CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

On January 5, 2010, a group of people attacked Gypsies in the Turkish town of Selendi in Manisa. They stoned their houses, damaged their vehicles and injured three of them. The reasons for the attacks beyond the momentous outburst were obscure. Apart from individual conflicts, how and why the local townspeople were organized and attacked the Gypsies was unclear. How do individual fights escalate into group conflicts and lead to pogrom-like situations? What motivated people involved in the attacks? How do our ways of socialization enable such expressions of violence? To answer these questions, we have to examine how and why the attacks mobilized the discontent through ethnic categories that made a crucial difference between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. To explain this type of attack, we must grasp not only the socio-economic context of the moment, but also the way the category of Gypsyness has been constructed over time.

This recent case occurred when I was already working on my research on the forced dislocation of Gypsy people from another town in 1970. The momentous effect, the specific dynamics and the local contexts of the two cases were very different. However, the social construction of Gypsyness and socio-economic worlds of these towns reveal interesting similarities. The attacks in Manisa reflected the ongoing strength of this construction, notwithstanding the local specificities. The reoccurrence of a similarly articulated attack points at the persistence of the stigmatization of Gypsyness. This similarity at a deeper structural level shows the value of my case study, which questions the role of similar categories in society and their mobilization during violent

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1 Radikal, 06 January 2010.
attacks. To study and understand such events, it is necessary to combine theoretical perspectives on exclusionary violence and the social construction of categories with a concrete analysis of local configurations. The term ‘exclusionary violence’ is taken from Bergmann and refers to the multidimensionality of the attacks.\(^2\) I believe the term is much more satisfactory than the ethnic violence approach that does not problematize the ethnicity as such and fails to take other dynamics into account. A similar approach has been applied successfully by Jan Gross, who analyzed pogrom-like violence against Jews by their neighbors in Jedwabne, a town in Poland.\(^3\) In his work, he meticulously analyzes the dynamics that at work and thus contributes enormously to our insight in the way pogroms start and evolve. He, however, does not explicitly theorize beyond his case study. This dissertation, which owes a great deal to the work of Gross, has the aims to frame the case study more in an explanatory theoretical framework.

The case that is central to my study concerns the forced dislocation of Gypsy people from the town of Bayramic, Canakkale in 1970 and enables us to apply theoretical tools to a concrete case study. The town is my mother’s home-town and where my close relatives settled until 2001 when my grandmother passed away. In analyzing this case, the local dynamics, local discourses and constructions required study. This particular world, however, took its shape in relation to more general categories and hierarchies. The cognitive world of the townspeople was deeply influenced by categories of Gysyness and Turkishness around the forced dislocation. Therefore, the study analyzes how such categories were applied in the local context.

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In the town of Bayramic there were different subcategories of Gypsies. At the time, the main ones were local Gypsies and muhacirs, or immigrants. Muhacir Gypsies were those who moved into the town in the 1920s with the population exchange from Greece. The local ones were those who had already been in the town when the muhacirs came. They mainly followed professions that were considered traditionally Gypsy, such as musicians and blacksmiths. The people who were called muhacir Gypsies in the town, on the other hand, started working as porters, drivers and petty workers.

What basically happened in the town was the mobilization of certain groups of people to attack the Gypsies: stoning their houses, beating some of them and eventually causing them to leave the town. Powerful figures in the transportation sector took the lead, including some low and middle class townspeople and villagers. It was the time when urbanization was intensifying in the town while the migration from the countryside to the city was on the rise. The changes also had their impacts on the development of highway transportation that was pivotal for conducting business with the urban centers. The transportation business was especially essential for the trade of the wood from the forests into the town, where no other industry was available.

In the beginning, the driving business was not very popular among non-Gypsies, since the mountain roads were very dangerous. It was therefore the sector in which some muhacirs stepped in and built a reputation of outstanding drivers. By the 1960s, the overall highway transportation and forestry had developed and the number of drivers and trucks in the town had increased. The conflict in 1970 occurred out of a truck partnership between a Turkish ruffian and his former best friend, a muhacir Gypsy. It immediately triggered rumors of immoral acts by the latter’s brothers, who were accused

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4 Sepetsis (basket weavers), who recently settled in the town, were not among these groups at the time.

5 The term refers to Muslim immigrants who formerly lived in the Ottoman Empire and were accepted as refugees by the Turkish Republic. In the town, it is used for the Gypsies who came from Greece in the period of the population exchange in the 1920s.
of making passes at Turkish girls. It did not take a lot to create a Gypsy threat in the
town ranging from stories about their violent attitudes and immoral behavior to unfair
competition in the markets. The first attack targeted the muhacir families, but the second
one after a few weeks extended to the people who were known as local Gypsies. While
the discontent had started as a “Drivers’ Fight”, it soon turned into a full-scale Gypsy
hunt. According to the town’s attorney at the time, some three thousand people from the
town center and the surrounding villages stoned the Gypsy houses and forced them to
leave the town. In the second attack, the attorney of the town who tried to stop the
crowd was also beaten up. Most of the Gypsies left the town for at least several months,
and some never returned. They struggled to survive in other towns and cities, while some
villagers and townspeople took over their professions. Many local Gypsies came back,
while most muhacirs tried to find their livings outside of the town.

What I mainly explore is why and how these violent attacks occurred, what
dynamics constituted the relationship between the people in the town in relation to the
categories of Turkishness and Gypsyness, how these categories have been employed in
their relationships in different contexts and finally how people remember and represent
their relationships and experiences. My aim is to display how and why the social
categories functioned by focusing on the flexibility of the category of Gypsyness and
Turkishness in the town’s context. It reveals how ethnic and other identities represented
in cultural spheres were employed to conceal socio-economic and political inequalities. In
this study, the categories as instruments in ordering our worlds will not be taken as a
given, but analyzed as flexible social constructions that could be reformed according to
relations and contexts that changed through time. Special attention will be paid to the
phenomenon of violence that will be conceived as a rule-making phenomenon that is used for regulating power relations and boundaries accordingly.\(^6\)

In our case, violence established not only the relation between the Gypsies and non-Gypsies but also the relations within these communities. During my fieldwork, many townspeople were still scared of talking negatively about the perpetrators and almost all used confusing and contradicting narratives ranging from their personal experiences to dominant discourses. The violence that was experienced in the town threatened not only the existence of the Gypsies, but also other people's relations with the Gypsies. It had severe repercussions for the way townspeople thought about Gypsies, but also for the room to interact with them beyond Gypsyness. At the time of the attacks many people felt desperate and impotent. The narratives of the protectors, the ongoing silence of the townspeople, the hesitations in narratives, the narratives of witnesses and the existence of secrets also reveal the effects of the attacks not only on the Gypsies' but also on the non-Gypsies' own positions in the town. Furthermore, I will discuss the role of the state and state officials as well as state discourse to understand the use of violence by the townspeople.

In analyzing the forced dislocation and exclusionary violence, I will use three main dimensions: 1) the socioeconomic context; 2) the historical and social construction of relevant categories; and 3) the position of the relevant actors. The theoretical angles of Bergmann and Van Arkel with regard to anti-Semitic violence are helpful for our analysis. Bergmann’s approach, with its focus on power mechanisms and social control in such violent cases, basically draws upon the usage of violence when especially the perpetrators perceive a negative change in power relations. In such cases, violence is generated in order to control the power means in society. Constructing a threat in such an environment intensifies the exclusion and motivates the perpetrators. Additionally,

Van Arkel stresses the functionality of a stigma and the importance of a social distance between the majority and the minority. His study of European anti-Semitism shows how a historical stigma can become functional in interplay with the current power relations and how the terrorization mechanism (which forces people to at least passively support discrimination and outright violence) leads to the redefinition of group boundaries. All three conditions together (a functional stigma, social distance and terrorization) create the conditions for collective violence. Thus, in order to understand the Gypsy hunt in 1970 we need to study both the specific context of the attacks, including the roles of particular actors, and the historical construction of the Gypsy category.

First, the local context of the violent attacks is important. We need to know more about the socio-economic situation in which the people were mobilized against the Gypsies at that particular moment. Why it happened at that particular moment will be one of our questions. The specific historical context of the town in relation to the wider context of the country will help us to comprehend the reasons for the collective violence and how categories became functional. The socio-economic transformation that the country went through and how it influenced the town, especially due to rapid urbanization will prove to be important. In that period, the town experienced a boom in the transportation sector, which together with a transformation of the social relations in the town is crucial to understand what was going on in our own case. It was a time during which power relations were changing and new opportunities were rising due to which some people were gaining and others were losing their previous status and power. Why did the people who were called Muhacir Gypsies attract particular attention? This question starts in this first dimension, but leads us to our second dimension in the analysis.

While the first dimension looks at the effects of socio-economic transformation on the social relations and categories, the second focuses on the historical background of
these relations and categories in the local context. In this light, the people who were called Gypsies were not random targets of the violence. There had been disagreements over a truck in this period when the driving business and transportation became profitable and prestigious. In addition to this, it was also a time when more villagers were searching for jobs in the town. These newcomers mostly lacked the capital to start their own businesses and were dependent on low or unskilled labor in the town’s context. An easy way to enter the urban labor market was through the service sector, in which most muhacir Gypsies were active. Even relatively low-earning jobs, such as shoe polishing, would be a good start for someone who wanted to start a new life in the town. Thus, the muhacir Gypsies were holding positions that had come into demand. This is essential to understand social relations in the first dimension. However, this in itself still does not explain why the Gypsies were targeted. That is why we have to look at the social construction of Gypsyness as a category and the historical stigma attached, which takes us to the second dimension.

The construction of Gypsyness in the local context had its own particularities, but it also interplayed with the perceptions, stereotypes, stigmas, and discrimination of Gypsyness at the national level. The construction of the Gypsy threat did not occur out of the blue, but was deeply rooted in the historical experience that goes back to Ottoman times. Although the townspeople had other ways of relating to one another beyond these categories, when a certain type of competition or conflict arose, the Gypsy stigma was easily activated. The “master status” that Gypsyness had acquired was fueled and

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8 Some of the wealthy villagers had already come to the town to benefit from socio-economic advantages, such as a more vivid public life, economic gains and education for their children.

9 Everett Cherrington Hughes, “Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status,” *The American Journal of Sociology* 50, no. 5 (March 1945), pp. 353-359. Hughes describes how some statuses in our societies are
maintained by the social distance between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. This can be characterized as “labeled interaction”\(^\text{10}\), which was based on the existing hierarchized and limited relations between Gypsies and the rest of the local society. The Gypsy category had been used historically to maintain this status quo. At the same time, however, as a reference point, it could fade in day-to-day contacts. Thus, the effect of the category depended on the context. Some people regarded the process as dangerous, because the group boundaries were blurring. Alba and Nee studied the process of assimilation in the United States and show how boundaries between ethnic groups can change over time. They differentiate between boundary crossing, boundary blurring and boundary shifting. Crossing happens at the individual level, whereas blurring refers to the situation in which ethnic differences between groups become less clear and reflect the ambiguous state of group boundaries. Boundary shifting, finally, creates a new situation in which a former group becomes included in a new encompassing category, for example Asian Americans who increasingly become viewed as ‘whites’. I find their approach very useful, as they emphasize categories instead of groups, which is crucial to understand what was going on in the case that is analyzed in this dissertation.\(^\text{11}\) Moreover, different people could react differently. In the town, there were protectors along with perpetrators. Then, although the people had been exposed to the same historical discourse on Gypsyness and socio-economic context of the time as well as terrorization of the perpetrators, there was still space for agency that thus led to different perspectives and roles during the attacks.

determined in relation to personal attributes. These attributes are linked to perceptions through categories and this type of status determining can lead to racial status groups.


Dwelling on agency as our third dimension will allow us to understand different and to some extent conflicting positions. These positions were of course related to people’s socio-economic positions and to the extent of terrorization by the perpetrators. Mainly the wealthy families of land holding, state officials and some merchants were against the attacks. There were plenty of people who employed the muhacir Gypsies and defended them. Among them, there were some who stood up against the crowd with a rifle in their hands. From the state officials, the attorney was the most visible one, as he was almost beaten to death for trying to stop the crowd with his gun. The previous experiences of the people in the town also help to understand their attitude towards Gypsies. Some of the Turkish townspeople who had close neighborhood relationship due to the geographic proximity were also among the ones who protected the Gypsies in their houses and in more indirect ways by informing them of the dangerous situation. However, there were also former friends who became the leading figures in the attacks.

Obviously, the different positions that people took during the attacks relied on their previous experiences with one another, and were not just automatic reactions that can be reduced to their position in the local socio-economic structure. Although the latter influences how one experiences other ethnic and social groups, the personal stories reveal how different people may relate within structural dynamics. Especially in the narratives on the attacks, these experiences make us understand why people remembered the conflict in different ways ranging from the “Gypsy incidents” to the “Drivers’ fight”.

There indeed were ‘inherited discourses’ against Gypsies, as Nirenberg calls them, but they had not been mobilized actively in any violent act extensively before. Moreover, many people experienced one another beyond those discourses because of a relative low social distance. At some point, however, anti-Gypsy discourses were employed widely. We cannot ignore the existence of the inherited discourses, but what is significant here is the combination of three dimensions that reveal which actors
employed the anti-Gypsy discourse and mobilized these according to their own socio-economic interests. On the other hand, there were also other actors who resisted those discourses and stood up for their Gypsy friends, neighbors and townspeople, to the point that they engaged in real fights against the attackers.

As Nirenberg argues, structuralists do not deal much with historical change but emphasize the collective systems such as fixed discourses in relation to stereotypes and beliefs that precede violent acts against minorities. One of Nirenberg’s problems with the structuralists’ analysis is to posit “everyman” as passive and uncritical receptor of inherited ideologies in medieval studies. Then, he makes a crucial comment: “I am not arguing that negative discourses about Jews, Muslims, women or lepers did not exist, but that any inherited discourse about minorities acquired force only when people chose to find it meaningful and useful, and was itself reshaped by these choice. Briefly, discourse and agency gain meaning only in relation to each other.”

In this dissertation I will therefore try to explain why at a certain moment the inherited discourse on Gypsies was employed by these particular agents. In doing so, this study will dwell on both discourses, and interrelations between social, economic, historical, psychological and cultural dynamics, as well as their effects on the way individual people behaved.

This research looks both at rural and urban contexts and thus touches on categorizations, social hierarchies and relations in human societies. It aims not only to be a story of certain Gypsies within a particular context, but also an analysis on how categories as such are used in social relations and in a particular political and ideological frame. It does not focus on the Gypsies as such, but on the relationships between people through the category of Gypsyness. Gypsyness in this context refers to an instrument that is used to constitute and order relations between people. It petrifies people in certain ways, and resembles widely known categories of class, race, gender and ethnicity. This

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similarity allows questioning the working of similar categories. Therefore, categories are studied in their flexible, contextual, and relational stages with a clear eye for alternative relations through people’s personal experiences. Instead of seeing categories like Gypsyness as primordial, I see them as highly situational and aim to underline that the use of categories in general should be conceived as instruments in hierarchizing the social relations.

instead of taking the groups as unchanged, homogenous entities, categories will be used to analyze the content and boundaries of certain groups. In this context, questioning the concept of ethnicity is necessary for both analytical and political purposes. Ethnicity is not an intrinsic characteristic of individuals and groups, but much more it defines a relation between people, both at the individual and the group level. In other words, ethnicity is not in people, but between people. As they exist in people’s perceptions, they become real in its consequences and therefore in people’s lives. This study aims to explain how ethnic categories of Turkishness and Gypsyness can change in the construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of relationships between people over time. It thereby questions the content of categories that are used to refer to certain groups and individuals and shows how the content can change, while the categories themselves persists.

Thus, it touches upon the power structures and relations, the construction of class and ethnicity, nationalism and Gypsyness in the country. Furthermore it takes a critical look at the official historiography and its reflection on ordinary people’s lives. Within its scope and aims, this study opens the space for alternative historiographies on Gypsies (as well as other ethnic groups) in Turkey and thus can be seen as a plea for the emancipation from dominant and authoritarian ways of seeing the world and people’s experiences. Finally, I aim to give space to my informants’ voices, not only the Gypsies, but also all townspeople, including the perpetrators.
By scrutinizing particular incidents, we will see how certain people become more Gypsy than before. I am interested in the effects of the tension and polarization over time of this type of violent acts. While people may be part of different social groups, outright violence based on group stigmas forces people to take sides and thereby fixate group boundaries in national and ethnicized ways. As Brubaker stresses, actors can take advantage of the ethnic framing which veils the individual or class interest in pursuing a violent act:

[Cognitive perspectives] can help specify how and when—people identify themselves, perceive others, experience the world, and interpret their predicaments in racial, ethnic, or national rather than other terms. They can help how “groupness” can “crystallize” in some situations while remaining latent and merely potential in others. And they can help link macro-level outcomes with micro-level processes.\(^\text{13}\)

The people who are called Gypsies of course existed before the attacks. However, during the period of the attacks, the muhacir Gypsies who would never have identified themselves with Gypsyness and primarily identify themselves as Turks became more Gypsy than ever. Olzak indicated that with assimilation the probability of ethnic conflict increases. It would fit our case in the sense that the boundaries between the muhacirs and perpetrators were about to loosen up just before the attacks. “Partial assimilation of formerly deprived groups increases competition among groups, as once-deprived groups come to compete with more successful natives. In the short-run then, assimilation may raise rates of racial and ethnic conflict.”\(^\text{14}\) Moreover, in contrast to some “ethnic violence cases,” not all the townspeople were against the Gypsies, as there were people who dared to stand up against the perpetrators.

\(^{13}\) Rogers Brubaker, *Ethnicity without Groups* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), p 44. Brubaker stresses that groups can originate as a result of violence, while Bergmann stresses the opposite situation in which of groups that exist already before the application of exclusionary violence. For a critique of overestimation of ethnic features in the literature, see John R. Bowen, “The Myth of Global Ethnic Conflict,” *Journal of Democracy* 7, no. 4 (1996), pp. 3-14.

Our case stresses the importance of thinking in terms of identification, as it underlines the relational, contextual and flexible features of belongingness and definition of the self. The concept of identity, on the other hand, freezes this belongingness, one’s relation to oneself and the environment. In real life, human beings can have several identifications, depending on the context and their specific relations with others. They may activate different identifications in different times and spaces. In our case, the narratives display different levels and ways of identification with Turkishness and Gypsyanness, which partly explains the seemingly confusing interpretations of the events by the various actors. While one may emphasize how strong ties are to Turkishness, just a few minutes later the identification with Gypsyanness may be stressed. Although they seem to be contradicting, it illustrates the multi-layered and contextual nature of identification. In this sense, we will also examine how Turkishness as a national identity and crystallization point for citizenship allows the ways and degrees of identifications. It is discernible in the different emphasis on Turkishness pertaining to citizenship and territorial belongingness. The emphasis on religion, on the other hand, is present in several usages ranging from moral values to the acceptance to Turkishness.

This study attempts to analyze how these identity constructions function and interact with one another, why we use these categories and how they constitute our lives through a critical look at ongoing power relations including different phases of subordination in the intersection of categories such as class, gender, ethnicity and race.\textsuperscript{15} Here, the point is not the fact that these categories are constructed but WHY they are constructed in the way they are, HOW they shape our lives and our positions; HOW they are accorded to our social structures; WHO takes advantage from them; and HOW

they are legitimized. In this study, Gypsyness as a category will accommodate us in our journey to this cognitive universe.

The Role of Categories

Our cognitive world employs categories to simplify and give meaning to the outer world. Categorizing the world as such is necessary to understand the otherwise chaotic reality that surrounds us. Through these categories, we classify things, people and relationships. Although they help us organize our perceptions, emotions and ideas, they sometimes also lead to generalizations. This reduction shapes our cognitive map, while at the same time prevents us from seeing the particularities and uniqueness and channels our perception in pre-existing categorizations.¹⁶

In human societies categories are used to store information and meanings, but also to order society through hierarchies and thus contribute to power systems while they (de-/re-) construct these categories in return. By looking critically at such categories, we have the possibility to question their function as instruments within the prevailing power relations in our societies. The argument in this study is that categories do not point at the essences of subjects but shape the relations between people and social groups. In this context Fearon and Laitin write:

Social categories are sets of people given a label (or labels) and distinguished two main features (1) rules of membership that decide who is and is not a member of the category; and (2) content, that is, sets of characteristics (such as beliefs, desires, moral commitments, and physical attributes) thought to be typical of members of the category, or behaviors expected or obliged of members in certain situations (roles).¹⁷

¹⁶ For a discussion on how our perceptions follow the idea of enlightenment pertaining producing knowledge about nature and society and thus restrict the view of many sociologists, see Pierre L. Van den Berghe, “Why Most Sociologists Don’t and Won’t Think Evolutionarily,” Sociological Forum 5, no. 2 (June 1990), pp. 173-185.

On the other hand, structural changes that influence socio-economic hierarchies, or negotiations over particular interests, relations and emotions can result in changes in the contents and directions of certain categories. Previous categories may fade out or can be reproduced or reinforced according to new context. Thus, a category can become irrelevant and dysfunctional or it can be reframed after the refiguration of relations. If the existing categories do not fill the gap, new categories may emerge. In parallel, a person who falls into certain categories may move to another category in time. In this process, the contents of the categories, who is included (and excluded from) in that category, how a person in that category can relate to people in other categories in the same cognitive universe, and how the category and its subjects should be perceived is subject to change. Hogg and Abrams describe this process as follows:

The nature of the social categories and their relations to one another lend a society its distinctive social structure, a structure which precedes individual human beings. Individual people are born into a particular society and thus social categories are largely pre-existent vis-a-vis individuals. However, the social structure is not a static monolithic entity. On the contrary, it is constantly in flux, constantly changing (gradually or very rapidly) as a consequence of forces of economics and history, categories come and go (prior to the mid-twentieth century there was no such occupational category as 'computer programmer'), their defining features alter (historical modifications to stereotypes of North American blacks), their relations with other categories change (intergroup relations between the sexes), and so on.18

Social categories thus do not stand as external mechanisms but are internalized and employed in self-definitions, formations and identifications as well as group characteristics. They are a real psychological state of mind. While exploring the categories, this reality of one’s self-understanding should not be neglected. Thus, categories should not be conceived as pure defining tools, nor are individuals the inevitable product of categories. More significant than the categories is the relation between the individual and the group. Social categories are secondary to group formation indeed. However, they are seen as fundamental and in the process of socialization and

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group formation treated as essential criteria. We should keep in mind, however, that an individual can engage in different groups and identifications that converge with one another. As we will see in this study people hardly define the attributes of Gypsyness, and as a result many do not even qualify as such. Nevertheless, although the boundaries and the members may change during time and space, the differentiation and discrimination of some group of people through the category of Gypsyness persists.

The changes within the categories are inextricably linked to changes in the society mostly as a result of changes in socio-economic relations. In the literature on ethnicity, this position is close to Hall’s understanding of ethnic identity as an instrument. The terms of instrument and performance that are applied in Hall’s work usually are misperceived merely as people’s conscious and artificial engagements in their identifications. By questioning the very being of ethnicity, as a category in this sense, he does not deny real and intimate relations that people experience and feel in their identifications. Another inspiring scholar, Fredrik Barth, defined ethnic groups as categories of ascription and identification, and explained boundaries as such within the changes in categories: “[…]Categorical ethnic distinctions do not depend on an absence of mobility, contact and information but do entail social processes of exclusion and incorporation whereby discrete categories are maintained despite changing participation and membership in the course of individual life histories.” Additionally, Wimmer’s approach is crucial for strategies around changing boundaries:

I distinguish between five types of such strategies: those that seek to establish a new boundary by expanding the range of people included; those that aim at reducing the range of the included by contracting boundaries; those that seek to change the meaning of an existing boundary by challenging the hierarchical ordering of ethnic categories; those that attempt crossing a boundary by changing one’s own categorical membership; those that aim to overcome ethnic

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boundaries by emphasizing other, crosscutting social cleavages through what I call strategies of boundary blurring.\(^{20}\)

Hall points at the process of “becoming” an ethnic group in the context of discursive practice\(^{21}\) and “historically, politically and culturally”\(^{22}\) constructed characteristic of ethnic identity. He uses discourse and psychological analysis to investigate the concept of identity. Identity is strategic and positional and thus it is also open to changes according to different positions and circumstances. Thus, for Hall, both the psyche and discourse are functional in identity construction. Identities are constantly reformed and “in the process of becoming rather than being.”\(^{23}\)

He also stresses that the identity of the Self is constructed through and in opposition to the Other. This construction is not free of the power and hierarchy of course. The binary of Self/Other is hierarchized in favor of the Self as in the cases of man/woman, white/black, Occident/Orient, us/them etc. “[…] within the play of power and exclusion […]”.\(^{24}\)

Then if not through primordial ties, how and why do we form groups? For this phenomenon, Brubaker urges us to rethink the concepts and practices of ethnicity, race and nationality, and proposes to see categories as flexible, changing along with an experience, instead of unchanged states and fixed entities. This resembles Hall’s conceptualization, but with a slightly different focus: ”It means thinking of ethnicization,


\(^{23}\)Hall, “Introduction,” p. 4.

\(^{24}\)Hall, “Introduction,” p 5.
racialization, and nationalization as political, social, cultural, and psychological processes. And it means taking as a basic analytical category not the "group" as an entity but groupness as a contextually fluctuating conceptual variable."25

Groupness as a concept and experience is suggested as opposed to the concept of group that requires a number of people with shared and stable positions. E.P. Thompson's idea of class-consciousness sees experience as the very basic requirement of being in a category of class.26 Hence, one cannot consider a group of people as a class unless they are aware of having a similar categorical position. In other words, people cannot be considered as a group or class unless they experience and "feel" their relation to another group of people and through related dynamics. This is what makes them as a class not their intrinsic features or ideals.

Brubaker conceptualizes ethnicization similarly as a process, but according to him ethnicization does not require the very existence of a specific category in itself. For instance, indicating that race is constructed does not mean that people do not act upon it in real life. Thus, we live in racialized societies, but this does not mean that races exist. Furthermore, most people do not experience categories as artificial, but as natural and as such they shape daily interactions and experiences. Hughes for instance explains how categories work through common interests and internal fraternities in occupational selection: "[P]eople carry in their minds a set of expectations concerning the auxiliary traits properly associated with many of the specific positions available in our society.” Moreover, he asserts that these expectations are rooted in stereotypes that are used in ordinary conversation and in media representations. The feelings of fraternity, commonality and groupness thus develop out of people’s experiences but these

25 Brubaker, Ethnicity, p 11.

experiences are shaped within the constructions of certain categories. As Barth suggests, after all the insiders of a category feel secure of the existence of the category as it is used to define the rules of the game that legitimize the order of the society.27

To understand the ongoing existence of discriminative categories and groupness especially in ethnic and racial references, I additionally find the term ‘nepotism’ articulated by Van den Berghe interesting. He questions the connection between physical attributes of people and social differences and underlines the socio-biological dimension of group attachments. He describes nepotism as: “to behave favourable (or ‘altruistically’) to others in proportion to their real or perceived degree of common ancestry.”28 He argues that this natural instinct of nepotism determines the social organism’s behaviors and refers to Darwin’s evolution theory, by stressing that organisms do not evolve if they invest in “unrelated organisms.”29

Whether it is related to evolutionary interests or not is beyond the scope of this study, but Van den Berghe’s nepotism concept can be helpful when we extend the definition of the term beyond the biological. I would suggest that groupness is not so much forged by biological, but socio-cultural similarities.30 I believe, instead of looking for common ancestry, people seek material and spiritual security, which I call existential security.31 Thus, if this security is attained through common experiences, emotions, rationalizations and interest seeking32 then nepotism will occur.

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27 Hughes, ‘Dilemmas and Contradictions of Status’, p 354.


29 Ibid.

30 We can also observe it in postmodern urban groupings by the way we dress, choose our hairstyle and other external features.

31 Security here should primarily be understood in a psychological sense. Although it includes a search for material sources and physical existence, it primarily refers to psychological and emotional comfort. Military reflections, on the other hand, manipulate and abuse the need for security and the fear for its absence. To find a relative approach with a different terminology, Butler’s emphasis on the mutual
Some points of Van den Berghe support this argument, but with a slightly different focus, where he indeed connects primordialism with instrumentalism:

“Ethnicity or race cannot be invented or imagined out of nothing. It can be manipulated, used, exploited, stressed, fused or subdivided, but it must correlate with a pre-existing population bound by preferential endogamy and a common historical experience.”

Thus, Van den Berghe leaves room for social construction although he bases his theory predominantly on biological attributes. Moreover, he explains why the cultural markers of a group are used when biological and physical attributes do not sufficiently differentiate groups who resemble their neighbors. However, when physical markers are sufficient to differentiate, people will resort to the biological.

My approach is closer to that of Brubaker, who gave a definition of the attributed categories as “at best a potential basis for group formation or ‘groupness’.” He urges for an analysis of categories in relation to groupness by asking how they are employed for instance in excluding some people from rights on scarce resources. A multi-dimensional approach would be required for this analysis:

We can study the politics of categories, both from above and from below. From above, we can focus on the ways in which categories are proposed, propagated, imposed, institutionalized, discursively articulated, organizationally entrenched, and generally embedded in multifarious forms of “governmentality”. […] From below, we can study the “micropolitics” of categories. The ways in which the categorizers appropriate, internalize, subvert, evade, or transform the categories that are imposed on them.  

In this study, a perspective from below will be combined with categories that are imposed from above. How townspeople make use of the category of Gypsyness will be

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32 The term ‘interest’ here should be thought of both in material and spiritual satisfactions.

33 Van Den Berghe, “Does Race Matter?”

explored in relation to the constitution of Gypsyness in the general context of Turkey and its relation with Turkishness both as a dominant frame of reference and as citizenship in discursive and practical ways. Instead of focusing on groups, this study is primarily interested in the way categories are employed in group-formation.

In the context of Gypsyness in the town of Bayramic, we will see how the perceptions of the associated members changed through time and context from superstitions to statements referring to them as decent members and eventually as exploiters of the system. The changes in socioeconomic relations influenced the perception of Gypsies. We will see that while Gypsyness tends to fixate the relationships and people’s positions in the society, there was still a room for negotiation in certain contexts and between certain people. The relationships between people thus were therefore more than an interaction shaped by those categories although at times they were reduced to those. Moreover, violence was used to change the relationships, because for the perpetrators daily life before the attacks was seen as violating the ethnic boundaries.

In our case we encounter a more complicated world and ways of relating to one another than the one ruled by categories. There is still a space for negotiation in personal relations beyond fixed identifications and hierarchies. The negotiation power is of course framed by these power systems that attempt to regulate the relationship between subjects and fix the source of power, as Foucault would suggest, but the interactions in our case would probably have surprised him.

To sum up, social categories and groups are an integral part of people’s baggage when it comes to social relations of which they usually cannot easily get rid of. They largely determine how people perceive one another, and how power and status are shared and attributed. However, as indicated above, interactions in daily life can correct stereotypes and bring people to look beyond fixed categories. People perform and
negotiate through these realities, through emphasizing some or neglecting others, sometimes inverting one into another, closing their eyes to some of them or playing around legitimized ones. That is where individual agency is situated.  

Gypsyness

In this study, Gypsyness is approached as a category instead of a self-evident ethnic marker. I believe this approach also enables the drawing of parallels with similar categorizations, such as gender, class, race, and age. Gypsyness is therefore studied not as a phenomenon in itself but through intersecting relations. Of interest is how and why it is constituted as such and what it can tell us about the relations in society. Our reconstruction aims to study how categories and hierarchies work, through preceding, overlapping and forthcoming relations during the violent attacks that resulted in the forced dislocation of the people who were associated with the category, Gypsyness.

Although this study gives many clues of the usage of different categories, it ironically shows how categories are employed for other means, mainly in allocating resources, prestige and status. The general concept of Gypsyness should therefore be questioned. In the usage of ethnicity, primordial and constructivist accounts are handled as the fixed and general features of specific people. However, many differences between and among people classified as Gypsies sit uneasy with their presumed ethnic homogeneity.

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35 It is also at stake in relations between individuals. For instance, being wealthy, following dominant moral and behavioral codes, wearing certain brands, way of talking and looking, may serve to make people automatically recognize the other as equal because self-esteem is coupled with legitimate categories. These criteria that are shaped in relation to certain categories and groups can be used in negotiations as well. For a similar account, see the “bargaining with patriarchy” concept of Kandiyoti and for an interesting study on women who use religious values to gather power to accuse men in their community of mistreating their wives, see Nazli Kibria, “Power, Patriarchy and Gender Conflict in the Vietnamese Immigrant Community.” In Asian, American Women and Gender: a Reader, edited by Franklin Ng (London; New York: Routledge, 1999), pp. 145-161.
Furthermore, many people who are called Gypsies have local identifications. In such a context, classifying them as an ethnic group would be confusing due to the absence of a common idea pertaining to origin, language, and religion. The Gypsies’ ability to adapt to local environments in different countries, and their ability to assimilate into national cultures, is often underestimated. Nevertheless, many scholars keep on viewing Gypsies as a homogenous and unified ethno-cultural group. I find a socio-economic analysis that puts relations and contexts in the center more helpful to understand the idea of Gypsyness.

It is not fruitful to approach Gypsyness with concepts as "identity", because the concept obstructs a critical analysis. Identity is too often defined as predominantly cultural, but it is also about class differences, how certain people are exploited through the allocation of economic resources. Often Gypsies emphasize that Gypsyness just means being poor and they often refer to themselves as "the poor". In the case of Gypsyness, poverty and identity largely overlap, whereby their discrimination and low social position is explained by pointing at their unique cultural characteristics. In this sense, I find the approaches of Okely, Willems and Lucassen et al. on Gypsyness inspiring, as they stress in their analysis that Gypsyness is largely defined through changing relations in socio-economic contexts and therefore question approaches that limit themselves to Gypsy folklore.

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36 For a discussion on the idea of a Roma nation, see Chapter 2.


38 I am also inspired by the work of Thomas Acton and David Mayall, but for the socio-historical conceptualization in this study, the approaches of Lucassen, Okely and Willems to Gypsyness were more useful. In the second chapter, these works will be further articulated.
First, they show the many changes in the way the Gypsy category over time has been constructed. Okely\(^{39}\) points at different historical representations and ironically notes that Gypsies were first referred to as Egyptians and then in the nineteenth century they became Indians due to changing interpretations of their dialects. Apart from ‘Gypsies, many other categories were used, such as foreigners and counterfeit Egyptians (in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries), as vagrants in the seventeenth century with the focus on their idleness and “depraved” in the nineteenth century. According to Okely, these shifts are directly related to the changes in socio-economic structures, especially linked to the control on vagabonds and the increase of proletarianisation and wage labor.

Lucassen, who contributed to a better understanding of Gypsyness as a historically changing category, focused on the process of stigmatization,\(^{40}\) and makes a distinction between the stigma as such and the actual application of that stigma to concrete people: the labeling process. He argues that stigmatization (the active application of the stigma) is crucial for group formation. Rather than a particular origin or other attributes, it is the power of stigmatization by authorities that decides who is being labeled and on what grounds. A stigma can be seen as a collection of negative features associated with a certain category of people by authoritative institutions (like the state or the church), while labeling refers to the actual and conscious act of attaching that stigma to specific individuals or groups. In this articulation, authorities play a crucial role. Stigmatization influences not only the perception of the majority, but also the attitude and the reaction of the stigmatized group, who may internalize the label.


Stigmatization is a structural force that can unleash discrimination and violence, but, as Lucassen remarks, it is subject to change and he illustrates this by showing how the stigma may remain stable over a longer period whereas the groups to whom the label is attached can change.\textsuperscript{41} By analyzing the changes in Gypsy policy in the Netherlands, he (like Okely) also stresses the changes in the stigma, which is closely linked to new attitudes over time towards itinerancy. This is important if we want to understand how the category of Gypsyness is constructed in a broader context instead of studying the people who are called as Gypsies as a stable and unproblematic category. Developments in the economic and social structure deeply influence the emergence, emphasis, disappearance or redefinition of some categories.

The second reason why it is important to problematize Gypsyness relies on confusing and conflicting accounts on who is a Gypsy. People’s narratives on Gypsyness and the people that they call Gypsies often conflict. For example, the inhabitants of the town of Bayramic themselves were easily confused when they were asked to explain what really differentiates a Gypsy from a Turk. This mainly stems from the fact that there have been many people who were called Gypsies, but who themselves identified as Turks and lived like Turks. This identification is the result of the inclusive character of the Turkish national identity that relied on different layers of Turkishness that ranged from territorial to religious proximities in defining the people’s belonging.\textsuperscript{42}

Third, the town in our case consists of three different types of people who were all called Gypsies regardless of their positions in the town and their proximity to Turkishness. The muhacirs, who were the main targets of the attacks, for instance, emphasized their Turkish citizenship due to the fact that the newly founded Turkish state

\textsuperscript{41} Lucassen, “The Power of Definition”.

\textsuperscript{42} Chapter 2 will provide a discussion on the construction of Turkishness.
considered them as Turks during the population exchange. They do not identify
themselves as Gypsies at all. The locals, on the other hand, take their traditional roles
according to local order and underline how they have adapted to the local culture of
Turkishness. The last group of sepetcis seems to fit the Gypsy ness category the best as
they only recently shifted to sedentary life. This group, however, was not present during
the attacks. The very existence of all these different groups under the same category
illustrates the internal inconsistency of processes of identification and problematizes the
idea of homogenous and fixed criteria to refer these people. Furthermore, the attacks
manifested how in certain polarized contexts people can use the power of definition to
target those who they see as the real Gypsies.43

To understand the position of Gypsies, ideas on Turkishness and Gypsy
ness both in Turkey as a whole and in the town of Bayramic, and the concept of liminality is
useful. Liminality in its basic definition refers to the states of being that is difficult to
define in mere dichotomies and situates people in positions that may fit into both and/or
either categories. The liminal position of Gypsy ness in relation to Turkishness in our case
allows us to question the idea of homogeneity and essential differences that are employed
to [re]produce socio-economic and political inequalities. Indeed, categories and
boundaries can be flexible and adaptable, but at the same time they have the tendency to
reduce the multifaceted reality to crude and essential differences that often produce the
opposite.

Gypsy ness is a good example of this inversion. Our case shows how violence
intervenes in daily relationships and seals the group boundaries. In our case, violence is
an instrument to reorder society according to former socio-economic inequalities. The
deviations and [re- and de-] formatting of the existing order through such violent
interventions again critiques essentialist views of social categories and boundaries. In our

43 These very layers are rarely emphasized in Romani literature that deals with Gypsies mainly by
focussing on folkloric features.
particular case, we will use oral history to show how flexible, relational and contextual the boundaries and the contents between Turkishness and Gypsyness are.

Oral History As a Method and an Approach to History Writing

Walter Benjamin posited the dominated class as the primary subject of history. He attempted to demystify the concept of historical progress “through a homogenous and empty time.”[^44] For historical materialists, the present stands in its relation to the past instead of this homogenous and empty time. Thus, they handle history as a construction that attaches present formations to past conditionings in favor of the dominated classes.[^45]

Harootunian interprets Benjamin’s approach to history as follows: “The principal ingredients of Benjamin’s conception of historical practice were memory, repetition, and the necessity of political intervention; its primary purpose was to free history from representation, nostalgia, and the spurious effort to reaffirm the identity of the past continuously in present.”[^46]

In this conceptualization, the past gains meaning in critiquing the status quo in the present, because it legitimizes inequalities. I find oral history as an approach and a method compatible to this view of history as well as the only way of research in this study, as will be discussed further below. First of all, oral history ideally focuses on people who are left out of traditional historiography and gives space to their voices, their suffering and helps to understand the underlying dynamics that are responsible for their


[^45]: Ibid., p 263.

subaltern position. Second, oral history looks critically at both the current position of people and how the past is remembered. It emphasizes symbolically and practically the link between the present and the past. Thus, the past’s role in the present becomes an area of discussion that can be used for the sake of today’s politics.

As a method, oral history depends on collecting historical data through talking to people and studying documents as diaries, biographies and autobiographies. Although it is considered as “the first kind of history” by some theorists, what is referred by the term “oral history” recently has become an established technique or method, rooted in theoretical and methodological reflections on the role of memory, remembering and representation. It is used largely in areas where adequate data cannot be collected through written documents or to study events that are not even recorded. But it also can be a useful corrective to biases, which may be found in written documents (and vice versa). However, its importance goes beyond these reasons.

The significance of oral history is not only the information itself, but also how the past is remembered and represented. We therefore should not reduce oral history to an alternative way of gathering data and I therefore follow Portelli when he argues that “the first thing that makes oral history different […] is that it tells us less about events than about meaning.” That is why it is so closely related to politics. Oral history has the potential for alternative representations and realities as well as the realities of “the others” of dominant groups. It breaks the static knowledge and impersonalized structure of traditional history. It appreciates the experiences, comments and identities of

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individual agents that are not represented in official and mainstream histories. Thus, it also creates a space for disadvantaged groups’ stories and their voices.\footnote{50}

Thompson emphasizes the added value of “life stories in the sociology of deviance,”\footnote{51} American anthropology, political history and “a surviving tradition of field work”\footnote{52} in oral history. According to Thompson, by relying on fieldwork, oral history traces new types of information that “statistical history can no more unravel the past unaided […]”\footnote{53} and he finds the contribution of sociology and anthropology in oral history highly important. Thus, oral history is formed through the convergence of history, anthropology and sociology, which all use this method.\footnote{54}

Interviews are considered as the backbone of oral history. Grele considers it as the experience that enriches history and through a careful understanding of this experience, oral history has an added value to our understanding of history which cannot be found in written documents: “[I]t is the interviewing experience itself which can reveal the contradiction between ideology, myth and reality. By careful observation and

\footnote{50} Alex Haley, “Black History, Oral History and Genealogy,” in Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, edited by David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (California: Altamira Press, 1996), pp. 9-21. Haley argues that how black people’s history has not been written especially for the ones captured and brought to America to work as slaves and the writer explains how he found out about his ancestor and his origins through oral history. In addition to this, Sherbakova argues that political remembering and memory constituted a “serious threat” as for the Soviet regime; Irina Sherbakova, “The Gulag in Memory.” In Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, edited by David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (California: Altamira Press, 1996), pp. 235-245, p. 235.


\footnote{52} Ibid., p. 67.

\footnote{53} Ibid., p. 69.

\footnote{54} For the interaction between history and sociology as well as other social sciences such as anthropology, psychology and geography see new approaches in historiography by Peter Burke, History and Social Theory (Ithaca: New York: Cornell University Press, 1992); Geoff Eley, “Is All the World a Text? From Social History to the History of Society e Decades Later,” in Historic Turn in the Human Science, edited by Terence, McDonalds (Ann Arbor: Michigan State University, 1996), pp. 193-243.
understanding of this experience we can add a depth to our historical understanding which is never revealed in the written record.”

This understanding includes finding the links between the interviewee and historical and cultural context of the story: “Our aim is to bring to conscious articulation the ideological problematic of the interviewee, to reveal the cultural context in which information is being conveyed, and to thus transform an individual story into a cultural narrative, and thereby, to more fully understand what happened in the past.”

Along with this understanding, one should be aware of the existing hierarchies. As an interview depends on an information exchange between two people, it is a very good way to communicate, because it is something mutual. Nonetheless, it does not imply that the relation between the interviewee and the interviewer is necessarily equal, as it is influenced by social hierarchies. Thus, the standpoint of the interviewer also becomes important in the questions and answers as well as the focus areas.

Although some theorists appreciate the contribution of oral history as a method in history, it has not been considered worthy and “serious enough” by many scholars. Oral historians and their works have not been paid much respect. The factual credibility of oral history has been a debatable issue as the representation or remembering of a fact may not perfectly fit with the fact itself or the interviewee may misrepresent it. It is claimed that oral history is useless as one can never be sure about the data that are collected in this way. However, what has been missed in these kinds of comments are the very logic and objectives of oral history.

55 Thompson, The Voice, p. 48.

56 Ibid., p. 48.

Portelli questions the concepts “truth” and “wrong” and he asserts that “‘wrong’ statements are still psychologically ‘true’ and that this truth may be equally as important as factually reliable accounts.” Oral history, from the beginning, does not necessarily rely on a unique fact, but how some historical events and signs are constructed in memory, how they are remembered and represented by people, and how these representations are related to other representations may be some of its worries instead.

Moreover, some historians criticize oral history because the interviewees’ are not representative for the population at large. However, according to Grele, in oral history, “interviewees are selected, not because they present some abstract statistical norm, but because they typify historical processes.” Thus, the criticisms of oral history mainly focus on its factual credibility. However, exactly by questioning these points, this is where the contribution of oral history to history and the social sciences in general lies.

Because of the reasons given above oral history is crucial to get a better understanding of the social position of Gypsies in past societies and to unravel the puzzle that is central to this dissertation. The Gypsies themselves as a community are kept out of traditional historiography because of their subordinated position, which is well illustrated by the specific case of their forced dislocation in Bayramic. Oral history in this study provides a space to critique the present through looking critically at the exclusion of Gypsies in the past. I trace the narratives of the Gypsies who experienced this specific incident of dislocation. Apart from the Gypsies’, I focus on the non-Gypsies’ (who contributed and the ones who did not) representations of the incident along with their memories before, during and after the events. I believe that those who did not experience the incident, but heard about it and/or experienced its effects can also contribute to this study, just like my own experiences based on my fieldwork and in-

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59 Grele, “Movement”, p. 41.
depth interviews. Reflections of the past experiences and discourses on the present influence this story. Trends in narratives and awareness of the shifts between discourses in the very moments of conversations thus become a significant area for inquiry. Open-ended questions that allow a story-teller develop her/his discourse gathered a remarkable place in the semi-structured interviews. Eventually, the narratives of about two hundred people in the town contributed to my study while fourty-seven of them constructed the backbone of the findings.

Moreover, oral history was the only way to do research on this particular case. I attempted to find archives and state documentation regarding the case, but apart from a few newspaper articles published at the time. I was not able to find any documentation despite my inquiries in the local and national archives. Apart from the fieldwork and interviews, I also investigated written works and documents that helped to frame the socioeconomic context and the local history of the town. Also here the documentation was sparse due to the insufficiencies of the state archives at the local level. In the interviews, on the other hand, silence was crucial as people were reluctant to reveal their voices on certain issues. Additionally, tape-recording and even the taking of notes during the interview were usually avoided as well as direct questions. In contrast, indirect questions and informal conversations encouraged the narrators.

The exploration of the 1970 forced dislocation of Gypsies is important for several reasons. First of all, there are only few studies on Gypsy people living in Turkey, even though recently a modest increase in the interest in the issue can be observed in academic research and social projects (i.e. Romani Studies at Bilgi University, the Accessible Life Association). Second, no researchers have touched upon the 1970

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60 Neither local nor nationwide documentation were available on the case. I consulted the archives of municipality, the security forces, the administration of justice and local governorship at the local level; the Ministry of Domestic Affairs, the Ministry of Highways and the Ministry of Forestry at the national level. Most documents on the town and in the period under investigation were destroyed. However, limited findings on socioeconomic context of the time and some statistical values will be used to demonstrate on our inquiry in Chapter 3.
dislocation so that literature on this issue is entirely lacking. Third, this study carries the potential to illuminate how exclusion in relation to citizenship, national and ethnic identity as well as the status of Gypsies has been historically constituted in Turkey. Thus, it also opens a space for political intervention into today’s politics on Gypsy issues and a contribution to look more critically at the Gypsies’ ongoing social exclusion. Finally, with its linkages to social exclusion and Gypsy studies, this study has the potential to stimulate further comparative research both for the Gypsy people and other groups experiencing exclusion in Turkey and beyond.

Contributions and the Contents of the Chapters

This study aims to contribute to several fields. In general, it will reflect on theories on ethnicity, identities, categories, nationalities and violence. The social construction of categories and their employment in societies is one of the main discussions that will be followed by reconstructing the forced dislocations of the Gypsies. This study also serves as a case to analyze how particular categories influence daily interactions, violent and peaceful in their (local) historical and socio-economic context.

The study additionally aims to stress some shortcomings of the studies on Gypsies in Europe. The political recognition and social movements of Gypsies, anthropological research on Gypsy groups and their culture, their ways of identification, and the discrimination that they face are among the issues that have been intensely investigated. However, most studies do not connect the issue of Gypsies to a wider discussion or to other research areas. Moreover, some follow a nationalist and essentialist logic that uncritically assumes that Gypsies are a homogenous ethnic group. In contrast to such an essentialist view, this research presents at least three groups of people that are
called Gypsies, who in different ways are related to Gypsyness and Turkishness and who are also perceived differently by the wider public in a small Turkish town.

Furthermore, much research in Romani studies does not point at these kinds of relationships, nor do they question the boundaries with other categories, and often reproduce the existing frame in which Gypsies are perceived as an unproblematic delineated ethnic group. This study, instead fundamentally questions homogeneity and reveals the contextual and relational characteristics of the Gypsyness as a category. I find the usage of Gypsyness as a category helpful to emphasize the interchangeability, flexibility and reflexivity of the meanings, perceptions and criteria that are attached to it. Moreover, looking at Gypsyness through the lenses of various relations displays different dynamics based on social, economic and cultural changes.

By analyzing the lives, relations and socioeconomic conditions in the town, and focusing on the relationship between Gypsies and Turks, this study fills a significant gap in the literature on the Gypsies in Turkey and what is internationally known as Romani literature. In the Turkish literature, no articulated historical-ethnographic research has been done on the relationships between Gypsies and Turks. Some studies point at the Gypsies’ conditions, stereotypes, specific features, their images in literatures and idioms. Most, however, are limited to the particularities of the Gypsy culture or discrimination by state and the dominant population, and seldom systematically explore the perceptions and relations between Gypsies and non-Gypsies. Some of these studies reproduce existing categories instead of questioning the relationship between different categories and people, as this study aims to. However, some available research and conversations with current scholars in the field have been very inspiring and fruitful for this study.

Below, I will first demonstrate how Gypsyness as a social category has been developed and how it is perceived in different contexts. The literature in the tradition of Romani Studies will be discussed in its relation with ethnic categories. The changes in
Gypsyness will be explained by stressing its flexibility and contextuality. I will discuss how Gypsyness in practice converges with and diverges from similarly constituted categories. In the same chapter, I also will look at the particularities of the Turkish case and the linkages between Gypsyness and Turkishness. This second chapter puts the category of Gypsyness in a more general frame.

The third chapter is a historical analysis of the transitions in the category of Gypsyness in the case of Bayramic. It will show why at the moment of the attacks the category was activated. What had changed in the socio-economical and cultural context of the country and how was this reflected in the town? The effects of urbanization will be studied in its local context. Especially the developments in the transportation sector and the increasing competition between various social groups will be analyzed in depth, because this played a major role in the forced dislocation. The increased competition in this sector in which the muhacir Gypsies had taken pivotal positions will help to illuminate the socio-economic background as well as the individual interests in the attacks.

The fourth chapter analyzes the local context and will deal with the local relations and the way power hierarchies were constructed in the town. Key questions are how Gypsyness influenced the relations between certain people; how people defined Gypsyness; and who identified as or were identified as Gypsies. In short, the relationship between the categories of Turkishness and Gypsyness are at the center of our inquiries. The chapter will dwell on the complexity of definitions, the confusions to which ethnic definitions may give rise, as daily interactions and relationships often lead to the blurring or even shifting of ethnic boundaries.

This chapter will introduce the category of Gypsyness in the town; how it was constituted hierarchically as inferior to Turkishness despite of the flexibility, confusion and conflicts around the category and the people who are labeled as such; and will also
show how the stigma was activated. Following the previous chapter that explains the outburst of violence moment, this chapter will display the fixation and the reproduction of the category during the attacks. Although the socio-economic context had always allowed for flexibility in the construction of ethnic categories and has lead to changing relations and perceptions in the town, this flexibility reached its limits at the moment that the historically constituted category of Gypsyness as a stigma was reasserted and legitimized the attacks.

In the light of the socio-economic context of the time and historical constitution of Gypsyness in the town, the narratives of the townspeople including Gypsies, perpetrators, protectors, participants and the others, will gather a new meaning. The fifth chapter will deal with the oral narratives of the attacks and forced dislocation in 1970. I will focus on two major narratives: one explains the attacks by pointing at the alleged immorality and misbehavior of the Gypsies, while the other highlights the individual interests in the transportation sector and Gypsies’ acquisition of socio-economic power.

In this chapter, we will see how the differences in remembrance and representations were directly linked to different positions of the interviewees in society during the attacks. The dominant local memory of the attacks reproduces the stigma of Gypsyness and appears as the master narrative among most townspeople, perpetrators and even some local Gypsies. The story reveals the importance of socio-economic competition and the individual interests of some perpetrators, most protectors, muhacir Gypsies and some local Gypsies. It is telling that the fear of talking about the perpetrators and keeping silent still persists until today. To understand the narratives, conflicting ways of remembering and different representations, the previous chapters serve as the necessary background and as our toolbox. The local context, countrywide socio-economic transitions, Gypsyness in Turkey and in the town as well as the role of the state will be crucial for the analysis. Finally, the literature on exclusionary violence in which similar
cases are analyzed will be used to look for parallels that help to understand the 1970 attacks in Bayramic beyond its particular local expression.