took place in *Caglayan Adalet Sarayi*, literally the Caglayan Justice Palace, located in the Caglayan district of Istanbul. Inaugurated on July 2011, as the Ministry of Justice Sadullah Ergin proudly announced, the Caglayan Courthouse is the largest courthouse in Europe, with an area of 3 million square feet. Fifteen minutes before the trial I met with Orhan, a close friend of Halil's, in front of the "justice palace." The Caglayan Courthouse, with its extremely high ceilings, makes one feel like a tiny little creature as soon as one enters. It is not only the ceiling that makes one feel so; what takes place during a trial makes one feel non-existent.

Feeling like little creatures, Orhan and I went up to the 6th floor, where terror-related hearings take place. Although the trial was supposed to start at 11 a.m., along with the friends and relatives of the accused we waited for three hours in front of the courtroom until the trial started. No one informed us as to how long the trial would be delayed. Thus, we could not leave the waiting room for three hours. For three hours, I, Orhan and 32 other people sat still in the “justice palace” and waited for injustice to take place. The mothers and fathers of the accused were especially nervous... While we were waiting, Orhan told me why he was not tried with Halil and other active members of the NBA, although he himself was working actively in the NBA in mid 2000s. He hid in the ceiling when the police raided the internet house where he was hanging with his friends:

When I saw the police coming towards the internet house, I told my friends that we should hide. They told me that there was no need to hide. They were sure that the police were not going to take them. They were like “why would we hide? We are innocent.” But I knew that they [the police] did not care whether you were innocent and or not. They were unhappy with our activities in the NBA; they were looking for an excuse to take us. I hid anyways. Just in case. You never know. I went to the rooftop and jumped in the chimney. I fell down from the fifth floor to the basement. You should have seen me. I was all black. The residents of the building thought that a thief went into the building. They all gathered together and came to the basement to beat me. You should have seen it... It was quite a scene. There were these men there with sticks and knives. I yelled “ stop, don't hit me. Go and look out side, there is an operation. I am hiding from the police, I am not a thief.” Then they stopped. I asked them to let me stay in the basement. I stayed there for like two or three hours. When I went home my whole body was aching. I didn't go to the hospital that night. I did not want to be seen outside. The next day, it turned out that there wasn't a single bone in my body left unbroken. But, I felt lucky for sometime. All those who told me that they were innocent went to prison. And, see, some of them are still in prison. But now I am also accused of being a member [of a terrorist organization]. I don't know what will happen. I do not mind staying in prison for five or ten years. It is still better than escaping to Europe and living there for the rest of your life. I don't want to live there.

That was the last time I saw Orhan. A couple weeks after the trial he learned that he was condemned to 30 years of imprisonment due to accusations that he was a member of a terrorist organizations. As I later heard from his friends, he escaped to Europe, which is known as an open-air prison among Narova youth.³¹

At 2pm., the soldiers told us that the hearing would start soon and that we should go into the courtroom. Usually, in terror hearings, due to the limited space for audience, not all of the friends and relatives can enter the courtroom. It was very depressing for me to see how mothers and fathers whose only chance to see their children was during the hearings had to leave the courthouse without seeing them.³² This time we were lucky. We could all go in. There were 32 members in the audience, 8 suspects, four gendarmes, three attorneys, one prosecutor, one head judge, and two assistant judges. However, two of the attorneys had to leave soon after the hearing started because they had other hearings to participate in. The hearing was opened by the defense. First Irem began to make his defense. Irem had been in pre-trial detention for 5 and a half years. His attorney was imprisoned on terror charges. Thus he had to make his own defense. Five years after being arrested, this was Irem's first time giving a defense speech. He read the defense speech he prepared in his cell. His defense went:

Having stayed in prison for five and a half years due to a crime I did not commit, I will not explain to you why I am innocent. I am very well aware that you keep me in prison although you know that I am innocent. As a responsible citizen who wanted to keep his neighborhood free of crime, I did my best to protect my neighborhood. When I go out I will continue fight for the democratization of this country. What is taking place right now in here is a serious threat against democracy and human rights. This country's poor people, are being criminalized and put in prisons. The people who love this country and fight for the people's rights are stigmatized as criminals. I am not defending myself. You keep me in prison on purpose. If fighting against crime is a terror crime, then you are free to punish me as a terrorist.

While Irem was talking, the prosecutor's eyes were closed, giving the impression that he was sleeping. The two assistant judges were playing with their laptops and never raised their heads from their laptops. The head judge was either hiding behind his laptop or looking at some files in front of him. None of those who represent the law in the courtroom seemed like they were paying attention to what Irem said. After Irem finished his defense speech, the head judge raised his head from his laptop and asked the remaining attorney if she had a question or a comment to make about her defendants. The attorney

asked the judge why her defendant H. was in pre-trial release while her other defendant, Y., whose file was exactly the same as the defendant H., was still in prison. The judge did not answer her question. He did not even explain why he did not answer. He just ignored the question, pretended that it did not happen. Again, neither the judges nor the prosecutor raised their heads and looked at the attorney. The prosecutor continued to sleep.

The judge's and prosecutor's words, attitudes and behaviors were almost exactly the same in both of the trials I attended. It was as if the attorneys and the suspects were speaking to an empty room. It was as if there was an invisible glass between these two parties, which prevented the judges, and the prosecutor to see the accused and their attorneys. After the defense, avoiding the attorneys' questions and without making any comments on the defense's speeches, the judge turned to the prosecutor and asked him about his decision. The prosecutor opened his eyes and without any explanation demanded that the accused should remain in prison.

The avoidance of any contact with the suspects and their defenders continued during the announcement of the court decision. In both hearings, after the prosecutor announced his decision, gendarmes took the suspects away and the attorneys and the audience were asked to leave the courtroom and to wait in the waiting room. The judge did not announce the decision to the audience in person. After waiting for fifteen minutes, a gendarme brought the decision letter to the waiting room. The judge decided to release some of the guys while their case remains open and to continue the imprisonment of the others. There, again, were no explanations regarding the court decision. As the court decision was read aloud by a young woman among the audience, we heard the screams and cries of mothers and lovers. The waiting room was full with the people with deep sorrow in their faces. After the last hearing, I left the room with Orhan and Aret, whose son had been in prison

for 9 years. I could not ask them how they felt about the trial. The feelings of sorrow, anger and being defeated suffused the air.

The law's representatives' performances during the hearings can be read as a manifestation of how law recognizes certain people by not recognizing them in person. The judge, by consistently avoiding the questions directed to him by the attorneys and by not providing any explanations regarding his decisions declares that there is no justice within the sphere of the law. As Arendt (1973) argues, totalitarian regimes make a distinction between criminals and undesirables: "Criminals are punished, undesirables disappear from the face of the earth; the only trace which they leave behind is the memory of those who knew and loved them"(433). For Arendt, the law does not apply to undesirables, the undesirables are the ones who are deprived of any juridical status and camp becomes the place of the undesirables. Accordingly, we can argue that in the case of Halil and his friends, too, the very place, which represents the law becomes the places of lawlessness. This law/lessness declares Halil and his friends undesirable; as the ones who have to be taken out of sight. Turkey's prisons have become camps. The undesirables have been forced to live in dark and Kafkaesque labyrinths of the law.

In Caglayan (Justice) Palace, I felt that I heard the heard the cold and distant voice of the sovereign(ty)—the voice of a group of men who believe that domination is unavoidable in order to reproduce the relations of production. I left the (Justice) Palace with Orhan and Aret. We did not talk much on our way to the bus stop. We could not even look into each other's eyes for a while. It was Aret who first broke the silence. "They brought us here again to show us that there is no justice in this country. What are they trying to do? Why the hell they are making these trials anyway? They are making fun of us!" he complained. Orhan, who was yet to disappear, replied,

did you hear that they are not even going to make these trials in the courtrooms anymore? Because of the excessive number of political cases, they found it

burdensome to carry people from the prisons to the courtrooms. And supposedly there are not enough courtrooms for all those trials. They are considering conducting the trials online. The prisoners will stay in prison and they and the judge will see each other through a camera.

Aret stared at him, angrily for a minute or so. He did not say anything. Orhan, turned towards me and continued: “There is no law in this country. *They are even breaking their own law...* Could you see the law in that courtroom?”

I could not find a word to say.

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“It is what fell to my share”

I first met Halil and his cell-mates, who are also charged in the same case, at a small party on the terrace of a common friend Meral from the neighborhood a month after their release. It was a small gathering to celebrate their release. As Meral told me before, they were all very funny and making fun of their time in prison. While having our drinks, we talked for hours about life inside and outside of prison.³³ They told us about their illegal wine-making adventures in their cell, the pleasant taste of that secretly made wine, their impatience while waiting for it to ferment, and their disappointment when it got confiscated by the guards three days before the New Year. We listened to their funny prison stories, laughed with them, and appreciated the beauty of sitting together under the stars and the ability to look at the sky freely. As the hours passed and the funny stories

reminded them of the sad ones, we switched to the more serious ones. Serkan, who was a 19-year-old college student when he was arrested, and who spent four-and-half years in the same cell with Halil, still seemed astonished by how many years he had spent in a cell.

He then described how he had heard about the beaten policeman:

When I saw all those policemen in the neighborhood I understood that something had happened. I asked around about what happened and heard the rumors that my friend Hasan was among those who had beaten the police, so I went to see Hasan. Hasan told me that he had nothing to do with the event. I did not believe him. I was teasing him and was forcing him to confess. He got really mad at me. He started yelling at me. ‘What kind of a friend are you? How come you don’t believe me?’ Can you believe that? Hasan is one of my best friends and I did not believe his words. And, look what happened in the end? I spent four-and-a-half years in prison because of the very same crime, which I did not commit.

Serkan stopped and took a deep breath. Aysen, Meral’s landlord, who happened to be there by chance and who has never been around socialists and Alevis before, could not believe what she heard. “This is unbelievable! This is like an Aziz Nesin story,”³⁴ she said in an astonished tone. Throughout the night, Aysen would jump into the conversation repeating, “This is just like an Aziz Nesin story!” Aysen’s comments would remind us that Halil and his friends’ story is the story of Turkey. Although the techniques of control and violence transform over time, it is a story of never-ending (in)justice.

Serkan agreed that the whole thing indeed seemed like an Aziz Nesin story. “I already knew that it was a fascist state,” he said when he was trying to explain what kind of shock his arrest was for him:

When they took us, I was thinking, ‘it’s a fascist state, you can’t trust it. You never know what they will do.’ But, still I was not expecting them to keep me in prison for four and a half years. I was thinking that we would get released within a month.

Halil jumped into the conversation: Yes, that’s true. When we were first taken I told them ‘okay, we are here for at least a year.’ They all got mad at me. They were shouting at me, ‘What? Are you crazy? We can’t stay here more than a month!’

Serkan and the other cell-mate, Ozkan, laughed. We kept quiet. Halil continued,

I knew that the police were mad at us because of what we did in the NBA. I thought they would keep us in prison for a year or something like that to warn us. I was not expecting this at all...

Afterwards, Halil once again reiterated that they spent four and a half years in prison, and Serkan began to talk about the difficult conditions in prison. He talked about how cold their cell was, how terrible the food was, how conservatively they had to use the mayonnaise or Nutella because of the high prices in the prison canteen. He also talked about the people he met inside--about the young guy who was condemned to two aggravated life sentences and an additional twenty years, about the people sentenced to 30 years, 40 years, and about an old man who has not been outside for 30 or more years. At one point, he stopped and said:

Do you know? There is a proverb: make someone appreciate malaria by showing them death. Our situation is like that. After seeing all those young people who will die in prison, we came to appreciate four and a half years.

Aysen, looking sadly at Serkan, wanted to say how sad she felt for them: "It is such a pity," she said. But Serkan did not let her complete her sentence. Cutting her words, he said, "don't pity us. There is nothing to feel pity for. Everything has its price in Turkey." Aysen, still wanted to express her feelings. She wanted to say that what she was hearing right there was unacceptable. "But poor you," she said, "Why should you have to pay a price?" Serkan, who, a couple of minutes before had likened his situation to accepting malaria, in an attempt to prove that there was not much to feel sorry for, asked Aysen, "Do you know Ugur Kaymaz, Aysen?" Aysen shook her head no. "Who is he?"

Ugur Kaymaz was a 12-year old Kurdish boy who was killed by the police while standing in front of his house. Do you know those people who died in hunger strikes for a better Turkey? I believe that wherever you are on the earth, if you see a human being slaughtered and if you do not do anything against it, it means that you are alienated from yourself. You are alienated from your humanity. We wanted to stay human, contribute to humanity. We protected our neighborhood from the gangs. Do you know how I explain my situation? There is this poet, she says 'what fell to my

share in this life is struggle.’ And, as for these four and a half years...*It is what fell to my share.*

Does Serkan, a young working class Alevi who was born into an environment filled with the stories about state violence against his grandparents and parents, and in a neighborhood defined as a semi-open prison, simply accept the injustice he faces as a fate? Does an all-pervasive, godlike figure of the police/state—or police-state as Serkan puts it—turn violence into an ill-fate?

Law/violence as fate

Halil and his friend’s case, as well as thousands of other terror cases bring Kafka’s famous short story, *Before the Law*, to mind. To summarize it briefly, a countryman comes to a gate wishing to gain entry to the law through an open doorway. But the gatekeeper tells the man that he cannot go through at the present time. The man asks if he can ever go through, and the gatekeeper says that it is possible. The man waits at the door, hoping to go gain entry, until he is about to die. Right before his death, he asks the gatekeeper why no one else has come in all the years, even though everyone seeks the law. The gatekeeper answers “No one else could enter here, since this door was destined for you alone. Now I will go and close it.”

Benjamin, in his reading of this story and Kafka’s novel *Trial*, underlines the fated character of law. For Benjamin, “law is not accidental but fated, a destiny which appears here in all its ambiguity.” For him, “violence, *violence crowned by fate*, is the origin of law” (emphasis mine). Benjamin was a Jewish communist in Nazi Germany. Being Jewish and being a communist was a lethal combination in Nazi Germany. He was a member of a community who disrupted the impossible promise/fantasy of the German nation-state. As a communist writer, he also actively called on people to demolish the law and order of the

capitalist Germany and to establish a new one. Thus, it was impossible for him not to see the violence inherent to law. Furthermore, as a person who was born into a Jewish community, a community that remained at the margins of the law and order of state formations for centuries, it is also understandable for him to have experienced law and the violence it carried with it as a fate. In other words, “violence crowned by fate” became apparent in Benjamin’s life. It also became apparent in Serkan’s life. After all, they have a lot in common. Serkan, like Benjamin, was also born into a community at the margins of the state. Thus he was born into the stories of violence against his ancestors. He is also against the prevailing law and order of the capitalist state formation and actively invited people to built a new law and order. Hence, violence and fate inscribed in law was apparent to Serkan as well.

To generalize, it would not be wrong to argue that working-class Alevis in Turkey are destined to violence. However, this is not to say that they are destined to violence because of their Alevi identity. I am also not saying that it is not because of their Alevi identity. They are destined to violence because of alternative law making and law maintaining practices that have kept the Alevi community at the margins of the state formation process for centuries. Local law-making and law-maintaining practices became a habitus which informs the political subjectivities of Alevi people and these practices persistently challenge the law/violence of the state, and ensure that Alevis continue to be the targets of political violence. The continuity in violence makes it perceived as an inevitable fate.

If we return to Kafka’s story, we should bear in mind that both the writer and the interpreter of the story were Jews in Europe. They both felt the dark, cold and overwhelming side of the law (of the state). However, I think that Benjamin’s connection between law, violence and fate, which largely draws on his own experiences, is a broad

one. He overlooks how the practitioners of law approach citizens selectively. As Schmitt (1985) argues, “all law is situational law” (13). That is to say the door of the law is always open to those whose interests match with the interests of the ruling elite. In other words, as I discussed with reference to Gramsci, the relations of production are not only reproduced through relations of domination. The ruling elite are always in need of a population who considers their violence, including exploitation, legitimate. The sovereign/violence is not always visible to these people. After all, the sovereign, who decides on the exception, is nothing but a group of people who represent the interest of the ruling elites —the bourgeoisie in capitalist state formations. And these people need the consent of the masses. Thus, not all people experience law as a fate, which carries violence.

Conclusion

This chapter points out the totalitarian tendencies of the current government, which became visible through anti-terror law. With its wide and vague definitions of terrorism, which pave the way for a wide variety of arbitrary applications, and with its claim that its authorities can even discern one’s inner feelings/ intentions and therefore punish accordingly, the anti-terror law declares the unlimited sovereignty of those who represent the state. Agamben argues that “one of the essential characteristics of the state of exception [is] the provisional abolition of the distinction among legislative, executive, and judicial powers”(Agamben 2005:7). What we witness today in Turkey is the deliberate erasing of these distinctions. Today, the juridical field in Turkey is moving away from what Bourdieu described as “the site of a competition for monopoly of the right to determine the law” (817). With pro-government judges and prosecutors dominating the terror cases, terror trials have recently become places of manifestation of police power and the violence inherent to law.

The case of Halil and his friends' is one of the earliest terror cases after the amendment of anti-terror law. It was an exceptional case until 2009, when large-scale terror operations started. Looking at the case in retrospect, today we can argue that it was indeed a harbinger of what was to come. As I explained, Halil and his friends became terrorist suspects because they challenged the authority of the police in their neighborhood, in a small local setting. Their case shows us that the current government sees any kind of practice that falls outside of police control, or that could potentially challenge the police's power, as a threat against the very foundations of the state. In other words, the Prime Minister and his supporters consider any oppositional act as a declaration of rivalry with the state. For instance, during the KCK operations, which targeted Kurdish activists working in trade unions, labor organizations and Bar Associations, Prime Minister Erdogan accused these people of "building a state within the state."

As Arendt argues, the police know no difference between the insider and outsider, and this is why their presence as the sole organ of power "can still be partially explained by the totalitarian aspiration to world rule" (420). To put it more explicitly, when police become "the guarantor of the regime" all human beings becomes potential enemies. Hence, the emphasis on the police as the sole power is symptomatic of the aspiration for the limitless expansion of (colonizing) power. The government of Turkey does not want any sphere within the country to fall outside be outside its direct control. Hence, it is no coincidence that today, as I write this dissertation, the Turkish public has begun to talk about the possibility that Turkey will attack Syria, as well as the government's imperial projects in the Middle East.

We are witnessing in Turkey today a shift from the state-sponsored extra-legal violence of the 1990s (Sabuktay 2012) to the realm of legal violence. The new anti-terror law is a manifestation of the law's violence within the sphere of the law. The courtrooms,

where terror trials take place, unlike what Bourdieu (1989) says, became the places of revelation; they reveal human intervention within the sphere of law. In other words, the courtroom becomes the arena of “the striptease of the state” (Coronil 2000) and of the law. Nevertheless, terror trials still have a mystification effect. The scope of injustice and silencing of the suspects and their defender’s voices when added to a decades-, even centuries-long, history of violence and oppression, make young Alevi youth feel like they are destined to a life of violence. Fate/destiny belongs to the realm of the sacred. Hence, revelation of the man in law contributes to mystification, hence naturalization, of the law and state.

Notes to Chapter VI

¹ In Turkey, the buildings in which different courtrooms are located are literally called Justice Palace.

² The State Security Courts (SSC) were closed in 1999 and the SACS were opened in their place. Unlike the SSCs there are no military Judges in SACs. Terrorist suspects' trials are held in SACs, specializing in "crimes against the state" and notorious for their contempt for any defense proceedings on the part of the accused, -- obviously in clear violation of "*the right to fair hearing*" (Kanar 2011). Article 6 of the European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) provides a detailed right to free trial including the right to a public hearing before an independent and impartial tribunal within reasonable time, the presumption of innocence and other minimum rights for those charged with a criminal offence (adequate time and facilities to prepare their defense, access to legal representation, right to examine witnesses against them or have them examined, right to the free assistance of an interpreter).

³ Information available at: <http://bianet.org/english/world/132522-over-one-third-of-worldwide-terror-convictions-from-turkey>. Last accessed: September 15, 2012. Although there is no official information about the total number of terror convicts in 2012, due to the new wave of operations, which took place throughout 2012, this number should be higher now.

⁴ An illegal pro-Kurdish movement.

⁵ This includes about 8,000 pro-Kurdish politicians, attorneys, academics, writers and members of the media arrested on KCK terrorism charges since 2009.

⁶ *Revolutionary Headquarters* is an illegal Marxist-Leninist organization in favor of armed struggle. DK first came to public attention in April 2009, when some of its members were involved in a six-hour gun battle with police in Istanbul. Information available <http://todayszaman.com/news-173752-turkey-press-scan.html>. Last accessed: October 22, 2012.

⁷ Information available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jan/31/turkey-terror-jail-human-rights>. Last accessed: October 22, 2012.

⁸ Information available at <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/jan/31/turkey-terror-jail-human-rights>. Last accessed: October 22, 2012.

⁹ See Law no. 5532, published in the Official Gazette, July 18, 2006.

¹⁰ See Article 6 and 7 under Number 3713 of the anti-terror law. Counterterrorism Law 3713 defines terrorist acts as "actions undertaken with the aim of weakening, destroying, or seizing state authority, destroying the security of the state both at home and abroad, and destroying public order."

¹¹ <http://bianet.org/english/english/129818-heavy-prison-sentence-for-journalist-abay> Last accessed: September 15, 2012.

¹² Article 102 of Code on Criminal Procedure.

¹³ <http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist-266922-counter--terrorism--vs-freedom.html> Last accessed: September 15, 2012.

¹⁴ Kozakcioglu was arrested in January 20, 2013 and is now in prison an alleged member of a terrorist organization.

¹⁵ The 9th Specially Authorized Assize Court in Istanbul. File 2007/418. Hearing Number 1. April 04, 2008.

¹⁶ The operation was covered in national mainstream media. The media coverage also testifies that two thousand policemen participated in the operation.

¹⁷ Interview with Ayhan. January 23, 2011.

¹⁸ According to Article 314/2 of TPC the offender can be sentenced to imprisonment from 5 to 10 years.

¹⁹ According to Article 149 1/a, f, g of TPC the offender can be sentenced to imprisonment from ten to fifteen years.

²⁰ According to Article 265/1 of TPC the offender can be punished with imprisonment from six months to three years.

²¹ According to Article 265/2 of TPC the offender can be punished with imprisonment from two to four years.

²² According to Article 265/3 of TPC the punishment to be imposed should be increased by one third of the above penalty.

²³ According to Article 265/4 of TPC the punishment to be imposed according to the above subsections is increased by one half of the above penalty.

²⁴ According to Article 86/1 of TPC the offender is sentenced to imprisonment for one to three years.

²⁵ According to Article 86/3 of the TPC the punishment to be imposed should be increased by one half of the above penalty.

²⁶ The 9th Specially Authorized Assize Court in Istanbul. File 2007/418. Hearing on July 24, 2008.

²⁷ See *Human Rights Watch*, World Report 2012. Information available at: <http://www.hrw.org/world-report-2012/world-report-2012-turkey> Last accessed: September 15, 2012.

²⁸ The 9th Specially Authorized Assize Court in Istanbul. File 2007/418. First Indictment submitted on February 4, 2010 and Second Indictment submitted on May 3, 2011.

²⁹ The 9th Specially Authorized Assize Court in Istanbul. File 2007/418. Hearings on September 4, 2010 and May 03, 2011.

³⁰ The case now continues with the third prosecutor after the previous two prosecutors are taken out of the case as their duration of service in the case is ended.

³¹ According to a research recently being conducted by Umit Cetin, a graduate student at the University of Essex, suicide is a significant problem among young Alevi refugees in Europe.

³² Prison visits are also very problematic. Terrorist convicts and suspects are usually detained in the prisons away from their hometowns. As the detainees usually come from working class backgrounds it is difficult for their families to go and visit them. Besides, terrorist convicts and suspects right to see their visitors are often suspended.

³³ See Goldstein 2003, for an analysis of the place of jokes and laughter in dealing with experiences of violence. In this work, Goldstein points out how the residents of a Brazilian favela laugh when they were talking about traumatic experiences such as rape, murder and, etc.

³⁴ Aziz Nesin is a famous socialist writer born in 1915, well known for his satirical style. People's powerlessness before the law and police, arbitrary uses of police force and injustice of the law are among the repeated themes in his fictional stories.

CONCLUSION

On the morning of September 30th, I sat in front of my computer to complete the conclusion of my dissertation. Before I opened the word document, I wanted to take a look at the news. Usually, when I am working on the dissertation, I choose not to read the news. The news for the last two years has been quite depressing. It becomes difficult to write after reading how many more people were put behind the bars, how many more people the police wounded, how many more Kurds were killed and how many more mass graves were found in the Kurdish region. But September 30th was my last day for working on my dissertation (at least that was what I thought at that moment) and I thought the news could not be that bad. I went to the web page of a local newspaper and I saw a picture of a young man, wearing a T-shirt with the word *Feda* written on it – a word that implied the sacrifice of one's life. The young man in the picture was 21 years old Hasan Ferit Gedik. He was working for THD in Armutlu, an Alevi neighborhood. Four gang members who were selling drugs in another Alevi neighborhood, Gulsuyu, shot him to death. Four bullets hit his head. Two others hit his back. He died immediately. He was taken to the hospital for an autopsy soon after he was killed. The police would not allow his family or his lawyers to enter the hospital. They let material evidence that could have been used against the murderers disappear.

Hasan Ferit's funeral was held on October 1st in Armutlu. That morning, thousands of policemen accompanied by *akreps* occupied Armutlu, and they closed the entrance and exits of the neighborhood. All those who attended the funeral had to submit to ID checks. They also had their bodies and bags searched. Hasan Ferit's friends were angry and feeling vengeful at the funeral. They were swearing, "the state will pay the price, Hasan Ferit's revenge will be taken." This meant that in the following weeks or months, a suicide bomber (possibly a survivor of the death fast that took place in 2002) would enter a police

office and kill himself/herself along with some policemen. Then they would publish the event on their web page. They would say, “those who are responsible for the death of Comrade Hasan Ferit have been punished.” They would also add “Comrade Hasan Ferit is alive!” I could guess what would happen. So could the police. It is hard not to see.

When violence becomes fate, life can easily be sacrificed. Probably, for Hasan Ferit, whose picture of him wearing a *Feda* t-shirt is now being circulated by the media, sacrificing his life was not something he never considered.

Hasan Ferit was actively working to end crime in his neighborhood. He was also working as part of the opposition against the urban transformation project, which would mean the demolition of his neighborhood. According to this project, Armutlu residents’ houses will be demolished and they will not be given new houses. Hasan Ferit was involved in the effort to to publicize this outcome. After the uprisings of summer 2013, public discussion forums were organized in many different districts of Istanbul. Hasan Ferit spent his summer nights participating in the forums organized in the upper and middle class districts around Armutlu and informing people about what was being planned for, and what would happen to Armutlu. Hence, Hasan Ferit himself acted as a bridge between Istanbul’s upper and middle classes and working classes. In a country where segregation and criminalization is an important technique of rule, what Hasan Ferit did was transgressive.

After reading the news about Hasan Ferit, I went to his Facebook page. What I saw there made the whole dark picture even darker. Hasan Ferit’s last post was about the Socialist Party of the Oppressed (SPO), the party of which Halil is also a member. Hasan Ferit had criticized SPO members for not being revolutionary enough and for being followers of the Kurdish movement, which was, in his opinion, supported by the imperialist USA.

Yet, another Jewish philosopher's, Adorno's words are haunting my mind: *To write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric*. At this point, all the theoretical concepts seem barbaric to me. But I will try. I will try to conclude this dissertation.

This dissertation, in a way, is the story of Hasan Ferit. It tries to explain why Hasan Ferit was killed and why he positioned himself not only against the police/state or the police state, but also against other socialist groups. Hence, this dissertation is the story of the thousands of Alevi youth who are members of small-scale radical and marginalized revolutionary organizations and who end up in prisons as a result of their fight against crime.

In this dissertation, I conceptualize the state as a fantasy product and as an external force, which has been *realized* through various performances of sovereignty in people's lives. The fantasy of the state is built on the impossible promise of monopoly over violence and law. It is impossible for the ruling elites to be considered legitimate by all citizens, who have diverse and distinct histories, cultural practices and traditions of law and order. It is also impossible for the ruling elites to gain the consent of the all of the citizens. As I illustrate in the context of Turkey, the founders of the Turkish Republic and their followers were not considered as legitimate by some populations, such as Kurds and Armenians, who were located away from the Ottoman center of power and enjoyed autonomous rule by local leaders for centuries. Alevis, on the other hand, as Muslims who did not fit into the idealized Islamic categories of the ruling elite, never enjoyed an autonomous status within the Ottoman Empire and have stayed at the margins of the Ottoman and Turkish state formations for more than five centuries. Hence, for the Alevi population, too, the central ruling elites have remained as an external force. The populations, who have a strong tradition of autonomous rule, see their local leaders as more legitimate than the central ruling elites. When the founding cadres of the modern

state formations started to consider the local power holders as bandits to be destroyed, these people chose to side with local power holders as they were more familiar to them when compared to the new elite. Accordingly, in Turkey, resistance against the central state has never ceased among certain populations since the beginning of the modern central state formation process in the 19th century.

The founding Turkish elites, in order to take potentially or actually resistant populations under their direct control, have always used force against them. These populations, such as the Armenians, Kurds, Alevis and the socialists, have not only become targets of military and police violence in Turkey, but they have also been the primary targets of symbolic violence provoked by state ideology. The ruling elite and those whose interests match those of the ruling elites produce and reproduce the fantasy of the state in order to maintain existing power relations. The fantasy of the state in Turkey is accompanied by the fantasy of a national whole, whose wholeness is threatened by the Other/enemy/terrorist. The fantasy of the national whole is supported by two other fantasies. The first is the fantasy of the state as an entity devoted to provide social unity, a social wholeness, by eliminating its enemies. The second is the fantasy that there are internal enemies and/or the Others within, who threaten the *jouissance* of the nation and its state. This second fantasy produces symbolic violence against potentially resistant populations, i.e. minorities and the organized working class, by stigmatizing them as enemies of the nation and the state. Symbolic violence against these populations prevents domination from being recognized by the Turkish masses and effectively contributes to the concealment of relations of exploitation and domination. However, violence against resistant populations contributes to the demonization of the state in the eyes of these populations. The targets of the ruling elite's symbolic and physical violence do not believe in the fantasy of the state, and its promise to make society whole. On the contrary, as I

illustrate in this dissertation, they see the state as an obstacle to the wholeness of their community, hence to the *jouissance* promised by the fantasy of the whole. However, as I discuss in the case of Narova, such a perception of the state does not necessarily make its population critical of the state form. On the contrary, state violence produces a relationship of mimetic rivalry between the representatives of the state and those who are subjected to their violence. State violence produces the desire to be like the state among the targeted populations and gives rise to the mimetic performances of the state by the targets of violence. As I illustrate, the state, which has been materialized through various performances of violence in Narova, produces the desire among Narova youth to abolish the state, to end its law and to provide their own law and order in the neighborhood through use of force. Such a desire to hold power and be like the state leads to a relationship of rivalry between the police and Narova youth and also among various local revolutionary groups within the neighborhood. This competition, consequently, results in more violence and further marginalization. I illustrate that in addition to the psychological motivations behind the mimetic rivalry, one of the main reasons that give rise to the relationship of rivalry is the isolation of the neighborhood through militarized spatial control techniques. The militarized spatial control of the neighborhood, which sets the ground for violent and intimate encounters with the police and Narova youth, informs Narova residents' political fantasies and desires and turns violence into a means of confronting the Other.

Throughout the dissertation I draw attention to the power and effects of militarized spatial control. I argue that militarized spatial control, which entails fragmentation of urban space, is not only about managing and controlling unruly populations; it is not only a project designed for the present. It is a project that shapes and transforms the future. It also transforms people's relations and has been influential in their perceptions of the world

and reality. While the state becomes present and real in the neighborhood through militarized spatial control techniques, such as identity checks at the checkpoints and patrolling tanks in the neighborhood, the use of such techniques also creates an atmosphere of war in the neighborhood, incites Narova residents to counter-violence, and effectively transforms their everyday realities and experiences. Due to the presence of the masked policemen, *panzers* and checkpoints in the neighborhood, Narova residents' everyday experiences have radically differed from those of the residents of surrounding neighborhoods and have given rise to the radically distinct perceptions of the social world between these two parties. I demonstrate that militarized spatial control of Alevi working class neighborhoods, have been effective in the fragmentation of the working class politics and polarization of socialist organizations in Turkey.

I illustrated that Narova youth's relationship of rivalry with the police has led to the imprisonment of approximately three hundred of young people as terrorist convicts in high security cell-type prisons over the last decade. Accordingly, I have analyzed the ways in which the state's power is manifested in the legal sphere and discuss the effects of this manifestation. The courtrooms of terror trials have become stages that reveal the sovereign/man in the law in Turkey. The suspension of law within the legal sphere, falsifying the promise of the law, reveals that lawmakers are also lawbreakers. In other words, Turkey's terror trials are places where one sees the "cruel one" who sits within the justice/law. I demonstrate that the revelation of the cruel one within the sphere of the law does not lead to the demystification of the state. On the contrary, it further contributes to mystification of state power in the eyes of the citizens who do not see the state as an independent institution whose aim is to provide law and order. As I illustrate throughout the dissertation, for Narova residents, the state is not something over and above individual people. It does not provide law and order; it rather produces disorder in order to control

the population effectively. They see the state as an instrument of the bourgeoisie, who are concerned with the maintenance of the existing capitalist relations of production.

However, it is precisely due to this this de-mystified perception of the state that the police and law enforcers continuously attempt to mystify the state in the eyes of Narova residents. The very “striptease of the state” (Coronil 2000) in the courtrooms grants the state with god-like powers in the eyes of Narova residents. Such a striptease, demonstrating that the lawmakers hold unrestricted power, makes the people feel they are powerless, defenseless and entrapped. Besides, charges of aggravated life imprisonment, which are very common in anti-terror legislations, steals the “right to hope” away from terrorist convicts and gives rise to a deep feeling of hopelessness among the convicts as well as their relatives and friends. Such powerful feelings turn the world into an ultimately unjust and insecure place and lead to perceptions of violence and injustice as a fate in the eyes of the suspects, convicts and witnesses. As is known, in Judo-Christian traditions it is God who determines one's fate. Hence, the perceptions and experiences of the state violence as a fate contribute to mystification of the state as a God-like power with unrestricted demonic powers.

What happens when one believes that state violence is fate?

Hasan Ferit's t-shirt pops up in front of my eyes.

When violence becomes fate, life turns into something, which can easily be sacrificed. The sacrifice of life for the sake of the cause of (holy) war against the capitalist state grants the otherwise wasted lives with a respectable status.

Moreover, when one feels trapped in cycles of violence and when there is no hope for the future, death does not seem like much of a threat. The scarification of the body for a cause brings meaning to a meaningless and hopeless world. Hence, it is no coincidence that when I was writing this dissertation, a number of young people, one from Narova and

all from Alevi neighborhoods died as suicide bombers. It is also no coincidence that a lot of young people were wounded as a result of gang attacks and yet they still continue to fight against crime.

Recall Hakan's words, which I cited in Chapter I. Hakan, a young man from Narova, after explaining that Narova youth do not have many options for the future, goes on to say,

If you are born in Narova, you have three choices. If you are lucky enough, you will get into college and leave the neighborhood and never come back again. Chances for that are very low. Your second option is to work with the gangs. You will sell drugs, use drugs, steal cars, whatever. If you want to stay clean, if you want to listen to your conscience you will be a revolutionary.

This dissertation is devoted to all those who want to stay clean in this dirty capitalist world. Sadly, however, as this dissertation demonstrates, even being a revolutionary and being ready to sacrifice your life does not keep one clean. The dirt that comes with the promise of the state and/or state promise spreads all too easily. That is to say, the state violence operates as an active call for counter-violence and it produces the desire to be like the state, to take over the state and be the state. I believe that the real challenge to state formation does not emerge from the relationship of mimetic rivalry. As I demonstrate in the dissertation, such a relationship entraps one in cycles of intimate encounters with the representatives of the state. Such encounters inform our desires and fantasies, hence political subjectivities, and let the state rationale intervene in our political projects. Those who want to abolish the state formation, first of all need to learn not to put the state at the center of political struggle and not to develop their political projects through the mirror of the state.

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