

Aylin Demir

Abstract: Live Music Events and Politics in Turkey

In my thesis, I examine the relationships between politics and music through Dersimli (the people of Dersim) artists' live music events. Dersim is a region in eastern Turkey, where Zazaki- and Kurdish-speaking Alevi live. Dersimli's ethno-religious differences from the governing actors- composed of Turkish and Sunni communities- caused them to be constructed as the "Other". My work highlights how these contestations can be traced through music. Beginning from the Republican Era, cultural politics of music cultivated musical genres. Naturally, these strategies excluded languages other than Turkish. Similar critiques were raised against the performance of Alevi musical genres with respect to lyrical and musical changes. I will explain how Dersimli musicians challenge these past and present restrictions both through their speech and performances. In this way, I attempt to understand how music of Dersimli in the social space constitutes itself as an aesthetic-political matter. My aim in doing is to explain the concert environments political aspects of the live events in Turkey.

Considering the relationships between music and politics, I focus on the carriers of musicians, their repertoires and discourses. My aim is to understand how musicians' discourses on music enable them to challenge the cultural politics of music imposed in the past. My interest is to highlight how musicians' discourses vary including their efforts to apply the characteristics of the oral tradition genres, using of Zazaki language, highlighting the Alevi belief practices and performances. To explore these, I focus on musicians' stage performances, speeches, song lyrics, compositions, and repertoires.

Finally, I reflect upon on the responses of audiences. Audience's aesthetic responses would enable us to understand the constitution of emotion, memory and identity through music. Thus, I attempt to understand how audiences locate their identity in relation to performed music.

I. Bio- Aylin Demir

Aylin Demir is an independent scholar, writer and musician. She is currently doing her PhD at Middle East Technical University in Ankara, Turkey. Her dissertation is on live music events of musicians from the region known as Dersim. She undertook research on migrant associations in Germany between 2014 and 2017.

