

Discussing the Concept of “Islamic City” Through the Avarız and Cizye Registers of Aleppo in the Seventeenth Century

17. Yüzyıl Halep Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri Üzerinden İslam Şehri Kavramını Tartışmak

Esra DEMİRCİ AKYOL*

Abstract

This paper discusses the concept of “Islamic city” through the example of the city of Aleppo in the seventeenth century by focusing on *Avarız* and *Cizye* registers. *Avarız* and *Cizye* registers were an important source concerning social life in the seventeenth century due to changing political and economic situation of the Empire. These registers provided valuable information not only on the amount of tax collected, but also on the social structure of the cities via the information noted near the names of the *nefers* of each *hane* enabling the researchers to come up with conclusions about the social and economic structure of the cities at the *mahalle* level.

Being aware of Max Weber’s important place in the discussions on the “Islamic city” due to his conclusion about the Islamic urban society being a chaotic association consisting of a mess of various sects and tribes, this paper will talk about various important organizations at the city centres of the East including mahalles, guilds, fraternities and religious groups.

What differentiates this study from other studies on the Islamic city is that it focuses on a specific time period by using specific registers that were reflecting the social and political structure of the Empire. Focusing on a multi-ethnic multi-religious city like Aleppo also provides information about the relation between various ethnic and religious groups.

Key Words: Aleppo, Islamic city, Avarız, Cizye, Mahalle

* Dr., Bilkent University, History Department, e-mail: esrade@bilkent.edu.tr

Özet

Bu çalışma, Avarız ve Cizye defterlerini kullanarak “İslam şehri” kavramını 17. yüzyıl Halep şehri örneği üzerinden tartışmaktadır. İmparatorluğun içinde bulunduğu politik ve ekonomik değişimler nedeniyle Avarız ve Cizye defterleri 17. yüzyılda sosyal hayat hakkında önemli kaynaklardı. Bu kayıtlar sadece toplanan vergi miktarı hakkında bilgi vermekle kalmayıp haneler içerisinde her neferle ilgili yanına alınan notlar sayesinde şehirlerdeki sosyal hayat hakkında da bilgi veriyordu. Bu şekilde şehirlerin sosyal ve ekonomik yapısı mahalle bazında incelenebiliyordu.

Max Weber’in, İslami şehir toplumunun farklı kabileler ve mezheplerden oluşan kaotik bir yapı olduğu çıkarımıyla “İslam şehri” tartışmalarındaki önemli yerinin farkında olan bu çalışmada Doğu şehirlerinde yer alan ve mahalle, lonca, cemiyet ve dini toplulukları da içeren önemli örgütlenmelerden bahsedilecektir.

Bu çalışmayı, İslam şehri ile ilgili diğer çalışmalardan ayıran önemli bir özelliği belirli bir zaman aralığına odaklanmak üzere İmparatorluğun sosyal ve politik yapısını yansıtan belirli kaynakları kullanmasıdır. Ayrıca, Halep gibi çok-etnili ve çok-dinli bir şehirle ilgili olarak bu çalışmanın yapılması farklı dini ve etnik gruplar arası ilişkileri anlamak açısından da önem arz etmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Halep, İslam şehri, Avarız, Cizye, Mahalle

The concept of the Islamic city has always been a matter of discussion since it was put forward. Max Weber’s works on the western city have been very much effective on the discussions concerning the Islamic city. Theories against or in favour of Weber’s idea included both endeavours to prove that there actually are cities like their western counterparts in the eastern world and studies to display that there is something like “Islamic city” in the eastern world and although it may seem totally different, it actually is a city when considered in its own terms. Scholars advocating the latter argument mostly had the same line of thinking with Weber and agreed with him on the fact that in the east there are no cities in the western sense, but they take the discussion a step further and conclude that there is the Islamic city and these cities have some features that are similar to western ones and thus devote their studies finding out characteristics that Weber stated lacking in the part of the world where Islam is the dominant religion. Some commonalities found in different cities

where Muslims are the majority are considered to be enough to name these cities as Islamic. What is meant by this concept is still not clear since Islam is practiced on a wide geography and the studies on this part of the world only include some cities. This paper discusses the concept of "Islamic city" through the example of Aleppo by utilizing Avarız registers of 1616 and 1678 together with the Cizye registers of 1627 and 1640. These registers give us information about the settlement patterns and social structure of cities.

According to Weber, city is a phenomenon that is related to the social side of the person. People are social beings and they live in groups. City is a consequence of this social life and it is mostly dominated by economic activity.¹ Weber's insistence on the importance of economic life in city goes as far as to define city on the basis of economic activity and accordingly city is differentiated from any other type of settlement by its inhabitants' involvement in trade rather than agricultural activity. On the other hand, it is not true to define every unit involving in trade as city since there should be economic versatility, which can be provided by a market and continuous exchange of goods rather than temporal activity of trade. In conclusion it can be stated that city is actually a market settlement.²

Weber does not only imply that there were no cities in the eastern world within the frame that he put forward, but also suggested that there were some essential impediments before the formation of these cities. According to him, cities of the middle ages were based on secular bases. Although the church had an important place within the cities, it was secular city council members that brought different church associations together to form a sense of urban community. In the end, despite their differences in worship and family membership, city people formed an administrative unit with similar living conditions.³ Since living conditions were mainly determined by economic activities, it is the economic benefits that brought city people together and enabled the formation of the western cities in the Middle Ages.⁴

By studying certain examples from the east, Weber concluded that there is no urban organization, city plan or even the idea of the city. Islamic urban society is a chaotic association consisting of a mess of various sects and tribes. İnalçık tried to disprove Weber's idea that there is no organization in Islamic cities, by explaining the administrative functions in the city and kadı's responsibilities in a city. He also answers the claims that Islamic cities are chaotic in the sense that they are made up of dead-end streets. For this, he

¹ Ahmet Aydoğın, "Önsöz", *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000, p. 9.

² Max Weber, "Şehrin Doğası", *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, Translated by Fırat Oruç, edited by Ahmet Aydoğın, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000, p. 102-103.

³ Weber, "Batı Şehri", *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, p. 141-146.

⁴ Weber, "Batı Şehri", *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, p. 150.

divides the city into two parts; trade centre (the market) and the residential areas and states that the trade centre is organized whereas the mahalles in the residential areas are formed by the groups living there within the limits of their understanding of privacy.⁵ Thus, the residential areas may seem disorganized, but they are formed freely by the people living in it according to their needs. Different mahalle and house structures in different Islamic countries can be explained from this perspective.

Scholars who suggest the existence of the concept of the “Islamic city” come up with some similarities. The big mosque at the centre of the city and the madrasa around it, the hierarchy of the markets placed according to the type of goods, the residential areas mostly with ethnic and religious solidarity, and a castle.⁶ In addition, the discussions on the existence of the concept “Islamic city” contain the pre-Islamic structures of these cities. According to some scholars, there was a similar city structure in the earlier settlements. Since most of these cities were placed on the old remnants of the ancient cities that had existed around the same areas, the old style of settlement is reflected in the new cities. Also, the central place of the mosque is seen mostly to be the old place of a temple or a church. In most cases these places of worship are just turned into mosques.⁷ One can observe these structures in most of the cities in places where Muslims live, but is this type of structure specific to Islam? Among the researchers trying to answer this question Kuban stated that there is nothing like Islamic city, but there are cities outside of the west that have similarities in terms of institutions.⁸

The Islamic City

Students of the Muslim world and their social structure did not agree with Weber on the idea that there exist no cities in the Islamic world. On the contrary, they put forward the common city structure of the cities in the Muslim countries and state that the market (suq), the mosque, the schools, the residential areas (mahalles) and the cemeteries are where they are because Muslims dominate the city. Their placement suggests an essence in these cities that is unique to Islam.⁹

⁵ Adalet Bayramođlu Alada, *Osmanlı Şehrinde Mahalle*, Sümer Kitabevi, İstanbul 2008, p. 24.

⁶ G.E. Von Grunebaum, “The Structure of the Muslim Town,” in *Islam in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, London 1955, p. 141-158.

⁷ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 116.

⁸ Dođan Kuban, “Anadolu-Türk Şehri: Tarihi Gelişmesi, Sosyal ve Fiziki Özellikleri Üzerinde Bazı Gelişmeler,” *Vakıflar Dergisi*, VII (1968), p. 53-73.

⁹ Albert H. Hourani, “Introduction,” *The Islamic City*, edited by A.H. Hourani and S. M. Stern, Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd., Glasgow 1970, p. 12.

Lack of urban community, city laws and autonomy in the Islamic cities were considered to be reasons for it not be accepted as a city in the Western sense. However, by accepting such an idea, mahalles as urban institutions are left out of the picture. Although it may seem irrelevant to try to look for corporate bodies in the Ottoman Empire or any other Muslim country earlier, it would be a mistake not to take mahalle structure into account as an organization between the person and the state. Although such structures are not defined in the Sheri'a as corporate bodies, these served similar needs.

Some scholars tried to disprove Weber's claims via the material and topographical characteristics of the Islamic city, but there is also the inner structure that should be looked at. As Stern emphasized, the Islamic city had a loose structure and it lacked corporate municipal institutions. According to Weber, cities of the Antiquity were the perfect examples of cities and they had municipal institutions. Despite the fact that the Muslim cities mostly inherited aspects from these cities of the Antiquity such as the bath, the market and the places of worship, they could not borrow municipal institutions, because by the time Islamic cities emerged on the remnants of the old cities these institutions were long gone or at least did not exist in their full extent. There were some movements towards formation of autonomous corporations especially in times of peace since the pressure of the central authority is less, but they never developed into a full autonomous city.¹⁰

A different way of life and differences in the understanding of privacy were effective in the way the cities were organized in the eastern part of the world. Social life was one of the main elements that the cities were organized around and although they may seem completely dissimilar to their western counterparts, eastern cities had structural characteristics that will be explained in detail in the following parts.

The Guilds

Almost all scholars of the city in the east come up with examples of organizations that can be interpreted as corporate organizations. Mahalles, guilds and tariqas or schools of law are among the most common examples. According to L. Masisignon, organization of the workers in guilds in the Islamic cities goes back to the reign of the Abbasids and it is related to the half religious, half social movement of the Qarmatians who aimed at overthrowing the Abbasid caliphate. These were Ismaili organizations and were not welcomed by the Sunnites.¹¹ Nonetheless, after a long discussion and a search

¹⁰ S.M. Stern, "The Constitution of the Islamic City," *The Islamic City*, edited by A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd., Glasgow 1970, p. 25-31.

¹¹ Louis Massignon, "Sinf," *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, 1935.

for evidence Stern concludes that this suggestion about the establishment of the guilds has no base and cannot be verified.¹² Leaving the discussions about the establishment of the guild system aside, guilds were accepted to be among the most important groups in the city. Changing conditions of economics, society and environment were effective on the organization of these guilds too. In times when there was less pressure from the central authorities, they were strong enough to form their own security organizations and defended their cities from any kind of attacks.

Despite their temporal seizure of power, guilds mostly existed for the sake of the government and were used as instruments of state control. Representatives of the guilds together with relevant government officials in the cities came together and decided the prices and the quality measures of the goods. However, the person responsible for the application of these decisions is the muhtesib and this is a government personnel working together with the kadi. Thus, these organizations were not formed and did not work separately from the government. Actually, forming different artisans into groups according to profession was the best way to provide control over their activities and the quality of their products through the control of the municipal authority. Artisans conglomerating under corporations was a result of the interest of administrative control.¹³ This was also the case in Europe in the middle ages; yet the European guilds were more organized institutionally and they sometimes claimed autonomy and got some political rights.¹⁴

Although the guilds were not organized to claim autonomy, this did not mean that they were never involved in politics. On the contrary, these guilds had a say in the cities and if this city is an important trade centre as Aleppo, they sometimes were able to take a stand against the central authority and fight against the kapıkulus sent from the centre on the side of the local janissaries. As stated above, the main purpose of these organizations was to provide an intermediary between the state and the people, but as some scholars suggest, in the later periods, with the waning of the central authority these groups may have had more apparent political aims and their activities could have been felt more within the cities.¹⁵ However, lack of cooperation and their extreme separation prevented the guilds in the Islamic cities to come up as “counter-authority” groups.¹⁶ In addition to the routine duties of the guilds such as

¹² Stern, “The Constitution of the Islamic City,” p. 44.

¹³ Henri Pirenne, *Economic and Social History of the Medieval Europe*, London 1958, p. 181-182.

¹⁴ Stern, “The Constitution of the Islamic City,” p. 46-47.

¹⁵ Albert H. Hourani, “The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent”, *Studia Islamica*, 8 (1957), p. 97.

¹⁶ Andre Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1995, p. 87.

inspecting the efficiency of their members and the quality of the products, setting the prices and solving problems among its members; they were also responsible for the administrative activities of their streets such as settling disputes and keeping the order.

In Aleppo the suqs were organized hierarchically according to the importance of the products that are made or sold. Biggest of these suqs were placed in the “medine” which can be explained as the city centre. International fabric and spice trade is concentrated in the medine whereas smaller markets (Suveyka) were seen in between the residential areas. These suveyka were mostly specialized markets where the everyday needs of the population were provided.¹⁷ The biggest mosque was at the centre of the city and the closest suqs were the jewellers (Suq al-saga) and the traders of imported fabrics. In Aleppo, Damascus and Algeria, jewellers were adjacent to the central mosque.¹⁸

Shop owners usually did not reside in the market area. Markets and the residential areas were separated from each other. For instance in Aleppo the centre lay between Bab-ı Antakya and the castle. Medine was the centre of economic activity. There usually existed suqs and kervansarays and these both served the needs of the merchants and the shop owners. There was a second centre of economic activity in Aleppo named as the Bankusa Suq placed at the Northeastern gates of the city. This suq was specialized in travel equipment, because this gate was on the pilgrimage route.¹⁹ Although there were residential areas close to the medine, they were not in the same places with the shops.

Guilds specialized in one craft and if one of the ethnic groups specializes in one craft then the guilds become ethnically specialized too. For example, Antakya suqs were organized according to the types of crafts (in which the same crafts were settled in the same part of the market and all of the craftsmen were part of their guild) and the ethnic or religious groups. Blacksmiths were Alawites, farriers were Turks and the jewellers were Christians.²⁰

As mentioned above, guilds had power as a group especially at times when the central authority was weak and they had a political stance against the state's acts. This was apparent in Aleppo when there was an open struggle between the janissaries and the sipahis. Actually, the Ottomans tend to get soldiers for the army thorough the method of “devşirme”, from the mid fifteenth century onwards, in which non-Muslim children were taken and brought up as the

¹⁷ Enver Çakar, *XVI. Yüzyılda Haleb Sancağı (1516-1566)*, Fırat Üniversitesi Basımevi, Elazığ 2003, p. 133.

¹⁸ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Araç Kentleri*, p. 162.

¹⁹ Enver Çakar, *XVII. Yüzyılda Haleb Eyaleti ve Türkmenleri*, Fırat Üniversitesi Basımevi, Elazığ 2006, p. 88.

²⁰ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Araç Kentleri*, p. 169.

servers of the Sultan and the state, but after a while, soldiers were began to be conscripted from Anatolia. They were mostly Muslim-Turk soldiers who were sent to the Arab regions. In addition to this, in most other parts of the empire the janissaries were conscripted from the local population.

Examinations of the registers from the second half of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century show that there were many janissaries involved in agriculture. They were not recruited under the *devşirme* levy and this can be proven by their fathers' Muslim names. In addition, they were not the sons of the Janissaries settled in the centre but assigned to the garrisons in the provinces, because they would then be registered among the peasant population. These were locally recruited soldiers.²¹ This was a method used by the Ottoman authorities to find the necessary war-ready soldiers in the provinces without relying totally on the troops to be sent from the centre. These groups usually did not go to the corps' barracks in Istanbul, but remained in their native places.

These locally recruited janissaries were very much involved with other kinds of economic activities. Some owned lands and some were members of the guilds as craftsmen. Although it was forbidden for janissaries to marry, during the reign of Sultan Selim II they had the right to marry and after the Grand Vezir Sokollu Mehmed Paşa's death, their sons were accepted to the corps as "kul oğlu"²² and these could be found in the registers with the title "Beşe" added to their names.

In the case of Aleppo, at the beginning the Janissaries that were sent from the centre for the protection of these cities usually settled in the city and formed close relations with the native people. Most of them married with native women and become tradesmen. In addition to these, in the seventeenth century ordinary people of the region could become Janissaries. Most of the Janissaries in Aleppo were involved with moderate business. They were concentrated in Bankusa, Bab el-Makam, Bab el-Neyreb, Karlık, Bab el-Melek mahalles of the city. These were settled in the eastern part of the city and they were not wealthy regions.²³ In the 1616 Avarız register²⁴ of Aleppo the members of different religious and ethnic groups were recorded with a note next to their names stating their religion or ethnicity. İbrahim Beşe in Saçlı Han-ı Fevkanı neighbourhood (p51) Kaya Beşe in Tatarlar neighbourhood (p56) and Beyazid Beşe and Ahmed Beşe in Menzeli neighbourhood (p 59) were recorded

²¹ Evgeni Radushev, "'Peasant' Janissaries?" *Journal of Social History*, Winter (2008), p. 450.

²² Radushev, "'Peasant' Janissaries?" p. 458.

²³ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 41.

²⁴ For a detailed explanation of the Avarız registers see page 11 of this study.

with a note "Türkman-i Şam" beside their names. This note shows that these janissaries were Turcoman in origin. Turcoman janissary is a good example of the new recruitment strategies of the corps.²⁵

On the other hand, there were the kapıkulu soldiers sent from the centre. They settled in the castle region. The coexistence of these two types of soldiers always caused a tension between them. The janissaries were from the cities that they were settled and the kapıkulları were sent from the centre. Janissaries were actually so much together with the native population that they were called *yerliyye* or *yerliyyan* by the people.²⁶ In case of unrest, the yerliyyan would take their stand on the side of the native population as was the case in Syria when the native people did not want the kapıkulus in their city and the controversy between the castle and the rest of the city continued from 1740 to 1757. Kapıkulus were supported by the intra muros (mahalle within the city walls) Amare Mahallesi where the ruling elite of the empire was settled. Janissaries were larger in number and had greater support from the people²⁷. Guilds were among the strongest supporters of the janissaries, because they were organized and had close relations with them due to their membership. With the armed power of the janissaries, the guilds actually had an important role. However, in the eighteenth century, janissaries lost power against the kapıkulus, while the same kind of cooperation between the janissaries and the people against the kapıkulus in Damascus resulted in the Sultan's decree for the kapıkulus to leave the city.²⁸

When the janissaries lost power against the kapıkulus, another group that was also in conflict with the janissaries found support from the people. These were the sherifs (grandchildren of the Prophet). They also had a politically active role in the city life. At certain time periods the numbers of the sherif families were thought to be a lot. They were not settled in specific mahalles within the city like the Janissaries, but they usually were residing in intra muros mahalles and there seemed to be a concentration in the regions around Bab el-Nasr.²⁹ Sherifs of Damascus were known to have played an important role in the fight against the kapıkulus. In Aleppo, there was not an open revolt against the kapıkulu troops. There the sherifs were also important for the transmission of complaints from the people to the kapıkulus. They were the intermediary groups that had good relations both with the native people and the military men sent from Istanbul.³⁰ There existed a rivalry between the yerliyyan

25 Mustafa Öztürk, "1616 tarihli Halep Avanz-Hane Defteri," *OTAM* 6, (1997), p. 264.

26 Hourani, "The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent," p. 99.

27 Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 42.

28 Karl Barbir, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus*, Princeton 1980, p. 89-92.

29 Hourani, "The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent," p. 96-97.

30 Abdul-Karim Rafeq, *The Province of Damascus 1723-1783*, Beirut 1966, p. 50-51.

Janissaries and the sherifs of Aleppo due to conflict of interest. Bloody fights between the Janissaries and the sherifs continued for nearly 35 years beginning in 1769/1770 and the last event taking place in 1805.³¹ In the end, neither the janissaries nor the sherifs had political power and they did not organize the people into groups that claim autonomy or any other kind of political advantage.

The Islamic Religious Groups and Other Urban Organizations

Among the examples of organizations that had autonomy and could even claim political rights or at least no control over their properties and activities were the religious orders in Christianity especially in the Middle Ages. Apparently no religious group in Islamic cities had become as powerful as the religious groups in the Middle Ages in Europe. However, according to Lapidus, fraternal societies such as young men's gangs and Sufi orders are worth looking at when talking about urban organizations.³² In Damascus young gangs were called *zu'ar* and it meant scoundrels or troublemakers and they were seen at the end of the fifteenth century. Although their name had a negative connotation, they were defenders of the quarters. They resisted excessive taxation and abuse by any Mamluk officer. They were actually at the centre of the popular resistance to the Mamluk regime, but on the other hand when their own interests were in this direction they were causing problems for the city residents and abused the quarters. They could be criminals, pillagers, thieves and even assassins when their own benefits were at stake. Thus, despite their temporal stance against state actions and support for the wellbeing of the city residents, they actually served themselves and exploited the weaknesses of both the state and the urban society.³³

Some scholars suggested that the *ulama*- the people educated in the literature, doctrines and laws of Islam were actually very effective on the people, because they were the ones giving people the religious and moral guidance. They were active at every level of social life as *imams*, scholars and *kadis*. The *ulama* were important for the discussion of the Islamic city in two ways. Firstly, their effect on people made them the leaders of the city dwellers when the city is considered on the basis of mahalles. Imams were the representatives of the city quarters in the meetings organized by the *kadis* about the general issues of the cities.³⁴ Secondly, *kadis*, who were also among the

³¹ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 52.

³² Ira M. Lapidus, "The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria," *The Islamic City*, Edited by A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd., Glasgow 1970, p. 200.

³³ Lapidus, "The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria," p. 201.

³⁴ Halil İnalçık, "Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration," *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, Edited by T.Naff and R. Owen, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale 1977, p. 38-39.

ulama, were actually the judges and the lawyers of the cities in addition to their administrative responsibilities. Weber claimed that kadıs applied Sheri'a arbitrarily. For this reason, he suggested that there existed no autonomous city law and no independent judges in Islamic cities. However, according to İnalçık, Islamic city was also organized administratively and the kadıs were actually responsible for the application of the Sheri'a and this was not an arbitrary application. Since kadıs were educated in theology and Islamic law they knew how to interpret these laws in certain situations.³⁵ In addition, Lapidus stated that the ulama, among whom were all religious authorities at all levels of the society, regulated the markets as well as managing the cities' educational, religious and philanthropic institutions. With all these responsibilities they were actually the local leaders of the community in the cities.³⁶

On the other hand, the ulama were not independent urban leaders. They were educated in state institutions and assigned by the state especially as was the case with the kadıs. They played the mediating role between the people and the state. Furthermore, some ulama attracted more attention than any other with their way of interpreting Sheri'a. These ulama created more comprehensive communities around the loosely organized schools of law that they have formed. There were four important schools of law in Islam³⁷ and every Muslim was considered to be a member of one of the four schools. The person does not choose which school to follow, but usually becomes a member according to the traditional membership of his/her quarter, city or region. In these schools of law, the people practiced Islam according to their ulamas' interpretation. These were not corporate organizations, but rather loosely organized groups.³⁸ Some people applied one interpretation in certain issues, while applying others in other issues. These were not strict divisions of the society, but communities that brought people together much better than any other fraternity. In rural areas, almost all of the population belong to the same school of law and for this reason; membership to a certain school of law does not make a difference. However, in the cities where people from different regions came together, these kinds of commonalities formed a reason for people to organize under this umbrella. No matter how organized or disorganized these groups might be, none of the fraternities, gangster groups or schools of law could take the form of a political organization claiming autonomy.

³⁵ Bayramoğlu Alada, *Osmanlı Şehrinde Mahalle*, p. 23.

³⁶ Lapidus, "The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria," p. 204.

³⁷ Hanafi, Hambali, Şafi'i and Maliki were the schools of law in Islam named after their ulama leaders. They are called madhabs in Arabic.

³⁸ Lapidus, "The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria," p. 204-205.

Mahalles

Lack of corporate organizations in Islam was seen as a barrier in front of city formation by Weber. Students of Islamic cities suggested that there actually existed cities in Islam although they may not be defined with western concepts. There was a kind of solidarity among the city dwellers especially in the city quarters named as “mahalles” or “haras” in most of the Islamic countries. Mahalles are thought to be born as a result of security reasons. According to Sauvaget, when the Arabs came to the classical cities of the Roman period, the cities began to change in structure. The market places gradually had taken their current shape. After the period of the early caliphate, there was a time of insecurity causing the population to withdraw into city quarters where the people from common ethnic or religious backgrounds had closer neighbourhood relations forming the mahalles within a city.³⁹ These mahalles had their *ra'is* as their leaders.⁴⁰ These were not state officials, but local people. These chiefs had the control of their regions in times of the decline of government authority, but they were not autonomous rulers except for some exceptional cases.

Mahalles were residential areas with small markets for the everyday needs of its residents and some had small workshops for weaving, but these areas were mainly separated from the central markets. These were often homogeneous communities either religiously or ethnically. Furthermore, migrants to the cities came to neighbourhoods where they have their relatives or acquaintances. Although there might have been divisions according to ethnic or religious background, class distinctions were not very apparent. Mahalles were like local administrative units. They had their chiefs (*ra'is*) among the local notables. During the time of the Mamluks the chief was chosen among the local notables by the Mamluk governors of the cities.⁴¹ As suggested earlier, in most cases imams were also acting as the community leaders especially in relations with the *kadı*.

Mahalles were places where people had very close relations that the kind of urban community that Weber put forward, can be claimed to have been formed in these mahalles on smaller scales. Joint responsibility of the mahalle residents on the issues of debt or any other kind of issue actually was a way of reflection of this sense of community⁴². Joint responsibility necessitates that in any kind of interruption of the public peace within the neighbourhood, the residents of the relevant mahalle was to be kept responsible for it altogether. In

³⁹ J. Sauvaget, “Esquisse d’une histoire de la ville d’Alep,” *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, vii (1934), p. 421-480 as cited in Hourani, “Introduction,” p. 13.

⁴⁰ Stern, “The Constitution of the Islamic City,” p. 33.

⁴¹ Lapidus, “The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria,” p. 197.

⁴² Özer Ergeneç, “Osmanlı Şehrindeki Mahalle'nin İşlev ve Nitelikleri Üzerine,” *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, Volume IV (1983), p. 73.

cases of punishment, the mahalle was punished as a group and in the same manner taxes were levied on the mahalle altogether. For this reason, acceptance to the mahalle, and through it to the city, was based on the acceptance of the residents. For a new person to come and settle in a neighbourhood, at least some of the old residents of the mahalle should guarantee that this person is trustworthy and suitable to reside there. Joint responsibility was a result of both community and state needs, because the Ottoman state liked minimum mobility among its people. For taxation and security purposes it was seen to be better if the population could stay in wherever they were born so that they could be kept under record.

Community feeling within the mahalles could be seen in many of the documents concerning the city life in the Ottoman Empire. Especially kadi registers suggest that residents of the same mahalle and even neighbouring mahalles were recorded to guarantee that there were no bad people among themselves.⁴³ As a result of this sense of collective consciousness some scholars even suggested that identification with a mahalle was far stronger than identification with a city and explained the existing differences within a city through this identification.⁴⁴

When tried to be comprehended in the Weberian sense, the urban community in Islamic cities should be considered at two levels. As mentioned earlier, work places and residential areas were separated from each other and the city centre, where most of the markets were situated, had its own structure and therefore its own identity. On the residential side, there was a different picture. According to İlhan Tekeli, when issues like foreign threats and oppositions to the central authority were at stake, then the mahalles were the places to look at. City centre could give an idea about the city identity, but the organization as an urban community could also be found in the residential areas at a different level. For this reason, mahalle was put forward as another very important organization in addition to the guilds, fraternities and religious groups most of which were organized at the city centre.⁴⁵

Moreover, when talking about the city structure at the time of the Mamluks, Lapidus submitted mahalles to be more important than the guilds, because the guilds were not as organized as they were to be later.⁴⁶ Mahalles were formed as taxation units and they were not isolated entities. Mahalle gates were not yet permanent in this period and they had to be rebuilt only in times

⁴³ Ank. Şer. Sic., VIII/538,539,540 as mentioned in Özer Ergenç, *ibid.*, p. 73-75.

⁴⁴ Sevgi Aktüre, "Tarih İçinde Anadolu Kentinin Yapı Çözümlemeleri", *Kent Tarihi ve Sempozyum/Atölye*, edited by F.B. Yıldırım, Tarih Vakfı ve TOKİ, İstanbul 1994, p. 46-51.

⁴⁵ Bayramoğlu Alada, *Osmanlı Şehrinde Mahalle*, p. 23.

⁴⁶ Lapidus, "The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria," p. 199.

of danger. Without the walls “as a permanent part of the Islamic city” especially during the Ottoman reign, these mahalles were just adjacent streets and districts within the larger city structure⁴⁷. Shortly, the mahalles were small, integrated communities most of which had ethnic, religious or economic unity.

Aleppo in Ottoman Tax Registers of the Seventeenth Century

Mahalle makes an important part of most of the studies on the cities of the Islamic world, whether they suggest that there is something like Islamic city or not, because its significance can be seen through Ottoman documents. As suggested many times before, mahalles were the basic administrative units for the state. Census records of the cities were kept on mahalle basis as an equivalent to their counterparts in the rural areas: the villages. For this reason, it is important to understand the mahalle structure to understand the city as a whole and suggest whether there really existed an Islamic city. One of the ways to study mahalles is to look at registers or *defters* kept by the Ottoman state.

In order to keep track of the taxpaying population of the cities, *defters* were used. In the earlier periods up until the seventeenth century, *tahrir* registers were kept. These registers provided valuable information about the social and economic life both in the cities and the smaller administrative units. With the beginning of the seventeenth century keeping of the *tahrir* registers were abandoned gradually.⁴⁸ Economic and social conditions of the seventeenth century required other types of record keeping leading to *Avarız* and *cizye* registers to be kept more regularly. Since the main source of revenue for the state was now *avarız* and *cizye*, these registers contained information about the taxpayers. The taxpayers and the amount of tax that they were paying was not the only information that we gather from these registers.⁴⁹ Demographic, economic -showing which payment units (*hanes*) paid how much tax and the changing amount of tax at the level of *hanes* within a certain mahalle- and social structure of the residential units can also be followed through these documents.

At the end of the sixteenth century, one of the main institutions of the empire -*timar*- began to dissolve. *Timar* system lost its efficiency and the Celali revolts of this period worsened the situation for *tahrir* registers. Agricultural activity, which formed the basis of the *timar* system, was not possible in parts of the country where Celali revolts took place. The medium of anarchy and unrest proved *tahrir* registers useless. In this period, the fast growing number of

47 Lapidus, “The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria,” p. 197.

48 Oktay Özel, “Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri,” *Osmanlı Devleti’nde Bilgi ve İstatistik*, edited by H. İnalçık, & Ş. Pamuk, DİE Yayınları, Ankara 2001, p. 35.

49 Özel, “Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri,” p. 40.

uninhabited *tımar* lands were collected under the Sultan's *has* lands and given for tax farming. This type of revenue collection was seen before, but it became widespread throughout the empire. Through tax farming the state could obviate its desire for cash⁵⁰. In the same manner, *avarız* and *cizye* taxes were also paid in cash and the state was aware of the importance of these taxes especially in a time when the need for cash was so big. Thus, *Avarız-cizye* registers were kept by the *defterhane* (imperial registry) that used to keep *tahrir* registers earlier. *Defterhane* adapted to the new financial situation and expanded.⁵¹

Although there were records of *avarız* and *cizye* payers earlier than the seventeenth century, this century was the time that these records were kept systematically. This tax continued to be one of the main sources of revenue for the empire until it was abolished in 1856.⁵² Although *avarız* was seen before, it was an extraordinary tax collected when the state was in need. This was named as *avarız-ı divaniye* or *tekalif-i örfiye*. From the late sixteenth century onwards, these taxes became regular taxes collected annually. Since this tax had become a regular source of revenue for the state, its registers were kept in a detailed way. From 1620 onwards, these registers also contained the exempted individuals.⁵³

Avarız and *cizye* taxes were collected on *hane* basis. *Hane* meant a unit of taxpayers and this was not necessarily a family. The number of taxpaying individuals within a *hane* changed according to the wealth of the people. Although there were discussions about standardization of the approximate number of individuals registered under one *hane*, the number changed from one region to another. In addition, detailed research on the *mufassal* *avarız* registers brought to mind that *avarız* tax was collected on individual basis rather than on household basis. This is a continuation of the classical *tahrir* tradition that also collected taxes from all the adult males and recorded them as "nefer."⁵⁴ On the other hand, from 1691 onwards, *cizye* began to be collected on individual basis.⁵⁵ Although there are many similarities and the *avarız* registers are represented as the continuation of *tahrir* registers, there are differences between them. For example, the *avarız* registers include the members of the *askeri* class as well as the *ulema*, *sadat* and the other military members who were town and village dwellers.⁵⁶

50 Linda Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy. Tax Collection and Financial Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660*, Brill, Leiden 1996, p. 28.

51 Öztürk, "1616 tarihli Halep Avarız-Hane Defteri," p. 249.

52 Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy*, p. 84-85.

53 Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy*, p. 91-93.

54 Özel, "Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri," p. 40-42.

55 Darling, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy*, p. 85.

56 Özel, "Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri," p. 237.

Furthermore, in order to get information about the tax-paying population of the empire, all the adult males were recorded name by name within a region. There were notes on some special characteristics of the individuals such as their religion, city of origin and job.⁵⁷ These notes enable us to see the differences in the social status of the people living in an area. As mentioned earlier, reaching demographic results from *avarız* registers may be problematic due to the uncertainty about the number of individuals recorded within a *hane*, but information about the social life in general and economic conditions of a neighbourhood can be gathered from them.

Another point that needs attention about the *avarız* registers is that there are two types of *defter*s. One is the *mufassal avarız* register which include detailed information about the *nefers* in a region and the other type is the *avarız-hane* registers in which only the total number of *avarız hane*s and the total amount of tax that they are going to pay are recorded on either province or *kaşa* base.⁵⁸ For the purposes of this paper, *mufassal avarız* registers are the sources that should be used, because only through the detailed records of the *nefers* could we get an idea about social life in the cities of Aleppo and Damascus. Our estimations about the religious division among the *mahalles* would be based on the notes about religion or the city of origin taken near the names of the taxpayers.

Avarız registers of 1616 and 1678 together with the *cizye* registers of 1627 and 1640 are taken into consideration to gather information about the social status of the people living in the different *mahalles* of Aleppo. As stated earlier, the idea of Islamic city assumed that people reside in *mahalles* in these cities and these *mahalles* are divided according to religious groups.

The number of *mahalles* and the structure of their populations are among the information that we get from the *avarız* and *cizye* registers. Under the Ottoman Empire, Aleppo played an important role as the centre of its province. A. Abdel Nour made a research on seventeenth century Aleppo based on the sales of estates. According to the results of this research, there was an increase in the prices of the estates. Moreover, houses were smaller and sales of estates were more often. There was an increased demand for houses and the new constructions were not enough to answer this demand. As a result, existing houses were divided into smaller parts. These results were reached through an example from the Behsita *mahallesi* of Aleppo. This *mahalle* was said to be established in a small and restricted region near the city walls. Since the area of this *mahalle* was very restricted, the increase in the number of *hanes* from 260 in 1570 to 477 in 1683 is interpreted as the division of already existing houses.⁵⁹

57 Öztürk, "1616 tarihli Halep Avarız-Hane Defteri," p. 290.

58 Özel, "Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri," p. 45.

59 Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 31.

The idea that the mahalles of the Islamic city were divided according to religious groups can be widened by stating that actually it was not only religion but also other common characteristics that brought people together in certain regions-mahalles. For example, Janissaries tended to concentrate in certain mahalles whose names are mentioned above. Their rivals, the sherifs were not as cohesive in terms of settlement, but while the fights between them were taking place, certain mahalles had become centres for these groups. Sherifs were in control of the intra muros mahalles while the janissaries were active in the Bankusa and Bab el-Neyreb mahalles where they were dominantly settled.⁶⁰ As can be seen, although mahalles were not divided strictly among certain social and political groups, the tendency for these groups to be together could be examined in their settlement patterns too. This was why some groups are concentrated in some mahalles, but this did not mean that a particular mahalle consisted only of the relevant group.

The aforementioned case was also valid for the divisions between the mahalles according to religious groups and occupation groups. For example, the main markets of the cities were divided according to the type of goods that were made and sold in these shops. Most expensive goods were in the centre whereas the other occupations had their shops in other parts of the market. While the shops were together in the main market of the city -at the centre-, houses of the shop owners were in the mahalles surrounding the city centre. Settlement patterns of certain occupation groups were similar to other social groups and they tended to live together in the mahalles, which were close to their working places. Proximity was the main motive for them to concentrate in certain mahalles.⁶¹

According to the Avarız register of 1616, most mahalles of Aleppo are Muslim mahalles and only Jewish mahalles are shown separately. Actually, it would not be correct to speak about an individual Jewish mahalle although there is one named as Yahudiyyan mahallesi consisting of 116 hanes only 50 of which were Jewish and there were 30 Jewish hanes in the Behista mahallesi. Behista mahallesi was one of the biggest mahalles of Aleppo and as mentioned earlier, Janissaries were also concentrated in here. In addition there were Jews living in Muslim neighbourhoods. These hanes are recorded clearly as "yahudi."⁶²

There existed no separate Christian neighbourhood in the Avarız registers, but the Christian hanes are recorded separately as *zımmi* within the registers. Furthermore, Cüdeyde mahallesi was known to be dominated by Christians

⁶⁰ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 52.

⁶¹ Öztürk, "1616 tarihli Halep Avarız-Hane Defteri," p. 266-267 and Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 53-58.

⁶² BOA, MAD, nr 3400, p23-24

from the earlier tahrir registers. As can be seen from the recorded names of the nefers, most Christians living in this neighbourhood were Armenians (Kaspar, Vans, Mardos, Serkis, Andon, Melkon, Kirkor... etc). In addition to Cüdeyde neighbourhood there are zimmi in mahales of Şeriatlu, Şakir Ağa, Menzeli and Kavansa. Although in most of the cases the zimmi population was recorded with a note “zimmi” next to their names, there are some very apparent non-Muslim names with no note beside their names. These are: Halife Kirkos in Dahil-i Babu'l Makam mahallesi (p25 line 74), Karagöz in Masabire mahallesi (p 30), Marun Kirkor in Haccac mahallesi (p 65, line 54).⁶³

Although Muslims dominate some of the mahalles, it can be stated from the general picture that we get from the Avarız registers of Aleppo that there lived Muslims and non-Muslims together in the same neighbourhoods. Bahsita was an example of the mahalles where Muslims and Jews lived together in the sixteenth century.⁶⁴ In the year 1550, a small number of Christians also settled in this mahalle.⁶⁵ Şeri'atlu and Haric-i Babü'n-Nasr were the mahalles where Muslims and Christians lived together in both the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries⁶⁶. These were recorded separately as Muslim hanes and zimmi hanes and in cases in which there is no separation, religion of the zimmi population was noted either as “zimmi” or-as was the case for the Jews- as “yahudi.”⁶⁷

Moreover, avarız registers of Aleppo indicate that this city was attracting population from other cities. These cities are noted beside the names of the incoming people. According to these notes the cities of origin of the incoming population were as follows: Kayserili: 6, Bursalı: 4, Ayıntablı: 10 (2 Jews), Mısırlı: 29, Derguşlu: 2, Serminli: 10, Şamlı: 21, Malatyalı: 1, Erzurumlu: 2, Suruçlu: 3, Antakyalı: 2, Urfalı: 3, A'zazlı: 5, Harputlu: 2, Kilisli: 1, Beyrutlu: 3.⁶⁸ Not only Muslims, but also Christians from other cities and countries came to Aleppo in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The rate of the growth of the Christian population in Aleppo was 38% between 1520 and 1584, but this rate was 106% between 1520 and 1550 when trade was a good business for the Christians.⁶⁹

These settlement patterns in the 16th century Aleppo show us that there was actually no strict separation of mahalles according to religion or any other

⁶³ BOA, MAD, nr 3400, p 25,30,65

⁶⁴ BOA, MD, 5, p105/242 as referenced in Çakar, XVI. Yüzyılda Halep Sancağı (1516-1566), p. 114.

⁶⁵ BOA, TD 454, p 16.

⁶⁶ BOA, TD 493,p 23

⁶⁷ Halil Sahillioğlu, Şam Şehrinin XVII. Asrda Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı 1977 numaralı Avarız Defterine Göre, IRCICA, İstanbul 2005, throughout the defter.

⁶⁸ Öztürk, “1616 tarihli Halep Avarız-Hane Defteri,” p. 265-266.

⁶⁹ Çakar, 2003, XVI. Yüzyılda Halep Sancağı (1516-1566), p. 149.

social and economic status. Although there was concentration of certain groups in certain areas, it cannot be stated that there was a closed mahalle structure. Social groups that wanted to live together due to pragmatic reasons were seen to form regions for themselves, but at the mahalle level there was a mixture of population.

According to the definitions of an Islamic city, house is the part of the city where the family lives. Since family life is private, houses are shaped to keep this privacy. Although it would not be correct to define a "Muslim house" which does not change according to place and time; characteristics of these houses are as follows: closed houses with no windows on the façades and whose only relation with the outside world is through their inner courtyards and these houses are situated on the streets with dead ends so that no trespassing would occur by those who are not residents of the same street.⁷⁰

Courtyards were used as transition places between the houses and the street and they were important in the lives of the residents. They were also important for privacy, because they assumed the function of public places for women. In addition, certain activities were made in the courtyard and they mostly contained stoves and cellars. The walls surrounding the courtyard and the inner parts of the house delineated the border of private and public life. However, on the contrary to the general belief, these structures, which were related to the understanding of privacy in Islam, were also apparent in the non-Muslim houses in Aleppo.⁷¹

The architectural structure of these cities was not specific to Islam. Thus, the claims that Islam was effective on the way the houses were built are not acceptable to the full extend, because the Muslims and the non-Muslims were using the same architectural style in their houses. Big courts and terraces behind high walls can best be explained through climatic reasons. Since these cities are in a very hot climate zone, usage of open spaces was seen very often. Furthermore, as also was claimed by Raymond, narrow streets can be explained by the need for shadow in the hot times of the year.⁷² Furthermore, O. Grabar opposes the idea that this type of architecture is special to Islam, by stating that this type of housing cannot be seen in the northern parts of the world where Muslims also lived. For this reason, houses with courtyards are more specific to the climate than being suitable to the religion's necessities.⁷³

⁷⁰ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 195.

⁷¹ Fikret Yılmaz, "XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Mahremiyetin Sınırlarına Dair", *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 Winter (2000), p. 104.

⁷² Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 120.

⁷³ Oleg Grabar, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art," *Muqarnas*, I (1938), p. 8.

Cities in the Arab provinces of the empire long existed. Some of them were grand cities even in the very early ages of civilization. Aleppo was also among these very old settlements. Although the cities grew and developed with time, some main structures such as the religious places and the general structure of the settlement places continued. Although Islam was effective on the culture of the region to a large extent, other cultural factors were also brought to the seventeenth century through traditions and other applications. Architecture, being one of the expressions of culture, contains pieces of both Islamic and earlier civilizations.⁷⁴ Family life being separated from the public life is a characteristic that can be seen commonly in the Mediterranean cities. Thus, it would be confining to talk about an architectural style of a Muslim house. On the contrary, this is a very old type of agricultural style born from the climatic and cultural needs of the region.⁷⁵

Changes in the Population of the Mahalles

Cities in the Islamic world had urban communities unique to themselves. Mahalles were among the most important places where the sense of belonging reached its peak and the mahalles formed smaller entities within the city. Although the Ottoman Empire found this kind of an organization beneficial and supported it, it was not something specific to this time period. Settling of minorities and other kinds of ethnic and religious groups in certain parts of the city was a result of the need to be close to each other and some other economic and social reasons. For instance Christian neighbourhood of Cüdeyde in Aleppo existed even during the Mamluk period, but the formation of the closed mahalle structure could be seen with the growth of the Christian population, increasing administrative authority and need for security.⁷⁶ Furthermore, despite not becoming a Christian mahalle, Bab el-Nasr also had a dominant Christian population.⁷⁷ In the same manner, in addition to the mahalle of Yahudiyyan, the Jewish mahalle of Behsita formed after the emigration of the Muslims in the 17th century and the immigration of the Jews from the nearby mahalle of Bendere to Bahsita. However it is not possible to give exact numbers about the Jewish population, because they were recorded together with the Muslims without any notes indicating the religion of the person.⁷⁸

According to the avarız and cizye registers, there was an increase in the population of the Christians in the seventeenth century due to various

⁷⁴ G. Marçais, "Dâr", *EI*, Second edition, II, p. 116.

⁷⁵ Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 216.

⁷⁶ *BOA, MAD*, nr 3400, p. 78-79 and Raymond, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, p. 121-122.

⁷⁷ *BOA, MAD*, nr 3400, p. 78-79, *BOA, KK*, Mevkufat, nr. 2684, p. 6.

⁷⁸ *BOA, MAD*, nr 3400, p. 23-24.

economic and social factors. Cizye was the head tax collected from the non-Muslims and cizye registers were kept to keep track of the tax paying population of the Christians. According to 1627 cizye registers, there were 1.307 Christian and 450 Jewish taxpayers in Aleppo.⁷⁹ In 1640 the number of Christians increased to 2500. In 1695 this number reached 5391 and it was noted that 1234 of them were newcomers. In 1740, immigration of Christians continued and their population was 8120.⁸⁰ Immigration to Aleppo was both from other cities and countries and from the rural hinterland of the city. Producers needed new markets for the fabrics they produced in the rural parts of Aleppo. This need resulted in the migration of these producers to the city centre.⁸¹

Immigration to Aleppo was not only relevant for the Christians. The city also attracted the Jewish population from its environs. There was a rivalry between the Armenians and the Jews for the possible administrative posts. Collection of the customs in Aleppo was traditionally Jews' job unless there was a Muslim responsible for this, but the Christians in the region were looking for ways to get hold of this post.⁸² Not only Jews and Christians, but also Muslims and other sects of Christians as opposed to Catholics had some kind of a tension between them stemming from economic reasons. In addition, different ethnic groups among the Muslims also were treated differently by the state. For instance Circassians and Turcoman tribes were settled in the border region near the desert to control the Beduins who attacked trade caravans.⁸³ Until the nineteenth century, Aleppo was one of the most important trade centres attracting merchants from different parts of the world. On the other hand, the effect of this economic well being on the lives of the population was not the same. With the increasing priorities given to some non-Muslim countries in trade, Muslims got poorer together with the other non-prioritized non-Muslim groups. This led to greater oppositions and in some cases to riots against these groups. The state of unrest within the city increased the need of closure for mahalles due to security reasons. This vicious circle resulted in fractions among the society, however forming stronger sense of community within the groups in the 17th century.

⁷⁹ BOA, MAD, nr 7281, p. 6-35.

⁸⁰ BOA, MAD, nr 3498 and Bruce Masters, "Halep: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Liman Kenti," *Doğu ile Batı Arasında Osmanlı Kenti Halep, İzmir, İstanbul*, Translated by Sermet Yalçın, edited by Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, Bruce Masters, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2003, p. 42.

⁸¹ Bruce Masters, "Halep: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Liman Kenti," p. 43.

⁸² Masters, "Halep: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Liman Kenti," p. 44.

⁸³ Norman N. Lewis, *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*, Cambridge 1987, p. 72.

Conclusion

Discussing the concept of the Islamic city through the example of Aleppo in the 17th century showed us that Aleppo was among the important trade centres of the Ottoman Empire thus having an ethnically and religiously diverse population. This diversity was reflected on the social structures of the city's mahalles. As Raymond and Masters-among many other scholars- have already suggested, the concept of Islamic city was too much of a generalization for describing the kind of cities existing in the eastern part of the world. This study added on to this view by revealing the social life in the city by focusing on the 17th century Aleppo through Avarız and Cizye registers. These specific registers were important to understand the social situation in the aforementioned century when the Empire was facing economic and political changes throughout its territories.

Furthermore, by keeping in mind that the cities were mainly built around the remnants of earlier ages, it can be stated that to understand whether there really existed something like the Islamic city, one has to look at the history of these cities on a long-term basis. With all the economic, political, cultural and social factors effective on its architectural style as well as the type of corporations that were formed within the city, abovementioned characteristics are anything but specific to Islam.

Cities were and still are living entities. They were shaped and reshaped according to the needs of the people and the changing conditions. Some cities got bigger at times of affluence while some got smaller as they lost significance. While some residential areas were abandoned others got more crowded resulting in different types of housing and higher rental prices. Adaptation to changes is a natural reaction of people and of cities. After all the examples, it can be seen that Aleppo also followed a similar pattern.

According to his studies on the Western cities, Weber came up with a suggestion that there were no cities in the eastern world within the frame that he put forward. He also suggested that there were some essential impediments before the formation of these cities. By studying certain examples from the east, Weber concluded that there is no urban organization, city plan or even the idea of the city. Islamic urban society is a chaotic association consisting of a mess of various sects and tribes. Furthermore, Weber saw lack of corporate organizations in Islam as a barrier in front of city formation.

When looked at through a Weberian lens, Aleppo might not have the western type urban corporate organizations and its guilds and economic associations might not have become as powerful as its European counterparts to claim autonomy. However, it had its special community structures the most

important of which were the mahalles. Mahalles were places where people had very close relations that the kind of urban community that Weber put forward, can be claimed to have been formed in these mahalles on smaller scales.

Some scholars even suggest that Aleppo, together with many other cities in the Islamic world, lacked a set laws specific to this city and actually never had an autonomous local administration, but it had its own type of city life and its people shared a common society. Thus, it would be as erroneous to consider Aleppo in terms of western city elements as trying to come up with the concept "Islamic city". We may think of cities in the Muslim world with similar characteristics, but putting forward the concept of Islamic city and trying to fit every relevant city no matter where it is situated, would be a futile act.

REFERENCES

Archival Sources

- BOA, MAD, nr 3400
BOA, TD, nr454
BOA, TD, nr 493
BOA, KK, Mevkufat, nr. 2684
BOA, MAD, nr 7281
BOA,MAD, nr 3498

Printed Sources

- Hurani, Albert H. "Introduction", *The Islamic City*, edited by A.H. Hourani and S. M. Stern, Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd., Glasgow 1970.
- Rafeq, Abdul-Karim, *The Province of Damascus 1723-1783*, Beirut 1966.
- Bayramođlu Alada, Adalet, *Osmanlı Şehrinde Mahalle*, Sümer Kitabevi, İstanbul 2008.
- Aydođan, Ahmet, "Önsöz," *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000.
- Raymond, Andre, *Osmanlı Döneminde Arap Kentleri*, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 1995.
- Masters, Bruce, "Halep: Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nun Liman Kenti", *Dođu ile Batı Arasında Osmanlı Kenti Halep, İzmir, İstanbul*, Translated by Sermet Yalçın, edited by Edhem Eldem, Daniel Goffman, Bruce Masters, Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, İstanbul 2003.
- Kuban, Dođan, "Anadolu-Türk Şehri: Tarihi Gelişmesi, Sosyal ve Fiziki Özellikleri Üzerinde Bazı Gelişmeler", *Vakıflar Dergisi*, VII (1968), p. 53-73.

- Çakar, Enver, *XVI. Yüzyılda Haleb Sancağı (1516-1566)*, Fırat Üniversitesi Basımevi, Elazığ 2003.
- Çakar, Enver, *XVII. Yüzyılda Haleb Eyaleti ve Türkmenleri*, Fırat Üniversitesi Basımevi, Elazığ 2006.
- Radushev, Evgeni, ““Peasant” Janissaries?” *Journal of Social History*, Winter (2008): 447-467.
- Yılmaz, Fikret, “XVI. Yüzyıl Osmanlı Toplumunda Mahremiyetin Sınırlarına Dair”, *Toplum ve Bilim*, 83 Winter (2000): 92-110.
- Marçais, G. “Dâr”, *EI*, second edition.
- Grunebaum, G.E. Von, “The Structure of the Muslim Town” in *Islam in the Nature and Growth of a Cultural Tradition*, London 1955.
- Hourani, Albert H. “The Changing Face of the Fertile Crescent”, *Studia Islamica*, 8 (1957): 121-150.
- Sahillioğlu, Halil, *Şam Şehrinin XVII. Asırda Sosyal ve Ekonomik Yapısı 1977 numaralı Avarız Defterine Göre*, IRCICA, İstanbul 2005.
- İnalçık, Halil, “Centralization and Decentralization in Ottoman Administration,” *Studies in Eighteenth Century Islamic History*, Edited by T.Naff and R. Owen, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale 1977.
- Pirenne, Hanri, *Economic and Social History of the Medieval Europe*, London 1958.
- Lapidus, Ira M. “The Urban Society in Mamluk Syria”, *The Islamic City*, Edited by A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd., Glasgow 1970.
- Sauvaget, J. “Esquisse d’une histoire de la ville d’Alep” in *Revue des Etudes Islamiques*, vii(1934).
- Barbir, Karl, *Ottoman Rule in Damascus*, Princeton 1980.
- Massignon, Louis, “Sımf,” *The Encyclopedia of Islam*, 2nd Edition, 1935.
- Darling, Linda, *Revenue Raising and Legitimacy. Tax Collection and Financial Administration in the Ottoman Empire, 1560-1660*, Brill, Leiden 1996.
- Weber, Max, “Batı Şehri”, *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, Translated by Fırat Oruç, edited by Ahmet Aydoğan, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000.
- Weber, Max, “Şehrin Doğası”, *Şehir ve Cemiyet*, Translated by Fırat Oruç, edited by Ahmet Aydoğan, İz Yayıncılık, İstanbul 2000.
- Öztürk, Mustafa, “1616 tarihli Halep Avarız-Hane Defteri,” *OTAM* 6, (1997): 249-293.
- Lewis, Norman N. *Nomads and Settlers in Syria and Jordan 1800-1980*, Cambridge 1987.
- Ergenç, Özer, “Osmanlı Şehrindeki Mahalle’nin İşlev ve Nitelikleri Üzerine”, *Osmanlı Araştırmaları*, Volume IV (1983): 251-261.

- Özel, Oktay, "Avarız ve Cizye Defterleri," *Osmanlı Devleti'nde Bilgi ve İstatistik*, edited by H. İnalçık, & Ş. Pamuk, DİE Yayınları, Ankara 2001.
- Grabar, Oleg, "Reflections on the Study of Islamic Art", *Muqarnas*, I (1938): 1-14
- Aktüre, Sevgi, "Tarih İçinde Anadolu Kentinin Yapı Çözümlenmeleri", *Kent Tarihçiliği Sempozyum/ Atölye*, edited by F.B. Yıldırım, Tarih Vakfı ve TOKİ, İstanbul 1994.
- Stern, S.M. "The Constitution of the Islamic City", *The Islamic City*, edited by A.H. Hourani and S.M. Stern, Robert MacLehose and Co. Ltd., Glasgow 1970.

