

RESTORATIVE ROLE OF PUBLIC MEMORIALS AND MEMORIALIZATION
AFTER THE PERIODS OF VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION:
THE CASE OF TURKEY

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OPPRESSION: THE CASE OF TURKEY**

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ABSTRACT

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The aim of this study is to examine the restorative role of public memorials in the aftermath of mass violence and the periods of oppression. The study is based on the assumption that mass violence and gross human rights violations committed in the past require a long process, and retributive and restorative justice measures to deal with the past. Memorialization initiatives and specifically public memorials may play an important restorative role to establish peaceful social relations, to restore the sense of justice, to recognize dignity of the victims, to create areas for healing and mourning, to educate the new generations about the past and to prevent recurrence of the past atrocities. Starting from that point, the study examines two cases from Turkey, namely Ulucanlar Prison Museum and debates and initiatives concerning transformation of Diyarbakır Military Prison into a museum, in the light of the literature, certain cases from the world and certain initiatives to deal with the past in Turkey. The answers for the questions regarding the initial assumptions were traced in the interviews made with the victims, representatives of the civil society organizations and actors involved in

the debates and processes. The study explores to what extent and under which conditions public memorials may serve to the goals of dealing with the past and presents some suggestions for the further initiatives.

Keywords: Restorative justice, memorialization, public memorials, dealing with the past, collective memory

ÖZ

ŞİDDET VE BASKI DÖNEMLERİ SONRASINDA KAMUSAL ANITLARIN VE HAFIZALAŞTIRMANIN ONARICI ROLÜ: TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu çalışma, kitlesel şiddet ve baskı dönemlerinin sonrasında kamusal anıtların onarıcı rolünü incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Çalışma, geçmişte işlenen ağır insan hakları ihlalleri ve kitlesel şiddetle yüzleşme için uzun bir süreç ve cezalandırıcı ve onarıcı adalet önlemleri gerektiği varsayımı üzerine kuruludur. Hafızalaştırma girişimleri ve özel olarak kamusal anıtlar, barışçıl toplumsal ilişkiler kurmak, adalet duygusunu onarmak, mağdurların itibarını iade etmek, iyileşme ve yas tutma için alanlar yaratmak, genç kuşakları geçmiş hakkında eğitmek ve geçmişte yaşanan şiddetin yeniden ortaya çıkmasını önlemek açısından önemli bir onarıcı rol oynayabilirler. Bu noktadan yola çıkan çalışma, konuyla ilgili literatür, dünyadan belli örnekler ve Türkiye’de geçmişle yüzleşme konusundaki belli girişimler ışığında Türkiye’den iki örneği, Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi’ni ve Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi’nin müzeye dönüştürülmesiyle ilgili tartışmaları ve girişimleri incelemektedir. Başlangıçtaki varsayımlarla ilgili soruların cevapları, mağdurlar, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının temsilcileri ve tartışmalara ve süreçlere dahil olan aktörlerle yapılan mülakatlarda aranmaktadır. Çalışma, kamusal anıtların ne ölçüde ve hangi şartlar altında geçmişle

yüzleşmenin amaçlarına hizmet ettiğini araştırmakta ve gelecekteki girişimler için bazı öneriler sunmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Onarıcı adalet, hafızalaştırma, kamusal anıtlar, geçmişle yüzleşme, toplumsal hafıza

In memory of Tahir Elçi

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ.....	vi
DEDICATION	viii
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	ix
TABLE OF CONTENTS	x
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xiv
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xv
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Problem of the Study	1
1.2. Research Method	3
1.3. Organization of the Study.....	6
2. DEALING WITH THE PAST, REMEMBRANCE, FORGETTING AND FORGIVING AFTER THE PERIODS OF VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION	9
2.1. Dealing with the Past and Realization of Justice.....	10
2.2. The Pivotal Role of Remembrance as a Collective Responsibility	13
2.3. Forgetting, Forgiveness and Resentment.....	17
2.4. Mourning	24

3. COLLECTIVE MEMORY, MEMORIALIZATION AND PUBLIC MEMORIALS.....	29
3.1. Reconstruction of Collective Memory and Public Memory.....	31
3.2. Memorialization, Sites of Memory and Public Memorials after Periods of Violence and Oppression	35
3.3. Different Forms of Public Memorials and Memorialization Practices	39
3.4. The Restorative and Reparative Role of Public Memorials	42
3.5. The State vs. Civil Initiatives in the Struggle of Memory.....	48
4. DEALING WITH THE PAST, MEMORIALIZATION AND PUBLIC MEMORIALS IN THE WORLD: THE CASES OF GERMANY, ARGENTINA AND SOUTH AFRICA	52
4.1. Germany: Dealing with the Shame of Holocaust.....	53
4.1.1. A State-Sponsored National Project: <i>The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe</i>	55
4.1.2. Decentralized Memorials on Pavements: <i>Stolpersteine</i>	60
4.2. Argentina: Dealing with the Military Coup	63
4.2.1. From A Detention Center to a Society Center: <i>El Olimpo</i>	66
4.3. South Africa: Dealing with Apartheid.....	69
4.3.1. The District Six Museum	72
4.3.2. Robben Island Museum	75
5. CERTAIN INCIDENTS OF DEALING WITH THE PAST AND MEMORIALIZATION IN TURKEY	81
5.1. Turkish Memory Regime: Amnesia, Negation and Distortion of the Past .	82

5.2.	Rise of Memory Issues in Turkey in Recent Years	83
5.3.	An Unofficial Attempt to Deal with the Past: “I Apologize” Campaign	86
5.4.	Two Official Cases of Dealing with the Past in Turkey: September 12 Judgments and Dersim Apology	92
5.4.1.	September 12 Judgments.....	92
5.4.2.	Dersim Apology	97
5.5.	Evaluation.....	103
6.	TRANSFORMATION OF ULUCANLAR PRISON INTO A MUSEUM.....	109
6.1.	The Actors of the Museumification Process and the Conflict Concerning the Determination of the Form and Content of the Museum	113
6.2.	Restoration Process: Erasing the Authenticity and Creating a Touristic Memory Site.....	117
6.3.	Potential of the Museum for Serving to the Expectations of Justice and Dealing with the Past.....	127
6.4.	The Educative and Preventive Role of the Museum	138
6.5.	Evaluation.....	142
7.	THE CASE OF DİYARBAKIR MILITARY PRISON: DEBATES ON TRANSFORMING THE PRISON INTO A MUSEUM TO DEAL WITH THE PAST	148
7.1.	Diyarbakır Military Prison on the Agenda of the State and the Civil Society.....	149
7.2.	Torture and Gross Human Rights Violations in Diyarbakır Military Prison after the September 12 Military Coup.....	153
7.3.	Realization of Justice in the case of Diyarbakır Military Prison.....	160

7.4. Conditioned Forgiving, Forgetting and Apology	165
7.5. Debates on Museumification and Alternative Conversions of the Prison.	170
7.6. The Restorative Aspects of a Prospective Museum	173
7.7. Evaluation.....	179
8. CONCLUSION	185
REFERENCES.....	193
APPENDICES	
A. INTERVIEWEES.....	207
B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE.	210
C. CURRICULUM VITAE	211
D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET	215
E. THESIS PERMISSION FORM / TEZ İZİN FORMU	231

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 Willy Brandt, in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument.....	54
Figure 2 The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe	58
Figure 3 Holocaust Memorial Selfies 1.....	59
Figure 4 Holocaust Memorial Selfies 2	59
Figure 5 The Stumbling Stones.....	61
Figure 6 El Olimpo 1.....	67
Figure 7 El Olimpo 2.....	68
Figure 8 The District Six Museum.....	74
Figure 9 Robin Island Museum 1	76
Figure 10 Robin Island Museum 2.....	78
Figure 11 Humanity Monument.....	90
Figure 12 The Memory Stone for Hrant Dink.....	91
Figure 13 Ulucanlar Prison in 1924	119
Figure 14 The Fifth Ward in Ulucanlar Prison Museum	120
Figure 15 Biography of Sırrı Süreyya Önder	125
Figure 16 Biography of Selçuk Özdağ.....	126

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
BDP	Peace and Democracy Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
DTP	Democratic Society Party
ESMA	Escuela de Mecánica de la Armada/The Navy School of Mechanics
EU	European Union
HDP	People's Democratic Party
MHP	Nationalist Movement Party
PKK	Kurdistan Workers' Party
TMMOB	The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects
TRC	Truth and Reconciliation Commission

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Problem of the Study

In this research, I will try to examine the restorative role of public memorials and memorialization in dealing with the past and establishing justice after periods of mass violence and oppression such as civil wars, military coups, ethnic conflicts, state violence against opponent groups, minorities etc. When different sections of society engage in violence against others; states commit violence against various groups based on political, religious, or ethnic discrimination; society is governed undemocratically as in the case of seizure of power through military coup or when civil wars break out and affect the whole society, social relations get broken down and it becomes very difficult and takes time to restore them. Although the wars, military regimes, ethnic or religious conflicts, anti-democratic governments, violence, and gross human rights violations committed during those periods may come to an end through a peace agreement, negotiation, ceasefire, change of government etc., yet the social effects of those periods are carried into the future and the past does not remain in the past but continues to determine the present and the future. At that point, it becomes critical what to do with that past; whether to forget or remember it; how to remember it if it is to be remembered and commemorated; whether to deny or suppress it and force society to forget about it or come to terms with it. For memorialization initiatives and public memorials to play a restorative role and serve to satisfy demands for justice of society, it is a prerequisite to open the past to discussion and to prepare a ground to deal with the past.

Coming to terms with the past is a comprehensive and long process which requires to talk about how to satisfy justice demands of the survivors, how to restore broken social

relations, how to disclose truths and build an alternative collective memory about the past. During this process, retributive or restorative justice measures should complement each other since the lack of any of them solely would make a successful and completed process of dealing with the past almost impossible. However, I will examine memorialization efforts and specifically public memorials among the restorative measures since it is not possible to investigate all the measures for realization of justice within the scope of this study.

The role of collective memory and memorialization, specifically public memorials, in the process of dealing with the past after the periods of violence and gross human rights violations and in building and maintaining a permanent and stable social peace lays at the heart of the research and to what extent public memorials play a restorative role, both regarding survivors and society is the major question of this study. In this study, the following questions would be tried to answer to explore the role of the public memorials: how public memorials help to heal damages of the past; to what extent they serve to public acknowledgement of wrong deeds and atrocities conducted in the past; whether they help to carry the lessons learned from past events to society in general and to next generations; whether they have the capacity to provide a space for individual mourning for the survivors and shared mourning by society; whether they play a role in establishing dialogue between conflicting parties and various sections of society. The answers to those questions will be searched in two cases from Turkey to be examined thoroughly in addition to theoretical approaches to the matter through literature review, selected cases from the world and the history of dealing with the past and memorialization initiatives in Turkey.

The reason to select this issue for my dissertation is highly related to the problems experienced in Turkey in dealing with the past. The history of Turkey is full of periods associated with violence and human rights violations and almost none of them have been dealt sincerely although some steps were taken. It is very critical what to do with that past, not to experience the same violence again. The choice to forget what happened is not a valid option since the past continues to dominate the present politically, culturally, and socially. Certain politicians and certain organizations may be motivated to force society to forget, deny and reject the past, however it is not easy,

at least for survivors and relatives of the victims, to forget the atrocities to which they were subject. So, if it is impossible to forget, how will we remember, how kind of a remembrance can serve to establish justice, relieve the burden of the past, restore social bonds? I will try to examine memorialization and public memorials in the light of those questions. Even if the perpetrators are judged and punished, and reasons of conflict come to an end, the effects of the past will last for years and it will take time and energy to restore the sense of justice of survivors, heal traumas, establish the broken social relations, prevent recurrence of the same events, and educate new generations about it. Moreover, punishment remains at individual level, but violence and human rights violations are social problems so, collective memory should be reconstructed to extend dealing with the past to the whole society and public memorials such as museums, sites of memory, monuments, etc are important means of reconstructing collective memory.

Experiences of the mentioned periods of violence and violations are not preserved only in individual memory, but in collective memory of society, so both individual and social healing of past traumas is necessary to be able to live together for different sections of society. Collective memory is restructured endlessly and public memorials including museums, monuments and sites of memory have an important role in this reconstruction. The question of how far those public memorials play a restorative role regarding the attempts to deal with the past will be tried to be analysed based on the case of Turkey, mainly the cases of Ulucanlar Prison Museum and the debates and initiatives to transform Diyarbakır Military Prison into a museum, which also cover the debates on military coups, torture and human rights violations, unsolved Kurdish issue that are still among the main problems of Turkish political, social and cultural life.

1.2. Research Method

This study which aims at finding answers to questions of whether public memorials may have a restorative role in dealing with the past after periods of violence and gross human rights violations consists of three parts in general. The first part will be based on literature review on the main concepts and theoretical approaches to the issue. Then the debates and cases about dealing with the past both from Turkey and certain

countries will be presented. Finally, two cases from Turkey will be elaborated to find answers.

The study conducted searches for answers to the questions that do not have definite answers and impossible to be examined with quantitative methods. The questions asked to the interviewees are about their feelings, ideas and expectations, so it is based on semi-structured interviews. Semi-structured in-depth interview is preferred to allow the respondents to express their feelings, talk about their experiences and express the viewpoints that they consider to be important. In addition to the interviews, I had the chance to observe reflections of the visitors at Ulucanlar Prison Museum. I visited the museum for many times during the study. I spent time in the museum just observing reactions of the visitors such as taking selfie in front of the gallows or crying or just walking around like a tourist. I interviewed with some of the visitors outside the museum after their visits. I also visited the museum with one of the former prisoners and listened to his own experiences and he talked about the original form of the prison when he stayed there. For the case of Diyarbakır Prison, there was not such an opportunity since it is still used as prison. However, I also visited the surrounding neighbourhood of the prison two times, but I could just walk around it and I had the chance to see its central spatial position for the city.

I used snowball method to reach to the interviewees and I also sent e-mail or contacted via social media with the interviewees who are representatives of civil society organizations related to the matter, or actors who took place in the debates and initiatives.

For the case of Ulucanlar Prison Museum, interviews were made with the current chairman and former chairman of the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section, project designers of the museum, the administrative officer responsible for the museum for 8 years, the chairman of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section; 7 former prisoners who stayed at the prison in different periods and 8 visitors. I contacted some of the former prisoners with snowball method, I knew two of them before and they directed me to other prisoners. I contacted one of them by sending e-mail to her and one of them via social media. The chairman of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section was a former prisoner and he also directed me to another

former prisoner. All the interviews with visitors were made in front of the prison building with people who had just visited the museum or brought their friends or guests to the museum. As a limitation, I did not interview with any right-wing or Islamist former prisoners who stayed at Ulucanlar Prison. All the interviewees were left-wing except visitors. In fact, the study does not claim to be representative and generalizable; and it is difficult for such a study to make that claim.

For the case of Diyarbakır Military Prison, I interviewed with a psychiatrist who worked with about 400 ex-prisoners (who also stayed at the prison himself for a short time), a professor of law who was also a member of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission, two persons who took place in the works of Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center, six former prisoners (one of them was also the chairman of the 78ers Foundation). The interviews were made face-to-face (except two, which were made via Skype) in Ankara, İstanbul and Diyarbakır.

Before starting the interviews, I introduced myself, explained the aim of the study, I obtained permission from interviewees to take voice record, and took a voice record except one former prisoner who did not want me to take voice record, so I took written note of that meeting. The in-depth interviews were semi-structured, and I asked to the interviewees open-ended questions such as what they felt about the past atrocities, their expectations about justice, mourning, memorialization, etc. I always started with their individual story and ended with asking if there were anything they wanted to add. It was difficult to talk about violence and violations that the interviewees witnessed and sometimes, I had to stop record since in some interviews, interviewees cried, or they wanted to give a break. It was also difficult for me to listen to their experiences because of content of the matter and try to not to show my emotions. I abstained from asking detailed and disturbing questions about the violence and torture not to trigger them, I just tried to open the way to them to tell what they want about the matter. I rather tried to understand their emotions, ideas, and expectations.

I did not add the off the record conversations with the interviewees to the study. I informed all my interviewees about the fact that their names would not be used in the study, except public figures and representatives of civil society organizations. All of them gave consent to use their real names, although I do not use their names not to

create any problem for them. I have named the former prisoners as UP1, UP2, ... (Ulucanlar Prison) and DP1, DP2, ... (Diyarbakır Prison). I did not ask the names of the visitors with whom I interviewed not to disturb them. I have also named them as V1, V2... (Visitor).

1.3. Organization of the Study

With the aim of finding answers to the questions of the study, first chapters will elaborate on the literature review and certain concepts related to the issue. Afterwards, the cases from the world will be mentioned to form a basis for different types of public memorials to understand the limits and potentials of memorialization and public memorials. Then, the attempts to deal with the past in Turkey will be examined and two cases will be elaborated based on the interviews made with the civil society actors, survivors and professionals involved in the cases.

In Chapter 2, I will examine the relation of dealing with the past with realization of justice, remembrance, forgiving and mourning. Since the main questions of the study are related to those theoretical issues, the literature will be reviewed within the context of those questions. The problem of dealing with the past, how to pursue it, what to do with the past, whether to forget or remember it, how to remember, whether it is possible to forget and forgive, how to establish justice after violence, whether to resort to restorative justice or retributive justice, how to judge the perpetrators and apologize from survivors, how to create places and means for individual and social mourning and relieve resentment of the survivors and relatives of the victims and restore social relations will be discussed.

In Chapter 3, I will examine reconstruction of collective memory and its role in dealing with the past. I will review the literature on collective memory and memorialization and specifically focus on public memorials as means of reconstructing collective memory. Various forms of public memorials and their restorative and reparative role in dealing with the past will be mentioned. As it will be elaborated in the cases from Turkey, collective memory is considered as a site of struggle to rewrite the past and shape the future. The struggle on reconstruction of collective memory between the state, official authorities and civil initiatives will also be reviewed.

In Chapter 4, I will examine certain examples of public memorials from Germany, Argentina, and South Africa. The cases from Germany have been selected because the attempts to deal with the past has a longer history in Germany compared to many other countries and there are different forms of public memorials to be examined. The cases of Argentina and South Africa have been selected because they have similarities with the periods of violence in Turkey such as the military coup in Argentina and ethnic conflict in South Africa. They also provide valuable insights about to what extent and under which conditions various forms of public memorials contribute to dealing with the past and whether they have a restorative role after periods of violence. They are important cases to compare with the cases from Turkey and take lessons for the future initiatives.

In Chapter 5, certain incidents of dealing with the past and memorialization practices in Turkey will be elaborated. The characteristics of the memory regime in Turkey and rise of memory issues in relation with the initiatives to deal with the past will be reviewed. Specifically, “I apologize” campaign will be presented as an unofficial attempt to deal with the past and September 12 judgments and Dersim “apology” by Erdoğan will be presented as official cases of dealing with the past. The limitations and potentials of those initiatives for the future attempts will be mentioned. In that chapter, I will try to provide a ground to understand better the two cases from Turkey to be examined by discussing the memory regime of Turkey and certain attempts to deal with the past.

In Chapter 6, I will examine the case of Ulucanlar Prison Museum mainly based on the interviews made with survivors, civil society organizations, visitors and the people involved in the process of discussion and realization of the project. The actors of the museumification process, the conflict between Altındağ Municipality and other civil society organizations and the problems experienced during restoration of the prison as a museum will be analysed. The museum will be examined regarding its potential to deal with the past and satisfy justice demands. In addition, its role to take lessons from the past, prevent recurrence of the same atrocities and educate the new generations will be discussed. Ulucanlar Prison Museum is a critical case since it is one of the

limited numbers of public memorials in Turkey claiming to deal with the past and attracts a considerable attention from different sections of society.

In Chapter 7, I will examine the debates and initiatives about transforming Diyarbakır Military Prison into a museum, again based on the interviews made. First, I will present the discussions, official speeches and the civil initiatives which brought the issue to the public agenda in the second half of 2000s. I will also try to describe the torture and gross human rights violations committed in the prison after the military coup in 1980. It will be explored what justice meant for the former prisoners, whether and under which conditions they can forget or forgive the perpetrators. Finally, the restorative potential of a prospective museum will be discussed.

I will evaluate the discussions made and the case studies in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 at the end of each chapter and I will present some concluding remarks, challenges faced during the study and some suggestions for the future memorialization attempts in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 2

DEALING WITH THE PAST, REMEMBRANCE, FORGETTING AND FORGIVING AFTER THE PERIODS OF VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION

Restoring the sense of justice of the victims, establishing a restored relation between former enemies, and building social peace become major issues in the post-conflict societies following civil wars, military coups or dictatorships. In a narrower sense, the post-conflict processes are mostly associated with political and bureaucratic actions such as disarmament, ceasefire, negotiations, peace agreements or transition to democracy. However, resolving the conflict, coming to terms with the past and establishing new social relations is a matter of a long-term transformation rather than a technical process limited to certain steps taken such as peace agreements between armed groups.

Technical aspects of the “peacebuilding process” mentioned above such as ceasefire or peace agreements will not be discussed in this study. However, since the term of peace will be used through the study, it should be noted that the concepts of peace and peacebuilding have been defined in different forms, in narrow or broad sense. The concept of peace includes absence of violence, namely “negative peace” at minimum and in the narrowest sense. Broader or “positive peace” is more than just absence of violence. It involves measures to prevent recurrence of the conflict or violence and encompasses some activities to improve lives of the people affected by the conflict and create substantial peace benefits for them. Promotion of human rights, truth commissions, democratization, etc. are among these various actions for positive peace (Meernik & Mason, 2006, p. 4). Negative peace is not enough to sustain the peace in the post-conflict societies because conflicts create enmities and it is difficult to have these former adversaries living and contesting for power peacefully in a democratic society (Meernik & Mason, 2006, p. 8). It should be noted that, what is meant with

peace during the study is beyond the negative peace. It refers to sustaining the peace and a long-process of “peacebuilding” in the broadest sense rather than the narrower concept of peace which is just related to reaching an agreement by adversary parties, ceasefire or putting an end to armed conflict. The main focus of the study, the restorative role of memorialization, sites of memory and public memorials with regard to social relations and justice, will be discussed by taking into consideration their effects on sustaining social peace and preventing recurrence of the past events.

2.1. Dealing with the Past and Realization of Justice

There is always a highly debated, controversial past after conflict periods and people should decide what is to be done with this past. It may be claimed that the past should be ignored as much as possible for the sake of reconciliation, however, the past cannot be forgotten easily, and it is impossible to leave all the conflict, violence, human rights violations and their results behind, for example, just with an agreement between adversaries after a civil war or transition to democracy after a military coup. The long process or long-term transformation after conflict and mass violence includes accounting for and dealing with the past, not just putting an end to the conflict. There are different ways of it. The most important ways are judging and punishing perpetrators and people responsible for gross human rights violations at courts mainly based on retributive justice approach; establishing truth commissions to reveal truths about the past; paying both pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages; reparation including apology; and memorialization of the past and reconstruction of collective memory. These different options should not be thought contradictory or exclusive; they generally complete each other and have different impacts. However, in different societies, one or some of them may be preferred more and some of them may be ignored at all. In this study, memorialization, public memorials and reconstruction of collective memory will be focused, but discussion on these topics does not exclude relations of these practices with other ways-methods of dealing with the past and they cannot be separated easily. Thus, certain other restorative practices will be mentioned from time to time in the study related to the core matter.

When we talk about coming to terms with the past, it becomes necessary to talk about satisfying justice demands of victims and securing justice. Following mass atrocities,

the main task of society appears as reconstructing a just environment, both socially and politically. While confronting the past through establishing justice and reconciliation is a key strategy, the question is how to succeed it (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 236). Čehajić-Clancy argues that “acceptance of collective moral responsibility is crucial for restoration of broken and damaged intergroup relations and ultimately sustainable reconciliation” and “taking responsibility for the past is prerequisite for a peaceful future” (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 236).

In post-conflict societies, many questions arise about the matter of justice: how to secure the justice after mass violence, gross human rights violations; how to restore the sense of justice of survivors, relatives of victims, persons killed or disappeared during the conflict or state violence; what kind of a justice serves better to reconciliation? There are different approaches about the form of justice to be preferred, namely whether to prefer retributive justice or restorative justice practices or a combination of them. In some societies, retributive justice practices may be predominant, while the others complement retributive justice with restorative justice practices. Some processes and mechanisms based on restorative justice principles such as commemorations and truth commissions are used to re-establish peaceful social relations following gross human rights violations and abuses. In addition, these mechanisms are generally supported with prosecutions of perpetrators (Blustein, 2014, p. 157). This restorative approach is directed at keeping perpetrators accountable for their acts and restoring dignity of victims. The aim of these restorative practices is defined as “political reconciliation, which in one of its senses refers to the establishment or reestablishment of relations of respect and trust between former adversaries” (Blustein, 2014, p. 146).

It has been proved in many cases that retributive justice is not sufficient alone for reconciliation, but it should be complemented with restorative justice processes (Clark, 2008, p. 339). Clark argues that restorative justice “has the greatest potential to initiate and further reconciliation and should, therefore, complement the administration of retributive justice” (Clark, 2008, p. 331). Supporters of retributive justice claim that retribution serves especially by administering justice, revealing truths about crimes committed and by realizing the individualization of guilt. Clark argues that these

claims are problematic because for reconciliation process in post-conflict societies, it is not enough to prosecute main perpetrators since the whole society is affected and society should be involved in the reconciliation process (Clark, 2008, p. 332-334). However, he also adds that differences between retributive justice and restorative justice and the inadequacies of retributive justice do not mean that these two approaches are mutually exclusive or irreconcilable although one of them may be predominant in different societies (Clark, 2008, p. 340).

While there are different views attaching priority to retribution or reparation for justice, Booth argues that memory is central to justice and uses the term of “memory-justice” (Booth, 2001, p. 778). He mentions three judicial forms of memory-justice in dealing with the past. These are “trial and punishment (criminal charges); illumination and acknowledgement (truth commissions); and forgetting for the sake of a future in common (amnesty)”. He argues that retribution is critical with regards to the fear of victims that crime would be forgotten, and passage of time would free perpetrators. So, trials to punish perpetrators are forums to resist to the will to forget and where victory of memory over forgetting is sought (Booth, 2001, p. 779). Booth argues that these trials also have preventive and didactic purposes, and they shape the identity and collective memory of communities. A former version of society before the conflict periods or gross human rights violations are tried to be restored through these trials and these unapproved periods and acts are deemed as important deviations from the core values of the community. Such practices are very important especially after periods of dictatorships in terms of transition to liberal and democratic regimes (Booth, 2001, p. 780). Booth emphasizes the significance of remembrance against forgetting; however also insists that it is not enough to remember the past crimes, they should also be punished:

Remembrance, as preserving the truth of the past, of the victims and perpetrators, at once saves the phenomena from oblivion and fulfills a debt of fidelity to the dead... We do not simply want crime to stand exposed in the light of truthful remembrance; we want it to be punished as well. Truth and retribution are what is wanted (Booth, 2001, p. 782).

The mentioned conflict periods leave mass and individual traumas behind, and justice is essential for “healing process” both individually and socially. As result of interviews made with survivors from many countries, Danieli concludes that there are some

necessary measures to be taken for healing after massive trauma. These include reestablishment of dignity of victims which is fundamental for reparation in a society through commemoration, compensation, rehabilitation; relief of the victims' stigmatization through empowerment, education, memorials; repairing the ability of the nation to provide justice through prosecution, conflict resolution, preventive mechanisms, etc.; commitment of international community for fighting against impunity and providing justice through international monitoring mechanisms, prosecution mechanisms such as tribunals, etc. (Danieli, 2006, p. 343). He mentions both retributive justice and restorative justice practices in these measures to be taken for individual and social healing.

The aforementioned justice practices will be discussed through the study, but the specific focus of the study will be memorialization practices predominantly supported by restorative justice approach. However, as mentioned, these different justice mechanisms cannot be separated from each other easily and any of them is not satisfactory on its own to restore the sense of justice of the survivors and relatives of victims. In short, the fact that one of these practices will be elaborated does not mean that it is considered as superior to others, or it may substitute other justice mechanisms. In this sense, it will also be questioned how far memorialization practices may serve to peaceful social relations and restoration of the sense of justice if not accompanied with retribution of perpetrators and what remembrance means for survivors without prosecution mechanisms with regard to securing justice.

2.2. The Pivotal Role of Remembrance as a Collective Responsibility

After periods of civil war, military coup, or dictatorship in which different ethnic, religious or political groups commit violence against each other or there is state violence against opponent groups which lead to big cleavages within society, people face with a critical problem: whether to forget the past and forgive the perpetrators, and if the past is to be remembered, how to remember it to build peaceful relations and secure justice. While some argue that it is better to forget or suppress the past to be able to live together, others argue that it is necessary to remember the past and come to terms with it. Some argue that we should forget because we cannot live with the past and remembering would make things worse. However, others argue that we

should remember because remembering helps individual and social healing, saves from traumatic effects of the past and liberates living members. While some supports social amnesia as the foundation of society since it prevents resentments, others reject arguments supporting forgetting and draw attention to responsibility of a society to account for its past and duty to remember (Misztal, 2003, p. 146). Misztal emphasizes the duty to remember arguing that “only by remembering can we construct the future, transmit the meaning of past events to the next generation and become heirs of the past” (Misztal, 2003, p. 145).

Forgetting and forgiving are often suggested as solutions for healing. Although the state policies may promote forgetting and forgiving, survivors and relatives and families of victims cannot forget the past easily even though they choose silence and their memories and individual traumas cannot be detached from the social context (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 164). Moreover, official policies that promote forgetting and forgiveness damage self-respect of victims, allow perpetrators not to undertake responsibility of their own actions in the name of national unity or political reconciliation. It does not mean that forgiveness does not have any restorative potential, but it depends on various factors such as

the relative power of victims and perpetrators; the reasons for which the perpetrators are forgiven; the voluntariness of the forgiving; and the involvement of communities of victims and perpetrators in ensuring that the terms under which forgiveness is granted are adhered to (Blustein, 2014, p. 172).

As Irwin-Zarecka and Blustein draw attention, forgetting is generally promoted as a state policy for the sake of national unity. Ernest Renan also points out that forgetting is an important factor for creating a nation: “Yet the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things” (Renan, 1990, p. 11). He argues that a nation is a soul and possession of common memories is one of two things which constitute this soul, the other one being the desire to live together in the present. “A heroic past”, Renan argues, “this is the social capital upon which one bases a national idea” (Renan, 1990, p.19). He also states that having suffered together in the past unifies nations and common griefs are more valuable compared to triumphs (Renan, 1990, p. 19).

Along with philosophical debates on the issue, in practice, the suggestion that it would be better to forget past atrocities was widely questioned by the Nuremberg Trials for the first time. The political attempts to reintegrate societies in the post-war period promoted forgetting and forgiving. However, Nuremberg Trials have been starting of a different approach to bring society together through remembering the past and punishing people responsible for the past crimes (Misztal, 2003, p. 148).

In his article named “The Meaning of Working Through the Past”, Adorno argues that defendants of the view that everything should be forgotten and forgiven are the people who are responsible for injustice, not the people who suffered injustice. He argues that it is impossible to evade from the past because the past people want to break free is still very alive:

One wants to break free of the past: rightly, because nothing at all can live in its shadow, and because there will be no end to the terror as long as guilt and violence are repaid with guilt and violence; wrongly, because the past that one would like to evade is still very much alive (Adorno, 2005, p. 89).

Mentioning the concept of guilt complex, Adorno states that psychiatry displays the feeling of guilt as pathological and against the reality and stigmatizes bearing the burden of the past as pathological: “or is guilt itself perhaps merely a complex, and bearing the burden of the past pathological, whereas the healthy and realistic person is fully absorbed in the present and its practical goals?” (Adorno, 2005, p. 91). This point is critical since it may be an argument that “bearing the burden of the past is pathological” against remembrance and talking about the past at the hands of supporters of forgetting. However, it should be questioned, whether the past which is full of mass violence, murders, human rights violations, wars, etc. is not the thing that we may think to be pathological instead of bearing the burden of such a past. It may also be claimed that what makes some people ill is the past events.

Adorno strongly advocates remembrance with his emphasis on the fact that there is only one thing that our powerlessness may offer to the murdered people, and it is remembrance (Adorno, 2005, p. 91). He states that knowledge about the past should work against forgetfulness. If not, forgetfulness can easily be accompanied with justification of forgotten facts such as in the case of parents answering questions of their children about Hitler with speaking of good aspects of the period to declare

themselves innocent (Adorno, 2005, p. 99-100). He draws attention to the fact that if the causes of the past events cannot be removed, our work with the past will not finish: “The past will have been worked through only when the causes of what happened then have been eliminated. Only because the causes continue to exist does the captivating spell of the past remain to this day unbroken” (Adorno, 2005, p. 103).

Booth emphasizes the question of whether it is better to “let go of the past, to invest our energy and time in building a future rather than dwelling in the evils of an irreversible past”. When the problem is considered from this point of view, “justice as the duty to remember” becomes archaic and traditional, he says (Booth, 2001, p. 777). Since he argues that memory is central to justice, he uses the concept of memory-justice and mentions three forms of it which are seen practically in societies in transition: institutionalized remembrance, informal social remembrance and restorative forgetting (Booth, 2001, p. 778). Justice as institutionalized remembrance is generally observed in official apologies for and reaffirmation of the past events as in the case of Bloody Sunday. The Prime Minister, Tony Blair reaffirmed the innocence of victims who were killed by British soldiers in Northern Ireland in 1972, which is known as Bloody Sunday, and he mentioned the importance of remembering the dead. This form of remembrance is deemed as a condition of reconciliation (Booth, 2001, p. 778). There are also some murals of the civilians killed in Bloody Sunday at the site where they were killed. These are made by the nationalist community there and this is an example of informal, social act of memory-justice with which the local community fulfilled the duty of remembrance for its own dead. The third form, claim of restorative forgetting, makes call for forgetting for peace and urges parties to forgive and forget. Booth states that these three forms or ways of memory-justice generally coexist and conflict with each other. While institutionalized memory-justice aims at reducing the effects of injustices in the past, informal social remembrance generally demands justice for the matters that are not solved or mentioned by forcing the institutions. The third one, restorative forgetting tries to mute the memory claiming that it is for the sake of future (Booth, 2001, p. 778).

Čehajić-Clancy argues that for a society to have peaceful relations and reconciliation following a conflictual past causing intergroup relations to be broken or damaged, all

members of society need to deal with that past (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 236). She draws attention to the duty of dealing with the past and impossibility of forgetting:

Forgetting or endorsing politics of forgetting is neither sensible nor logical as our present is marked and defined by the past. Our today is inevitably marked by the heritage of yesterday. The very same word heritage implies the presence of the past in the here and now. One cannot ignore the fact that our present is surrounded or burdened with economical, political, moral and cultural consequences of the past. Consequently, forgetting is not psychologically or politically possible (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 237).

Remembrance also calls members of post-conflict societies to collective moral responsibility (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 237). Remembrance and acceptance of responsibility by society opens the way to prevent reoccurrence of the past events and this collective responsibility “forms the initial psychological basis for emotions that can be felt in relation to one’s group actions such as guilt, shame or empathy” (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 238). Čehajić-Clancy emphasizes the fact that if members of the post-conflict societies do not respond to the conflictual past of their societies through acceptance of collective moral responsibility, this would endanger a democratic and peaceful future (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 240).

2.3. Forgetting, Forgiveness and Resentment

Another crucial matter for the discussion of memorialization is forgiveness in relation to forgetting since forgiveness is generally associated with forgetting. There are critical questions and debates about the matter such as whether it is possible to forgive gross human rights violations, mass crimes or whether it is possible to forgive but not to forget, to continue remembering. Since forgiveness is often deemed as contrary to remembrance, a solution for vengeance, resentment, etc., it should also be considered in debates on remembrance and forgetting.

For the main question of this study, the matter is also critical for the question of whether or how far public memorials and memorialization efforts, thus remembrance and recognition may be a solution for resentment if it is deemed as a problem preventing future social relations. Does inclusion of certain events in collective memory prevent resentment? Is resentment of survivors and relatives of victims relieved when the victims are memorialized, and the honour of victims are restored

through public memorials? How do survivors feel when they are forced to forget and forgive? Can resentment be thought as a positive feeling regarding the duty of remembrance and as a call for justice; and if so, how far forgiving and forgetting serve to justice and social peace?

Levy and Sznajder emphasize that forgiveness may take different and ambiguous meanings in different political and moral contexts. They state that most of the debates about forgiveness start with the assumption that “forgiveness is the morally superior sentiment; resentment is atavistic, archaic, leading to revenge and renewed cycles of violence” and forgiveness is attributed a healing effect, however it should be questioned (Levy and Sznajder, 2006, p. 83). They argue that historical and institutional circumstances determine the respective meanings that forgiveness may take, and its political significance also depends on these circumstances (Levy and Sznajder, 2006, p. 84).

Resentment is defined as a feeling arising when somebody is offended or injured by acts of others and sharpening if the injury is not considered or taken into account by offenders. Strawson states that the kind and degree of the feeling would be different when a person injures us accidentally while trying to help us or he/she causes the injury by disregarding our existence or with a wilful misconduct (Strawson, 2008, p. 6). He draws attention to the fact that in some situations people feel resentment when actions of other people offend or injure them and the persons causing the offense or injury display any special consideration (Strawson, 2008, p. 7). In this case, it is normally expected for the offended person to feel resentment:

Thus resentment, or what I have called resentment, is a reaction to injury or indifference... Thus one who experiences the vicarious analogue of resentment is said to be indignant or disapproving, or morally indignant or disapproving... The personal reactive attitudes rest on, and reflect, an expectation of, and demand for, the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings towards ourselves; or at least on the expectation of, and demand for, an absence of the manifestation of active ill will or indifferent disregard (Strawson, 2008, p. 15).

Resentment carries a capacity for moral reflection, and it cultivates a demand from others, i.e. recognizing immoral status of what has been done. Based on examination of the emotional response of resentment, Habermas also argues that the feeling of resentment is deeply related with the lack of restitution or the situation of indifference

of the other party. He states that if there is not any restitution for the injury or offense, the unambiguous reaction in the beginning will turn into a smouldering resentment as an expression of moral condemnation:

Unlike fright and rage, which are immediate responses to an injury as it occurs, resentment is a response to the disgraceful wrong done to one by another. Resentment is an expression, albeit a relatively powerless one, of moral condemnation” (Habermas, 2007, p. 45).

At this point, it is important whether there is any restitution or excuse to prevent resentment. If actions of any person or perpetrators violate the integrity or rights of other persons and if they excuse and this excuse is accepted by the suffering party, then there is the ground for the offended party not to feel injured in the same way as before and it would prevent his indignation to turn into a continuous resentment. So, Habermas considers excuses like repairs made to disturbed interactions (Habermas, 2007, p. 45-46). What is disturbed here is not the interaction between two persons, but also impersonal moral norms:

Indignation and resentment are directed at a specific other person who has violated our integrity. Yet what makes this indignation moral is not the fact the interaction between two concrete individuals has been disturbed but rather the violation of an underlying normative expectation that is valid not only for ego and alter but also for all members of a social group or even, in the case of moral norms in the strict sense, for all competent actors (Habermas, 2007, p. 48).

According to Habermas, the normative expectation explains the guilt feeling of the wrongdoers. This feeling of guilt and self-accusation arises when the perpetrator realizes that what he has violated is not only a particular person, but also something impersonal which is a common expectation of both parties (Habermas, 2007, p. 48). Schaap also draws attention to the fact that lack of resentment may be a sign of lack of self-respect, so he attaches a positive role to resentment in terms of condemning the wrong and immoral acts. However, he also adds that establishing friendly relations in a society divided due to the wrong acts in the past may only be possible by “relinquishing the hard feelings occasioned by such collective memories without forgetting or condoning what went before” (Schaap, 2003, p. 79).

If we apply such an assessment of resentment to memorialization, it appears that public memorials should also be questioned whether they can be tools of excuse, whether

they prevent the victims to feel indifference by the perpetrators, and whether they may relieve resentment of victims and sufferers as recognition of the fact that perpetrators violated integrity of victims and moral norms of society.

While Strawson and Habermas draw attention to the positive aspect of resentment as moral condemnation of violation of impersonal moral norms, Nietzsche considers resentment as a part of slave morality. According to him, the essence of resentment is the need of a “hostile external world” by slave morality to exist. He associates hatred, revenge and vengefulness with impotence (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 37). Even the noble man has the feeling of resentment, he shows immediate action and consummate it and therefore resentment does not poison him in contrast to the man of resentment who focuses on the past and never lets it go. So, he considers resentment that is not exhausted with an immediate action as poisonous (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 39). He favors forgetting against resentment. For him, forgetting is a sign of healthiness which is on the side of life. He states that not taking one’s enemies, accidents and misdeeds seriously indicates a strong nature that has the power to forget (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 39). The slave morality needs an enemy for itself, “as his mark of distinction” and since the subject of resentment is the evil one, the impotent man having slave morality creates a “good one” against this “evil one” which is himself (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 39). In contrast, the noble man is far away from the “popular instincts of resentment” (Nietzsche, 1989, p. 54). So, for Nietzsche, resentment is an inferior feeling nothing to do with moral condemnation of the other for violating social norms. The powerful person is the one who is able to take immediate action, save from resentment, not to allow resentment to poison him and who has the power to forget.

In addition to forgetting as mentioned by Nietzsche as an indicator of power against resentment that is not exhausted, forgiveness is usually thought as a solution to resentment. However, does forgiveness relieve resentment on its own, without excuses? Is it meaningful or possible to forgive if the other party displays indifference or does not make any excuse? There are critical debates about forgiveness especially with reference to the Holocaust. After such a mass atrocity, it has been debated widely whether it was possible to forgive and whether the sufferers should forgive, whether the relatives of victims have the right to forgive in the name of victims, who had the

right to forgive in the name of six million Jews who were killed, etc. The history and what people experienced are irreversible, so what is to be done with this irreversibility? Arendt argues that the remedy against this irreversibility is the faculty of forgiving:

The possible redemption from the predicament of irreversibility- of being unable to undo what one has done though one did not, and could not, have known what he was doing- is the faculty of forgiving. The remedy for unpredictability, for the chaotic uncertainty of the future, is contained in the faculty to make and keep promises (Arendt, 1998, p. 236-237).

Arendt argues that while forgiving is critical to prevent sins of the past to come after the new generations by undoing the acts of the past, the second faculty, making and keeping promises allows relationships between people by coming over uncertainties of the future and establishing some secure areas. She states that

without being forgiven, released from the consequences of what we have done, our capacity to act would, as it were, be confined to one single deed from which we could never recover; we would remain the victims of its consequences forever (Arendt, 1998, p. 236-237).

Arendt argues that faculties of forgiving and making promises correspond to the human condition of plurality and the moral code inferred from these two faculties is based on experiences that require presence of others, namely plurality (Arendt, 1998, p. 237-238). In her opinion, forgiveness is the direct opposite of vengeance which she claims to make everybody bound to the process and to prevent putting an end to the results of the initial misconduct (Arendt, 1998, p. 240). She argues that revenge may be calculated and anticipated, however forgiveness can never be predicted, and it is unexpected:

Forgiving, in other words, is the only reaction which does not merely re-act but acts anew and unexpectedly, unconditioned by the act which provoked it and therefore freeing from its consequences both the one who forgives and the one who is forgiven (Arendt, 1998, p. 241).

Forgiveness is not the only solution to put an end to consequences of the initial misdeed. Punishment is the alternative to the act of forgiving. However, Arendt makes a distinction between offenses that we can neither punish nor forgive:

It is therefore quite significant, a structural element in the realm of human affairs, that men are unable to forgive what they cannot punish and that they are unable to punish what has turned out to be unforgivable. This is the true hallmark of those offenses

which, since Kant, we call “radical evil” and about whose nature so little is known, even to us who have been exposed to one of their rare outbursts on the public scene. All we know is that we can neither punish nor forgive such offenses and that they therefore transcend the realm of human affairs and the potentialities of human power, both of which they radically destroy wherever they make their appearance (Arendt, 1998, p. 241).

As we see in Arendt’s words, forgiveness is attached to a result: it aims at putting an end to ongoing effects and consequences of the initial misdeed and preventing people from being bound by the process. Derrida argues that forgiveness is not pure when it is at the service of a finality or it tries to re-establish social, national, etc. normality: “Forgiveness is not, it *should not be*, normal, normative, normalizing. It *should* remain exceptional and extraordinary in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality” (Derrida, 2001, p. 32). He argues that there is the unforgivable and what is forgivable, in fact, cannot be forgiven. So, forgiveness appears as impossible because forgiveness can only forgive the unforgivable (Derrida, 2001, p. 32-33).

Derrida states that ‘unforgivable’ monstrous crimes were committed in the 20th century, and they have also become visible and known, and they seemed to escape from the justice measures. So, the call to forgiveness has been reactivated (Derrida, 2001, p. 33). He rejects the arguments such as claimed by Jankélévitch that forgiveness can only be considered if the other side asked for it. Derrida criticizes this conditionality where forgiveness may come to the scene only depending on the condition of being asked. Derrida deems such an act like an economic transaction, in which “on this condition, it is no longer the *guilty as such* who is forgiven” (Derrida, 2001, p. 36).

Derrida draws attention to the relation between calls to forgiveness and efforts to reconstitute national unity:

In all the geopolitical scenes we have been talking about, the word most often abused is ‘forgive’. Because it always has to do with negotiations more or less acknowledged, with calculated transactions, with conditions.... These transactions can certainly appear honourable; for example, in the name of ‘national reconciliation’ (Derrida, 2001, p. 39).

He gives France as an example where political officials advised reconciliation through amnesty in the name of national unity. He argues that these calls for reconciliation or

amnesty always have strategical or political calculations and rejects forgiveness to become an instrument in these calculations (Derrida, 2001, p. 40-41). Forgiveness should be out of these political or strategical calls and be unconditional: “Pure and unconditional forgiveness, in order to have its own meaning, must have no ‘meaning’, no finality, even no intelligibility” (Derrida, 2001, p. 45). The warning about instrumentalization of forgiveness at the hands of politicians or perpetrators is also made by Booth. He argues that “a combination of formal amnesty and informal amnesia” would serve to interests of perpetrators to escape justice, collaborators and passive bystanders not to be dishonoured due to their acts. He warns that “amnesty and amnesia can be instruments of political actors in the present who seek to install one memory or expunge another” (Booth, 2011, p. 784).

Jankélévitch is one of the authors who rejects unconditional forgiving, and he argues that in some cases, it is absurd and impossible to forgive even conditionally. Talking about Nazis, Jankélévitch calls them as monsters and states that their acts denied “the essence of a human being as a human being”. So, in this case, it is absurd to call for a pardon because if this huge crime against humanity is forgotten, it would be a new crime against all other human beings (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 556). He argues that the mentioned huge crime against humanity is inexpiable and there is not any punishment proportional to the perpetrators (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 558). Criticizing his view, Derrida claims that Jankélévitch concludes the unforgivable from what he calls as the inexpiable or the irreparable and this is a wrong connection (Derrida, 2001, p. 36).

Although Jankélévitch states that these huge crimes are irreparable and unforgivable in any case, he thinks pardoning would be meaningful only if anybody asked for a pardon:

To pardon! But who ever asked us for a pardon? It is only the distress and the dereliction of the guilty that would make a pardon sensible and right. When the guilty are fat, well nourished, prosperous, enriched by the “economic miracle”, a pardon is a sinister joke. No, a pardon is not suitable for the swine and their sows. Pardoning died in the death camps...To presume to be pardoned one must admit to being guilty, without conditions or alleging extenuating circumstances (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 567).

There is another crucial problem with forgiving or pardoning. People may pardon offenses directed at them, however, can any of survivors pardon the perpetrators in the

name of victims or their relatives? Jankélévitch argues that we cannot do this in their names and so, it is also impossible to pardon someone who killed a person in the name of the victim (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 569). According to him, what we feel is not only the horror of what happened but also horror of the perpetrators and the people who accepted and the other who have forgotten these events. He calls this feeling as resentment and he talks about resentment as a response to the unforgivable crimes and as a protest against forgetfulness (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 572). He associates resentment with the intense feelings and a protest against amnesia and forgetfulness which he calls to be shameful and a big insult against people who were killed in mass crimes. Resentment maintains the required seriousness and dignity which we should not lose (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 572).

It is a critical debate that whether forgiveness is possible with or without pardoning of the perpetrators or whether forgiveness loses its essence or value if it is conditional. However, apology and recognizing the faults made in the past are important for honouring the victims, to open the way for both retributive and restorative justice measures independent of whether survivors forgive or not. If we talk about forgiveness that cannot be real anyway, we have the risk of missing the value of pardoning, coming to terms with the past by perpetrators, honouring victims and recognition of the fact that mass crimes and violence in the past were unfair and wrong. In terms of the subject matter of this study, it will be questioned whether public memorials can be considered as apology, whether survivors and families of victims think of public memorials as an apology and how these memorials affect the relation between resentment and forgiveness.

2.4. Mourning

Following conflict periods, call to forgiveness and forgetting the past may also impede individual and shared mourning process and if the survivors feel that they are alone and their pain is not shared, it would be difficult to restore social relations. Examining the individual mourning, Freud is widely referred for the importance of completing mourning process. He uses the term of “work of mourning” which is necessary to be completed to free ego and make it uninhibited. Otherwise, ego is absorbed in the incomplete mourning, and this leads to inhibition and loss of interest (Freud, 1917, p.

245). He draws attention to the need for time for completion of the process stating that “In mourning time is needed for the command of reality-testing to be carried out in details, and that when this work has been accomplished the ego will have succeeded in freeing its libido from the lost object” (Freud, 1917, p. 252).

We may ask whether it is possible to apply Freud’s theory of mourning to the collective work of mourning of a society to free itself. If incomplete mourning process plays a role as an inhibitor, we should consider both individual and social mourning and whether and how it is possible to complete the process and serve to both individual and social healing in post-conflict societies.

Rose mentions importance of completing the mourning process and the struggle for the right of mourning as search for political justice with examples of Antigone and the wife of Phocion. She states that these two women insisted on the right of mourning which has to be completed when a loved one is lost because it is necessary to allow the person who mourns to return to the real life (Rose, 1996, p. 35). Phocion was an Athenian statesman who was sentenced to die. His burial was prohibited within the borders of Athens and his body was burnt outside the walls of Athens by a paid servant. She talks about a painting by Poussin named *Gathering the Ashes of Phocion* which depicts the wife of Phocion while gathering ashes of her husband outside the city walls (Rose, 1996, p. 23). For Rose, this act carries political risks and signifies a search for political justice: “In Poussin’s painting, this transcendent but mournable justice is configured, its absence given presence...” (Rose, 1996, p. 26). She argues that acknowledging and experiencing again the justice and injustice in the life and the death of the loved one is “to accept the law, it is not to transgress it- mourning becomes the law. Mourning draws on transcendent but representable justice, which makes the suffering of immediate experience visible and speakable” (Rose, 1996, p. 36). When mourning is completed, the mourning person becomes renewed and ready to challenge the injustices and difficulties of the real life again (Rose, 1996, p. 36). She also argues that when the mourning is not completed, it remains as melancholia. If there is not any law which decrees the necessity to leave back the dead one and returning the person with grief to the law of the everyday, “remains of the dead one will be incorporated into the soul of the one who cannot mourn and will manifest themselves in some all

too physical symptom” (Rose, 1996, p. 70). This is what Rose calls as “*aberrated, not inaugurated*” mourning (Rose, 1996, p. 70). If there is no proper burial and mourning, it is impossible to restart again. In the example of the wife of Phocion, she refused melancholia and inaugurated the work of mourning by gathering the ashes which was also a response to injustice (Rose, 1996, p. 102-103).

In fact, individual and social mourning and healing processes are interdependent. Danieli refers to it as “a mutually reinforcing context of shared mourning, shared memory” in which the nation shares the pain of the past and survivors do not feel alone in their pain (Danieli, 2006, p. 345-346). He draws attention to the “conspiracy of silence” between society and survivors and says that this conspiracy has always been damaging for reintegration of survivors socially and culturally by:

intensifying their already profound sense of isolation, loneliness, and mistrust of society. This has further impeded the possibility of their intrapsychic integration and healing and made their task of mourning their massive losses impossible (Danieli, 2006, p. 344-345).

Public memorials which may be thought as indicators of public mourning can be crucial steps to open the way for social healing and play a role for connecting people with the feeling of same pain, not leaving survivors alone in their pain. A critical contribution is made by Butler by asking those questions: “The question that preoccupies me in the light of recent global violence is, who counts as human? Whose lives count as lives? And, finally, what makes for a grievable life?” (Butler, 2004, p. 20). It is true that not all lives are counted as lives equally. Especially, the survivors, families and relatives of victims who lost their lives during the conflict periods need the victims’ lives to be declared as “grievable lives” and shared grief for the losses may serve to the restoration of honour of victims. Discussing obituaries as means of distribution of grief publicly, Butler draws attention to public mourning:

Although we might argue that it would be impractical to write obituaries for all those people, or for all people, I think we have to ask, again and again, how the obituary functions as the instrument by which grievability is publicly distributed. It is the means by which a life becomes, or fails to become, a publicly grievable life, an icon for national self-recognition, the means by which a life becomes noteworthy. As a result, we have to consider the obituary as an act of nation-building. The matter is not a simple one, for, if a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life and is not worth a note. It is already the unburied, if not the unburiable (Butler, 2004, p. 34).

Butler argues that we should think obituaries as acts of nation-building. We may also consider obituaries similar to public memorials which establish what is worth to remember and which losses are grievable. She states that “we have to ask about the conditions under which a grievable life is established and maintained, and through what logic of exclusion, what practice of effacement and denominalization” (Butler, 2004, p. 38). As certain lives are not qualified as grievable, the violence against them would fail to injure them since their lives are already negated. In this sense, they cannot also be mourned publicly because they are “always already lost or, rather, never ‘were’, and they must be killed, since they seem to live on, stubbornly, in this state of deadness” (Butler, 2004, p. 33).

Volkan is another author who emphasizes the role of completing mourning. According to him, forgiveness is only possible when a suffering group or its descendants has completed mourning process to a great degree. So, before asking forgiveness or just apologizing, strategies should be developed to help the mourning work of the victimized group which is significant for peaceful coexistence (Volkan, 2006, p. 129-130). He states that the concepts of “apology” and “forgiveness” are not magical tools if the slow and complicated mourning process of victimized groups is not taken into consideration (Volkan, 2006, p. 130).

Volkan argues that if a deeply traumatized group cannot do and complete the work of mourning and continue to feel degraded and helpless, this uncompleted task of mourning is transferred to following generations. At this point, Volkan considers monuments as means to deal with mourning by groups having massive trauma or their successors (Volkan, 2006, p. 120). He states that some individuals who both want to maintain the hope of recovering what was lost and also want to complete the mourning process and accept the reality find a solution for this by creating “linking objects”. These linking objects are chosen by mourners as a ground of meeting for images of what is lost and mourners (Volkan, 2006, p. 121). Traumatized groups also erect monuments to honour the lost people and recall the shared trauma, but these monuments may also be linking objects. These monuments may have different functions based on the nature of the shared mourning:

A monument as a shared linking object is associated with the wish to complete a group's mourning and help its members accept the reality of their losses. On the other hand, it is also associated with the wish to keep the process of mourning active in the hope of recovering what was lost; this latter wish fuels feelings of revenge. Both wishes can coexist: one wish can be dominant in relation to one monument, while the other is dominant in relation to another monument. Sometimes a monument as a linking object absorbs unfinished elements of incomplete mourning and helps the group to adjust to its current situation without re-experiencing the impact of the past trauma and its disturbing emotions (Volkan, 2006, p. 122).

I will examine public memorials in this sense, so to say, whether they can be sites and means for public mourning, whether they serve to the completion of the work of mourning and help survivors to accept the reality of losses to complete the process. Since relatives of victims and people are not generally allowed to mourn during the conflict periods and victims are generally reflected as persons whose deaths are not 'grievable', public memorials and memorialization practices may create a place for completion of individual and social mourning process.

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, how to deal with the past, to restore justice and to establish a sustainable social peace are the main questions following mass atrocities. Remembrance and memory may be deemed as central to justice, in lack of which it is extremely difficult to talk about forgiving and being able to live together. It is also important what is to be remembered and how, and whether this collective remembrance may serve to prevent resentment if it is thought as preventing establishment of new social relations. Although negative implications are attached to resentment against forgetting and forgiving, it may be a constructive feeling in terms of reminding impersonal norms and moral condemnation of people who violate these norms. We do not need to think the matter in a duality of forgetting vs. remembering, forgiving vs. resentment. In addition, mourning and completion of mourning process have been stated to be important both for individual and social healing. In the light of the debates in this chapter, I will try to examine collective memory, memorialization practices and public memorials and their restorative role in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 3

COLLECTIVE MEMORY, MEMORIALIZATION AND PUBLIC MEMORIALS

The issue of collective memory is a matter that has been discussed in social sciences literature ranging from psychology to politics starting from the first half of the 20th century. However, in the last quarter of the century, especially discussions about the Second World War and the Holocaust triggered the debates on reconstruction of collective memory and memorialization initiatives to deal with the gross human rights violations and mass violence in the past, with a greater emphasis on restorative justice mechanisms.

Mass and grave crimes such as Holocaust exceed the limits of criminal justice and individual punishment. Therefore, limitations of retributive justice have brought the restorative justice mechanisms and symbolic reparation measures such as memorialization and public apology to the agenda to establish justice, restore dignity of victims, recognize the wrong deeds of the past, prevent recurrence of the past violence. As symbolic and non-legal forms, memorialization and public memorials have been focused more to be able to recognize the immoral and illegal status of the past atrocities and to overcome the problem of impunity and impossibility of punishing some perpetrators (especially when the mass violence was committed long ago and the perpetrators are dead), impossibility of material reparation in certain cases, and the irreversibility of most of the effects of the mass violence. Since the last quarter of the 20th century, symbolic, aesthetic, and artistic dimensions have become an important part of the debates on how to establish justice in the aftermath of the mass crimes that go beyond the individual responsibility and political or legal interventions.

Reconstruction of the collective memory through public memorials and other memorialization practices to come to terms with the past has a very critical role regarding its potential to involve the whole society in the debates and transformation, thanks to the possibility of public memorials to intervene in the daily life with their symbolic, cultural, aesthetic, and artistic aspects. The critical point is that the officials and perpetrators may be punished after mass crimes, however it is almost impossible to judge legally and punish the people who supported or who kept silent against the violence or who indirectly contributed to the atrocities. Moreover, punishing the perpetrators does not guarantee recognition of the past deeds as wrong by the larger sections of society. So, at that point, symbolic and non-material acts become vital to establish justice, to ensure public recognition and to struggle with symbolic connotations of the past violence.

There has been a so-called “memory boom” in social sciences since 1980s. Mainly due to this memory boom, although there are many studies discussing collective memory, memorialization and public memorials, there are not many which deals with their actual impacts for specific cases. Collective memory and memorialization practices are at the very heart of the discussions mentioned in the second chapter such as coming to terms with the past, establishing justice, creating an area for mourning, relieving resentment and restoration of social relations. In this study, I will try to examine memorialization initiatives and public memorials considering their strong symbolic value in coming to terms with the past and restoring the sense of justice for unpunished or unpunishable crimes which have irreversible effects.

It should be noted that only memorialization practices and public memorials which are performed or established following conflict periods and aim at preventing recurrence of human rights violations and mass violence will be considered in this study. While memorialization practices and public memorials which are a part of nation-building processes canonize the past of the nation, try to remind speculative origins of the nation and call for national unity, those which are a part of the efforts to come to terms with the past after conflict periods and mass violence are critical of the past and they may be considered as a part for search for justice. So, two different types of reconstructed collective memory, one of which is in the service of nation-building processes and

calls for national unity and the other as call for justice, human rights and dealing with the past should be separated from each other. In this study, I will try to focus only on the second type of collective memory and memorialization.

3.1. Reconstruction of Collective Memory and Public Memory

The issue of memory was mostly associated with psychological studies and considered as an individual matter before the 20th century. Halbwachs is accepted as the first theoretician who argued that there is no individual memory independent of a social group and collective memory in his book titled “On Collective Memory” published in 1925. He states that people can acquire, recognize and localize their memories in society (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 38). According to him, individual memory is a part of the group memory, and it is reconstructed under the pressure of society (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 53).

As Halbwachs uses the term, “reconstruction” may be considered as the key concept in the discussion of collective memory as many theoreticians emphasize the most important aspect of collective memory as being reconstructed continuously. Halbwachs states that the past is something that is always restructured through collective frameworks and such an image of the past is in compliance with society’s predominant thoughts (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 40). He argues that remembering and forgetting is related to maintaining equilibrium of society. Different groups reconstruct their past every moment and society tend to erase things that have the potential to separate and distance individuals and groups from each other. So, society tries to adjust its recollections about the past to changing conditions of its equilibrium (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 182). He also draws attention to the role of physical objects on endurance of group remembrance stating that it is succeeded if there is collective remembrance which has “a double focus- a physical object, a material reality such as a statue, a monument, a place in space, and also a symbol, or something of spiritual significance, something shared by the group that adheres to and is superimposed” on the material reality (Halbwachs, 1992, p. 204).

Referring to Halbwachs, it may be argued that the experiences and traumas of the past are not preserved only in individual memory, but in collective memory of society since

there is no individual memory apart from collective memory. Since individual memories of victims and sufferers are not independent of the collective memory of society, being able to restore social relations, to heal pains of the past, to prevent hostilities in the future requires reconstruction of collective memory. In this respect, reconstruction of the collective memory through public memorials and memorialization practices based on what societies choose to remember and forget about their past, and what, how and why they remember specific things rather than the others are critical matters for this thesis.

The term of collective memory has been used widely in the literature; however, it does not always refer to the same thing. Olick states that collective memory has been used to refer to various things including:

aggregated individual recollections, to official commemorations, to collective representations, and to disembodied constitutive features of shared identities; it is said to be located in dreamy reminiscence, personal testimony, oral history, tradition, myth, style, language, art, popular culture and the built world (Olick, 1999, p. 336).

It is obvious that collective memory does not have a single definition and there are different approaches about what the collective memory is. Olick states that there are two competing concepts of collective memory. The first one considers collective memory rather as the aggregation of individual memories those are framed socially and the other one refers to collective phenomena and considers cultural and social patterns of individual and public memory (Olick, 1999, p. 333). Olick calls the first approach as “collected memories” which he argues to locate shared memories in individual minds and to be based on individualistic principles. This approach does not exclude social frameworks; however, the individual is central to the approach, and it is the individual who remembers (Olick, 1999, p. 338). According to the second approach, which Olick calls as “collective memory”, we remember as members of a group and social frameworks and definitions provided by the group are central to remembrance of the past that is remade again and again for present purposes (Olick, 1999, p. 341-342). So, there are different approaches to collective memory, which we can name as individualist and collectivist approaches. Referring to Halbwachs and others, in this study, collective memory means more than aggregation of individual memories and used as a concept to understand reconstruction of the past socially. In

fact, any individual memory cannot exist without social experience and there cannot be any collective memory without individuals. This approach overcomes the problem of considering the individual and society as separate things (Olick, 1999, p. 346).

Since collective memory is something that is restructured by different groups, it is not fixed and neutral. Rather, it is ever-changing and charged with political and moral implications depending on construction of the past in different ways. Irwin-Zarecka draws attention to an important point that we should investigate the “construction of our emotional and moral engagement with the past” to understand working of the collective memory. Finding out which events, places, heroes are worthy of remembrance is critical for the mentioned emotional and moral engagement (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 7). She also mentions that collective memory is related to human affairs due to two reasons at least. The first reason is that collective memory is related to the sense of collective identity of people. The second one is that it inspires moral imperatives such as notion of justice which are fundamental for the normative order. She argues that “on both accounts, collective memory is then a significant orienting force, or, something we need to understand better in order to account for why people do what they do” (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 9).

Collective memory should also be considered as an area of struggle. It is an area of contestation to establish framework of collective memory regarding what to forget and what and how to remember. There is a struggle between different groups, states and opponent groups on the matter of what to forget and what to remember after conflict periods. As Olick states, there are always some powerful institutions which value some histories and narratives than others and provide the patterns of how individuals should remember (Olick, 1999, p. 342). The conflicts and struggles between the states and civil society organizations on the collective memory and memorialization practices is very determining on the form and content of public memorials and memorialization works.

Since the memory is related to the past, the relation between the collective memory and the past should also be mentioned. Collective memory deals with the past but it does not reflect the past directly and fully. It is rather a selective and mediated version of the past (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 145). Olick emphasizes the difference between

history and collective memory stating that “history is the remembered past to which we no longer have an ‘organic’ relation-the past that is no longer an important part of our lives- while collective memory is the active past that forms our identities” (Olick, 1999, p. 335). Since the past is established through remembering, the past may only exist when a relation is established with it (Assmann, 2001, p. 36). Based on the difference between the past and collective memory, we may consider public memorials and memorialization activities as tools mediating the past, and through which the past is established selectively.

The knowledge of the past and collective memory takes a critical part in discussions about building peace in the post-conflict societies as a restorative mechanism. The knowledge about the history of oppression is defined as heritage of a people and preserving the archives and collective memory as a duty of states by UN:

A people’s knowledge of the history of its oppression is part of its heritage and, as such, must be ensured by appropriate measures in fulfilment of the State’s duty to preserve archives and other evidence concerning violations of human rights and humanitarian law and to facilitate knowledge of those violations. Such measures shall be aimed at preserving the collective memory from extinction and, in particular, at guarding against the development of revisionist and negationist arguments (United Nations, 2005).

The terms of collective memory, social memory and public memory are generally used interchangeably in the literature. However, Casey differentiates public memory from other kinds of memory stating that while other forms of memory or remembrance primarily deal with the past, public memory is both “attached to a past (typically an originating event of some sort) and acts to ensure a future of further remembering of that same event”. He gives public monuments as an example claiming that their solidity also enforces the futurity (Casey, 2004, p. 17).

Casey states that social memory is the memory shared by the people who are affiliated by various types of ties such as kinship or geographical proximity in a region. This kind of memory requires to be shared by people related to each other (Casey, 2004, p. 21). He also adds that social memories do not need to be public unless they are made ‘public property’ by members of an affiliated group (Casey, 2004, p. 22). He defines collective memory as the circumstance in which different persons who may not know each other remember the same event in different ways. The critical point

differentiating collective memory is ‘commonality of content’ and conjoint remembrance of a certain event by people not knowing each other such as September 11. Even though social memory is based on shared experience, history or place, collective memory does not require such a basis (Casey, 2004, p. 23).

Based on the differentiation he makes between individual, social, and collective memory, Casey states that we may think of individual and social memory as inner circles of public memory, while collective memory is located at the outer perimeter. Public memory, which contrasts any kind of memory that takes place privately, takes place in an open realm where encounters and discussions with others are possible. So, compared to three other forms of memory, public memory serves as an ‘encircling horizon’ in the public area including places such as public parks or city halls (Casey, 2004, p. 25). He also emphasizes the concreteness of public memory. He argues that public memory always occurs in particular places. Differentiating the public memory from other kinds of remembering, he states that public memory requires specific scenes of interaction where people meet and interact (Casey, 2004, p. 32). The place is at the center of public memory:

It is integral to public memory, which is not merely situated in a public arena or literal “common place” but *enacted* there. The place, in other words, lends itself to the remembering and facilitates it at the very least, but also in certain cases embodies the memory itself (Casey, 2004, p. 32).

The fact that public memory is both related to the past and the future, it is concrete, requires places of interaction and has a spatial aspect will be discussed in the following pages in the example of public memorials.

3.2. Memorialization, Sites of Memory and Public Memorials after Periods of Violence and Oppression

Memorialization, sites of memory and public memorials have been accepted as an important part of dealing with the past, reestablishment of social relations after conflict and mass violence and honouring the victims and sufferers. Memorialization may include a range of practices such as establishing museums, erecting monuments, changing names of streets, preserving and establishing memory sites,

commemorations, etc. In this study, sites of memory and public memorials will be attached a specific importance among different forms of memorialization practices.

The report by Barsalou & Baxter on the role of memorials in social reconstruction defines memorialization as “a process that satisfies the desire to honour those who suffered or died during conflict and as a means to examine the past and address contemporary issues” (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 1). They list important contributions of memorialization as documenting human rights violations; creating places to mourn victims both for the families of the victims and society as a whole; being symbols of a society’s commitment to human rights; encouraging dialogue and reconciliation between former adversaries and different groups; serving to educational purposes like retelling the past for the next generations and preserving specific periods in the past (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 4).

Brett, Bickford, Sevchenko & Rios define memorialization as the process in which public memorials are created. Public memorials are defined as the physical representations such as museums and monuments or commemorative activities and performances related to the past and which are present in public spaces (Brett et al., 2007, p. 1). They state functions of public memorials as:

They are designed to evoke a specific reaction or set of reactions, including public acknowledgement of the event or people represented; personal reflection or mourning; pride, anger, or sadness about something that has happened; or learning or curiosity about periods in the past (Brett et al., 2007, p. 1).

As both Barsalou & Baxter and Brett et al. emphasize, memorialization in general and public memorials in particular are critical in terms of recognition of past events, creation of places for social and individual mourning, transferring lessons from the past to the next generations, honouring the victims, encouraging human rights, dialogue and social peace, etc.

Final Report of South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission is another relevant source in terms of referring to memorialization as a recommendation for symbolic reparations to victims. It is stated that these symbolic reparations include “continuing public, official acknowledgement through monuments, living memorials, days of remembrance and so on” (TRC Final Report, Vol: 1, p. 129). In another volume

of the report, it is stated that symbolic reparation includes measures for shared remembering and commemoration of the sad events and victories of the past. Establishment of museums, erecting memorials and monuments are also listed among other measures of symbolic reparation (TRC Final Report, Vol: 5, p. 175).

The concreteness of remembrance and concrete reflection of the past events through public memorials is important regarding *materialization of memory*. Assmann states that remembering is a concrete act in contradiction to thinking which is an abstract act. Before the thoughts become a part of the memory, there is a stage of perceiving. At this stage, the concept and the image (or the figure) are interpenetrated in a way impossible to separate (Assmann, 2001, p. 41). She uses the concept of “remembrance figures” which arises from this interpenetration of the concepts and experiences and which are characterized by three features. These are dependence on time and space, dependence on group and reconstruction of the past (Assmann, 2001, p. 42). Remembrance figures require to be materialized at a certain space and be current at a certain time, so to say, they are based on a concrete space and time (Assmann, 2001, p. 42). Social memory can only be associated with a real and alive group and remembrance figures express the general attitude of the group (Assmann, 2001, p. 43). As the last feature, social memory is reconstructed again and again. The memory cannot preserve the past in its pure form and reconstruct it in different forms in every period. The past is reorganized continuously within the changing relations of the present (Assmann, 2001, p. 44-45). The fact that remembering requires something concrete located at a space and in time strengthens the role of public memorials in collective remembrance. Irwin-Zarecka also states that it would be helpful if we think collective memory in concrete terms. She emphasizes that assuring presence of the past requires a kind of “memory work” regardless of its form, so to say it may be shooting a film or erecting a monument. These produced spaces and objects allow concrete engagements with the past (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 13).

In addition to being concrete, public memory and collective memory needs a space. Dwyer & Alderman argue that collective memory should be understood as “a socio-spatially mediated process”. They state that collective interpretation of the past can be realized through material sites of memory. Being places in public space, sites of

memory which are termed as memorials in general, include different types of spaces such as street signs, parks, landmarks, etc. associated with collective memory. They argue that all of these memorials constitute memorial or heritage landscape (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 167).

Public memorials which are located at public spaces inspire remembrance in the daily life. Physical memory works are critical due to being visible and permanent in public places, generally in the most visible parts of cities. These memory works and practices may take different forms such as memorial plaques, monuments, museums, archives, changing names of some public spaces, streets, etc. and giving names of important events or persons. These activities and works facilitate sharing of memories and when they do this, they become memorialization activities (Blustein, 2014, p. 172). It is argued that if the collective memory did not locate in physically distinct places such as monuments and memorials, it would be impoverished. These physically distinct places hosting collective memory make us remember by their presence and they become “symbolic texture of our remembering” (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 150).

Endurance of the collective memory is mostly dependent on the place. As Casey states, “the collective thought of the group of believers has the best chance of immobilizing itself and enduring when it concentrates on places, sealing itself within their confines and molding its character to theirs” (Casey, 2004, p. 39). Casey argues that the place is especially important for public memories since they need ‘spatial anchorage’ more than other types of collective remembering. He states that if there were not such concrete placement, memories would not have any referent in reality, so the place is located in the center of public memory (Casey, 2004, p. 39).

Gürler & Özer define public memorials as “landscapes which make it possible to keep past events alive in the common memory through physical representation in public areas” (Gürler & Özer, 2013, p. 858). They state that public memorials reflect psychological and sociological requirements of the societies which are listed as human rights, representation of victims, democracy, commemorating victims, preservation of the history and transferring information between different generations and cultures (Gürler & Özer, 2013, p. 858).

Brett et al. uses the concept of sites of conscience to separate specific memory sites from public memorials. Sites of conscience are places for not only to remember the past but also to open the way for public dialogue. Their main goal is preventing recurrence of past events. Since creation of a public memorial does not guarantee non-recurrence of human rights violations and mass violence in the past, sites of conscience fight against the possibility of re-experiencing the past through public dialogue and making people aware of the past (Brett et al., 2007, p. 7). They give various examples for these sites of conscience such as former torture and detention centers like Villa Grimaldi Park in Chile where Chilean President Bachelet and his mother were detained in the past and which has been transformed into a space of public actions and performances; Sole Peace School in Italy where 770 civilians were killed by Nazi troops in 1944, currently being a school bringing young people from conflict societies for three-weeks camps and other places all over the world giving educational programs to young people, providing place for everyday actions and performances, etc. (Brett et al., 2007, p. 7).

As widely observed in the literature, public memorials are attached value mainly due to their concreteness, visibility in the daily life, being located in urban space and allowing endurance of the collective memory. However, it will be questioned whether they are really visible as argued, whether they are realized consciously and whether their realization changes in accordance with their form, content and placement. I will elaborate different forms of public memorials and their effects based on their types and content in the next section.

3.3. Different Forms of Public Memorials and Memorialization Practices

Public memorials have been classified in various forms. Depending on their design, place and content, they may preserve the memories of the past, reverse the meaning attached to some places by transforming them into other places or just mark specific places. There are different classifications of public memorials. For example, Casey states that Germans distinguish among “a Denkmal, a monument meant to memorialize a person or event, a Mahnmal (a public reminder that acts as a warning), and a Gedenkstätte (a place in which a momentous event can be meditated)”. These three forms are related to different times. While the Denkmal is associated with the

past events, the Gedenkstätte is for the present and the Mahnmal is critical for the future. These “temporal” modes are placed in a particular site in concrete forms (Casey, 2004, p. 42).

Another classification is made by Barsalou & Baxter. They categorize forms of memorial initiatives under three headings. The first one is the constructed sites such as museums, monuments and walls on which names of victims are written; the second one is found sites such as graves, places of mass killings, former detention and torture centers and concentration camps; and the third one is activities such as anniversaries of events related to the conflict, public apology, temporary exhibits, renaming streets or buildings, walking tours, etc. (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 5). In parallel to “found” and “constructed” sites mentioned by Barsalou & Baxter, Truc draws attention to the fact that there are two distinct movements about memory. There may be two kinds of places, original or symbolic-official places and we may talk about memorialization or institutionalization of places: “the ‘memorialization’ of the original places of an event (where memory is based on the ‘local’ setting and eye-witness accounts) and the ‘institutionalization’ of official places of memory (created using the ‘symbolic’ setting and representations)” (Truc, 2011, p. 150). Truc states that each group wants to claim its authority through localization of its memories and “thus to stamp its mark on its selected ‘places of memory’ in a symbolic marking of the urban space” (Truc, 2011, p. 150). The means of symbolic marking may include commemorative plaques, erecting monuments, establishing museums or parks, changing names of streets, etc. (Truc, 2011, p. 150).

Memorialization practices range from traditional monuments made of marble or bronze that are located at very central places to contemporary memorials which can be encountered in any street or on the pavements in the daily life. Murtic states that contemporary monuments and memorials are far away from grand type of traditional monuments and they focus on creating some traces in urban spaces. He gives “stumbling stones” in Berlin and “Sarajevo Roses” in Sarajevo as examples of unusual street memorials which are “dispersed in public space, becoming part of everyday situation in which passers-by critically think for themselves and take their own responsibility for their thoughts and feelings” (Murtic, 2011, p. 39). During the

Bosnian conflict between the years of 1992-1995, many places were harmed with shells. Some pavements where shells exploded were not repaired after the war and they were painted with red resin creating the image of bloody flowers. Being small gestures of remembrance, this alternative project is encountered on the streets frequently by people and creates a different way of thinking about the past in the public space. It is valuable as an artwork, but more importantly, it has the capacity to direct attention of the viewers to larger issues (Murtic, 2011, p. 39). Gürler & Özer also draw attention to the fact that sudden encounters with a memory site or an alternative memory project within the routine daily life renews memories and it allows refreshment of social memory (Gürler & Özer, 2013, p. 860). Especially interactive sites of memory including exhibitions, neighbourhood tours, workshops and projects by social groups create a vibrant social memory (Till, 2003, p. 296).

In addition to different classifications, there are various approaches to the question how we can interpret public memorials. Dwyer & Alderman state that there are mainly three approaches to study memorial landscapes. These three approaches use metaphors of text, performance or arena. The first approach uses the text metaphor to emphasize that the landscape is like a text that is written and rewritten and read by readers. This textual approach considers commemoration as manifestation of stories through and on the landscape (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 169). This approach tries to “understand what historical discourses are represented and given authority via the landscape” (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 170). The second approach uses the metaphor of performance. It focuses on how memorial landscapes host various performances like marches, protests, rituals, festivals, etc. and how cultural displays and commemorations give meaning to memorials. There is a mutual-constitutive relation between the landscape and performances. While performances take place at places of memory, these places are also shaped and constituted through display of collective memories and performances. They give Madres de Plaza de Mayo (Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo) as an example who have been marching in a central square for years. They state that in such cases, the body may also be considered as a place of commemoration (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 173-174).

The third approach uses the metaphor of arena and focuses on the potential of public memorials to “serve as sites for social groups to actively debate the meaning of history and compete for control over the commemorative process as part of larger struggles over identity” (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 166). Although these three different approaches are important to understand public memorials and sites of memory, the third approach, which discusses memorials as a part of the larger struggle between different groups and as an area of contestation fits better to my study. Since there is a continuous debate on the past, different demands of victims, sufferers and perpetrators, states and civil initiatives, it is impossible to understand the content, design and effects of these memorials without considering this larger struggle to take control over the past and its reflection into the present. This third approach will be discussed in more detail in the section 3.5 related to the role of states and civil society.

3.4. The Restorative and Reparative Role of Public Memorials

The restorative and reparative aspects of memorialization and public memorials are widely emphasized in the literature. There seems to be a consensus on the restorative role of public memorials especially in terms of public acknowledgement of the wrong deeds in the past, providing a space for both individual and shared mourning, contributing in a culture of human rights and democracy, transferring lessons from the past to new generations, establishing a dialogue among different cultures and groups.

Brett et al. emphasize the contribution of public memorials and memorialization following the periods of violence and atrocity. They state that the reparative aspect of public memorials arises from “public acknowledgment of private experience” and they are usually connected with reparation policies following the periods of violence and atrocity (Brett et al., 2007, p. 6). According to them, memorials often provide spaces for a series of purposes such as personal mourning, spiritual alleviation in addition to democratic dialogue on the social level (Brett et al., 2007, p. 6). They state another important function of public memorials as connecting the past and the present arguing that public memorials may open the way for drawing connections between the past remembered through the memorial and other related crimes or events in the present time regardless of the country and context (Brett et al., 2007, p. 30). This argument is critical, because if public memorials have such a potential, it may be argued that they

contribute to the purpose of “never again” by drawing attention to the current problems and possible recurrence of the past events. In this respect, public memorials will also be questioned regarding the matter whether they may assist the visitors or people who visit or see them with establishing connections with the past and the similar current events. For example, can a public memorial in a specific country and related to a specific past atrocity remind people the existing violence or atrocity in another country or case?

Brett et al. argue that public memorials should open the way for an inclusive and plural dialogue. These memorials should trigger questions such as “‘What would you do in this situation?’, ‘Where is this happening today?’, ‘What do we need to do to prevent this from happening again?’” (Brett et al., 2007, p. 31). These questions are very critical for the study to understand whether public memorials play a significant role in triggering thoughts about the past, possible reactions of the people in the event in question and whether they encourage people to provide solutions for the current problems and to prevent recurrence of the past events.

One of the restorative aspects of public memorials arises from the fact that they create a space for commemoration. According to Blustein, if the wrongdoing is commemorated, it may be restorative since it may cause perpetrators and the responsible persons to take responsibility for their wrong acts and if this is endorsed politically, it may open the way for victims to feel that they are full members of society which would help political reconciliation (Blustein, 2014, p. 173). Blustein also mentions truth commissions and physical memorialization practices as remembrance of wrongdoing. He states that while criminal prosecutions are important since testimony of victims and findings of trials can inform the collective memory of society, truth commissions may be thought as a type of memorial to the victims and as forums for remembering. Mentioning physical memorialization practices such as erecting monuments, founding memorial museums and archives, Blustein states that these different types of memorialization initiatives “not only represent different ways of remembering the victims of past wrongdoing but are also facilitators of communal self-reflection that influences a community’s sense of its collective past” (Blustein, 2014, p. 147).

Remembering and not leaving victims of mass crimes to forgetting is very important to honour victims. Booth argues that if the victims are left nameless and the people do not have enough knowledge about their lives and what they experienced, they will be lost to forgetting. In this case, “the world is left incomplete; its integrity broken; its reality undermined” (Booth, 2001, p. 781). Irwin-Zarecka also emphasizes active role of public memorials in remembrance. She states that physical memory markers claim to represent true meaning of human experience and they take the most active role in terms of remembrance compared to other forms of public discourse about the past (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 151). Public memorials are also important for educating the new generations about the lessons taken from the past. Dwyer & Alderman state that “public remembrance of atrocity is necessary as a tool for facilitating social compensation to victimized groups, moral reflection among the larger society, and public education” (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 172).

Similar to the aforementioned authors, Huyssen draws attention to the restorative aspects of public memorials, mainly preventing traumatic repetitions and contributing in a democratic public spirit. He argues that public memory serves to prevent traumatic repetitions because public memory discourses aim at allowing people to get free of them. He states that “human rights activism, truth commissions and juridical proceedings are better methods for dealing with historical trauma. Another is the creation of objects, artworks, memorial, public spaces of commemoration” (Huyssen, 2003, p. 9). According to him, although remedying the losses, healing wounds is not easy, monuments facilitate continuing to live and they feed the “democratic public spirit” (Huyssen, 2003, p. 108). However, he does not talk about how they facilitate to live and how they feed democracy. Murtic, being another author claiming that memorials contribute in social interaction, argues that public memorials and sites of memory are critical in deconstruction of political debates and controversies remaining from the conflicted past by encouraging interaction between different groups (Murtic, 2011, p. 39). Public memorials are argued to have the potential of being democratic dialogue areas by creating a culture of respect through memorialization at the city landscape (Gürler & Özer, 2013, p. 858).

In addition to the restorative role of public memorials, it is emphasized that they may prevent similar events in the future. Many of the authors agree on the fact that transferring information about the past and generating a public awareness is one of the functions of public memorials. Danieli draws attention to this fact and he states that, there should be statues of heroes and martyrs, streets and colleges should be given their names and there should also be memorial services, scholarships, artistic performances in their names. This is necessary both for honouring the sufferers and preventing occurrence of a similar event. He suggests that commemoration should both honour the victims and sufferers and serve to preventive purposes because the loss cannot be compensated. Commemorative activities should also be committed to the motto of “never again” and intergenerational dialogue including dialogue between children of enemies and opposite groups in the past (Danieli, 2006, p. 352). In parallel to Danieli, Barsalou & Baxter argue that the memorialization efforts serve to encourage a culture of human rights and democratization to a certain extent through creation of the mentality of “never again” (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 10).

Danieli also draws attention to the matters of the need for mourning and fear of forgetting the past by survivors. He argues that erecting monuments is important for the sense of continuity both for the survivors and society. Since survivors are afraid of completing the mourning process thinking that it would lead to forgetting the dead, they always carry graveyards inside full of chronic grief, shame and pain of the past.

He considers monuments and public memorials as an attempt to take these graveyards carried inside of survivors out and in this way, survivors have a place for remembrance and mourning. They become a form of commemoration and documentation to ensure that the gross human rights violations and atrocities will not be forgotten (Danieli, 2006, p. 352). He indicates the role of commemorations with their healing property:

Commemorations can fill the vacuum with creative responses and may help heal the rupture, not only internally but also the rupture the victimization created between the survivors and their society. It is a shared context, shared mourning, shared memory. The memory is preserved; the nation has transformed it into part of its consciousness. The nation shares the horrible pain (Danieli, 2006, p. 351).

Danieli states that this shared mourning makes the sufferers and victims felt that they are not alone in their pain. This feeling is argued to be very critical both for individual

healing and strengthening bonds between the survivors and society (Danieli, 2006, p. 351). However, such arguments are not adequate to understand the real effects of public memorials since they may be too naïve and they are generally not based on actual cases and studies.

Jelin & Kaufman also draw attention to the role of public memorials claiming that although there are strong political conflicts and debates about presence and role of museums, monuments and memory sites, they may contribute to social peace since they convey the feeling of belonging to a community due to their public and collective nature and people may feel that they share a common identity rooted in a traumatic history. They also emphasize the role of public memorials as “key to the intergenerational transmission of historical memory” (Jelin & Kaufman, 2012, p. 98).

In her study on public memorials in South Africa, Marschall states that monuments of post-apartheid period are designed to come to the terms with the past and introduce alternative perspectives and they are manifestations of the post-apartheid period’s strategy of reconciliation and nation-building supported by the state (Marschall, 2009: p. 4). She argues that monuments and memorials satisfy significant social and psychological needs of both individuals and groups such as the need for mourning. However, states may use them for their political needs as in the case of the South African government which are a part of the project of establishing a unified national identity with reference to non-racism and reconciliation (Marschall, 2009, p. 9). She draws attention to three categories of needs those are social, psychological, and emotional needs of both persons who were affected by past atrocities directly and society as a whole bearing trauma of the past, which may be satisfied by these physical memory markers. She argues that considering memorials as symbolic forms of reparation is an important factor contributing to the proliferation of physical memory works which are important in terms of individual and social healing (Marschall, 2009, p. 13). Marschall also argues that memorials and monuments may restore the sense of personal dignity. According to her, although memorials are strategic tools to come to the terms with the past, this functionalist perspective obscures the emotional significance of such memorials for individuals and communities (Marschall, 2009, p. 59). This point is important since she warns to view public memorials regarding their

different aspects. Any public memorial may be mainly emotionally significant for people rather than its being a part of political strategy to come to the terms with the past.

Although the restorative and reparative aspects of memorials and monuments are highlighted in the literature, there are some authors who draw attention to the dangers of erecting monuments, establishing museums etc. For example, Booth draws attention to the concerns about danger of building monuments in the name of victims of mass crimes because when these monuments are erected, museums are built, demands of justice are “transformed into history, the past perfect, and cease to be part of the lived world of justice. Remembrance itself, in other words, can sometimes be used to quit the debt once and for all, to throw off the weight of the past” (Booth, 2001, p. 786).

It should be noted that forgetting and remembering does not exclude each other. Remembering something also means forgetting the others that are excluded. Since memorials narrate the past in a selective and controlled form, the process of forgetting comes with the process of remembering which leads to the exclusion of some narratives from public recognition (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 168). Connerton argues that there is a reciprocal relation between memorials and forgetting. While memorials are caused by the threat of forgetting to a certain extent, establishing memorials feed forgetting at the same time since memorials allow only certain things to be remembered while causing others to be forgotten (Connerton, 2009, p. 29). Brett et al. also emphasize that “some memorial designs in some political contexts can have the paradoxical purpose of *forgetting* the past... Sites of Conscience resist closing debate about the past. In fact, they are often likely to open debate” (Brett et al., 2007, p. 30). Huyssen argues that once a memorial is built, the responsibility to remember begins to fade. However, he also defines memorialization as a survival strategy against the fear and danger of forgetting (Huyssen, 2003, p. 18).

Brett et al. draw attention to the risks of memorialization based on the management of public memorials. For example, if the memorials proclaim ethnic superiority, this would deepen the existing divisions and may lead to violence between different ethnic groups. They also state that even the purpose of many of the memorials is to prevent recurrence of the past events with the motto of “never again”, their design may have a

discouraging effect for participation of people and they may not serve to prevent future mass crimes and human rights violations. If the memorials are monolithic or too static, visitors will be just passive observers and if they are too abstract, visitors will not be able to get an inspiration from them (Brett et al., 2007, p. 2). Barsalou & Baxter also argue that memorial projects which promote critical thinking, exploration of contested memories by the survivors and that facilitate the cultural exchange serve more to social reconstruction compared to static memorials, for example memorials of heroes (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 2).

In this respect, the public memorials to be searched will also be questioned with regard to whether they relieve of the societies from a burdensome past, prevent establishing justice, whether they provoke hatred among different groups and cultures due to their content, design, etc.

3.5. The State vs. Civil Initiatives in the Struggle of Memory

Public memorials and memorialization efforts are sometimes promoted and sponsored by the states. However, civil initiatives generally have to struggle for them, and they come face to face with the state on the matter. Public memorials are not neutral in general. They are related to political debates and struggles about the right and authority to represent the past. It is usual that there is a struggle between different groups, state and civil society after conflict periods on matters of who is entitled to represent the past, what should be commemorated, what can be carried to the public space and in which form. Public memorials and memorialization works are at the very heart of the struggle between different social groups and state about representation and narration of the conflicted past.

Remembrance of the past is very critical for states especially in the process of nation building. Till states that places of memory have been historically established by states as symbolic settings in the process of nation building. Memorials, museums, public places have been places where the state could put on the stage “selective histories”. He draws attention to the role of places of memory in power relations and says that “places of memory and the processes associated with their establishment, demonstrate the complex ways that nationalist imaginations, power relations, and social identities

are spatially produced” (Till, 2003, p. 289-290). Casey draws attention to the fact that every revolution, regardless of its questioning the official public memory of the former regime creates a new memory and establishes a new calendar for events to be remembered publicly (Casey, 2004, p. 25).

Public memorials may be considered as areas where different groups and states struggle to represent their “version of the past” in the built space. Therefore, there is an ongoing political struggle and negotiation on memory about whose past will prevail in the public space and attempts to fix time through the place (Till, 2003, p. 290). Till states that different social groups struggle against official representation of the past and they claim a political voice through alternative representations (Till, 2003, p. 296).

As aforementioned, one of the approaches to memorial landscapes is considering them as “arenas” of political struggle. This approach emphasizes inherently political character of memorialization and draws attention to the struggle on the right to represent and reshape the past:

Memorial landscapes are inherently political. They can be manipulated by those social groups in control while also providing a place for resistance and struggle. The ‘past’ is a potentially contested terrain and where memorials are located—relative to a sense of time and place—plays a critical role in shaping what (and who) is ultimately remembered and forgotten (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 173-176).

Thinking collective memory and memorial landscapes as an arena allows to examine the political character of collective memory. The reconstruction process of collective memory has some constraints imposed by the conflict among different social actors whose historical narratives are different from the other. Therefore, the “contest over whose conception of the past will predominate lies at the core of the politics of memory” (Dwyer & Alderman, 2008, p. 171).

Irwin-Zarecka also mentions the political aspect of memorialization stating that the struggle for preserving memory has always been together with the political struggle against the political regime. She gives the example of the mothers of the “disappeared”, Madres de Plaza de Mayo in Argentina who did not struggle just for preserving the memory of their children, but also entered a direct challenge against the regime (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 136).

Huyssen's book examining public memorials is another study emphasizing the political aspect of memory. He states that memory is not only related to the past but memory issues become a constituent part of political legitimacy of regimes and ethical self-understanding of societies about their conflictual past (Huyssen, 2003, p. 94). Huyssen draws attention to intervention in the public space by the public memory projects and their effects on reconstruction of the national consciousness:

Once embodied in memorial sites as active parts within an urban fabric, remembrance of traumatic events seems less susceptible to the vagaries of memory. Memory thus has a chance to inscribe itself into history, to be codified into national consciousness (Huyssen, 2003, p. 101).

Brett et al. compares governments and civil society organizations and argue that while governments try to develop narratives suiting their specific interests, civil initiatives and civil society organizations has the capacity to create more inclusive narratives as independent of political mandates and they can ensure greater participation of the people (Brett et al., 2007, p. 28). States and governments generally create a monolithic, unified or single national narrative. However various civil initiatives may produce multiple narratives and overthrow the myth of a unified national narrative (Brett et al., 2007, p. 29).

Regardless of whether initiated by states or civil society organizations, broad participation and involvement of society in the process of creation of public memorials and memory sites is important for their effects and capacity to open an area for social dialogue. Brett et al. emphasize that monolithic state projects which do not allow participation of different social groups can lead to resentment. A similar risk is also valid for projects of grassroots group which serve only to a specific isolated group since such projects would not have significant impact of transformation of social relations and building peace (Brett et al., 2007, p. 2).

Barsalou & Baxter also draw attention to the irrelevance of public memorials that are planned and established through a top-down process. Since public memorials and memorialization are part of a political process and struggle, inadequate involvement of survivors and different social groups and not taking care of local needs and priorities may cause creation of a place "that carries little meaning for the local survivors of the

conflict, breeds hostility towards it, or raises unrealistic expectations about it” (Barsalou & Baxter, 2007, p. 15).

Due to being at the very center of political struggle on representation of the past and reconstruction of collective memory, public memorials cannot be discussed independent of the struggle in the process of their realization and debates afterwards. In this study, the political struggle and debates, the effects of being realized by official power or civil initiatives, the level of involvement by people will be taken into account for all public memorials to be discussed.

As tried to be stated throughout the chapter, there are different approaches to collective memory, public memorials, and memorialization practices. They are considered as performance, arena of political struggle or texts to be read, differentiated based on their forms and content and they are attributed both positive and negative aspects regarding their role in establishing justice and peaceful social relations after conflict periods. Although there are different theoretical approaches to the matter, there are not adequate number of empirical studies to test and prove convenience of these theories and approaches. To be able to answer the questions asked throughout the first two chapters, cases from the world and Turkey will be discussed in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 4

DEALING WITH THE PAST, MEMORIALIZATION AND PUBLIC MEMORIALS IN THE WORLD: THE CASES OF GERMANY, ARGENTINA AND SOUTH AFRICA

As mentioned in the previous chapters, collective memory discussions, memorialization practices and public memorials based on dealing with the past have become widespread in the world especially since 90s. However, the leading example of dealing with the past can be taken back to Nuremberg trials where the perpetrators were judged on an international arena. Following Nuremberg trials, there have been some initiatives both by the governments and civil society organizations to memorialize Holocaust victims. On the side of the government, the public apology by Willy Brandt, the German Chancellor for the victims of Holocaust in Warsaw in 1970 has been an unforgettable scene in the world history. However, memorialization practices and the erection of memorials were started to be discussed in 90s and most of the critical memorials and sites of remembrance could come into existence in 90s and 2000s across the world.

There are numerous countries which faced and continue to face civil wars, mass murders, genocides, state violence etc. Some of them have started to apply transitional justice measures and taken steps to deal with the past. In parallel with those efforts of dealing with the past and post-conflict restorative measures, an important number of monuments, memorials, sites of remembrance, museums, etc. have been established as a part of memorialization practices. It is impossible to examine all of these examples within the scope of this study. The cases of Germany, Argentina and South Africa have been selected for the purpose of demonstrating their possible contribution to the realization of justice in dealing with the past. All of these cases have unique aspects and provide insight regarding memorialization practices and their restorative role after

mass violence. As discussed in the previous chapters, public memorials may play a critical role in dealing with the violent past, restoring social relations, preventing recurrence of the past events, educating the new generations about atrocities in the history, satisfying justice demands of the survivors and relatives of victims, allowing them to mourn for their losses, etc. Different examples of public memorials and sites of remembrance will be examined taking into account whether they serve to those aforementioned goals.

The reason for selecting Germany is that it may be considered as the country where discussions about dealing with the past have begun before other countries, it is the most-discussed case in the world and there are various types of memorialization in the country. Argentina and South Africa have been selected to be able to compare with the examples and initiatives in Turkey due to the fact that Argentina experienced a military coup and currently it deals with its violent past during junta regime and South Africa experienced a violent racism against the black people for decades and South African society tries to deal with this discriminatory and violent past. These cases will allow me to compare with the cases selected from Turkey, namely Ulucanlar Prison Museum and discussions and initiatives concerning the transformation of Diyarbakır Military Prison into a museum in the following chapters.

4.1. Germany: Dealing with the Shame of Holocaust

Germany has witnessed the most horrible crime in the 20th century and it still tries to deal with it. The Nazi regime is responsible for murdering about 6 million European Jews and other people (including Sinti and Roma communities, workers, socialists, homosexuals, etc.) during the years of 1933-1945. Trials of the top authorities by the International Military Tribunal just after the end of the Second World War known as Nuremberg trials, Auschwitz trials held in 60s, trial of Eichmann held in 61 were important steps for dealing with the past. However, all of them personalized the crimes during the Nazi regime and maintained the narrative of “particular criminals among decent Germans” (Birdal & Akkoç, 2013, p. 96). Almost during two decades after the end of the Nazi regime, there was a collective silence about the genocide and the official discourse and politicians supported forgetting.

The gesture by Willy Brandt in his visit to Warsaw, namely falling on his knees in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument in 1970 was a turning point for assuming social and political responsibility for the Holocaust (Birdal & Akkoç, 2013, p. 97). This gesture shocked the German society and the world; it became a very important step to show the desire and start the process of coming to terms with the past as a whole society. Being both an individual and political apology, the gesture by Willy Brandt opened a new period in collective memory of Germans and became a symbol of dealing with the past (Birdal & Akkoç, 2013, p. 103).



Photograph 1: Willy Brandt, in front of the Warsaw Ghetto Monument, taken from <https://rarehistoricalphotos.com/warschauer-kniefall-1970/>

Since the 1980s and especially 90s, Germany has witnessed proliferation of monuments and memorials dedicated to the victims of the Holocaust. Although this is a critical turning point regarding attempts for dealing with the past, there are also criticisms about the high number of monuments since they are claimed to serve to forgetting. For example, Huyssen states that Germany experiences ‘a memory mania’ since the 1980s and there is an obsession with monuments. He claims that “in today’s Germany, redemption through memory is the goal”. He also criticizes that high number of monuments make the past invisible and they serve to forgetting (Huyssen, 2003, p. 31-32).

Currently there are various monuments, museums, memorials, concentration camp museums, information centers, exhibitions, etc. which continuously remind Holocaust. Some of them are at the heart of cities and daily life across Germany. Among them, there are concentration and extermination camps which are protected in their original forms to a substantial degree; central memorials and museums such as the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe and Jewish Museum in Berlin; some museums and centers dedicated to the people who resisted to Nazis and helped Jewish people to rescue such as Silent Heroes Museum and German Resistance Memorial Center and stumbling stones known as “*stolpersteine*” which are small stones located on pavements commemorating the victims individually in their neighbourhood. It is impossible to mention all of them in this study, however remarkable ones will be examined to be able to show different aspects of public memorials and memorialization practices.

4.1.1. A State-Sponsored National Project: *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*

The first example that I will examine is the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe which is known as the first national Holocaust memorial of Germany. There was a years-long debate on the construction of a memorial dedicated to the murdered Jews of Europe. The discussions go back to a citizens’ initiative started by a publicist and a historian in the late 80s. The German Bundestag (Federal Assembly of Germany) passed a motion in 1999 to start the construction of a memorial based on the architect Peter Eisenman’s design and the memorial was opened in 2005 (Holocaust Memorial, information leaflet). The memorial is located at the very center of Berlin, on the center of former Nazi military headquarters on an area of 19.000 square meters and consists of 2711 concrete slabs (stelae) of differing heights. The central location of the memorial is also critical because most of the concentration and extermination camps which are authentic sites of memory are located at remote areas. So, importance was attached to establish the memorial “right in the middle of public consciousness” (Rellensman, 2010, p. 132). There is an information center underneath the memorial area. Despite anonymity of the slabs, names of the Jewish victims are shown in the “room of names” inside the information center. Names, birth and death dates and a

short biography of thousands of victims are reflected on the walls. There is also a database of names which is updated continuously (Rellensman, 2010, p. 129).

An international competition was staged in 1994 to select the design of the memorial. 528 designs were submitted and they were evaluated by a jury composed of 15 members. These members were appointed by three main agencies of the process, namely the citizens' group which started the debate, the Berlin Senate and the Bundestag (Young, 2002, p. 67). Such a composition of the actors, including both citizens' civil initiative, local and central administration, is critical in terms of comprehensiveness. Of course, these actors did not always work in harmony and various disputes arose about the design of the memorial. For example, there were experts and intellectuals in the jury to select the design, however the citizens' group accused them of being elitist and favouring the "conceptual and minimalist designs" (Young, 2002, p. 67). The organizers of the memorial also organized a number of public colloquia about the memorial in 1997. Historians, critics, artists and curators were invited to discuss the important matters related to the available designs for the memorial. These colloquia attracted intense public attention (Young, 2002, p. 68). Young draws attention to the importance of public debates about the memorial. He argues that the debate itself deserved to be blessed instead of a "fixed icon for Holocaust memory in Germany" (Young, 2002, p. 68). The long process of discussions about the memorial, inclusion of civil initiatives and public opinion and the support of the state are critical since either civil society organizations and initiatives or official authorities manage the process in most of the cases in the world and it is common to see conflict arising between these two sides or one side being out of the process.

The memorial was attributed importance in the sense of serving to the goals of educating new generations, preventing recurrence of the past events, honouring the victims, defending democracy and resisting dictatorships. The purpose of the memorial was explained in the resolution of 1999 by the German Bundestag to establish a memorial as follows:

With the memorial we intend to honour the murdered victims, keep alive the memory of these inconceivable events in German history, admonish all future generations never again to violate human rights, to defend the democratic constitutional state at all

times, to secure equality before the law for all people and to resist all forms of dictatorship and regimes based on violence (Rellensman, 2010, p. 133).

The memorial is widely compared to traditional monuments and it has several aspects differentiating it from them. The architect of the memorial, Eisenman states that the unique way of remembering the Holocaust is keeping the past active in the present. He compares the Holocaust Memorial with traditional monuments and argues that the traditional monument is seen and understood simultaneously and by its symbolic imagery. Despite the fact that traditional monuments have a space-time continuum and a goal in itself, the Holocaust Memorial has no goal and no end. He draws attention to the importance of individual experience: "In this context, there is no nostalgia, no memory of the past, only the living memory of the individual experience. Here, we can only know the past through its manifestation in the present" (Holocaust Memorial, information leaflet). Young also draws attention to the difference between the traditional monuments and the memorial stating that while the traditional ones use their sizes to impress viewers, the Holocaust Memorial has a proportioned form which locate people on an equal level with memory (Young, 2002, p. 78). Comparing the Holocaust Memorial with the authentic sites such as concentration camps, Rellensman argues that the memorial reminds the past constantly thanks to its central location contrary to the authentic sites such like extermination camps which are out of sight in remote parts of both Germany and Europe (Rellensman, 2010, p. 136).

The Holocaust Memorial rejects to present experience of a traditional monument which is determined, seen and understood simultaneously and which does not leave place for individual interpretation. Harjes emphasizes that contrary to traditional monuments, the abstract design of the memorial is intended to appeal to more people and provide a space of interpretation and particular experience of visitors. She also states that another intention of the memorial is to provide a site of mourning due to the image of a cemetery created by the concrete slabs reminding of gravestones (Harjes, 2005, p. 142). However, she states that the memorial fulfills these aims to a limited degree. Especially young people do not have adequate information about and interest in Holocaust and as she emphasizes "fulfilling the memorial's educational function, is entirely dependent upon the previous knowledge and intellectual inquisitiveness of the individual visitor" (Harjes, 2005, p. 142-143).



Photograph 2: *The Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe*, taken from <https://www.tripsavvy.com/holocaust-memorial-in-berlin-1520198>, photographer: Taylor McIntyre

This is a critical point in evaluating effects of a memorial or memory place. The memorial or place itself may have some intentions, aims such as educating young people, creating a place for mourning or individual experience, however, the visitor determines whether these intentions or goals are served in the end. The project held by the Israeli artist, Shahak Shapira called “Yolocaust” aims at showing how visitors were distanced from the meaning of the Holocaust Memorial. He selected inappropriate selfies taken by visitors from the social media platforms and combined those photos with ones taken at Nazi extermination camps (“Artist shames tourists”, 2019). Although it is impossible to attach a universal and determinate meaning to the memorial, he argues that “The exact meaning and role of the Holocaust Memorial are controversial. To many, the grey stelae symbolize gravestones for the 6 million Jews that were murdered and buried in mass graves, or the grey ash to which they were burned to in the death camps” (“Artist shames tourists”, 2019). As an example, he took a photo of a girl doing yoga on one of the concrete slabs with expression of “Yoga is connection with everything around us” and combined it with a photo from Nazi camps showing hundreds of persons killed.



Photograph 3: Holocaust Memorial Selfie 1,
taken from <https://www.demilked.com/holocaust-memorial-selfies-yolocaust-shahak-shapira/>



Photograph 4: Holocaust Memorial Selfie 2,
taken from <https://www.demilked.com/holocaust-memorial-selfies-yolocaust-shahak-shapira/>

Parallel to the aforementioned warning of Huyssen about potential of memorials and monuments to serve to forgetting, Young also has the fear that the memorial would help to unload the burden of Germans instead of reviving memory of murdered Jews. In that way, Germans could “move freely and unencumbered into the twenty-first century. A finished monument would, in effect, finish memory itself” (Young, 2002,

p. 70). But this comment is inconsistent considering the fact that Young also considers the memorial as a deliberate act of remembrance. He argues that building such a memorial does not only mean a passive form of recognition of the past, but it is also a conscious act of remembrance which also creates memory for the next generations along with preserving it (Young, 2002, p. 75). In fact, the memorials and monuments might always carry the risk of serving to forgetting or easing the burden of the past, however the solution is not absence of them.

4.1.2. Decentralized Memorials on Pavements: *Stolpersteine*

An interesting form of memorial is “*stolpersteine*” which means stumbling stones that are located on pavements. This symbolic art project was initiated in 1996 and currently there are about 70.000 stumbling stones across Europe. The artist Gunter Demnig lays those stumbling stones himself. Each stumbling stone is laid in front of the buildings where the related person was last seen or once lived. The stumbling stones generally begin with the words of “here lived...” and continues with the name, life dates and the fate of the victim of Nazis (Official website of *stolpersteine* project).

The stumbling stones constitute the example of decentralized form of memorials. They are dispersed across the whole Europe, mainly Germany. You can encounter with one of them anywhere while walking across the city. They are placed taking out of a piece of pavement stone and replacing the stumbling stone instead of it and since the colors are different, they draw attraction of the paddlers and invite them to read the writing on the stone.

The importance of such kind of a memorial seems to arise from the individualization of victims and placing the memorial at the very heart of the city and daily life. It is especially striking that those stones are placed in front of the victims’ last place of residence, reminding them as normal individuals who were living in those buildings, walking on those pavements. Volmert argues that the intention of the project is “their commemorative reintegration into a common civil space” (Volvmet, 2017, p. 6). The accidental encounter with the stumbling stones by pedestrians may make them wonder about the historical reality, perpetrators and local people who witnessed these events (Volvmet, 2017, p. 9).



Photograph 5: The stumbling stones, taken from <http://www.stolpersteine.eu/en/gallery/>

The stumbling stones mark the everyday places and remind people the victims who were neighbors once upon a time. They also bring that question to the mind: “who were the perpetrators and who stood by and watched” (Richarz, 2008, p. 329). According to Harjes, the stumbling stones focus on “the moral duty of remembering and taking responsibility for that which lies in one's proximity: here, the former neighbors” thanks to their potential to open the way for conversation about the neighbourhood and their open-endedness with an emphasis on individual memory. The mentioned moral duty for each other can serve to establish communities based on the common cause of collective memory (Harjes, 2005, p. 147-148). This point is very critical in the sense of reducing credibility of the claims of local people that they did not see or know anything. It can also raise the awareness of the individual fates of the victims and it also reminds incomprehensible number of the Holocaust victims (Volmert, 2017, p.18). In parallel with Volmert, Harjes also draws attention to effects of unintended encounters with the stumbling stones:

Through their plentitude, their inconspicuous locations, and their lack of explanatory texts or documentation, Stolpersteine can, on the one hand, surprise and irritate those who pass by. On the other hand, these decentralized memorial pieces can blend into

the city like pieces of furniture, becoming familiar, unnoticed objects to the people who see them every day (Harjes, 2005, p. 144).

Volmert emphasizes three important aspects of the project. First of all, it is critical that the project is dedicated to all the victims of Nazi regime, not only to Jews. Secondly, one of the aims of the project is to remember the victims as individuals indicating their names and last place of residence. Thirdly, the project exists in different locations and it is an ongoing project, namely it is possible to contribute into the project personally being sponsor for a stumbling stone which costs 120 Euros (Volmert, 2017, p. 5). All these aspects point to an inclusive, interactive and flexible memorial form.

Harjes argues that the stumbling stones are not a type of ready-made interpretation of the history and they intend to make people think. Educational role of the stones overrides their commemorative or representative functions, providing the chance of an active and critical engagement with the past (Harjes, 2005, p. 143). They also trigger further interest and historical research and the process is supported by museums, archives, schools, citizens' initiatives and individuals. There are many people who contribute in the work of those stumbling stones and learn very much from them (Richarz, 2008, p. 326). Especially research for details and biographies of the victims requires a substantial human labor to work with archives. An increasing number of teachers and students take place in these researches. Sometimes students choose to work on a victim from their own neighbourhood, go to the State Archive to collect information, make interviews with living witnesses and victims' relatives and they present this information during the ceremony held while laying the stone (Richarz, 2008, p. 332). So, this is a very active method of learning about the past and may be said to have a considerable educatory role.

Another critical purpose that the stumbling stones serve is creating place for mourning. Since many of the victims do not have a grave, these memorial stones act as the public signs of remembrance. Many people sponsor laying of those stones for their victim relatives. Richarz argue that for those relatives, laying these stones accompanied with a small ceremony fulfills a psychological need (Richarz, 2008, p. 329). Hamburg coordinator of the project of the stumbling stones, Peter Hess points out the critical psychological role of the stones for relatives of victims as follows:

I personally am most touched by the reaction of the relatives who want to have stones laid for murdered family members. The ceremony is very, very important for them. They come from Australia, from America, from Israel to witness the ceremony... Other relatives, who live here, or sponsors regularly go to visit the stones on the victims' birthdays or the anniversaries of their death; they clean them, lay a flower on the stone, or silently commemorate their murdered relatives... (as cited in Richarz, 2008, p. 330).

Stumbling stones is not a state-driven project, it is maintained by the support of citizens. It has never received public funding, it has always been sponsored by individuals so it has been a "grassroots memorial" (Richarz, 2008, p. 330). This kind of participation in the process of introducing these small memorials into the daily life is important in the sense that it becomes easy to be adopted by the people. In contrary to huge-sized, stable, unchanging and centralized memorials, the stumbling stones represent a decentralized form of memorial that is open to change and proliferation by the ordinary people.

4.2. Argentina: Dealing with the Military Coup

Living under a cruel military dictatorship between the years of 1976-1983, Argentinian people witnessed disappearance, kidnapping and murder of thousands of people by the military regime. The violent acts were not limited to mass killings by the state, but also the whole society was divided into opponent camps and numerous people were subject to state violence, torture and imprisonment (Sarlo, 2012, p. 18). So, the mentioned period of the history of Argentina is one of the most known examples of the state terror. While serious human rights violations left their mark on the history of Argentina until 1983, it is possible to say that the struggles for justice, memory and truth have taken the place of violence after 1983 and there has been an ongoing struggle since then.

Judgement of some of the junta leaders started shortly after the end of the regime in 1983. The criminal procedure was important to admit officially the fact that those junta leaders were guilty and responsible for what happened during the military regime. However, only the senior leaders were judged and many of them were granted amnesty by the repentance laws issued in 1986 and 1987 and the worse, the punished soldiers were released in 1989 during the Menem period (Üstündağ, 2011, p. 8). So, the penal justice was not satisfying for the sufferers and judging only the high order officers was

inadequate for accounting for the thousands of people who were disappeared, kidnapped and murdered.

Established in 1983, the National Commission of the Disappeared Persons researched human rights violations during the junta regime and it revealed a serious number of hidden torture centers and graveyards. The Commission verified that there were about nine thousand disappeared people and 400 illegal detention centers. Such an official admission and recognition is critical in terms of establishing a standard information accuracy of which cannot be refused by anyone (Jelin and Kaufman, 2000, p. 93). A book named *Nunca Más* (Never Again) based on the reports of the commission was published and it became a bestseller. Importance of *Nunca Más* is that it formed a new historical narrative instead of the propaganda of the military regime and it also established a standard for discussions regarding the past in addition to revealing many unknown stories of that period (Kaplan, 2012, p. 7).

Although there were various attempts to deal with the violent military regime starting from the end of the military dictatorship in 1983, the state violence could be discussed widely only in 90s. One of the important events carrying the violent acts during the military dictatorship to the public agenda was a critical admission by a former navy officer in 1995. In his book named "Flight", the officer admitted that they threw detainees to the ocean from airplanes after narcotizing them. This was the first time that a perpetrator made a confession about the acts of the military regime. Following that event, the chief of defense of the period apologized stating that the army committed crime during the dictatorship period (Jelin and Kaufman, 2000, p. 95). Another event bringing forward the state violence was related to the commemorations organized in 1996 in many parts of Argentina due to the 20th anniversary of the military coup (Jelin and Kaufman, 2000, p. 96). In 2003, Kirshner declared March 24 as the Memory Day for National Truth and Justice and he supported establishment of a Memory Museum at ESMA (former Navy Mechanics School) (Kaplan 2012, p. 10).

Discussing the memory struggle in Argentina, Huyssen states that starting in 1977, ongoing weekly public demonstrations of the Mothers and Grandmothers of the Plaza de Mayo have managed to keep state terror in the military dictatorship period in the public agenda (Huyssen, 2003, p. 97). Huyssen draws attention to the fact that although

the important part of the public memory struggle was experienced in the courts and focused on disappeared persons and kidnapped children, the nationwide debate about public monuments, memorial sites and museums have started to lay the foundation for grappling the past for Argentinian people since 90s (Huysen, 2003, p. 99). Among them, the struggle for memory places such as ESMA, *El Parque de la Memoria* (Memory Park) and *El Olimpo* raised nationwide debates. For example, when Menem suggested to erase the building of ESMA, it was massively protested by the opponents of the regime, relatives of victims and the disappeared, and on the other hand, suggestion to turn it into a museum of terror to keep its memory alive was strongly opposed by the military (Huysen, 2003, p. 100).

The most important and known struggles about the acts of the military regime in Argentina were put up in the field of memory places. Hundreds of detention and torture places were determined and an active struggle started especially in 90s to transform these places into memory sites to remind the disappeared to the entire society. There was a need to keep the memory of state terrorism alive and this could be made through places carrying traces of that period. The local neighbourhood commissions and initiatives which emerged in the second half of 90s were “part of a broader transformation in the struggle for truth, justice and memory” (Drunen, 2010, p. 125-126). The aim of these local memory commissions was to reconstruct the memory of the neighbourhood and create awareness among the people about the crimes committed by the military regime (Drunen, 2010, p. 126).

Shooting a documentary about sites of memory in Argentina, Estela Schindel states that there are about 500 places that have been determined to be illegal detention centers and marked as memory site. These places are marked by placing a memorial in front of them (Öztürk, 2014). The most known ones of such places in Argentina are *El Olimpo* and ESMA which are among the most important torture centers of the junta regime. Both of them have been assigned to human rights associations and transformed into society centers (Üstündağ, 2011, p. 6).

4.2.1. From A Detention Center to a Society Center: *El Olimpo*

El Olimpo is a former tramway station located in a working-class neighbourhood being in operation for decades. However, during the junta regime, it was used as a secret detention center for a short period. About 500-700 people were kept there and only about 100 of them could survive (Hite, 2015, p. 45).

A large number of human rights organizations and people who survived after being kept at *El Olimpo* and relatives of the victims started to struggle to take out the police from *El Olimpo* and to transform this place into a memory site in the mid-90s. A project was submitted to Buenos Aires City Council to establish a “Memory Museum” at *El Olimpo* in 1995. People who submitted the project assembled to open the museum symbolically and to write “Memory Museum, Never Again” on the wall of the building in 1996 and they painted the wall (Jelin and Kaufman, 2000, p. 97). However, assignment of the building to human rights organizations took a long time and an agreement could be signed just in 2004 to assign *El Olimpo* from the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the State of Buenos Aires. In accordance with the agreement, the Federal Police Force would evacuate *El Olimpo* and the building would be used as a site to revive the historical memory about state terrorism and promote human rights and democratic values (Drunen, 2010, p. 125). However, the police destroyed the architectural structure of the place while evacuating there not to leave any evidence. Despite that, the building itself continues to exist as a symbol of the past events (Üstündağ, 2011, p. 24).

In fact, the struggle for transforming *El Olimpo* into a memory site was a result of local memory commissions and initiatives that were established to revive the memory about state terrorism during junta regime and which were a part of a large-scale transformation in truth, justice and memory struggle starting from 90s (Drunen 2010, p. 125-126). One of the most important aspects of transforming *El Olimpo* that is located at a central point of the city into a memory center is that it showed that the people in the neighbourhood participated in this process passively by staying silent (Drunen, 2010, p. 140). As Drunen conveys from narratives of witnesses with whom he interviewed, it may be said that people used some defense mechanisms to refuse that they knew what happened there such as they thought the sounds coming from the

function during the dictatorship has been reversed; it has been a place where people come together and unemployed people acquire profession instead of being a center of isolation. The expression by a person attending to sewing workshop as “we sew the social fabric with needle and yarn” is a striking example of reversal of the meaning of the building during the dictatorship (Öztürk, 2014).



Photograph 7: Inside El Olimpo, taken from <http://trabajadoresdemuseos.blogspot.com/2011/03/una-visita-por-el-ex-centro-clandestino.html>

The study conducted by Drunen on *El Olimpo* provides important insight into the feelings of people about such memory works. Based on the interviews made, he argues that revealing the past abuses, forcing relatives of victims to remember may be both disrupting and healing. It was disrupting to remember the past and talk about the loss and suffering for some people, while it was healing and activating for others (Drunen, 2010, p. 134). He also argues that the memory sites which were formerly clandestine detention centers helped people to talk about the past, stimulated them to speak about their experiences and deal with the past as in the example of a seventy-years old woman who heard screams coming from the next house but never spoke about it until this place was declared to be a former torture center and transformed into a memory site with a marker on it (Drunen, 2010, p. 138). It is critical that he draws attention to social impacts of memory sites such as *El Olimpo* in the form of silence, shame,

confusion for inhabitants of neighbourhoods where these sites are located, but those sites have also become a source of activism and a tool of dealing with the past at the same time (Drunen, 2010, p. 141).

Existence of *El Olimpo* as a memory site has been a source of activism for the people living in that neighbourhood along with being an expression of silence, confusion and shame (Drunen, 2010, p. 141). It may be said that transformation of *El Olimpo* and hundreds of similar places into a memory site has contributed to dealing with the past by the people who pass by this building every day and created a strong base for the new generations to prevent recurrence of similar events.

These memory places have many important roles in the struggle to reconstruct the memory of a violent past. As opposite to the state policy of killing, making people disappeared and forgotten and trying to prevent mourning for those people, these places allow the names and ideas of the disappeared people to live; open a space for the disappeared to “appear” and be remembered again in a neighbourhood and just in the middle of the daily life; and create an area for both individual and social mourning. The victims’ relatives, sufferers and human rights activists still keep this struggle going on in Argentina.

4.3. South Africa: Dealing with Apartheid

South Africa lived under a racist regime called apartheid almost for a half-century, starting from 1948 until 1994 when African National Congress led by Nelson Mandela won the first democratic elections held after decades. It has been difficult to deal with a past characterized with institutionalized racism against the black people and the process has not been completed yet. Although a remarkable number of monuments and memorials have been established to deal with the past, South Africa case is mostly known for the truth commission established in the aftermath of the apartheid regime as a measure to ensure justice and reconciliation.

Following the apartheid regime in the country and a severe violence especially against the black people, South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission was established in 1995 to listen to victims and perpetrators, to reveal truths about the past abuses and to encourage reconciliation for national unity. Stating that truth commissions function

to gather truth in general and perform this function through testimonies and collection of material evidences, Kraft argues that among the truth commissions in several countries, South Africa's TRC, which worked until 2001, has been the most extensive and well-documented truth commission. Perpetrators were granted amnesty by the commission if their acts were judged to be politically motivated and provided that they made full disclosure about the events in which they were involved (Kraft, 2014, p. 34).

Whether the amnesty trials of the committee and confronting of victims and perpetrators were restorative and contributed in the social peace is a highly debated issue. Since the TRC allowed some perpetrators to receive amnesty for acknowledging their crimes and disclosing them fully and who were judged to have political motivations for their acts, it meant that these people who benefited from apartheid regime would also be free in the new society and would not be punished (Villa-Vicencio, 2009, p. 105). This aspect is very critical because when truth is disclosed and crime is acknowledged but the perpetrator is not punished, it may disrupt the feeling of justice of victims. In addition, when the past is judged but people's status in society and economic and cultural relations do not change much, it may cause new conflicts between adversary groups instead of serving to build social peace. Despite the steps taken for strengthening economic and social status of the black people, they still live as deprived of basic needs. Villa-Vicencio argues that the process has not been completed yet and this would be a problem regarding the stability in the future (Villa-Vicencio 2009, p. 105).

In addition to revealing truths, The Truth and Reconciliation Commission drew attention to memorialization as a part of symbolic reparations to victims in its Final Report. It is stated that these symbolic reparations include "continuing public, official acknowledgement through monuments, living memorials, days of remembrance and so on" (TRC Final Report Vol: 1, 129). In another volume of the report, it is stated that "amongst other measures, symbolic reparation should entail identifying a national day of remembrance and reconciliation, erection of memorials and monuments, and the development of museums" in the chapter devoted to symbolic reparation measures (TRC Final Report Vol: 5, 175). The fact that South African Truth and Reconciliation Committee recommended building memorials as symbolic forms of reparation has

been an important factor contributing in proliferation of these physical memory works which are important in terms of individual and societal healing (Marschall, 2009, p. 13).

Marschall states that the monuments of the post-apartheid period are designed to come to the terms with the past and introduce alternative perspectives and they are manifestations of the post-apartheid period's strategy of reconciliation and nation-building supported by the state (Marschall, 2009, p. 4). She argues that the monuments and memorials function to satisfy significant social and psychological needs of both individuals and groups such as the need for mourning. However, states may use them for their political needs as in the case of the South African government which are a part of the project of establishing a unified national identity with reference to non-racism and reconciliation (Marschall, 2009, p. 9). The mentioned policy of the South African government may be said to be problematic in the sense that the needs of the survivors may stay unnoticed amidst the attempts to highlight national unity and reconciliation. Barsalou and Baxter give Freedom Park as an example of this policy and its potential problems as follows:

Freedom Park acknowledges the survivors, broadly defined, of the conflict but focuses mainly on drawing together the different racial, ethnic, and cultural narratives of a richly diverse country in an attempt to portray a nation moving forward into a transformed future. Survivors may have negative opinions about a nationally and future-focused memorial because it does not relate directly to their particular needs—honouring those killed in conflict, restoring the good names of those involved in struggles against oppression, or commemorating particular types of violence (Barsalou and Baxter, 2007, p. 8).

Memorials and monuments have specific importance in South Africa since most of the monuments and museums in the country established before 1994 played the role of reaffirming dominant status of Europeans, namely the white settlers over the indigenous Africans, the black people (Sheriff, 2014, p. 2). Sheriff argues that memorials and monuments established in the post-apartheid era emphasized national unity, reconciliation and aimed at confronting with the legacy of apartheid (Sheriff, 2014, p. 3). There are various memorials in South Africa dedicated to dealing with apartheid and establishing a sense of national unity. Among them, the most known ones are Freedom Park which is dedicated to the people who resisted against apartheid, human rights defenders and aims at serving to reconciliation and an inclusive concept

of nation; Apartheid Museum that was established in 2001 with concrete blocks over the walls with messages of “Democracy, Equality, Reconciliation, Diversity, Responsibility, Respect and Freedom” and which aims to make visitors feel the apartheid regime’s racism with “white” and “non-white” entrances; Robben Island Museum which was a former prison where Nelson Mandela was also imprisoned for years and which recruits former inmates as guides (Rankin, 2013, p. 81); and the District Six Museum as will be discussed below.

4.3.1. The District Six Museum

District Six was a neighbourhood of tens of thousands of residents which was demolished after it was declared as a “white-only” area following legislation of an act which denied black people to live in “white” cities. It was a mainly working-class neighbourhood, which had a vibrant intellectual, artistic and cultural life. It was also a place which had potential for opposition to apartheid ideology (Layne, 2008, p. 54). In the period following 1966, more than 60.000 persons were forcibly displaced and their houses were bulldozed. The life in the neighbourhood came to an end in 1982 (Official website of District Six Museum). An alliance named “Hands Off District Six” was established in 1987 to prevent redevelopment of the area. In 1988, the alliance held a conference and made a call to establish a museum to keep the memory of District Six alive (Işık, 2018, p. 190).

People of the area have started to return to their lands as a result of land restitution process in the post-apartheid period. The District Six Museum was established as an independent community-based project in 1994. It is stated that the museum is committed “to deepening its memory work by supporting and facilitating the reconstruction of the landscape and the community in both material and intangible ways” (Official website of District Six Museum). District Six Museum is currently located at a former church and there is also an additional building serving as a part of the museum under the name of the Homecoming Center. Different levels of students from elementary school to university students are educated at this place and also public education events take place there (Official website of District Six Museum). The mission of the museum is stated to be “an internationally engaged museum of innovation working with the memories of District Six and other communities affected

by forced removals, and contributing to the cultural reconstruction and restitution” of Cape Town in the post-apartheid period at the official website of the museum (Official website of District Six Museum).

The former and vibrant life of District Six is displayed in the museum with photographs and personal objects collected from ex-residents of District Six. There is a big map on the floor of the museum and it is surrounded by old street signs of the neighbourhood. The map is a vital and interactive piece of the museum on which the former residents write down details about the area such as who lived and what happened at different places of the area (Rankin, 2013, p. 91). The street signs were the first collection put in the museum and after their placement, an exhibition named Streets was displayed. Remarkably, people who came to the museum saw the name of the street where they lived once and the signs opened the way of memories and stories (Layne, 2008, p. 58). The map which is laid on the floor of the museum has also played a critical role in interactive character of the museum since ex-residents come to the museum and mark their houses, schools, bus stops, etc. and the map is kept updated with memories added by the real subjects of the story (Layne, 2008, p. 59).

The museum has various functions including providing educational programs about the history of the neighbourhood and apartheid, creating space for public discussions, allowing different forms of remembrance and expression to be performed, keeping a historical archive, and rendering social services to the residents of the area who return back (Barsalou and Baxter, 2007, p. 14). Among them, the educatory function of the museum comes to the forefront since there are intense education programs which ensure younger generations who have not witnessed apartheid period to understand experiences of their parents and grandparents (Barsalou and Baxter, 2007, p. 9). The museum is frequently visited by school groups and there are some lesson materials and programs for schools (Geschier, 2005, p. 46).

Although education of new generations is very important in the sense of taking lessons from the past and preventing recurrence of the past events, selectivity of education programs and stories have a problematic aspect. Geschier interviewed with five facilitators of District Six Museum majority of whom were former residents of the area and asked them about the role of primary narratives in interaction with young people.

One of the facilitators states that there is a selective memory in the museum and the children think that only heroes were living in District Six in the past and he suggests that the museum should also have a gallery exhibiting rogues to show the young people that there were also 'bad' persons. However, he also draws attention to the fact that majority of the former District Six residents did not want to talk about memories that may have negative effects on others (Geschier, 2005, p. 58). Geschier argues that it is problematic to present District Six as a place where only good people lived since younger generations think of it as an unreachable place (Geschier, 2005, p. 58). So, the selectivity of memories displayed is an important matter as observed in the case of District Six. Another problem that facilitators draw attention is that it is very difficult for children to imagine and understand the atrocities of the past (Geschier, 2005, p. 50).



*Photograph 8: The District Six Museum,
taken from Official website of District Six Museum, <https://www.districtsix.co.za/>*

The District Six Museum is an example of an interactive, changing museum which is open to contribution and representation of the ordinary people. Rankin states that the

museum is an example of living museums in contrary to other established museums. Irrespective of having a connection with the area or not, the visitors have an outstanding experience in a living museum (Rankin, 2013, p. 91). Işık draws attention to the fact that stories of the post-apartheid era do not give much place to ordinary people. The narrative of anti-apartheid struggle also focuses on heroes and the enemy. However, it is quite different in the District Six Museum: “There are no place-direction signs in the museum, guides or booklets dictating you how and where to start, what you have to learn or experience; they have ‘storytellers’” (Işık, 2018, p. 198). Those storytellers are ex-residents of District Six who were forcibly removed from their lands and what they share is their own stories. It is important that the museum provide space for the stories of ordinary people and individual narratives. Layne also argues that the museum is “an ordinary people’s place”. People tell their stories, listen to others, laugh and cry there (Layne, 2008, p. 59).

In contrary to most of the memorials and monuments which dictate ready memories and stories to visitors, the District Six Museum attaches importance to collecting individual stories and memories of the ordinary people and these stories and memories are continuously collected and shared with visitors (Layne, 2008, p. 60). The words of Layne show the potential of the museum for the future:

We believe, though, that by continuing to collect personal stories and memories, and by fostering dialogue among many different peoples about their visions of the past, present, and future of District Six, the museum can become a community center for the diverse populations that are now beginning to come back to District Six, and can help return the heart into the city of Cape Town (Layne, 2008, p. 62).

4.3.2. Robben Island Museum

Robben Island is located 11 km away from Cape Town. It was mainly used as a prison since the mid-1600s. The island prison hosted many political prisoners including Nelson Mandela who spent 18 years in a cell in the maximum security prison which was built during the Apartheid period. The island also hosted a hospital for “socially unaccepted groups” for about three centuries and a military base. However, it is mostly remembered for the oppression in the Apartheid Era. The island was declared to be a national monument in 1996 and a World Heritage Site in 1999 (UNESCO, Robben

Island). Daily tours are organized to the island and visitors are taken to the island by ferries from Cape Town. The tours take about 3.5 hours including the ferry trip and the tour route includes the maximum security prison where many political prisoners and Mandela were incarcerated, lime and bluestone quarries where prisoners were forced to work along with the graveyard of lepers and some other historical buildings. In addition, educational tours are organized for the primary and secondary school students and commitment to human rights and development is emphasized in these tours (Robben Island Museum, 2013).

The core message of the museum is stated as the “triumph of the human spirit over enormous hardship and adversity” (Robben Island Museum, 2013, p. 7). Instead of focusing on the violence and oppression in the past, it is preferred to highlight the struggle of South African people against the Apartheid policies and victory of the “freedom fighters”. In the interpretation plan of the Robben Island Museum for 2013-2018, resilience, struggle and triumph of South African people are emphasized through the text and predominantly positive implications of the Robben Island are underlined:

As a site of living heritage, and a national and international symbol of political imprisonment, Robben Island holds strong symbolic associations for humanity. The site is a universal symbol of hope, solidarity and transformation, a site of spiritual reflection, healing and pilgrimage. As such, it offers a world struggling under social injustices and intolerance, an example of the indomitable nature of the human spirit (Robben Island Museum, 2013, p. 6).



Photograph 9: The wall on the harbor where the visitors disembark from the ferry. It is written “Repression, Release, Resurrection” across the bottom. Taken from <http://www.tourismupdate.co.za>

One of the most important aspects of the museum is that the guides are former inmates. Although all of the guides are ex-prisoners, not all of them stayed in the Robben Island Prison (Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005, p. 159). Rankin argues that employing former prisoners as guides is a strategy that can “provide affective insights for visitors” (Rankin, 2013, p. 81). Experiences and personal stories of these guides are very critical and since they also tell their own stories to the visitors, visitors may imagine more easily the past. However, it is questionable whether this experience functions as a way of healing for the former prisoners since they mainly emphasize reconciliation and forgiveness and underestimate the oppression and suffering (Riouful, 2000, p. 33). So, in fact, individual memories of the former prisoners are generally collectivized under the discourse of a unified and reconciled nation.

Originality and first-hand experience are attached importance more than the facts in the museum’s plan. Interpretation is defined as “an educational activity which aims to reveal meanings and relationships through the use of original objects, by first-hand experience and illustrative media”, not simply communicating information” (Robben Island Museum, 2013, p. 3). Certain principles of interpretation listed in the text are minimal intervention in the place and landscape; use of multiple narratives; respecting authenticity; stakeholder participation and transparency and inclusivity (Robben Island Museum, 2013, p. 8). Such an understanding of the museum is contrary to the traditional museums which are designed from top to bottom and leave little place for interpretation.

As a result of the aforementioned approach, one of the criticisms about the museum is that there is not adequate information about the history of the island. Rankin states that it is assumed that the visitors are aware of the past of the island, however the intentions of the museum may be ambiguous for the visitors (Rankin, 2013, p. 81). The emphasis on the first-hand experience is concretized with the existence of ex-prisoner guides, however it should be questioned whether lack or inadequacy of factual information results with the violence in the past being out of the focus. Wood et al. state that only key events are illustrated in the island and the information is predominantly conveyed by guides. The tour starts with describing Apartheid Era politics by the guides. At the end of the tour, people can ask questions to guides and it becomes like a forum where

imprisonment and Apartheid period are discussed (Wood et al., 2013, p. 180-181). However, Riouful states that only a few things are communicated by the guides about the apartheid system on the island and it is mentioned as systemic, thus making the agents, mainly warders, neither faceless or victims of the apartheid. So, former supporters and agents of the apartheid are also represented as victims or survivors of the apartheid system and this serves to unite the nation against the evil system of the past without agents (Riouful, 2000, p. 28).



*Photograph 10: A former prisoner as a guide in the prison with visitors.
Taken from Wood et al. 2017.*

Another critical point is the insistent focus on the triumph and freedom stated to be obtained as result of the struggle of South African people. Wood et al. argue that “some of the historical complexity is lost when one views the Island as a place of freedom to the extent that narratives of oppression are often lost in grander stories of triumph” (Wood et al., 2017, p. 174). The violence, oppression and cruelty in the past are generally put into the background and positive messages are highlighted with the result of the victory. Symbols of national unity get ahead anything related to revenge or resentment (Wood et al., 2017, p. 184). Riouful points out the connection of this policy with the post-Apartheid period’s representation of the past. He argues that key features of this new representation is that it is positive, unifying, inclusive and conciliatory.

The policy about the past focuses on the reconciliation, democracy and unity in the present rather than the suffering and divisions in the past (Rioux, 2000, p. 23).

Although this may seem to be a positive aspect of the museum, it should be questioned whether repressing the feelings of resentment, putting the stories of violence into the background serves to the healing process of the survivors and relatives of the victims and whether it supports the sense of justice. It seems that the discourse on national unity and reconciliation puts pressure on the explicit expression of the feelings of resentment, anger, etc. Focusing on the struggle and achievements of the former prisoners rather than the suffering and weakness may turn into a way of “not telling certain dimensions and meanings of the past... It thus implies corollary forgetting of certain voices and interpretations” (Rioux, 2000, p. 25).

In addition, the problem is not only related to the past. The official narrative of resurrection also becomes problematic when people see that Apartheid conditions still persist to a certain degree despite the narrative of triumph and considering the bad economic and social conditions existing in South Africa, this narrative loses its power to a certain degree (Wood et al., 2017, p. 182-183) Wood et al. argues that visitors may leave the tour without understanding the ongoing problems of South Africa arising from the Apartheid Era. They state that the official narrative leaves the impression that the problems of a painful past are solved to a substantial degree (Wood et al., 2017, p. 193). However, as stated above, the legacy of Apartheid period still exists in the daily lives of South African people.

It is also important to understand what visitors expect and perceive during their visit to the museum. In a study conducted by Phaswana-Mafuya and Haydam, 135 visitors were interviewed about their expectations about the museum before they arrived at the island and perceptions after they saw the museum. About 55% of the visitors were foreigners, mostly Americans and Europeans and 45% was from South Africa. The study revealed that the primary motivation to see the museum was to see the cell of Nelson Mandela as a former prisoner and about 93% of the visitors stated that they wanted to see the Mandela’s cell as the primary expectation (Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005, p. 157). It is interesting that 40% of the visitors expected the guides to

be ex-prisoners, 22% expected them to be ex-warders (Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005, p. 158).

Considering the question of whether the visitors could feel the meaning of the museum, it is striking that 44% of the visitors stated that they wanted to see traditional African dancing on the island to visit the museum again when they were asked what type of entertainment they would want to receive. While most of them wanted traditional and ethnic dancing, music, video shows, etc, only 1.9% of the visitors stated that they would want to listen to personal experiences and stories (Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005, p. 160). Another striking result is that when the visitors were asked what they expected from the tour to the island, 92.9% of the visitors selected Mandela's cell among the answers given in a list to them, 75.2% selected the prison, 65.5% selected plant and animal life on the island and only 0.9% of them selected the history of apartheid (Phaswana-Mafuya & Haydam, 2005, p. 161). These results also show that the Apartheid period and individual stories of the survivors, other than Nelson Mandela's story, are not among the primary motivations of the visitors to visit the museum.

Preservation and protection of the island as a heritage site and as a symbol of the oppression in the Apartheid Era is important and it may serve to educate young people about the past. However, the emphasis on national unity and reconciliation in the post-Apartheid period seems to prevent the island museum from fulfilling functions of realizing justice, healing the survivors, providing a place for mourning for the victims of the Apartheid, telling stories of the survivors and expressing the feelings of anger, resentment or revenge freely. Accompanied with the economic and social conditions that still bear the mark of the Apartheid Era, conscious or unconscious attempts to silence the stories of violence and oppression for the sake of reconciliation may lead to further problems.

CHAPTER 5

CERTAIN INCIDENTS OF DEALING WITH THE PAST AND MEMORIALIZATION IN TURKEY

The history of Turkish Republic has witnessed various mass violence periods and incidents which originated from political, ethnic or religious conflicts. Starting from mass violence experienced in the last period of the Ottoman Empire, these incidents in different periods of Turkish Republic are deeply related to the foundation process of the nation-state. This process bears many marks of the common characteristics of foundation of nation-states throughout the world in the 19th and 20th centuries, however, it has different characteristics especially due to transition from empire to the nation-state and the empire's ethnic and religious composition which was essentially heterogeneous. Transition from a cosmopolitan empire to an "imagined" homogenous nation requires rewriting of the past and establishing a common memory for the desired united nation.

As mentioned in the previous chapters, nation-states predicate on having a common past (and usually a "heroic" past as Renan states) and a collective memory. Being a nation-state requires both forgetting of certain parts of the history and remembering or the creation of a common past. So, the history is distorted in the attempt to create an imagined nation and therefore, forgetting is promoted. Even worse, the remembrance of certain events which are contrary to nationalist narrative and certain forms of remembrance are forbidden by nation-states. Turkish history, also as history of foundation of a nation-state, has been an area of struggle on numerous events regarding remembrance and forgetting. In this chapter, the issue of dealing with the past and memorialization in Turkey will be elaborated focusing on the historical roots of Turkish "memory regime" and certain incidents which may help to understand this regime.

5.1. Turkish Memory Regime: Amnesia, Negation and Distortion of the Past

The history of Turkish nation-state, among many others, is a history of establishing a new memory regime through regulation of the past. Since the new Republic was associated with the Ottoman Empire, but the founders of the Republic targeted a historical rupture, the Republic was based on “the absolute negation of the Ottoman past” (Orhon, 2015, p. 8). Özyürek argues that an “organized amnesia” was applied in the beginning of the Republic by the founders who believed that they had to erase the Ottoman heritage to create a homogenous identity for the newly established nation state (Özyürek, 2006, p. 3). The steps taken by the new Turkish nation state in the 1920s and 1930s to erase the Ottoman past such as changes made in dressing, time regulations, laws, language, etc. aimed at removing daily habits and memories inherited from the Ottoman Empire (Özyürek, 2006, p. 4).

In parallel to Özyürek’s emphasis on the “organized amnesia”, Hür states that amnesia is a socially-shared situation and a “founding element” of Turkish national identity. She further argues that forgetting is the foundation on which the Turkish identity was established by Republican elites. Historical events were not only forgotten, but they were also distorted (Hür, 2007, p. 128). She also argues that Turkish intellectuals both participated in this “crime of making people forget” and the national identity was based on not remembering; not speaking about the past even it is remembered and denying the reality if it is spoken about (Hür, 2007, p. 128). She states that some social sections that are victims or consider themselves as victims started to demand more “remembrance” from the state in the last decades however there is still a resistance against that (Hür, 2007, p. 131).

Aydın defines Turkish nation-building process as an example of one of the two main models of nation-state establishment in which nation-state is a product of a political intervention and national history is created after the establishment of the nation-state (French model). The second one is German model where intellectual interventions for establishment of a national essence and history precede territorial establishment of nation-states (Aydın, 2011, p. 43). The model where national history is created later requires a systematic program which makes alive a non-existent culture and destroys other cultures that are considered to spoil homogeneity of the national identity (Aydın,

2011, p. 54). This kind of nationalism needs history as the unique tool to transfer such a “made” culture. So, Turkish official historiography is a product of such an understanding. Aydın argues that Turkish historiography reflected the dominant discourse especially until 1960s and the national culture was based on successes and history of the dominant section (Turk- Sunni) of society (Aydın, 2011, p. 70).

Creation of a homogenous, “imagined” nation is not just an ideal, theoretical process. Especially in the states established on a territory that hosts many different ethnic-religious groups, those groups that are not wanted to be included in the imagined nation are likely to encounter with genocide, mass violence, forced migration, etc. Starting from the last decades of the Ottoman Empire, Turkish history has also witnessed many oppressive and violent acts against ethnic and religious minorities. At this point, “physical and symbolic/cultural elimination of minorities” was deemed as an important and integral step in the nation-building process which also allowed a historical rupture with and denial of the Ottoman past (Orhon, 2015, p. 5).

The Ottoman policies directed at non-Muslims including Armenians, Assyrians, Greeks in the last 30-years period of the empire are still taboo in modern Turkey. The mass killings and deportation in this period are argued to be a structural necessity and a legitimate defense against ethnic cleansing of Muslims from Balkans by the official narrative (Erbal, 2012, p. 51). The history of the Turkish Republic continues with Dersim massacre, the law of capital levy, wealth tax, the Pogrom on September 6-7, 1955, various massacres against Alevis such as in Çorum, Maraş and Sivas and mass violence against other ethnic and religious groups.

5.2. Rise of Memory Issues in Turkey in Recent Years

It may be argued that the relations of almost all nation-states with the past have been formed in a way in which the past was treated like an obedient servant. Nation-states could call that past whenever they wanted, they used it and sent it back when their role was over. However, in the last decades, this conventional form of relation with the past has changed essentially and a period that is called as “memory boom” or “memory conjuncture” has started (Sancar, 2007, p. 121). Following the trend in the whole world, memory studies flourished in mid-1990s in Turkey. Studies related to collective

memory in Turkey mainly originate from the deep interest in the recent past following the military coup of 1980. Intensive attention attracted by the identity matters and the past encouraged production of memoirs, biographies, novels, documentaries. As a result, projects started to be made in the field of oral history and memory studies (Neyzi, 2011, p. 9).

In parallel to globalization and rise of the new media, Turkish society has started to discuss the transition from the Ottoman Empire to the Turkish Republic, the foundation of the Republic, traumatic events experienced by various ethnic and religious groups. Academic researches in memory studies started with oral history in 1990s in Turkey (Neyzi, 2011, p. 3-4). 1990s also witnessed flourishing of testimonial literature about the military coup of 1980 in contrast to the limited number of novels, testimonies, biographies and memories written about the military coup of March 12, 1971 which could only be written and published long years after the coup (Günay-Erkol, 2011, p. 46).

During the 2000s, there was a memory boom including both written memory works and visual works in addition to commemorative organizations that played a significant role in shaping collective memories (Orhon, 2015, p. 60). Although this was parallel with the global trends about the memory studies and memory politics by the states, Orhon argues that this memory boom of the 2000s was possible due to a change in the Turkish politics made by AKP (Justice and Development Party) (Orhon, 2015, p. 66). She connects this change to the efforts by AKP to condemn the Kemalist past:

The 2000s marked a return/reconstruction of the past, both in official and academic/intellectual terms, the latter of which was probably encouraged by the former. In the Turkish context, this orientation was further reinforced by the apparent attempts of the Justice and Development Party government to condemn the Kemalist past, which spurred efforts to revise its most problematic parts (Orhon, 2015, p. 4).

As it will be discussed in the case of apology by the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for Dersim massacre of 1938, the attempts by AKP to condemn the past opened the way for public debate, official confessions and apologies on some matters that were almost impossible to talk about. However, it is difficult to think those attempts as sincere efforts by the government to come to the terms with the past, rather the pages of the history which were opened to public discussion were claimed to be

mainly pragmatist and selective cases. Bakiner defines these attempts by AKP as majoritarian conservatism which means that AKP promoted just uncritical interpretations of the past “to ensure ongoing political support and boost a particular conception of collective belonging, while enforcing silence on some or all critical historiographies that might challenge this hegemonic memory and identity project” (Bakiner, 2013, p. 2).

Although it is mentioned that promotion of forgetting and remembering certain parts of the past is a common characteristic of nation-states, some nation-states have attempts to deal with the past. Turkish state does not have such a comprehensive history of dealing with the past, despite the fact that there are some official and unofficial attempts. Many reasons can be counted as explanation of this difficulty in Turkey. For example, Mithat Sancar argues that it is difficult to come to terms with the past for a state that uses forgetting, ban of remembrance in some issues as an administrative technique and where civil society is not strong enough. The decision to deal with the past is determined under the impact of political power balance. Both social reality, namely whether there is strong will to deal with the past and political power determines the scope and method of the process (Sancar, 2007, p. 123). Hür points out to the cultural-religious roots of this resistance against remembrance and dealing with the past. She underlines the impact of Islam which is stranger to keeping subsequent generations responsible for the crimes of former generations and to apologizing in their names because crime is personal in Islam. She argues that the Islamic Sufism’s motto of “it was yesterday, it passed away” is an expression of this culture (Hür, 2007, p. 131).

Regardless of their political targets, we have witnessed some official and unofficial examples of dealing with the past and apologies for the past crimes in the last two decades. Although it is not systematic, especially the official discourse on Kurdish issue, Armenian issue, torture, minority rights, etc. has been started to be questioned and discussed more.

Even it is highly debated whether these attempts were sincere, they have been important milestones and generated a wide discussion about the past. One of the unofficial attempts was the “I Apologize” campaign started by Turkish intellectuals

on the Armenian issue. Dersim apology and September 12 judgements are two official examples. Of course, there are more official and unofficial cases of dealing with the past, however these three cases will be examined in detail as important cases leading to wide public debate.

5.3. An Unofficial Attempt to Deal with the Past: “I Apologize” Campaign

The well-known Armenian issue is a century-long matter in the Turkish history, which is still a taboo to a certain degree. It was talked about by a group of people unofficially, however, the matter has never been discussed officially. Any official apology or attempt to take responsibility about the issue did not take place. Aside from dealing with the violence committed against Ottoman Armenians in 1915, planners and perpetrators of that mass violence against Armenians are honoured through memorials, giving their names to streets, schools, etc. (Erbal, 2012, p. 52).¹

As stated by Altınay, the year of 2005 was a turning point for the discussion of Armenian issue in Turkey. A public debate was opened thanks to the widely-debated conference held about Ottoman Armenians in 2005 and recognition of the fact that many Armenians survived in 1915 by converting to Islam (Altınay, 2014, p. 2). She states that especially after 2005, stories of Islamized Armenians became publicly visible through documentaries, novels, academic researches, etc. (Altınay, 2014, p. 5).

The first attempt that brought the issue on the public agenda was the conference titled “Ottoman Armenians During the Demise of the Empire: Responsible Scholarship and Issues of Democracy”, which was mentioned as “Armenian Conference” on the media, to be held at Bosphorus University. Actual date of the conference was May 25, 2005,

¹ One of the most recent examples of such honouring of perpetrators is commemoration of Kemal Bey, who was Deputy Governor of Yozgat in 1915. Kemal Bey was hanged in 1919 with the accusation of being responsible for killing of Yozgat Armenians and his punishment was affirmed by the Sultan. Despite official acceptance of his responsibility and crime in mass Armenian killings, his name was given to a school in Yozgat (Boğazlıyan Kemal Bey Lisesi), he was declared as “national martyr” by the Grand National Assembly in 1926 and he was commemorated upon his grave in 2011 with participation of students of the high school named with his name, Boğazlıyan District Governorship and some representatives of CHP (İnsel, 26.04.2011).

however, there were intense reactions both from the government and the main opposition party to the conference. Just one day before the conference, on May 24, 2005, a deputy of CHP (Republican People's Party), Şükrü Elekdağ argued that participants of the conference were traitors. The Minister of Justice of that time, Cemil Çiçek also argued that “the organizers stabbed Turkey in the back”. Another deputy of AKP, Ramazan Toprak said that they called “all patriots” in front of the university where the conference was intended to be held on the following day (Deringil, 2011). So, the conference was postponed by the organizers due to that pressure and threats.

The second attempt to hold the conference was made some months later, in September 2005. It was announced to be held on September 24-25, 2005, but it was cancelled by the 4th Administrative Court of Istanbul with a motion for stay of execution upon objections of some lawyers. But since it was expected to start negotiations with EU on October 3, 2005, the government claimed that this administrative jurisdiction decree was to sabotage the negotiations and ironically, the PM, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abdullah Gül and even Cemil Çiçek, who had accused organizers and participants of being traitors some months ago, supported the conference in the name of freedom and democracy (Deringil, 2011). The conference was held at another university organizing the conference on September 24, 2005 thanks to the fact that the name of this university was forgotten to be stated in the aforementioned decree.

As one of the organizers of the conference, historian Deringil argues that the most permanent contribution of the conference was raising awareness about the existence of an Armenian issue and people recognized that this matter needed to be discussed. The Turkish official view on the matter was defenseless for the first time and it was seen that there was an alternative to this official view (Deringil, 2011).

In 2008, an apology campaign was started by four intellectuals, namely Ahmet İnsel, Ali Bayramoğlu, Cengiz Aktar and Baskın Oran with a text titled “I Apologize” and it was signed by about thirty thousand people. The text was as follows:

My conscience does not accept the insensitivity showed to and the denial of the Great Catastrophe that the Ottoman Armenians were subjected to in 1915. I reject this

injustice and for my share, I empathize with the feelings and pain of my Armenian brothers and sisters. I apologize to them.²

Within some weeks, the number of persons signing the text reached to about 30,000 and it was a huge number considering the fact that Armenian issue and 1915 events were almost a century-long taboo. The writers of the text did not use the term genocide or massacre, they preferred the word “Great Catastrophe” (“Meds Yeghern” in Armenian and “Büyük Felaket” in Turkish). Use of the word “genocide” would result with trial within the scope of Article 301 of the Turkish Penal Code on the claim of insulting Turkey and Turkish people (Özyürek, 2009).

Regardless of their attitudes against the campaign, all of the main political actors gave reaction and the issue was carried to the political arena. There were different reactions to this apology campaign by members of the government party, AKP. While the Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan criticized the text, President Abdullah Gül deemed the campaign as a matter of freedom of speech. The PM, criticized the text as follows: “I neither accept nor support this campaign. We did not commit a crime, therefore we do not need to apologize...It will not have any benefit other than stirring up trouble, disturbing our peace and undoing the steps which have been taken” (Tait, 18.12.2008). Gül changed his attitude in the following weeks due to pressures and negative attitude of his party and he argued that the campaign could lead to polarization and negative consequences (Erbal, 2012, p. 69).

The major opposition party, CHP, condemned the campaign and argued that Armenian side needed to apologize (Erbal, 2012, p. 66). One of deputies of main opposition party CHP, Canan Aritman accused the organizers of the campaign of being traitors and she also claimed that the President Gül’s reaction against the campaign, considering it within the framework of freedom of expression, was due to his Armenian ancestry. There were reactions to Aritman and even some center rightist columnists stated that it was not a negative feature to be an Armenian even if Gül had an Armenian ancestry

² Turkish text was: “1915'te Osmanlı Ermenileri'nin maruz kaldığı Büyük Felaket'e duyarsız kalınmasını, bunun inkâr edilmesini vicdanım kabul etmiyor. Bu adaletsizliği reddediyor, kendi payıma Ermeni kardeşlerimin duygu ve acılarını paylaşıyor, onlardan özür diliyorum”.

(Erbal, 2012, p. 67-68). However, accepting the claim of Aritman something as an accusation and requiring a defense, Gül expressed that his family was Turk and Muslim and he sued Aritman with the charge of defame (Erbal, 2012, p. 68).

The second biggest opposition party, MHP (Nationalist Movement Party) denounced the apology claiming that the history of Turkish nation was completely honourable and there was not any event in that history neither to be embarrassed nor to apologize to anybody (Özyürek, 2009). Only the pro-Kurdish opposition party, DTP (Democratic Society Party) supported the apology and the leader of the party, Ahmet Türk said “maybe Kurds have contributed to the loss of this (cultural) richness. We are ashamed when we look at our Armenian or Assyrian brothers” (“Pro-Kurdish party leader”, 30.12.2018).

Despite the fact that only the reaction of DTP challenged the official memory, the issue has become politicized and opened the way for discussing the issue in the long term. The text also received many criticisms along with being admired due to bringing the issue to the public sphere and creating an opportunity for dealing with the past. Erbal argues that the text was important with regards to bringing the necessity of recognition and apology about the Armenian issue to the public sphere, however it was not a successful apology due to certain reasons such as being elitist, operating from top to down, being a passive and unclear text, etc. (Erbal, 2012, p. 54). After all, it was a “crack in the long history of silence” and even the text conceptualized the matter within the frame of conscience, it was a form of political apology (Erbal, 2012, p. 53). Özyürek states that although this apology could be deemed inadequate, it had a great value in terms of creating the possibility of educating many young Turks about the violence suffered by Armenians and opening the way for persons to come to terms with the matter (Özyürek, 2009). As emphasized by both Erbal and Özyürek, the text has been a valuable source in terms of challenging the official memory, breaking the silence about the issue and providing an opportunity to deal with the issue in the long term.

Both the conference on Armenian issue and “I Apologize” campaign opened the way for creation of public memorials related to the matter. Kars Municipality, which was governed by AKP, decided to erect a Humanity Monument in the name of

reconciliation with Armenia and with the wish of avoiding wars in 2005. An agreement was signed between the sculptor, Mehmet Aksoy and Mayor of Kars, Naif Alibeyoğlu in 2006. The 30-meters long sculpture consisted of two persons, like divided parts of one person, standing face-to-face and extending their hands to each other. The sculptor, Mehmet Aksoy stated that he “created the monument to acknowledge the pain rooted in the division between Turkey and Armenia, and to promote peace, brotherhood, and rapprochement between the two countries” (Barsoumian, 2011).



Photograph 11: Humanity Monument,
taken from <https://www.atlasobscura.com/places/monument-to-humanity-kars>

The Prime Minister R.T. Erdoğan defined the monument as a “freak” (ucube) and wanted it to be demolished in 2011. Upon that event, the monument was demolished in a short time. Workers started to cut one of the head of the sculpture with the expression of “Allahuekber” (Aktemur, 14.06.2011). There were protests against demolition of the monument by intellectuals and some politicians, however this could not prevent its demolishment. The sculptor filed a claim against the PM for calling his work of art as “freak” and the PM was sentenced to pay compensation of 10 thousand Turkish Liras to Mehmet Aksoy by the court (“Erdoğan ‘ucube’ için”, 03.03.2015).

Although the Humanity Monument was demolished, there were other attempts to memorialize the issue through monuments. As it is stated before, the pro-Kurdish party, DTP supported the apology campaign and the leader of the party apologized to both Armenians and Assyrians. Some municipalities governed by the party took steps in the way of creating physical sites for commemoration of 1915. Sur Municipality of Diyarbakır erected the “Monument of Common Conscience” in 2013. It is written “We share the pain so that it is not repeated” on the monument in six languages. The mayor of the Municipality, Abdullah Demirbaş said “We Kurds, in the name of our ancestors, apologize for the massacres and deportations of the Armenians and Assyrians in 1915... We will continue our struggle to secure atonement and compensation for them” in his speech during the inauguration (Akkum, 12.09.2013). That speech is important since it resumes responsibility and recognizes that the ancestors of many people involved in the massacre.



Photograph 12: The memory stone for Hrant Dink, taken from T24, <https://t24.com.tr/yazarlar/reyan-tuvi/hafizadan-utanca-hrant-dink-ten-geriye-kalanlar,25261>.

Another important memorial which brings Armenian issue to the agenda is the “memory stone” placed in front of the Sebat Building where Hrant Dink was shot to death in 2007. The memory stone was placed on the pavement in 2012, five years later

the death of Hrant Dink, with words written on it as follows: “Hrant Dink was murdered here, January 19, 2007 at 15.05.” Since it is placed on a very busy place of İstanbul, many people coincide with it unexpectedly. That stone is a different form of the stumbling stones which are common in Europe. The Sebati Building, the former place of Agos newspaper of which Hrant Dink was the editor-in-chief, was transformed into a site of memory to commemorate him in 2019. These are all important milestones to open the way for a comprehensive discussion about dealing with the Armenian issue, however it may be said that the matter is still a taboo.

5.4. Two Official Cases of Dealing with the Past in Turkey: September 12 Judgments and Dersim Apology

The cases of September 12 judgements and Dersim apology by the prime minister Erdoğan are important official cases which opened the way for public recognition of state violence. It is no surprise that they came to the agenda during democratization attempts by the government, however none of those cases have been completed with a sincere process of dealing with the past.

5.4.1. September 12 Judgments

Military coups and coup attempts have been a critical part of Turkish politics. Starting from the military coup of 1960, Turkey faced junta regimes or coup attempts almost during all decades. There is no doubt that the most violent military coup was the September 12 coup. On September 12, 1980, a junta regime and martial law were declared; political parties, trade unions, democratic organizations were shut down; the military intervened in the political, cultural and economic life of the country. The constitution of 1982 which is still in force to a large extent was accepted with a referendum. During the period until 1983 when civil government was established, Turkish society witnessed one of the most brutal periods of the Republic and gross human rights violations became a routine part of the daily life. To state in figures, 650 thousand people were taken into custody, more than 1.5 million people were blacklisted, 50 persons were executed, more than 70 thousand people were judged due to the crime of thought, 30 thousand people were dismissed from their jobs and 14

thousand people were denationalized, 23 thousand associations were shut down (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 19-20).

The September 12 coup came to the public agenda again before the referendum of 2010 for constitution amendment. The referendum for amending 26 articles of the 1982 Constitution was held on September 12, 2010 and amendments were accepted. In direction of the amendments made in the former article forbidding retrospective jurisdiction of persons responsible for the coup, two perpetrators, namely Kenan Evren who was the 7th President of Turkey and the Chief of General Staff during the coup and Tahsin Şahinkaya who was the Chief of Air Forces, started to be judged in 2012. Akçura argues that it was a sham judgement due to some clear reasons. First of all, the defendants were not brought to the hearing due to their ages and health status and they did not answer any questions. Secondly, confidentiality order on documents of September 12 was not removed on the justification that “coup plans were state secrets” (Akçura, 2013). Orhon states that the jurisdiction “turned to becoming an attempt to bring the perpetrators to account for their acts *against the state*, not *against society*” (Orhon, 2015, p. 111). She argues that this is in nature of continuation of the memory politics of AKP to “rewrite history” (Orhon, 2015, p. 111). In the jurisdiction of these two persons, it was observed that the coup was considered as an event that originates from individual acts of some persons and did not have a vision of human rights. In Orhon’s own words:

The legal, and thus public, conception of the coup that to a large extent excludes the left-wing collective memory framed by a crime against humanity vision draws significant parallels with the conspiratory understanding informing right-wing collective memory. Another similarity is their common focus on the period before the coup, and their exclusion of efforts to question the military practices including the issues of injustice and violation of human rights (Orhon, 2015, p. 112).

The two mentioned perpetrators were sentenced to penal servitude for life in 2014, however, the case was dismissed after the death of Evren and Şahinkaya in 2015 and they were not punished actually since the legal process of appeal was not completed. It was a symbolic judgment and punishment because both of the perpetrators were in hospital and older than 90 years when the decree was given. One of the joint attorneys of the case, Mehmet Horuş states that the jurisdiction was symbolic and they demanded launching of investigation about lower level officers, too. Although

investigations were started about lower level generals upon the request of lawyers, decision of non-prosecution was given about most of the investigations and some of them were dismissed due to prescription (Söylemez, 17.08.2015).

Therefore, although it could be a good opportunity to judge lower level officers, torturers, persons responsible for gross human rights violations during the coup after removal of ban of judging the perpetrators, it was just left at a symbolic level. Some victims had the chance of sharing their pains at the court against the face of the two perpetrators, however, there is no doubt that judgments caused disappointment for many victims because of impunity.

Another important development related to dealing with military coups was establishment of the Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission in the Parliament in 2012. The Commission published a report about military coups in Turkey named “Ülkemizde Demokrasiye Müdahale Eden Tüm Darbe ve Muhtıralar ile Demokrasiyi İşlevsiz Kılan Diğer Bütün Girişim ve Süreçlerin Tüm Boyutları ile Araştırılarak Alınması Gereken Önlemlerin Belirlenmesi Amacıyla Kurulan Meclis Araştırması Komisyonu Raporu” (Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission Report in short). In the presentation by the Chairman of the Commission, Nimet Baş, it is stated that coups are considered as “crimes against humanity” and they caused wounds in the social psychology that are hard to recover (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 15). She also emphasizes that results of traumas experienced by people imprisoned at Mamak, Metris, Ulucanlar and Diyarbakır Prisons continue to damage our spirits (Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission Report, 2012, p. 17). It is stated that although number of persons who died because of torture after the coup cannot still be determined, it is known that more than 50 persons died only in Diyarbakır Military Prison due to torture after September 12 (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 20).

Baş states that the Commission opened out the Pandora’s box to face the truth which was both needed by society, perpetrators and who helped them (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 35). She gives the example of the director of Mamak Prison after September 12 and two deputy members of the Commission (Atilla Kaya from MHP and Sırrı Süreyya Önder from BDP/Peace and Democracy Party) who were

tortured heavily in Mamak Prison under directorate of that person coming face to face. She states that the director was not regretful and it was shocking for the Commission members. She says that he still considered himself as the director of the prison and insulted the Commission members who were tortured under his directorate (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 36). Although these encounters of victims and perpetrators are priceless experiences in terms of dealing with the past, the efforts to “open out the Pandora’s box” were inadequate and these experiences were not carried to the public sphere.

There are some expressions in the report regarding coming to terms with the past. It is said that “Turkey has started to come to terms with pro-coup and tutelage mindset” (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 640). There is also a subtitle named “Coup as a Social Trauma and its Reparation” (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 645). It is argued in the report that it is necessary to punish coup plotters, their supporters, to start a legal process, to relieve unjust sufferings for dealing with coups and healing traumas caused by coups. In addition, both perpetrators and their supporters should be disclosed and human rights violations should be recovered (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 649). It is important that the report emphasize the need to judge both perpetrators and their supporters, however, in actuality we see a symbolic judgment of only two persons.

It should be underlined that a positive impact about the debate occurred in 2010-2012 concerning September 12 on memorialization practices in Turkey. The debates on September 12 also triggered certain attempts and discussions about memorialization of the human rights violations committed after the military coup. Since the most symbolic places of the mass violence and human rights violations were prisons after the coup, the debate mainly focused on them. Within this context, transformation of Ulucanlar Prison, Diyarbakır Military Prison and Mamak Military Prison into museum has been brought to the public agenda by both official and civil initiatives, however, only Ulucanlar Prison has been converted into museum.

Ulucanlar Prison was established in 1925 as the first prison of the new Republic. Until its closure in 2006, it hosted numerous politicians and activists with different political views during 81 years. It was converted into a museum by Altındağ Municipality of

AKP and opened to the public in 2011. It has been criticized that the museum does not reflect the past of the prison correctly because many parts of it were converted without preserving the originality. In addition, almost all signs of violence and massacres experienced in the museum have been removed. Since the prison hosted both left-wing and right-wing prisoners especially after the military coup of 1980, Ulucanlar Prison is very critical in terms of Turkish politics. Karacan argues that there is “battle on the sites of memory of 12 September” between the AKP Government and leftists groups on the matter of how to reconstruct the past from their sides and this can be seen in the example of Ulucanlar Prison Museum along with the 12 September Shame Museum (Karacan, 2014, p. 103).

Since Ulucanlar Prison Museum has been product of an official attempt and civil initiatives were excluded from the process of design and establishment of the project to a great degree, left-wing initiatives argued that the museum did not reflect the real experiences of the prisoners who stayed there and it was transformed into a touristic place instead of preserving the original form. Therefore, the idea of establishing another museum came to existence. September 12 Shame Museum, a mobile museum, has been organized by Devrimci 78'liler Federasyonu (the Federation of the Revolutionary 78 Generation) which is an organization that targets at performing works against official attempts of oblivion and reconstructing the collective memory by challenging false representations of the official discourse. The museum is established for about 1-2 weeks in every September since 2010 in Ankara. The museum has also been exhibited in other cities in some years. The main supporter of the museum is Çankaya Municipality of CHP. They provide place for the exhibition every year. Personal belongings, letters, photos of some people like Deniz Gezmiş, Mahir Çayan are exhibited. The museum also includes traces of other human rights violations and mass crimes in different periods such as Madımak, Roboski, October 10 Ankara Gar explosion, etc.

Another important place which is well-known for cruel and inhuman treatments to prisoners after the coup is Diyarbakır Military Prison. As stated in the Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission Report, Diyarbakır Military Prison was known as the place where the most brutal practice of the coup was observed. The

debates for transforming the prison into a museum started following establishment of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission (Diyarbakır Cezaevi Gerçekleri Araştırma ve Adalet Komisyonu) in 2007. The commission consisted of specialists such as academics, human rights defenders, legal experts, doctors, etc. Its establishment was declared in front of Diyarbakır Military Prison on 12 September 2007 with a press statement attended by more than 50 commission members, civil society organizations, professional organizations and thousands of people (Tanrıkulu, 2012, p. 20). The commission members interviewed with 517 persons who were victims or witnesses of the violence, torture and deaths in the prison. It also organized many symposiums, exhibitions and press meetings on the issue (Tanrıkulu, 2012, p. 21). After the number of criminal complaints made by support and incentive of the commission reached about 1500, Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office brought a prosecution. It prepared a report on the issue and submitted it to the investigation carried by Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. The commission also collected 100 thousand signatures within the scope of the campaign organized for transformation of Diyarbakır Military Prison into a human rights museum (Tanrıkulu, 2012, p. 22). The debates still continue in 2021 and there is still no sign of converting the prison into a museum since the government insists on transformation of it into a school.

The prisons of September 12 will be examined in the following chapters along with discussions on them in detail and based on interviews made by organizers, planners of the museum, people supporting transformation of other prisons into museum, victims and visitors. Let me now examine another incident of mass violence in the history of Turkish Republic, Dersim mass killings in 1937-1938 and official apology about the issue.

5.4.2. Dersim Apology

The mass violence experienced in Dersim during 1937-1938 is a remarkable event in the history of Turkish Republic, yet it was almost impossible to talk about the events of Dersim. Even using the name Dersim instead of the official name of the city, namely Tunceli, was not possible until the public debate started in 2009. Although there are different estimates, official figures state that about 14 thousand people were killed and 11 thousand people were forced to migrate due to state violence in this period.

Within the context of Dersim massacre, the state-led violence was justified as “the state’s legitimate self-defense against an uprising of disloyal subjects” until 2009 (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 135). Legitimization of state violence in Dersim was disseminated mainly through mass media and the Elazığ Peoples House’ publication series (Törne, 2015, p. 3). In a publication named “Geography of Tunceli-Dersim” which was written by Ömer Kemal Açar, a teacher and one of the publishing committee member of the Elazığ People’s House, it was stated to be necessary “to pull out the roots, to let Tunceli understand its national Turkish identity” (as cited in Törne, 2015, p. 4). Törne argues that in parallel with other provinces in the East Anatolia, “the social frameworks that enable the constitution of collective memories and allow for intergenerational transmissions are broken as a consequence of the history of collective violence” in Tunceli (Törne, 2015, p. 7).

The public debate about Dersim started after when one deputy of CHP, Onur Öymen used the expression of “suppression of the Dersim uprising” while giving examples of state fighting against terrorism in November 2009. There were negative reactions to Öymen’s expressions and deputy chairman of the party, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, urged him to resign. In November 2009, Erdoğan said that “the state had not suppressed an uprising but had committed a massacre” (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 137). This official confession by the Prime Minister was very critical for Turkish people since many citizens had not even heard the name of Dersim or they had known the issue as suppression of an uprising due to official policies.

The debate deepened on November 10, 2011 when another deputy of CHP, Hüseyin Aygün said that the state was responsible for the massacre in Dersim in an interview he gave to the Zaman newspaper which was known to be close to the government. He argued that both Atatürk and the governing party of the time were aware of all the facts (Poyraz, 2013, p. 76). Just two weeks later, the Turkish Prime Minister of the period, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan apologized for Dersim Massacre on November 23, 2011. During a meeting held with provincial heads of his party, AKP, the Prime Minister apologized for the Dersim massacre between years of 1936-1939 calling it as a tragedy. Until this apology, official discourse on the matter clearly legitimized the

military operations held in 1938 as the unquestionable self-defense of the state against a dissident group which lacked loyalty to the state (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 240).

Erdoğan presented various documents related to Dersim events including Dersim reports, Tunceli Law, the report dated 1938, council of ministers' report and he blamed CHP for all of these events ("Dersim için özür diliyorum", 24.11.2011). He claimed that CHP had to confront with the matter:

Dersim is the most tragic event in our recent history. It is a disaster that should now be questioned with courage. The party that should confront this incident is not the ruling Justice and Development Party (AK Party). It is the CHP, which is behind this bloody disaster, who should face up to this incident ("Turkey PM Erdoğan apologizes", 23.11.2011).

Defining the events as a "disaster" and "tragedy", Erdoğan also used very clear expressions about the cruelty of the state violence emphasizing that mortars and even gas bombs were used to kill people and "every moving thing in Dersim, including women and children, were being massacred" (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 244). In addition, a part of the speech of Erdoğan includes acknowledgement of wrong acts in the past especially with use of some words such as cruelty, repression and dark pages (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 243).

One of the critical point in the apology of Erdoğan was that he did not undertake any responsibility in the name of the state since according to him, the responsibility belonged to CHP, not to the state (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 245). As he was the leader of CHP, Kılıçdaroğlu was the person to apologize for the massacre. It is ironic that he pointed out the person who was required to apologize as Kılıçdaroğlu, because Kılıçdaroğlu's father was resettled from Dersim in 1938. So, his family was also the victim of the events. However, since Erdoğan addresses Kılıçdaroğlu as responsible of the Dersim Genocide by leading CHP, he reconfigured "the victim as the perpetrator of his own murder" (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 140).

Another critical point is the expression and content of the apology which is clearly a conditional apology. After blaming Kılıçdaroğlu for not apologizing for the events, Erdoğan says "If it is necessary to apologise on behalf of the state and if there is such a literature, I will apologise and I do apologise" (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 246).

Ayata and Hakyemez draw attention to the conditionality of apology which is based on an essential doubt regarding whether the state need to apologize for a mass crime (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 138). In addition, the PM does not talk about current situations of Kurds and Alevis in his speech and does not point out any solution or reparation for other past atrocities against these ethnic- religious groups.

There were both positive and negative reactions against this apology from different angles. The apology was both considered as an opportunity to deal with the past and criticized as a political maneuver for instrumentalization of the apology against his political opponents (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 233). Efe and Forchtner argue that it was a speech that was used to delegitimize political opponents rather than being a political apology (Efe and Forchtner, 2015, p. 234). It is also argued that Erdoğan made a strategic move against CHP and the leader of CHP, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu who is from Dersim (Güzeldere, 26.03.2013). Ayata and Hakyemez argue that in fact, Erdoğan did not apologize to anybody despite the national and international news which reported his speech as apology. Instead, his speech demonstrated the vulnerable position of minorities in Turkey considering substance, form and context of his statement (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 131). The official denial of past crimes has been an important characteristics of Turkish politics although there has been a public discussion about state violence against minorities and the official narrative that deny this violent past and mass crimes. This widening public discussion about past crimes is seen as one of the achievements of AKP rule (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 132).

Ayata and Hakyemez argue that these two developments, namely widening of public discussion about state violence in the past and continuity of similar events in the period of AKP, can be deemed as an indicator of a “new truth regime that the AKP government seeks to establish through rewriting the Turkish state’s official narrative” (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 132). In this new truth regime, while AKP government did not mention massacres such as Maraş, Çorum, Sivas carried out by Islamists and ultra-nationalists and do not apologize for mass killings under its rule, such as Roboski massacre, it uses state crimes in the one-party period in its struggle against Kemalist regime and to blame CHP for these crimes as the perpetrator (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 133). Moreover, he mentions Alevis only once during his one-hour-long

speech and he calls victims just as humans and both the name of victims and perpetrators are erased:

When the victim is called humans rather than Alevi, the dreadful persecution that the Alevis have historically experienced at the hands of the Sunnis has been swept under the carpet...In other words, the conflation of ethno-religious identities of the victims erases not only the name of the victims of the Dersim Genocide but also the perpetrators defined hereby (Ayata and Hakyemez, 2013, p. 139).

The apology for Dersim and its instrumentalist use in the hands of AKP rule validates the argument of Bakiner that “politicians are quick to remind voters of those parts of the past that would delegitimize their rivals, while they demand social amnesia on other past episodes that implicate them and their allies” (Bakiner, 2013, p. 4). AKP does not open the space for alternative narratives but it rather replaces one nationalist narrative with another one (Bakiner, 2013, p. 6). Bakiner argues that constant references given to certain past events to discredit opposing parties and rivals can be accompanied by “forced silencing of alternative memories” (Bakiner, 2013, p. 17).

Another event showing the attitude of the government about Dersim concerns the words of the Governor of the time during his speech in the opening of the “1st International Tunceli (Dersim) Symposium” held in 2010. The Governor of Tunceli stated that “the state no more looks at its Eastern side from the muzzle (Devlet, Dođu’suna artık namlunun ucundan bakmamaktadır)” (Atay, 2013, p. 355). The symposium was held in October 2010, just after the first admittance by the Prime Minister that what happened in Dersim was a massacre. In his assessment on the symposium, Atay states that the symposium seemed as an initiative to come to the terms with the past state policies and official history and it was like a semi-official “Dersim Initiative” under the tutelage of the government. He states that the word “Dersim” was used in brackets and this also symbolized official attitude of taking Dersim into brackets for long years by prioritizing the name of “Tunceli” (Atay, 2013, p. 356-357).

Another participant of the symposium, Hatice Kurtuluş states that there was the aim of degrading the symposium to an accusation of CHP on the government side and official organizers, however they could not attain their goal. Dersim massacre was considered as a state policy in the symposium and massacre and violence against

Alevis and Kurdish people were taken into account as extension of that state policy. So, participants did not fall into the trap of the government (Kurtuluş, 2013, p. 352-353). She argues that the symposium was very critical in terms of performing the mourning by Alevis and Kurdish people openly. However, she adds that this mourning should also be experienced more publicly through official apology of the state and opening the documents in state archives to the public (Kurtuluş, 2013, p. 353).

There are other periods of history when Alevi people were subject to mass violence and massacre. Especially, massacres in Çorum (1980), Maraş (1978), Sivas (1993) are not opened to public debate yet and the state has not apologized for them. Moreover, lawyers of perpetrators of Madımak Massacre in 1993 have been deputies of AKP. This fact alone is enough to make people think that apology for Dersim is not sincere; rather it was a political attempt to defame CHP.

In parallel with the widespread public debate on the matter, two important memorials came to the agenda in Dersim. Both memorials have been designed and erected with efforts of municipalities and civil initiatives and there has been no official attempt about memorialization of victims of Dersim massacre. The first memorial is Seyit Rıza Monument that was erected to commemorate Seyit Rıza, a local leader of Dersim who was executed in 1937. It is erected on the square named as “Barrack Square”, right across the Barrack Building from where the massacre was directed, so its place also has a symbolic meaning. The monument was opened to public in 2010 just after the “Alevi Opening” by the government came to the agenda. The monument was erected by the initiative of Tunceli Municipality of BDP. The Mayor, Edibe Şahin stated that the aim of the memorial was “a call for the state and political parties to come to terms with past wrongdoings” (Seyit Rıza Park and Monument). It is important for Dersim people to see monument of Seyit Rıza on a central place of the city since it may be considered as recognition and admittance of Dersim Massacre, creates a place for mourning and encourages people to talk about the past.

It may be said that the government preferred to stay silent about the monument. It was neither criticized nor recognized. Tunceli Provincial Directorate of Security filed a criminal complaint against the monument, however the prosecution office decreed that there was not any element of crime related to the monument so there was no need for

prosecution (“Seyit Rıza’nın heykeli”, 26.11.2013). The monument has also been opposed by some nationalist groups arguing that Seyit Rıza rebelled to the state authority and he was a traitor. Vatan Party led by Doğu Perinçek applied to both Tunceli Governorship and Municipality for removal of the monument and changing the names of streets, squares, etc. that are named after him in 2019, however the Municipality declared that Seyit Rıza was one of the cultural values of Dersim and removal of the monument was out of the question (“Dersim Belediyesi”, 21.12.2019). There has not been any official attempt to remove the monument by August 2021 by the Governorship, so it seems that the state has accepted the existence of the monument so far.

The second memorial was Dersim Massacre Memorial designed by a famous architect, Dara Kırmızıtoprak in Mazgirt district of Dersim upon request of Mazgirt Municipality of BDP. The architect designed the memorial without charge and other costs were afforded with a donation campaign (Dersim Massacre Monument). The architect states that they wanted to build a memorial to the victims and create a place for remembering them and mourning (Güzeldere, 26.3.2013). However, before the memorial was completed, construction work was stopped by the District Governorate of Mazgirt on the ground that the land where the memorial was being erected belonged to the Treasury (“Dersim anıtına kaymakamlık”, 23.10.2012). The completed part of the memorial is made of different sized pillars made of natural concrete and scattered through the area symbolizing adults, children and animals killed there. It was aimed at reflecting the massacre and resembling a graveyard (Güzeldere, 26.3.2013). By the date of August 2021, the problem was not solved and the memorial stays as half-completed and so, it is not open to the public as a memorial.

5.5. Evaluation

Any attempt to discuss the matter of dealing with the past in Turkey faces a very basic problem in the beginning: has the past really passed away? The answer is unfortunately “no” for many of the “past” events. The source of the problem leading to the state violence or intergroup conflicts continues for issues such as Kurdish issue, Alevi issue, human rights violations in prisons, etc. Of course, the events were experienced at any moment of the history, but when they are repeated, so to say, history recurs in the

present, it becomes hard to consider that events as left behind in a distant past. This fact has substantial effects on the discussions and studies about the issue and concrete steps taken such as memorialization practices.

As stated in the beginning of the chapter, the problems with dealing with the past and memorialization efforts in Turkey has deep roots in the foundation of Turkish nation-state. The memory politics in Turkey is organized around a strong policy of amnesia, making people forget what the state wants to be forgotten, denying and distorting the past. The cases mentioned in the chapter also support that argument. For example, the reaction to the campaign to apologize for 1915 both by the government and the main opposition parties was to deny and destroy the past. The prime minister argued that “we did not commit a crime” talking in the name of the state and the nation; the nationalist party, MHP, claimed that there was nothing to be ashamed in our “honourable” history and CHP, the main opposition party stated that Armenians had to apologize. Only pro-Kurdish party DTP assumed responsibility for the violence committed against the Armenian people.

Turkish nation-state is based on the narratives of victory and history of Turk-Sunni section that dominates society. The history of the Republic is full of violence against religious-ethnic groups such as non-Muslim minorities, Alevis, Kurdish people, Armenian people etc., however they have been denied to a great extent, because acceptance of it would be acceptance of existence of those sections and it would bring the matter to the public agenda. At the same time, this national identity is associated with nationalist-right wing politics, so mass violence against leftists is also denied or legitimized.

Turkish political culture plays an important role in shaping the memory regime. As Sancar emphasizes forgetting is used as a tool to govern and there is a need for a strong public demand and initiatives for remembering any event or period in the Turkish history that the state tries to make people forget. Although there is an increasing number of civil society organizations working on memory and bringing gross human rights violations and violence committed against different sections of society to the public agenda, it is not possible to say that there is a strong grassroots movement challenging the official narratives and creating strong grounds to remember. Of course,

it is difficult for such a movement to emerge without a political atmosphere allowing people to express and discuss their thoughts freely.

The studies, discussions and initiatives on collective memory, dealing with the past and memorialization have proliferated in Turkey since 1990s in parallel to the other countries. However, most of the discussions about the “taboo” issues of Turkish history came to the agenda in the 2000s as a result of use of the past as a strategic tool to attack Kemalists and CHP by the governing party, AKP. Some matters such as Dersim massacre were used strategically as a part of “Kurdish Initiative” and “Alevi Initiative” (popularly known as Kurdish and Alevi Openings). The issues brought to the public agenda were highly selective and pragmatic events and periods in the history, so when the government did not need these matters to be discussed more, those pages were closed quickly. The official apologies or condemning the violent past by the government cannot be considered as sincere efforts to deal with the past. They were rather considered as beneficial tools in that political conjuncture. The example of the government’s attitude against the Armenian Conference planned to be made in 2005 validates that conjunctural policy. While the governmental authorities accused people organizing the conference of being traitors, they supported the conference just some months later since it coincided with negotiations with EU. Another example is Humanity Monument in Kars which was erected in 2006 and stayed at its place for 5 years until the prime minister called it as freak and the monument was demolished. Most of similar developments just depended on changing domestic and foreign policy of the government and the conjunctural needs.

Pragmatic and ever-changing attitude of the government about dealing with the past is also supported with the policy of impunity. As mentioned in the previous chapters, restorative justice mechanisms including memorialization need to be accompanied with retributive justice practices to serve to dealing with the past. The perpetrators of gross human rights violations and mass violence are generally not judged and punished and judgments stay at symbolic level. As in the example of 12 September judgments, only two top level perpetrators were judged, and the crimes committed against humanity during the military coup were represented just as “individual crimes”. Although Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission Report stated that both

perpetrators and their supporters had to be judged and punished, judgment of lower level officials were generally prevented with decisions of non-prosecution or on the ground of prescription. So, the impunity policy stays as an important problem to be solved in dealing with the past.

The aforementioned retributive justice practices were accompanied with the promises given about restorative justice practices in certain periods when the government seemed to start a process of dealing with the past. However, most of them have stayed just as words and the promises have been not kept. For example, many reparative mechanisms were listed in the part on reparation after the military coup in Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission Report prepared in 2012 such as relieving unjust sufferings, healing traumas, disclosing perpetrators and their supporters and recovering human rights violations, however no step has been taken for realizing them so far. So, the promises given for dealing with the past by the government could not go beyond reports, conjunctural speeches of politicians or some symbolic acts. It may be said that no concrete and public steps were taken to deal with the past and those tried to be realized by some civil initiatives were also hampered.

Another problem about dealing with the past in Turkey is that cases of mass violence and human rights violations in Turkish history are usually brought to the agenda by civil society organizations, survivors and politicians, however this does not open the way for the public to discuss the matter widely and assume “collective moral responsibility” as Čehajić-Clancy argues to be vital for damaged relations between different sections of society and sustainable social peace. There is not a strong public will in Turkey for taking collective moral responsibility for the past since the crimes of the past are represented as individual crimes when they are not denied and the responsibility of the “ordinary” people in society in the past violence is not discussed much. In addition to “I Apologize” campaign, the speech made by the Mayor of Sur Municipality elected from DTP during the inauguration of “Monument of Common Conscience” may be considered as an example of taking collective moral responsibility. In that speech, the Mayor apologized for the massacre in 1915 in the name of the “ancestors”. The speech is critical in terms of acknowledging the role of

the ancestors in the massacre and inviting people to think about it not only blaming the state or someone else.

The apology by Erdoğan for Dersim massacre is an example of not taking collective responsibility for the past. His conditional apology was made just in the name of the state with the words “if it is necessary to apologise on behalf of the state and if there is such a literature, I will apologise and I do apologise”. As mentioned in the case of Germany, one of the critical moments which disseminated the discussion about the Nazi past of Germany was the apology by the German Chancellor Willy Brandt, falling on his knees spontaneously, in front of the Monument dedicated to the victims of the uprising in Warsaw against Nazis. It was accepted as a sincere apology mostly thanks to the impressive gesture of kneeling down before the monument. He apologized not for the whole German society and talked about the “heavy burden” on the German society for years. It is very critical to make society feel the responsibility for the past. In contrast, Erdoğan’s apology just blamed the state, implying that CHP, the ruling party during the massacre was responsible for that. His apology did not discuss the fact why those people were killed, how the Kurdish-Alevi identity of Dersim people challenged founding motives of Turkish nation-state, the ongoing Kurdish and Alevi issues and presented the matter as something stayed completely in the past. He did not talk about the ongoing Kurdish and Alevi problems because in that case, he would have to mention other massacres in the past such as murdering Alevi people in Maraş, Çorum before the military coup of 12 September and Madımak (also known as Sivas Massacre) in 1993 by nationalists and political Islamists. It is striking that the lawyers defending the suspects of Madımak massacre had important roles in AKP such as being minister of parliament or taking top level offices in municipalities, so talking about Madımak would open the relation of people representing or close to the government with the perpetrators of the massacre.

Despite all the negative aspects of the aforementioned cases of dealing with the past, it is very valuable even to be able to talk about some of the past events, naming them as “massacre”, accepting the role of state in the mass violence, etc. as in examples of judgment of 12 September and apology of the prime minister for Dersim massacre. Even the past violence has been instrumentalized and used for political strategies, and

it had conjunctural effects, acknowledging the mass violence committed by the state and condemnation of the past has paved the way for public memorials and other memorialization practices by civil initiatives. The attitude of the government against those memorials changed over time and was not consistent. In some cases, the government supported the efforts as in the case of transformation of Ulucanlar Prison into museum; stayed silent as in the case of Seyit Rıza Monument. However, the government also raised difficulties as in the case of Dersim Massacre Memorial and destroyed completely the memorial as in the case of Humanity Memorial. It is possible to say that the state has always been a dominant and intervening party in memorialization efforts to deal with the past. The struggle on the public memorials between the state and civil society organizations will also be elaborated in the cases of Ulucanlar Prison Museum and Diyarbakır Military Prison in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 6

TRANSFORMATION OF ULUCANLAR PRISON INTO A MUSEUM

Ulucanlar Prison was put into use as the first modern prison of the newly-founded Republic in Ankara in 1925. During decades, it hosted many famous authors, intellectuals, politicians, journalists, activists, ministers such as Nazım Hikmet Ran, Yılmaz Güney, Bülent Ecevit, Muhsin Yazıcıoğlu, Ahmet Arif, Metin Toker, Necip Fazıl Kısakürek, İsmail Beşikçi, Leyla Zana, Oral Çalışlar, Behice Boran and many others. Ironically, the prison was called as “sosyete palas (high society palace)” due to hosting many famous names and two of the wards with a land view of Ankara were named “Hilton Ward” (Yıldırım, 2011, p. 62). However, this “palace” has been a grave for many people. 18 people including Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Hüseyin İnan, Erdal Eren, Necdet Adalı, Mustafa Pehlivanoglu were executed at the courtyard of the prison. Ten prisoners were killed and tens of them were injured in an operation by soldiers on September 26, 1999 based on the claim that leftist prisoners had taken control of the wards. The prison witnessed several riots including the riot in the juvenile ward in 1976, hunger strikes and death fasts. Due to the fact that the history of the prison goes parallel with the history of the Republic, it presents a summary of important milestones in Turkish politics. Since the prison witnessed imprisonment and death of many opponents, Ulucanlar is defined as “a grave” to the opponents of the power in the history of the Republic (Sevgili, 2012, p. 11).

The prison was closed in 2006 after serving for 81 years. After the closure, it was reported at a newspaper that the prison would be demolished and a shoemaker’s bazaar would be built at its place (Sevgili, 2012, p. 28). TMMOB (The Union of Chambers of Turkish Engineers and Architects) Chamber of Architects Ankara Section filed an application with the Ministry of Culture, Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board in January 2007 for the prison to be registered and taken under preservation.

The prison was registered by the Board upon this application. The Chamber wanted the prison to be transformed into a memory place. In the book published by the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section in 2012, it is written that “from then on, Ulucanlar would stand as a symbol of collective memory” and be “a mirror of the past” (Sevgili, 2012, p. 29). The museumification process is mainly encouraged by the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section which considered the prison as a part of the collective memory of the country: “Ulucanlar was the collective political memory of a city and of a country. Thus it should have never been erased from memory” (Sevgili, 2012, p. 31).

The chairman of the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section, Tezcan Karakuş Candan and the former chairman, Ali Hakkan state that the idea to transform the prison into a museum came to their mind just after they heard that the prison was closed down and the Ankara Metropolitan Municipality was planning to turn it into a shoemakers’ bazaar. They desired it to be a memory site but also wanted it to be formed through a participatory process, so they staged a contest called “City Dreams”. In fact, their goal was opening the way for the issue to be taken to the public agenda and allowing young people to learn both the political and spatial history of the prison. More than 60 projects participated in the contest and they chose two projects, one in the category of undergraduate students and the other in the category of graduate students. Candan describes their object as “multiple minds and alternatives against the single mind of the Metropolitan Municipality” (Interview with Candan and Hakkan). She also emphasizes that they considered the method of the process as “active participation”, not only voting or attending to meetings, but also sharing ideas, suggestions through the entire process.

After the Section ensured that the prison was registered by the Ministry of Culture, Cultural and Natural Heritage Preservation Board, they wanted the prison to be opened to the people for 15 days. With permission of the Ministry of Justice, an event was organized in June 2007 named “Ulucanlar is Opening its Doors to the People”. There were exhibitions, guided tours, panels and about 15-20 thousand people visited the prison during this event of 15 days (Interview with Candan and Hakkan). The prison was opened to the public in October 2007 for the second time. The Chamber of

Architects organized “Social Architecture Festival” for 15 days and an oral history workshop was made with architects and engineers who stayed in the prison in the past (Ünalın, 2008, p. 6).

Altındağ Municipality, after excluding other actors to a substantial degree as will be discussed later, initiated works to transform the prison into a museum in 2010. The winner project of the contest staged by the Chamber of Architects was applied as the restoration project, however critical changes were made in the architectural structure of the prison. After about a year of preparation work, Ulucanlar Prison Museum was officially opened in 2011.

The museum is located at the very heart of the city, surrounded by neighbourhoods and has been one of the most popular “tourist sites” of Ankara. Altındağ Municipality promotes the museum very actively as a must-see place. Starting from the first day of its opening, the museum had an unexpected number of domestic and foreign visitors. It is visited by people coming from other cities, tours are organized to visit the museum by high schools, universities, associations, bar association etc. The museum is visited by people that vary by age, political view, motivation of visit etc. Daily number of visitors may exceed one thousand in a day especially during holidays. The administrative officer states that about 10 thousand people visited the museum only in two days in the weekend coinciding with November 10 in 2018, the death anniversary of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Most of those people came from other cities to visit Anıtkabir and they also visited Ulucanlar Prison Museum following Anıtkabir (Interview with Bayıksel). The Mayor states that the museum was visited by 1.3 million people from its opening until April 2018 (“Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesinde”, 2018, p. 3).

As mentioned before, the Mayor of Ankara Metropolitan Municipality of the times, Melih Gökçek wanted the prison to be turned into a shoemaker’s bazaar but it was allocated to Altındağ Municipality by the Ministry of Justice. Therefore, although both mayors are members of the same political party, namely AKP, there was a conflict between them until another Mayor, Mustafa Tuna was appointed as the Mayor of Metropolitan Municipality in 2017. In the city guide prepared by Ankara Metropolitan Municipality in 2014, all the museums in Ankara are listed, even those which are very

small and not known in general. However, Ulucanlar Prison Museum is not mentioned. It is very ironic because Ulucanlar Prison Museum is visited by hundreds of thousands of people every year and the Metropolitan Municipality did not make any reference to it in the city guide which contains all the symbols and intangible cultural heritage of Ankara including even “Ankara rabbit”. When asked the reason of absence of the museum in the city guide, the administrative officer of the museum stated that there was a dispute between two municipalities in the past, however Ulucanlar Prison Museum currently takes place in Ankara city guide prepared by the Metropolitan Municipality following change of the mayor (Interview with Bayıksel). This indicates the fact that management of the museum, its content and its promotion are deeply connected to changes in politics and individual and political disputes between political figures.

Within the scope of this research, interviews have been made with main actors of the museumification process, former prisoners, and visitors to understand the potential of the museum to deal with the past, to satisfy justice demands of former prisoners, to educate new generations and prevent reoccurrence of the past events. Interviews have been made with the current chairman and former chairman of the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section, project designers of the museum, the administrative officer responsible for the museum for 8 years, the chairman of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section; 7 former prisoners who stayed at the prison in different periods and 8 visitors. I contacted some of the former prisoners with snowball method, I knew two of them before and they directed me to other prisoners. I contacted one of them by sending e-mail to her and one of them via social media. Also the chairman of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section was a former prisoner and he also directed me to another former prisoner. All of the interviews with visitors have been made in front of the prison building with people who have just visited the museum or brought their friends or guests to the museum. In all of the interviews, I introduced myself, explained the aim of the study, asked for permission to ask questions and made a sound record except one former prisoner who did not accept sound record, so I took written note of that meeting.

Since some of the interviewees are representatives of chambers and civil society organizations, or they are official representatives, and since their names can easily be understood from their positions, I will use their names in the study with their permission. Although all the former prisoners stated that they had no problem with using their real names in my study, I do not prefer to use the real names since there are personal experiences and feelings in the interviews. I will name them as UP1 (Ulucanlar Prisoner 1), UP2, etc. Regarding the visitors, I did not ask their names not to bother them and allow them to answer questions without fear. I will also name them as V1 (Visitor 1), V2, etc.

6.1. The Actors of the Museumification Process and the Conflict Concerning the Determination of the Form and Content of the Museum

Inclusion of actors in the museumification process and mutual relations mainly started with the protocol that was signed between Altındağ Municipality, the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Association of Ankara and the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section for transformation of the prison into Ulucanlar Prison Museum and Cultural Center on February 12, 2008. The construction project was given to the graduate winners of the contest held by the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section (Ünalın, 2008, p. 6).

Candan states that the Ministry of Justice insisted that the Chamber of Architects had to take place in the protocol. However, after allocation of the prison to Altındağ Municipality by the Ministry of Justice and signing the protocol, the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality, Veysel Tiryaki dominated the process and tried to take decisions on his own (Interview with Candan and Hakkan). Due to the criticisms of the Chamber, Chamber officers were not allowed to participate in the official opening of the prison museum. Candan states that the Municipality tried to determine the whole process claiming that it knew everything and did everything. However, as she states, the idea of museumification belongs to the Chamber and they started the process. It is clear that the Municipality tries to ignore all of the other actors and take credit for the museum. Hakkan states that the Ministry of Justice would open archives to them because the Chamber also had specialists about museology and they wanted to establish the museum with a new perspective, however Altındağ Municipality kept the

Chamber out of the process and the negotiations between the Chamber and Municipality were broken down in a short time (Interview with Candan and Hakkan).

Another actor was the Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section which did not take place in the protocol, however it was an active participant during the process. The Chairman of the Ankara Section of the Association, Hüseyin Esentürk stated that they issued a declaration in 2007 and made a request for prisons where the most brutal practices were experienced during the history to be transformed into a museum. The association participated in the event organized by the Chamber of Architects in 2007 at the prison and opened exhibitions, attended to oral history workshops. However, Altındağ Municipality excluded them and the Chamber of Architects from the process and they were not even allowed to enter the museum (Interview with Esentürk). One of the striking example of the lack of confidence in Altındağ Municipality was registering the poplar tree, which is decades old and which witnessed executions of 18 people at the courtyard of the prison, with the Council of Monuments to prevent the tree from being cut down after a speech by the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality disregarding its historical importance. He states that members of the association regularly control the tree against chemicals etc. because they are afraid that the tree will be damaged. Esentürk argues that the poplar tree is an alive witness of the history. Despite all of these criticisms and negative views, he states that it is a success story to preserve the prison even in this form because it is not a rent center such as a shopping mall or shoemaker's bazaar as intended at the beginning (Interview with Esentürk).

Experiences of the project designers of the museum also prove that there was not a participatory method in the restoration process of the prison museum. The designers were three persons who were the winners of the contest staged by the Chamber of Architects and also graduate students at the Department of Architecture at Middle East Technical University. In the interview made with two of the designers, Gürem Özbayar and Zeynep Kutlu, they stated that final decisions were given by the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality. They encountered many problems during the restoration process, such as change of original iron ward doors with wooden doors which created a huge damage in the originality of the prison. They could solve such problems just by applying to the

Mayor. Although their architectural project had to be applied in accordance with the agreement made between the designers and the Municipality, many lower level bureaucrats and officers did not comply with the project regarding many details and the designers had to discuss and struggle with them to be able to apply their project (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu).

Former prisoners who would be expected to participate in the decision-making process about the form and content of the prison museum were also excluded. The project designers state that there was no time to meet with former prisoners, to ask their ideas for the project and they designed the project without talking to former prisoners. They searched the history of the prison, made research about the historical events witnessed by the prison, thought over which traces and places to preserve, they attended to some meetings by the Chamber and the Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section, and there they heard thoughts and demands of former prisoners. However, they did not arrange separate meetings or interviews with former prisoners to ask their feelings, thoughts, suggestions (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). This is a very important deficiency for the museum because it seems that nobody asked them what they would want and how they felt. The only possibility for former prisoners to come together and discuss the future of the prison was the festival organized by the Chamber of Architects, however, it was also inadequate to think over the museum collectively. It may be said that only the members of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section and some members of the Chamber of Architects who were imprisoned there in the past had the chance to express their ideas. Neither Altındağ Municipality nor the museum management asked the ideas or expectations of the former prisoners. The administrative officer of the museum stated that they called some of the former prisoners and their relatives to demand their belongings to be exhibited, however expectations, ideas or suggestions of former prisoners' were not asked (Interview with Bayıksel). This also shows that there was not a participatory decision-making process.

Observations by Eray Çaylı who visited Ulucanlar Prison Museum in 2011 before it was opened to public show that nothing has changed in the following years. He was granted an appointment for an exclusive visit to the museum as guided by the

administrative officer responsible for the museum. Çaylı states that when he asked to the administrative officer who gave the decisions about what to exhibit, which color to paint the walls etc., she answered that a team prepared a detailed report and made several suggestions, however “all detailed decisions were taken by the mayor himself” (Çaylı, 2011, p. 388). In the interview made with the same person, Merve Bayıksel in 2018, her answer to this question was the same. As the answer to the question of whether they would consider any suggestions from the public to exhibit other former prisoners whose names are not exhibited, she stated that they were “open” to all kind of suggestions, criticism, etc. and they would take them to the mayor (interview with Bayıksel). This is a clear sign of the fact that although non-governmental organizations, former inmates, professionals etc. are claimed to be given the chance to share their own opinions, suggestions, the final authority is the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality. Indeed, it is a very serious problem to authorize one person to give final decisions. It means that another mayor may change the museum to a substantial degree based on his/her political views, opinions, etc.

Another problem about the museumification process is that specialists of the issue were not included in the discussions and restoration process. Such a museum project requires to be prepared considering views, opinions and experiences of historians, psychologists, sociologists, museology specialists, architects, political scientists, curators etc. However, the project was mainly considered as an architectural project and its content has been formed based on preferences of the municipality. During establishment of such an important museum, it is striking that there is not any museologist. It is clear that such a museum requires a professional work and professionals and specialists should not be excluded. The project designers also state that the museum required integrative conservation and this needed inclusion of social, physical, economic, cultural dimensions. There had to be professionals from different fields to take certain decisions. Özbayar clearly points out the impossibility to make such decisions individually: “How the Mayor or we will decide which place is worthier to be preserved” (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). However, the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality is the person who decides what and how is to preserve de facto.

All of the statements made by the main actors prove that the museumification process was not participatory, did not include adequate number and categories of specialists and the Municipality dominated the process. As argued by Çaylı, the process of museumification was characterized by “exclusion”. It excluded many people who wanted to contribute in the process with their memories and ideas (Çaylı, 2011, p. 393-394). All these aspects show us that there has been an official patronization of the process from the very beginning.

6.2. Restoration Process: Erasing the Authenticity and Creating a Touristic Memory Site

The most critical discussions about the museum raise on the restoration of the prison. Restoration of the museum has been a highly controversial process since it determines to what degree the memory site will preserve its authenticity, which and whose memories will be preserved, which specific periods and events will be highlighted. Due to the fact that the originality of Ulucanlar Prison Museum is destroyed to a substantial degree and there are political conflicts on the content to be selected and to be exhibited, there are many criticisms by the actors of the process, former prisoners and visitors about the restoration of the museum.

The project designers state that the contest held by the Chamber of Architects was in the form of an imagination about how to use the prison area. Their initial dream was to transform the prison into an area consisting of both a museum and a conservatory. The reason of thinking of a conservatory was to reverse the unwanted memories of the prison and create a hopeful environment (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). However, this was just an idea and construction project was very different from this initial idea. The project designers state that there were three important factors determining the form of restoration of Ulucanlar Prison. The first one was the demands of Altındağ Municipality, the second one was the procedures of the Preservation Board about historical buildings with which they had to comply and the third one was the expectations of different political actors attaching importance to different places and events in the history of the prison (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). Özbayar and Kutlu state that they had to reach a compromise between the demands of the former

prisoners and the Municipality. Kutlu also states that the latest form of the museum was not like what they wanted it to be (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu).

The Preservation Board wanted to reveal the first form of the prison as established in 1924 by demolishing additional buildings which were constructed later. The project designers state that this is the methodology used by the Board to reveal the historical structures by demolishing unqualified additions. However, at this point, it was questionable that which buildings were worth to preserve (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). It is clearly seen that there is a debate on which structures to preserve and why. The prison consists of various wards, meeting cabins, observation towers, etc. Some of them were existent in 1925, however some new buildings and wards were added in different periods based on the need of that period. For example, women's ward was added in 1940s. It has an important historical value to preserve and meaningful with the lives and experiences of women who lived in it, however the Preservation Board considers only architectural value of the ward. The project designers state that there were some places inside the prison which did not have architectural value but had to be preserved just due to the "memory" they carried but they tried hard to explain this fact to the official authorities (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). They also state that the architectural value of the prison, the fact that it was the first modern prison of the Republic and had a unique architecture saved it from being demolished. They state that if the prison had an unqualified structure, it would be demolished. Çaylı also emphasizes that "the value of buildings and memories only defined in relation to age: older is worthier of preservation" (Çaylı, 2011, p. 394).

The project designers state that they had some problems with the people working in the restoration. They state that there is not such an experience to transform a prison into a museum in Turkey (except Sinop Prison) and people did not know how to do it. For example, iron doors of wards were changed with wooden doors and they had to talk to the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality to return it to the original form. The Mayor ordered the former doors to be collected from junk dealers and in this way, they could preserve those iron doors. They state that lower level officers have the mentality that "I should do something, change something, otherwise they will think that I do nothing" (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). It is a very non-proficient act to change the

original iron doors which are the symbols of a prison with wooden ones just to show that he/she does his/her job. They also had to quarrel with officers for many times because of painting the walls, erasing traces, etc. Kutlu states that at some points, what the officers made was not restoration but “beautification” (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu).



Photograph 13: Ulucanlar Prison in 1924, taken from www.ulucanlarcezaevimuzesi.com

The latest form of the museum is different from its original form to a great extent. Especially the changes made in the walls and the floor have destroyed the originality. Most of the walls, both wards’ and courtyards’ walls, have been painted and scraped. All the floors have been repaired, which creates a feeling of cleanness and spaciousness. Those amendments erase the traces of the past which Violi defines as “visible documentations of the past and powerful activators of imaginary forms of reconstruction” (Violi, 2012, p. 39). Almost all the poems and words written on the walls, traces of blood and dirt documenting the past and reminding the feelings of the prisoners, torture and physical conditions of the prison have been erased. Tuğçe Aysu, who interviewed with several former prisoners, states that “writings were proofs of their agencies against the suffering inflicted on them and were part of their resistance” (Aysu, 2015, p. 54). She also argues that cleaning and organizing the prison in such a way both prevented the former prisoners from placing their memories and limited representative power of the museum for visitors (Aysu, 2015, p. 46).

You enter into the prison from a corridor and you come across Hilton wards (the 9th and 10th wards). As mentioned before, these wards are known for hosting famous names and they are very comfortable compared to the other wards. Then you enter a dark, narrow corridor of isolation cells. There are wax sculptures in some of these cells and audio animation with voices of inmates. For example, one of them shouts as “Guardian, guardian, open the door!”, another one says “The walls come at me!”, “I did not do anything, I only protected my honour”. There are also two small wax rats in one of the cells.



Photograph 14: The 5th ward with biographies of certain famous former prisoners, taken from www.ulucanlarcezaevimuzesi.com

The 4th and 5th wards come after isolation cells. There are wax sculptures and bunk beds in the 4th ward. The walls of this ward have been protected partially, and there are still some writings of former inmates on the walls. This ward is also the one where 10 people were killed in 1999 and there are some journal news about this operation on the walls in the entrance of the ward. There are biographies of some famous thinkers, politicians, etc. in the 5th ward. There are 19 bunk beds inside the ward (totally 38 beds) and the ward seems very spacious. However, as one of the former inmates who stayed at the 5th ward stated, the average number of inmates were 90-100. So, when

people enter the ward, they can't imagine 100 people were staying there and since there is not any information about that, they can think that it was quite spacious and comfortable. In addition, there is an additional part of these wards consisting of a small place to cook and toilets. The place used as kitchen is made of marble and stones of allaturca toilets have completely been changed.

We can find information on the original situation of wards and the prison in certain novels, documents, etc. For example, there is a small part titled Ulucanlar Report in the novel written by Yılmaz Güney named "We want stove, window glass and two breads" inspired by his imprisonment at Ulucanlar Prison in 70s. Güney states that wards no. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 were supposed to be for 70 persons, however about 130-150 persons stayed in these wards. Some prisoners slept on steel wardrobes used for belongings and food taking the risk of falling down (Güney, 2019, p. 11)³. He adds that there were fleas, rats, cockroaches in the wards; water leaked through the roofs; there were not enough coal and wood for lighting the stove and some windows lacked glass and they tried to cover them with newspapers and clothes (Güney, 2019, p. 12). Testimonies of the former prisoners also confirm that the wards were not such spacious and healthy to live in contrary to the impression left in the museum.

The 7th ward has been arranged as a cinema hall and a documentary about Ulucanlar Prison is continuously on display. There are chairs to sit and watch the documentary. There are personal belongings of former inmates in the 2nd and 6th ward. There are also four disciplinary cells with heavier conditions compared to isolation cells. The 1st ward is being prepared to be opened to visit in 2019. Except those wards, the Turkish bath, children's ward (transformed into library and cafeteria), closed meeting cabins and the gallows tree where 18 people were executed are open to visit.

³ "1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 no'lu koşuşlar sözde 70 kişiliktir. Fakat bu koşuşlarda genellikle, 130 ila 150 civarı kişi kalır. Yiyecek ve eşya dolabı olarak kullanılan çelik dolapların üstünde ise, düşüp sakatlanma pahasına da olsa mahkumlar yatmayı göze alırlar. Kuru betonda yatmaktan daha iyidir çünkü. 130-150 kişi, aşağı yukarı üç metre eninde, yedi metre boyunda olan daracık bir yerde, banyo-tuvalet ve mutfak ihtiyaçlarını karşılamaya çalışırlar. Sular günlerce kesilir, tuvaletler sık sık tıkanır. Pislik ve koku içinde kalır her yan. Böylesine kalabalık bir koşuşa üç-dört gaz ocağı ancak verilir. Bu gaz ocakları da çoğunlukla bozuktur ve çalışmazlar" (Güney, 2019: 11).

It may be said that the restoration made by the Municipality satisfied none of the actors. Candan states that some places and buildings inside the prison which they attached importance were demolished during the restoration. Although she considers transformation of the prison into a museum instead of being demolished as a result of their struggle, she thinks that the prison “has lost its spirit” due to the restoration process by the Municipality. She says “It is our success that the prison was not demolished, but it is their shame that it has lost its spirit”. Replying the question about how the prison was changed after restoration, she said “it was spick-and-span” (Interview with Candan and Hakkan). Candan states that the Municipality “cleaned” everywhere, but prisoners were living in dirt. The Chamber wanted to reveal all layers of walls, because every layer represented a period and carried traces from the past. She says that many important things were erased in general. However, the existence of the structure itself has allowed that place to be a place for dealing with the past (Interview with Candan and Hakkan). Hakkan also emphasizes importance of preserving authenticity of the place. Giving the example of his visit to a Nazi camp, he says he could not even breathe there and wanted to go out. He adds that any memory place should create such a feeling to deal with the past and it requires originality to be preserved (Interview with Candan and Hakkan).

Being also a former prisoner, Hüseyin Esentürk argues that the restoration was exactly “a historical massacre”. He states that they transformed cells into 5-stars hotel rooms. Talking about 80s when he was imprisoned there, he tells that there was something like clay on the ground, not concrete. When they fell asleep, they woke up with rats on their bodies. He says that the walls of the prison have a spirit and when you paint and reform those walls, you kill its spirit (Interview with Hüseyin Esentürk).

Karacan states that such places are generally preserved without beautifying them to be able to represent the traumatic past similar to experiences of the victims. So, all kind of interventions “destroy the basic grounds of memory: interlinked familiarity and authenticity” (Karacan, 2014, p. 107). Çaylı also points out the effect of restoration on memory and argues that renovations impair memory while claiming to make material reparation (Çaylı, 2011, p. 394).

One of the most critical aspects of the restoration process is excluding the women's ward from the museum since it was not existent in the plan of 1924. One of the former woman prisoner states that hundreds of women stayed there and she could not understand how their experiences would be ignored. She says "I do not know, maybe they did not think of us as human" (Interview with UP4). In addition, memories of the woman inmates are ignored in the museum to a substantial degree. There are only very small traces related to woman inmates. Some paintings of Sevim Onursal, a former inmate, are hanged on the walls; there are biographies of only four women compared to tens of biographies belonging to man inmates; and some photos of Sabiha Sertel and Behice Boran. Although there are many pieces of personal belongings of men, there is not even one piece of personal belonging of any woman exhibited. Akbaş and Kelekçi defines the museum as a "male-dominant space" where the lives of women who stayed there are lost (Akbaş and Kelekçi, 2019, p. 52).

In his dissertation thesis on the spatial politics of AKP period, Dorroll states that he could not experience "authenticity" during his visit to Ulucanlar Prison Museum:

The space was not dusty, there were no rats, except for one wax rat, and the space smelled fresh. This is what made me question the "restoration" of the prison as a project with any kind of authenticity. The building was remodeled and freshly painted (Dorroll, 2015, p. 207).

Comparing the new form of the prison with the pictures of the prison taken just after its closure, he states that it was difficult to think of people living there because the place seemed very old, dirty, dusty, etc. But the renovated form of the prison was fresh and clean. So, he just felt that the museum just reflected "an idealized version of prison life" in Turkey (Dorroll, 2015, p. 207). According to him, the reality was whitewashed (Dorroll, 2015, p. 210). He states that it was aimed at making people felt upset with a soundtrack of screams through the corridor however exposure to these voices felt "very forced and contrived" (Dorroll, 2015, p. 208).

Undoubtedly, the process of museumification cannot be thought independent from the attitude of the party in power then, namely AKP, its strategies and the political environment. The political atmosphere of the period when the prison was decided to be transformed into a museum was promising about the possibility of dealing with the past. Dorroll argues that AK Party intended to consolidate its social narrative and

political identity with the museum (Dorroll, 2015, p. 211). Searching ideological motivations behind turning the museum into an idealized place, Dorroll argues that these motivations should be sought in AKP politics:

I argue that the answer can be found in the utilization of the space as a component of AK Party spatial politics. As with Hamamonu, the Ulucanlar complex was constructed in order to remember certain select aspects of Turkish national history in order to promote the AK Party's own vision of the Turkish moral subject. In order to accomplish this project, the prison had to be restored in such a way as to serve a historical narrative. Its original condition was whitewashed in order to contribute to the spatially politicized AK Party moralizing project (Dorroll, 2015, p. 214).

Although there were some signs of dealing with the past in the years of museumification process, as other attempts such as apology for Dersim massacre, Ulucanlar Prison Museum is also criticized for being used as a narrative to condemn Kemalist past and praise the new "democratic" regime. Karacan states that the museum intends to represent "a homogeneous narrative of the anti-democratic actions of past governments without any particular focus on any specific period or event" (Karacan, 2014, p. 104).

The former inmates have also been homogenized and presented as sole victims independent of their different political thoughts. All the political prisoners are exhibited as the victims of the same policy to homogenize victimization and erasing political differences and conflicts between different groups. Political diversities and identities of the prisoners, different political contexts and personal histories are washed away due to that homogenizing narrative which reduced the inmates to just victims (Uğur-Çınar & Altınok, 2021, p. 11). As Herzog points out, ideological diversity of the former prisoners, namely Islamists, leftists and rightists, is highlighted in the museum to show that the whole nation was affected. He also argues that this meta-narrative serves to the purpose of "showing that the authoritarian periods of suffering and repression which are on display are a thing of the past which can now be exhibited in the museums of a newer, more democratic age" (Herzog, 2013, p. 37). He states that connecting the past narrative of Ulucanlar prison to present political discourses contributes to gaining legitimacy before the public (Herzog, 2013, p. 38). Çaylı also criticizes the design of the museum due to detaching former inmate political figures from their political views and interpreting the history linearly (Çaylı, 2011, p. 394).

The museum also serves to consolidate the democratic image of AKP. As Dorroll argues, the museum is a part of the narrative established by AKP that presents itself as devoted to human rights and as a party which saved the people from Kemalist oppression:

The museum, as part of the AK Party's spatial politics, participates in the AK Party narrative of the party as an engine of human rights reform after years of Kemalist oppression, using a simplified and idealized narrative of Kemalist oppression that is supposedly ended with the election of the AK Party. While emphasizing the devout Muslims and other political prisoners who were imprisoned in the facility, the museum does little to engage with the context of contemporary political prisoners in Turkey (Dorroll, 2015, p. 216).

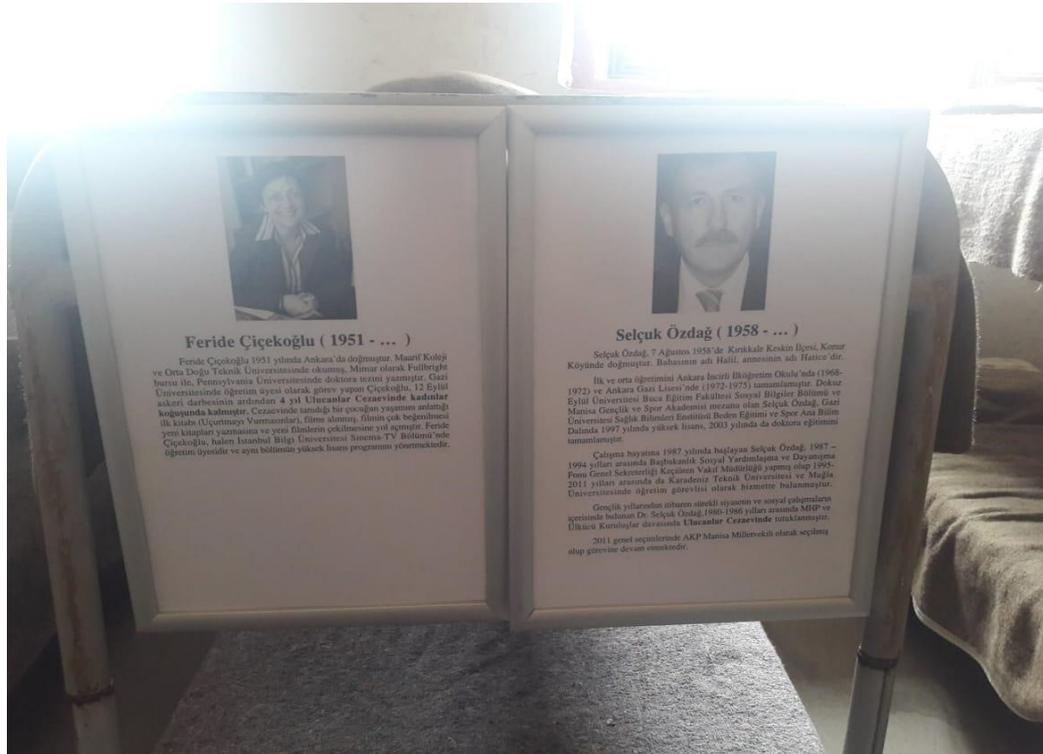
Uğur-Çınar and Altınok draw attention to the role of the museum in enhancing the populist agenda of AKP. AKP portrayed itself as representative of the people against the status quo and established a “one-dimensional oppressor-victim narrative” (Uğur-Çınar & Altınok, 2021, p. 5). That populist narrative stands as a barrier in front of the “potential for pluralism and a more multifaceted and critical engagement with the past” (Uğur-Çınar & Altınok, 2021, p. 16).



Photograph 15: Biography of Sırrı Süreyya Önder, taken from

<https://www.gazeteduvar.com.tr/gundem/2019/05/17/sirri-sureyya-onderin-ismi-ulucanlar-muzesinden-kaldirildi/>

The selected narrative also determines whom to include and exclude. The power determines whose stories will be included in the representation of the past and to what extent. Exclusion of Kurdish parliamentarians is critical, because currently there are some Kurdish parliamentarians in the prison. As Karacan states, the past is manipulated or destroyed in some cases through strategies of exclusion and ignorance (Karacan, 2014, p. 105). A striking example of the mentioned exclusion policy is removal of biography of Sırrı Süreyya Önder from the museum. Önder stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for 11 months in 1985 and is a former member of parliament of HDP (People's Democratic Party). He was sentenced to three and a half years in 2018 based on the accusation of making terrorist propaganda and his biography was removed from the prison in 2019 (Alan, 17.05.2019). Biography of Selçuk Özdağ, former member of parliament of AKP was placed instead of his biography.



Photograph 16: Biography of Selçuk Özdağ, taken in July 2019, after removal of the bibliography of S.S. Önder.

As in the other case of the study, namely Diyarbakır Military Prison, the political environment determines the content of discussions about the violent past and its representation. Museumification and restoration processes of Ulucanlar Prison Museum is not independent from this reality. Political intervention and use of such

memory places for purposes of any political party rather than being a sincere attempt to deal with the past affect the potential of these memory places and memorials to serve to establishment of justice and dealing with the past as will be discussed below.

6.3. Potential of the Museum for Serving to the Expectations of Justice and Dealing with the Past

As discussed in the previous chapters, establishing memory places and public memorials are attached an important role as restorative justice practices in dealing with the past. However, any memory place itself cannot directly serve to the goals of restorative justice practices. Its content, form, decision-making process, actors included, selectivity, etc. affect its potential of serving to expectations of victims, survivors and society in general. So, while examining a memory place, such questions should be asked to understand its various effects: Who initiated the process? Who decides what to do and why? Which places or events are selected to be reminded, represented and exhibited? Does the place contribute in preventing forgetting of the past? What the victims and survivors feel about it? How are the visitors of the memory place affected by the place? Can the memory place be thought as an official apology for the past atrocities? Can the memory site help the victims to forgive the perpetrators?

Within the scope of the research, interviews were made with former prisoners and they were asked questions to reveal whether they think that the museum serves to dealing with the past, satisfies expectations regarding justice, whether they accept the museum as an apology, whether it opened the way for social and individual mourning, etc. Interviews were made with 7 former prisoners who stayed at the prison in different periods, during 80s, 90s and 2000s. Three of them were woman and four of them were man. All of them were left-oriented ideologically. As aforementioned, the interviewees were selected with the snowball method and I could not contact any right-oriented former prisoner. 6 of these 7 people also stayed at other prisons in different periods, so they could compare conditions of Ulucanlar Prison with the others.

First of all, it should be stated that Ulucanlar Prison has been stated as a “more comfortable” place compared to other prisons especially during 1980s. Although it

was the main center for executions, it witnessed death of 10 people in 1999 and death fasts and riots in different periods, the prison has not been identified with torture and harsh prison conditions as much as Mamak, Metris and Diyarbakır prisons. The physical conditions were very unfavorable compared to the other prisons, however political prisoners were respected by the prison officers and ordinary prisoners during most of its history. The most severe human rights violations were executions and killing of 10 people in September 1999.

The interviewees were asked what would satisfy their expectation of justice. Most of them replied that they did not have any expectation of justice or they did not believe that justice would be realized. They generally stated that they did not expect anything individual and the term of justice would only be meaningful when democracy was established. To understand the difference between expectations about penal justice and restorative justice, questions were asked about both penal cases and other restorative acts.

Regarding penal justice, the interviewees were asked whether they filed a suit for the injustice they faced during their imprisonment. One of them, current chairman of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section, stated that they actively participated in the September 12 trials as the association. The association members were individually involved in the case. He said they did not have positive expectations about the trials to create a climate of dealing with the past and they turned out to be right at the end. He said that September 12 is not limited to a small number of generals, there are also many bureaucrats and officers involved in it including governors, police officers, torturers, etc. He stated that these trials did not serve to encountering with the past and the military coup of September 12 actually continued for 38 years (Interview with UP6).

When asked whether she filed a suit against the state, one of the former prisoners said “No, never. I do not want to have any relation with the state. I do not make any claim. They cannot return my lost years to me. Actually, I do not believe in the law in Turkey” (Interview with UP5). One of them stated that he told in the court that he had been tortured at the court, however the judges did not pay attention to this fact. So, he did not file any suit (Interview with UP1). Another former prisoner, who was injured

severely during the operation in 1999, said that they filed suits against the state for injury and deaths during this operation, however counter suit was filed against them claiming that they killed their own friends. They were kept responsible for the operation and the suit was dismissed (Interview with UP7). Only one of them filed a suit for damages, she won the case and received material compensation (Interview with UP4). She also followed September 12 trials even though she did not make any request for involvement in the case. She says that the case was only for show, but despite that they wanted the responsible people to be judged (Interview with UP4).

It is observed that the former prisoners do not have trust in penal justice and they do not have much expectations. They generally want the responsible people to be judged, but this does not seem to be of high priority for them. For example, UP3, who said he is still angry with the doctor of the prison participating in torture, did not mention anything about judging this doctor. He thinks the problem would be solved when an environment is created based on common human values. He dreams of denouncing this doctor through a short movie and he states that, he would then tell to the doctor “you committed such a severe fault in the past, but come to this film screening, let’s tell about this to the new generations and prevent reoccurrence of it” (Interview with UP3). He states that he would prefer to denounce such people through art because one of the biggest penalty to be imposed is to display him in front of the people as such a character and denounce him (Interview with UP3). Another former prisoner who experienced the operation of 1999, says that he would not be affected if Hikmet Sami Türk (he was the Minister of Justice in 1999) was judged and sentenced to prison penalty because there is such a system that any person at this position would do the same thing (Interview with UP7).

The interviewees were asked whether they could forgive the responsible persons or it was possible to forgive. In general, former prisoners expressed that they considered the matter as a social problem, not an individual problem. So, most of them stated that they would forgive individually, however this did not mean much. There were not any former prisoners who said he/she would never forgive. One of the former prisoners said “Individual forgiving, reconciliation does not solve any problem. Let me forgive, what would change if other problems are not solved? Unless this wound is healed,

nothing gets solved” (Interview with UP3). Despite the fact that none of the former prisoners consider the matter of forgiving as an individual problem, when they continue to talk, it can be observed that they have feelings of individual disappointment or sadness especially about the lower level officers or from whom they did not expect violent acts. For example, although UP3 frequently emphasized that it was a systemic problem, he told about an event that he could not still cool his anger. While he was staying at Eskişehir Prison, the prisoners were tortured and the doctor of the prison put his stethoscope on prisoners lying unconscious due to torture and said to the torturers “keep going, keep going, he can endure more”. After a while, he saw this doctor and said “I will forget the torture made by the ordinary guardian, police, etc., but I will never forget you. You, as a doctor taking the Hippocratic oath, participated in the torture at your own will”. He states that the doctor claimed to be forced to do that but he has never forgiven him. As aforementioned, he thinks they may only come together in another social and political environment (Interview with UP3).

Another former prisoner, UP7, also emphasizes the systemic aspect of the problem and says that he did not feel anger beyond his opposition to the system. Anyway, he also talks about his disappointment about the guardians attacking them during the operation in 1999. He was just sorry for seeing the guardians beating them during the operation of 1999 because they became close with guardians for 4 years and saw them every day. He was sad to see those guardians who he knew for years, smiled upon and whom he did not expect to do such a thing (Interview with UP7). The former prisoners are inclined to understand more and show empathy towards the lower level officers when they just performed their duties. One of them stated that she would forgive those with the mentality of being an aide. She stated that she would not accept the apology of the persons who did that job consciously, however she would accept the apology to be forgiven by those who performed his/her job being alienated (Interview with UP2).

These examples show that certain feelings such as sadness, disappointment, anger etc. are suppressed by the political prisoners because they generally do not want to think of their experiences and pains as individual problems. When the former prisoners were asked what was the dominant feeling when they thought about their prison years, two

of them stated that they felt grief, one of them stated that she felt nothing because she thinks of her own experiences as the life of another person, as if she never lived that life. The others did not state a certain feeling but none of them mentioned individual rage, anger, hatred, etc. UP3 told that he did not have a feeling of personal grudge but the rage against the responsible people was healthy to call them to account for their acts. However, he emphasized that this rage should not be self-destructive, but feed the feeling of resisting to and struggling with those people (Interview with UP3).

When the former prisoners were asked whether they expected an official apology, they stated that an official apology would be important but it did not mean much on its own. For example, one of them says that even the state apologizes for the violence at Ulucanlar or another place, but if it still continues to kill other people at other places, it would not be a healthy apology. He emphasizes that the apology should be sincere and it should come with a social transformation (Interview with UP7). Two of them emphasize insincerity of apologies for September 12, Dersim and Diyarbakır Military Prison. One of them defines these apologies as “discourses to be turned into votes” (Interview with UP3).

It seems that when the apology is not considered as sincere or it is not accompanied with establishment of justice, telling the truth, consolidation of democracy etc., it is hard for the victims or sufferers of violence to accept this apology. It can be understood from the statements of the interviewees that any apology without changing conditions of the past does not give hope to the former prisoners.

Regarding the matter of whether the former prisoners wanted to forget their experiences during prison years, all of them stated that it is impossible to forget and they want the people to learn and remember it. One of them states that their efforts for coup plotters of September 12 to be judged were just not to forget the past, to bring this period to light and confront with that period. She adds that they would not breathe a sigh of relief if Kenan Evren was sentenced to 10 or 20 years at his old age, however there would be an achievement in terms of remembering that period (Interview with UP4). Almost all of them stated that they did not abstain from remembering the past. One of them shot a documentary about it and another one wrote a book, of which a movie was also made.

Despite the fact that all of the interviewees stated that they would want to remember the past and remind it to others, it was hard for some of them to talk about the past. One of them started to cry when she was talking about being tortured at a detention center after the military coup of 1980. She says “We should definitely remember, however, it also disturbs me. I could not tell about being tortured to anybody for 10 years. I was hurt so bad in my heart and I still feel the same” (Interview with UP4). Another former prisoner also could not continue to speak when he mentioned the poplar tree which is the witness of execution of Deniz Gezmiş and his friends, Erdal Eren etc. (Interview with UP6). As mentioned, one of the former prisoner who was injured during the operation of 1999 and lost his friends in this operation shot a documentary about that process. However, although he emphasizes that he does not abstain from confronting the past, he also adds that he cries at every turn he watches his own documentary (Interview with UP7). Another former prisoner, UP1 mentioned that when he entered the prison after its closure in 2007, he went to the meeting cabins and cried there for 10 minutes remembering the pain his family suffered when he was in prison (Interview with UP1).

A very important shortcoming of this study is that all of the political prisoners interviewed are left-oriented and there is no interviewee from the right wing. Based on a critical observation of the administrative officer of the museum, it may be said that remembrance practice of right-oriented people may be different. Bayıksel states that while they were conducting research during establishment of the museum, they saw that left-oriented former prisoners had a huge archive and they did not throw away anything related to their prison years. However, right-oriented prisoners preferred to forget those years thinking that “their” state did all of the things and tried to ignore it (Interview with Bayıksel). This is an important point, because it shows that preferences about remembering or forgetting the past or erasing the traces or keeping them alive is deeply connected to political views of the prisoners.

All of the former prisoners stated that they considered the idea of turning the prison into a museum as a good and convenient idea, however none of them were happy with the latest situation of the museum. Only one of them stated that she had thought that there was no need to turn the prison into a museum because it would trigger their

traumas, would be offending for the former inmates and underline the feeling of being a victim when the discussions about museumification started. However, after a while, she changed her mind and currently she thinks such places are necessary. What affected her to change her mind was the bomb attacks in Turkey after 2015 and she thought that such memory places and memorials were essential not to forget the people who died there (Interview with UP2). All of them visited the prison when it was opened to public in 2007 and 6 of them visited it after the museum was opened. Only one of them rejected to go to the museum because she was critical of the process after which the prison was allocated to Altındağ Municipality and now, she also protests paying an entrance fee to enter the museum (Interview with UP4). One of them shot a documentary about the operation of 1999 and recorded most of images during the event of 15 days named “Ulucanlar is Opening its Doors to the People” organized by the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section in 2007 when the prison was opened to the public. He worked as a voluntary guide for the groups coming to see the prison that year (Interview with UP7).

The former prisoners confirm that there have been substantial changes in the prison during restoration process and originality of the prison was not preserved. For example, one of them says “I could not recognize it when I entered in. We had an ornamental pool, there were trees at the courtyard and even places of doors had been changed” (Interview with UP7). Another former prisoner talks about demolition of the 8th ward, he says that women’s ward was not open to visit, bunk bed order was completely different, etc. He mentions the words of Veysel Tiryaki, the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality as “there are some people who want to pay money to stay here, we have done such a luxury place” (Interview with UP6). He criticizes the mayor for being proud of establishing a luxury prison museum and he adds that originality and spirit of the museum had to be preserved. He states that he stayed in the 4th ward and they were about 240 people in that ward despite its normal capacity of 70 at most (Interview with UP6). Currently there are about 20 bunk beds in wards, and it seems that only 40-50 persons stayed in a ward. UP7 argues that what the Municipality did was not related to reparation or restoration, but they wanted to erase the traces of the place in the social memory. He mentions that people were living there with broken windows but now it seemed very luxurious (Interview with UP7). Such a change in

real conditions of the prison does not reflect the reality and it misguides the visitors. Although it is difficult to preserve the whole structure without any change, it might be more realistic and compliant with the original form.

All of the former prisoners share the thought that the museum does not serve much to dealing with the past especially due to losing its authenticity; its promotion as a touristic site; and being a caricaturized, sterile, inauthentic museum, etc. One of them emphasizes that it may be a place for dealing with the past for the people who learned those stories for the first time, but it was not an extraordinary experience for her to see the museum (Interview with UP5). Another one states that people visit the museum like a touristic place and it did not mean anything to him. He says “It does not mean anything for me. It may be meaningful for other people, I do not know. I did not feel like that I was able to talk about something that I could not before”. He says that the museum was established as if only to allow people of Ankara to see a prison prototype and the last 20 years of the prison was erased. He says “it would not differ if they exhibited a mockup of the prison” (Interview with UP1). In parallel with UP1, UP7 also states that there is not any difference between turning the prison into a museum in this way or demolishing it and building a shopping mall instead of it. According to him, although the place has a historical value, it has no value after it is cleaned out and not preserved in the original form (Interview with UP7). UP3 also defines the museum as inauthentic and says that make-up was put on the prison so the value of the museum was lost to a substantial degree. He points out the absence of Kurdish political prisoners who stayed there for years especially in 90s. Some Kurdish parliamentarians, including Leyla Zana, Hatip Dicle, Orhan Doğan, were imprisoned there up to 10 years and they were not mentioned. He thinks that Ulucanlar museum does not comply with the aim of keeping the memory alive (Interview with UP3). Even if there is such an attempt, it is exclusionary with respect to certain ideologies, identities and movements.

One of the prisoners states that there is no feeling of a museum there because everything is very new:

I think it is very caricaturized, sterile and artificial. Everything I saw was very new. Sculptures are new, dresses were tried to be worn out, but it is very clear that they are also new. Paving stones are new. It is not a place giving the feeling of a museum (Interview with UP2).

She draws attention to the function of creating a change in people visiting them. She says when people walk around, they are just surprised to learn that some famous people stayed there in the past and it creates no change. However, such museums should create a change or remind the shame of imprisoning those people. She adds:

Possibly, the state created such a band-aid place not to allow such a remembrance... The museum makes you recognize pain of others, you sigh about something but you cannot pass to the next step. I think the state coded this very well, it ensured that you do not pass to another stage with many mechanisms. It says you do not need to think about beyond, because what it shows and wants you know are the things out its own window. You sigh about something but you cannot pass to the question of why those things happened (Interview with UP2).

She also says she is not sure whether museums or memorials would serve to justice. She says she thinks as such maybe due to living in a country with a very low expectation level of justice. She considers Ulucanlar Prison Museum important just for their experiences to be known and to document those periods. She states that she thinks “such memorials and museums would be valuable for documenting the search for justice rather than expectation of justice. On the other hand, I also think that they would be valuable for recognition of that pain” (Interview with UP2).

The former prisoners were asked whether the museum could be considered as an apology by the state for the violent past, none of them stated to think of the museum as an apology. In general, they criticized the restoration of the museum and erasing the traces. One of them says:

To what extent our traces stay in that place? How far did they tell about our experiences? You have changed our wards, there was the writing of ‘Workers of the whole world, unite!’ on the wall, you erased it and put a Turkish flag instead of it, you also added the writing of ‘Do not be a talebearer, be a stone bearer (Laf taşımaya, taş taşı)’. How kind of an apology it can be? (Interview with UP7).

He states that if the museum could make any visitor learn that the state killed 10 people there and the state protects the memory of that place, then any apology would be valuable. But this is not the case, because when people read journal news at the entrance of the 4th ward, they would think some people rioted and the state just oppressed it (Interview with UP7). As mentioned before, there is not enough information about the historical events that took place in the prison and this leads certain parts of the history to be neglected or misrepresented.

As mentioned before, the former prisoners mainly emphasize the unchanging conditions despite turning the prison into a museum. One of them says that although it was important to preserve traces of a former violence place as witness of that period and to carry it to next generations, it seemed only for show considering the fact that many new prisons are being constructed and put into use at the same time (Interview with UP5). In fact, the Ministry of Justice announced that 174 new prisons would be constructed in 5 years and the capacity would be increased by 100 thousand persons in 2016 (Saymaz, 14.09.2016).

When the former prisoners were asked whether the museum could be thought as a mourning place, the answer of one of them was striking: “It cannot be a mourning place. There is nothing there telling the pain” (Interview with UP1). Another former prisoner says it would have been a mourning place if it was opened at different political conditions including democratization and attaining high standards of freedom (Interview with UP3). One of them stated that the museum could be thought as a mourning place because the prison itself is grave stone for someone. Especially families demand a concrete place to commemorate their children and people may go to the museum as if they were going to a grave or mourning house and it would have a healing aspect. However, she criticizes erasing the traces and she does not attach such a mourning role to Ulucanlar museum (Interview with UP2). In addition, she also mentions the potential of the museum for recognition of pain of prisoners. She says that people want their pain to be known, seen and recognized. When anybody does not recognize, see or know it, people feel as if they are lost and what they experienced was meaningless. In this regard, although she has criticisms about the museum, she attributes importance to the museum for recognition of her pain (Interview with UP2). In fact, almost all of the other former prisoners mentioned offending aspects of the museum. For example, one of them talks about touristic visit of the museum by the people not differentiating from Anıtkabir, Gençlik Park or Atatürk Forest Farm (Interview with UP4).

In addition to opinions of the former prisoners, observations of the administrative officer of the museum, Bayıksel also prove that the museum cannot serve to the function of being a mourning place. She says that most of the families of people who

were executed there did not pass by the door of the museum. For example, brother of Deniz Gezmiş visited there but he did not go to the part where the gallows tree is exhibited. Bayıksel called the mother of Erdal Eren, who was executed after September 12 at the age of 17, but she never accepted to meet face to face. The mother of Eren told “you may think that years passed over his execution, however this pain is fresh for me as if it was yesterday”, Bayıksel quotes (Interview with Bayıksel).

Most of the aforementioned questions were directed to the actors of museumification process to understand their expectations about justice and whether and to what extent those expectations have been satisfied by Ulucanlar Museum. As mentioned before, Chamber of Architects Ankara Section attributes importance to the prison museum as a memory place. The chairman of Ankara Section, Candan says that existence of that building is very important as a remembrance, memory site. However, while the place itself is a remembrance place, there is nothing as realizing justice because justice itself is not a problem of place, she adds. She states that the reality is not told in the museum, it is distorted. She also says that for this place to serve to the mission of preventing reoccurrence of past events, there should be something like a human rights program. Regarding the matter of whether the museum can be deemed as an apology, she argues that establishing a museum does not mean apologizing. For example, personal belongings and photographs of Nazım Hikmet, one of the former inmates are exhibited in the museum, however his grave is still in Moscow despite his will to be buried in Turkey. So, she says “reminding aspect of the place is important and strong, but the system should also establish some mechanisms for coming to terms with the past” (Interview with Candan and Hakkan).

One of the project designers, Kutlu states that the intention was dealing with the past, however she is not sure whether this goal has been achieved. She mentions personal belongings of former inmates such as torn undershirt of Hüseyin İnönü while he was taken to execution and says “At least, it makes people who do not know the matter feel something. This is an attempt to deal with the past or at least, it is not an attempt to make people forget or remove it”. She says that personal belongings exhibited and wards are very impressive although they are not exhibited well. She summarizes the situation as “We are just looking at their existence now. It is not confrontation; we are

only looking. Dealing with the past may be the next step” (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu).

The other project designer, Özbayar agrees with the museum’s potential to serve to mourning, however it has not been a place where society wanted to mourn together. Regarding the matter of apology, she thinks that the place does not apologize to anybody. She states that the museum creates the feeling that the state “did favor” and opened a place for mourning and she adds “It is not something like listening to any person or sharing. Anyway, it is sure that this is a step. It is better than demolishing the building or filling it with other things” (Interview with Özbayar and Kutlu). It is possible to say that the actors of the museumification, former prisoners and visitors are pleased with preservation of the prison buildings in general, however, they have various criticisms and think that the museum is far from serving to restorative justice to a great extent.

6.4. The Educative and Preventive Role of the Museum

As mentioned before, memory places also have the aim of educating the new generations and preventing reoccurrence of the past events. Altındağ Municipality has also such a claim to make the museum a living museum and considers the memory of the prison as vital not to experience the past again. The Mayor of Altındağ Municipality, Veysel Tiryaki attaches a preventive role to the museum. He says:

This place is literally going to be a living museum, a living memory of the political life of Turkey with its library, art galleries, meeting and conference rooms and film plateaus. Ulucanlar is not only a prison, it is a memory that contains several remembrances that mark Turkish political and social life. Accessing this memory is vital so that we do not live what we have seen and lived again. I think that opening Ulucanlar for visiting as a museum is therefore important and believe that the social memory must be read correctly (Official website of Ulucanlar Prison Museum).

To be able to understand whether the museum had any potential to attain the goal of educating new generations about the past and preventing reoccurrence of it, interviews have been made with some visitors. It can be said that Ulucanlar Museum has a young visitor profile. Many high schools and universities organize tours to the museum both from Ankara and other cities. The administrative officer also states that even there were some kindergartens which wanted to bring children to the museum but the

museum management rejected the demand since they do not allow children under 13 to enter the museum without their parents. In addition to the young people, there are also people coming from the surrounding neighbourhoods, people visiting for touristic purposes, etc.

Since one of the main questions of the research is whether the museum has an educative role and whether it serves to take lessons from the past, interviews were generally made with young people. One of them was high school student, 5 of them were university students, one of them was an accountant at her 30s and one of them was a 32-years old police officer. Only two of them had relatives imprisoned in 80s, but they stayed in other prisons, not Ulucanlar. 6 of them had visited the museum more than once. It was the first visit of the two visitors who came from other cities.

First of all, it should be stated that most of the visitors visit the museum for touristic purposes. As mentioned before, Ulucanlar Prison Museum is promoted actively by Altındağ Municipality as a must-see place. In addition, many websites list the museum among touristic destinations in Ankara. So, especially visitors coming from other cities visit the museum since there are not many touristic and interesting places in Ankara. For example, tours coming from other cities generally visit Anıtkabir, Hamamönü, Ankara Castle, Gençlik Parkı etc. Since Ulucanlar Prison Museum is located just next to Hamamönü and Ankara Castle, it is mostly preferred for touristic purposes. Most of the people living in Ankara take their out-of-town guests to the museum as a social activity. One of the interviewee visitors was coming from İstanbul with the tour organized by ÇYDD (Association for Supporting Contemporary Life) and they visited Anıtkabir and then the museum within the scope of the tour. Another interviewee was a high school student coming from Hatay with her school and they also visited Anıtkabir along with the museum.

The interviewees were asked what they felt after visiting the museum. They generally replied that they were sorry and impressed very much. Especially isolation cells and sounds at these cells affected people. It may be said that young people who did not know past periods are inclined more to consider the museum as realist and impressive. Only two of the visitors complained about artificiality and non-realistic aspects of the museum. One of them, a university student coming from İstanbul says that the museum

did not reflect the reality much because it was more spacious compared to those which she watched in soap operas and movies. She says she felt that the wards were comfortable and it did not reflect the reality. She jokes that living in the wards are more comfortable than living in İstanbul (Interview with V8). Another visitor, who was a police officer, states that the museum was not realistic, only some places were close to reality. He states that if the original form was preserved, it would create a very different feeling. He argues that the museum was “turned into a child toy” (Interview with V6). Contrary to criticisms of the former prisoners about artificiality of the museum, young visitors generally find the museum authentic because they do not have any knowledge about the former situation of it and have no information about how the prisoners lived there. There is not adequate photographs or information in the museum showing the real state of the museum when it was used as a prison. For example, if there were some photographs on the walls showing the crowded wards or broken windows of the wards, visitors would be allowed to see the original form of it and understand more the hard conditions of a prison. But such important details are consciously erased and physical conditions of the prison is not taken to the agenda of the visitors.

The visitors were asked whether they had information about the events occurred at Ulucanlar Prison and whether their thoughts changed if they came to the prison with some prejudices or prior knowledge. Two of the visitors, who were at their 30s and knew the history of the prison, had a settled view about what happened there and they said their thoughts did not change (Interview with V1 and V6). Two of them, one being a university student and the other high school student knew almost nothing about the past periods, history of Ulucanlar and they did not know any of those “famous” prisoners who stayed there (Interview with V7 and V8). Four of the interviewees who were university students (knowing each other from high school) and who had a conservative view were very interested in the history of the prison and they said they started to read about the history after they visited the museum for the first time and especially about the leftists whose opinions they did not support (Interviews with V2, V3, V4 and V5).

It was striking that aforementioned conservative university students emphasize that they developed empathy towards the people supporting opposite ideological views. One of them says “all of the people who stayed here had different opinions but they were subject to the same torture and they died in the same way. What we should see here is that all of them were killed at the same conditions, not to support leftists or rightists” (Interview with V2). Another one says that she visited the museum with neutral feelings although she feels close to one side. However, she adds that she did not accuse the other side (Interview with V3). One of them, who visited the museum when she was a secondary school student states that she had some prejudices before she visited the museum. She thought that revolutionaries staying there damaged the country. However, after her visit, her thoughts have become more positive and she says “I have been able to develop empathy because I could feel the pain experienced here” (Interview with V5). She tells about her mother who was a revolutionary in 80s and was tortured severely under detention. However, her mother changed her mind and became a conservative person, therefore her mother was very angry with revolutionaries, in her words. Despite the anger of her mother, she says that she tries to be neutral while reading and learning opinions of the both sides (Interview with V5). On one hand, it is very important that the museum opened the way for these people to search the past, to think about the people against whom they had prejudices and to develop empathy towards them. On the other hand, it is seen that the message that the museum gives to the people, namely “we suffered together as a nation”, has been received by those people. However, despite the politics of September 12 named “mix and reconcile (karıştır-barıştır)”, former prisoners state that they never came together with the people from opposite views and there were serious fights between them while they were in the prison. So, it is questionable how far the museum reflects the reality of past events while erasing political differences of the former inmates.

The visitors were also asked about their opinions concerning capital punishment and whether it changed after they saw the gallows tree. 2 of them (V4 and V6) state that they supported capital punishment for some cases and the others state that they were definitely against capital punishment. While those supporting capital punishment (not for crime of thought but for rapists or murderers, etc.) did not change their mind, those who were against it state that their opposition to capital punishment was consolidated

when they saw the gallows tree. It has been observed that some people were affected by the gallows tree but most of the people passed by it quickly because it is located at the end of the museum, just before the exit. People concentrate on leaving the museum and they suddenly see the gallows tree. Many people, especially the young ones, take selfie in front of the gallows tree and it seems that they do not feel the severity and meaning of execution.

Four visitors (V2, V3, V4 and V5) also made some suggestions for the museum to be more educating and informing. They say that there should be guides, booklets, historical information, especially visual information. Two of them complained about insensitivity of people while walking around the museum. One of them was very angry with the people taking selfie and people taking a ride with the purpose of displaying that on social media. She says “While I try to feel it, I see that some people are there to touch and play around with something” (Interview with V2). Another visitor, V6 also complained people taking photos and using them on the social media. He says “if you look at Instagram, Ulucanlar Prison is a very famous place, but it is not in reality” (Interview with V6).

6.5. Evaluation

Transformation of Ulucanlar Prison into a museum is one of the limited number of officially-supported memorialization practices. The date when it was decided to be restored as a museum and opened its doors to the people coincides with the period that AKP took steps to deal with a “selective” past. The idea of museumification came from the Union of Chamber of Engineers and Architects, the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section. It was suitable for conjunctural interests of the government and transformation could be realized thanks to the political atmosphere of the time.

The approach by the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section to the museumification process was very participatory and they brought the issue to the public agenda with the contest and the festival they organized. It was very critical for many university students to participate in the contest to determine the restoration project of the prison. The prison was opened to the people for 15 days in 2007, just after its closure and many people had the chance to visit the prison and see its original form before

museumification. They also organized oral history workshops, exhibitions, panels and guided tours.

The process of deciding the design of the project and opening the idea of museumification to the public discussion may be compared to the design process of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe in Germany. As mentioned before, the design of the mentioned memorial was selected among more than 500 designs by a jury. Civil initiatives, German Federal Parliament and the Berlin Senate participated in the decision-making process by appointing the members of the jury to select the design of the memorial. The design of Ulucanlar Prison Museum was also selected with a contest attended by university students and the winner project was applied, even the Municipality intervened in it much. Public colloquia were organized for the Memorial in Germany and both professionals and the people had the chance to discuss various matters regarding the memorial. The festival organized by the Chamber of Architects was a similar attempt to open the prison to public attention and discussion. In the beginning, museumification process was promising for a participatory decision-making mechanism thanks to the quadruple protocol signed between Altındağ Municipality, the Ministry of Justice, the Bar Association of Ankara and the Chamber of Architects Ankara Section; however, the process which started as participatory has been turned into an exclusionary process by Altındağ Municipality and the Mayor of the municipality has been the sole decision-maker.

The struggle between the official authorities and civil initiatives has a very determining role on the form and content of public memorials which become areas of contestation. In parallel to the other examples of public memorials and memorialization practices in Turkey, Ulucanlar Prison Museum has also been a clear example of the struggle on the power to shape the collective memory and to decide what to remember and forget about the past. The dominating party, so to say AKP via the Mayor of Altındağ Municipality, established a selective narrative regarding the meaning and history of the prison. The narrative exhibited in the museum presents the past as a homogenous, anti-democratic past when all the nation, including the leftists, rightists, political Islamists and nationalists, had survived and those anti-democratic times when people were punished because of their thoughts have been left behind. The

museumification process of the prison coincided with the period when the government tried to embrace larger sections of society such as Kurdish people, Alevis and leftists. However, it was also a selective “embracing” of more “acceptable” prisoners since people such as Kurdish political prisoners in 90s, leftist prisoners who were killed in 1999 were either ignored or presented only with the news accusing the prisoners. The narrative established in the prison also gives the message that those people were imprisoned because of their thoughts, as if people are no more imprisoned in Turkey due to violation of freedom of thought and expression. It seems that the hidden message of the museum is “bad old times are over”.

The promotion of Ulucanlar is also a very important element to evaluate. It is located at a very central place in Ankara, surrounded by neighbourhoods. It is promoted as a must-see touristic site and as mentioned, it has been visited by hundreds of thousands of people both from Ankara and other cities. Presenting the museum as a touristic site is problematic but it also shows how the government conceives the place. In fact, as designers of the museum emphasized, architectural value of the prison and being the first modern prison of Turkey saved the prison from being demolished.

Regarding the potential of the museum to satisfy expectations of justice and dealing with the past, it is not possible to say that the former prisoners and actors of museumification process are satisfied with the actual form of the museum. They have serious criticisms especially about destroying authenticity and distorting the reality of the past. In fact, the problem starts from the beginning. Since almost all the actors were excluded by Altındağ Municipality, former prisoners, civil society organizations and people willing to participate in the process could not express their ideas and suggestions. Selective content of the museum started from the restoration process. Authenticity of the prison has been damaged, and the museum has lost its potential to deal with the past to a great extent since originality and familiarity for the former prisoners were lost. As mentioned before, the former prisoners cannot even make their families recognize the conditions in which they lived when they were imprisoned, since it has been a more spacious, fresh and clean place during restoration. Since there is not any official apology for executions and prisoners killed in the prison, the former

prisoners also do not consider the place itself as an apology. These deficiencies of the museum prevent it to have a healing effect to a substantial degree.

As almost all the former prisoners emphasize, the museum itself does not mean much to them unless the general political environment in the country changes. It is very critical for such museums or memorials to be accompanied with a general democratization environment, official apologies, judgment of the responsible people, etc. so that the people who suffered from the past atrocities could deem such efforts as establishment of justice and dealing with the past. Otherwise, effects of such attempts stay very limited and even they may have reverse effects.

As the condemned violent practices continue in the present and issues such as capital punishment are opened to discussion from time to time, they become present issues, not past events to deal with. In other words, there is not a clear rupture between the past and present and the continuity between the condemned past and the so-called “democratic” present damages the role of the museum to serve to the aim of dealing with the past. One of the clear examples of that is the gallows exhibited in the prison as a symbol of the violent past and discussions to bring back the capital punishment. The last capital punishment was carried out for the last time in 1984 and abolished in 2004 by AKP Government. As mentioned by Uğur-Çınar and Altınok, “the representation of gallows and death penalty opens space for the AKP as an embodiment of the voice of the oppressed and the liberator of the people” (Uğur-Çınar and Altınok, 2011, p. 13). However, politicians both from the government and other parties started to talk about bringing the death sentence back especially after 2016. So, while the gallows are represented as a symbol of putting an end to the violent past, the threat to bring capital punishment back is like the sword of Damocles hanging over our heads at the same time.

Considering the goals of the museum, it is not possible to say that it has a significant potential of educating new generations and make them take lessons from the past. Unless it creates such a strong feeling about what was wrong in the past, it is difficult to say it has the potential to prevent recurrence of past events. It does not contribute much to a critical reading of the past by the young people. Based on the interviews she made with the visitors, Aysu also argues that the museum does not “open up a new

space for people to think through, leave what they have already known, and develop a different understanding, or a real criticism of the period” (Aysu, 2015, p. 85). When people come with a group, they enter the wards with tens of people at the same time, they quickly look around and leave there. Especially high school students speak very loudly, make jokes and consider the museum as an entertainment place. Although the administrative officer of the museum states that they see some writings in the visitor book such as “we have come here for the same things not to be lived again”, it is doubtful that the museum has such a strong effect. As Aysu argues, the narratives presented in the museum may make people sad, however visitors cannot find any clue about what to do to prevent recurrence of the past (Aysu, 2015, p. 58).

One of the critical roles that the museum can play is establishing dialogue between people with opposite views since numerous people with different political engagements, namely leftists, rightists, nationalists and people supporting political Islam visit the museum and witness the injustice and atrocity experienced there. Murtic mentions about the potential of public memorials to deconstruct “political debates and controversies remaining from the conflicted past by encouraging interaction between different groups” (Murtic, 2011, p. 39) and Gürler and Özer mention their potential to be “democratic dialogue areas by creating a culture of respect through memorialization at the city landscape” (Gürler & Özer, 2013, p. 858). Ulucanlar Prison Museum provides a valuable opportunity for different sections of society with different political views to come together in the same area and think about the “others”. However, due to the aforementioned problems with the museum, it cannot be said that this opportunity for encouraging interaction, dialogue and respect is used properly.

Despite its all deficiencies and problems, the presence of the museum means much for dealing with the past in Turkey since there is not another example of such a museum in Turkey in which political prisoners are commemorated. Certain improvements and changes may make the museum more educative and contribute to realization of justice. First of all, there is not adequate information about the history of the prison in the museum. More photographs, written information, videos, brochures, etc. may be placed in the museum to inform people about the historical facts and the original state of the prison in different periods. As Violi states, informing materials about such

museums are significant “interpretative devices” for the visitors to understand the context better based on historical facts (Violi, 2021, p. 47). Secondly, as mentioned in the case of Robben Island Museum, employing former prisoners as guides may serve both to educative functions and may satisfy the former prisoners in the sense that their stories are told to the people. Employing museum guides and organizing regular tours across the prison with detailed information would help people to learn and understand the history better. Thirdly, management policies of the museum may be changed in a way to include former prisoners, related associations and institutions and professionals based on a transparent and participatory decision-making mechanism. A professional, independent and inclusive museum management may contribute to solve the existing problems and to bring the museum to a position serving better to the goals of realizing restorative justice, providing place for mourning and healing for the survivors and relatives of the victims, revealing the truth about the history, educating the new generations about the past atrocities and reoccurrence of the past events.

CHAPTER 7

THE CASE OF DİYARBAKIR MILITARY PRISON: DEBATES ON TRANSFORMING THE PRISON INTO A MUSEUM TO DEAL WITH THE PAST

Diyarbakır Military Prison, also known as Diyarbakır Prison No. 5, was established in 1980 just before the September 12 military coup. The prison accommodated many Kurdish politicians and activists and ordinary prisoners after the coup. It is mostly known for the intensive torture and violence against the prisoners between 1980 and 1984. Especially in the early 1980s, the prison witnessed hunger strikes and riots that aimed at stopping the torture. Some of the prisoners died during hunger strikes, some of them hanged themselves and some others committed the act of self-immolation to protest the torture and gross human rights violations. Although harsh conditions were eased off to a certain degree after 1984, torture went on in the following years. The prison continued to witness gross human rights violations, riots and hunger strikes in the 1990s and 2000s. Diyarbakır Military Prison was declared to be among the ten most notorious jails in the world by The Times magazine with reference to the brutal torture practices (Hines, 28.04.2008). In the second half of the 2000s, the torture in the prison was started to be mentioned by the political actors. The debate about demolishing the prison or transforming it into a museum also came to the agenda in those years.

With an effort to find answers to the major questions of this study, interviews have been made with former prisoners who mainly stayed at the prison between 1980 and 1984 and main actors advocating and working for museumification of the prison. I contacted some of the former prisoners with snowball method. One of them was relative of a friend and he directed me to other prisoners. Another one was a colleague of a friend. One of them is the chairman of the 78ers Foundation and he directed me

to other former prisoners and an interviewer who worked at Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center. I contacted one of them by sending a message via social media and one of them via e-mail. In all of the interviews, I introduced myself, explained the aim of the study, asked for permission to ask questions and made a voice record.

In this chapter, first, the debates about transforming the prison into a museum or another place raised by both the efforts of civil initiatives and the speeches of representatives of the government will be reviewed. Then, gross human rights violations and torture practices in Diyarbakır Military Prison especially between 1980 and 1984 will be mentioned in short and after that justice expectations of ex-prisoners, their thoughts and feelings about transforming the prison into a museum will be discussed. It will also be discussed whether and under which conditions such a potential museum serves to establish justice, to prevent recurrence of similar events and whether it could be a place for mourning, and individual and social healing.

7.1. Diyarbakır Military Prison on the Agenda of the State and the Civil Society

Diyarbakır Military Prison was always on the agenda of civil society and human rights defenders with reference to gross human rights violations in 1980s and 1990s. The prison came to the agenda of civil society with something different than torture and violence in 2007. A group of academics, human rights defenders, political activists, lawyers, etc., led by 78ers Foundation, established a truth commission named Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission (Diyarbakır Cezaevi Gerçekleri Araştırma ve Adalet Komisyonu). The commission was declared to be established in 2007 with a press statement attended by thousands of people in front of Diyarbakır Military Prison on a date that had a critical reference, on September 12 (Tanrıku, 2012, p. 20). The commission members conducted 517 interviews with the people who were victims or witnesses of the violence, torture and deaths in the prison and organized numerous exhibitions, symposiums, and press meetings on the issue (Tanrıku, 2012, p. 21). The commission also collected 100 thousand signatures with the demand of turning Diyarbakır Military Prison into a human rights museum (Tanrıku, 2012, p. 22). As a member of the commission, DP6 states that activities of

the commission were reacted positively especially during the “Solution Process”, however the commission was not recognized officially, and activities of the commission were ignored completely when the process came to an end (Interview with DP6).

The prison started to be mentioned by the official authorities in late 2000s within the scope of the Democratic Initiative Process initiated for finding a solution to the Kurdish issue. In 2009, an AKP MP, Mehdi Eker who was the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of the period, visited Diyarbakır and stated that a campus containing an elementary school and high schools would be built in the place of the prison as a part of the Democratic Initiative Process by the government (“Diyarbakır cezaevi taşınıyor”, 22.08.2009). About one year later, the Prime Minister of the period, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan visited Diyarbakır and made a speech emphasizing the nonhuman torture in Diyarbakır Prison and he stated that the prison would be demolished, not to remind the past. The speech was made just one week before the new constitution referendum to be held on September 12, 2010. Erdoğan acknowledged the torture in the prison as one of the results of the September 12 military coup⁴:

I wish Diyarbakır Prison could speak and talk about what happened after September 12. I wish, the ward no. 5 could talk about nonhuman torture and brutal treatments... We will close down Diyarbakır Prison and build the new prison rapidly. When it is completed, we will immediately demolish Diyarbakır Prison. We want that place not to remind September 12 to our city with its existence... While the coup plotters of September 12 shot as ‘there is no torture in Turkey’, clamours and groans were coming out the ward no. 5. Now, it is written in books how they tortured people on cold concretes, dirt and sewage. Now, it is written in books how they put up 20 people as completely naked in single cells. We have been putting an end to that shame. God

⁴ The complete speech in Turkish is as follows: “Ah şu Diyarbakır Cezaevinin bir dili olsa da konuşsa, 12 Eylül sonrasında yaşananları bir anlatsa... Ah şu 5. koğuş dile gelip, o insanlık dışı işkenceleri, o insanlıktan uzak muameleleri bir söylese...Diyarbakır Cezaevini kapatıyoruz. Yeni cezaevini süratle yapıyoruz. Biter bitmez hemen mevcut bu malum Diyarbakır Cezaevini de yıkacağız. İstiyoruz ki orası artık varlığıyla şehrimize 12 Eylül’ü hatırlatmasın...12 Eylül darbesini yapanlar, ‘Türkiye’de işkence yoktur’ diye bas bas bağırırken, Diyarbakır Cezaevi’nden, 5. koğuştan, Diyarbakır semalarına feryatlar, figanlar yükseliyordu. İşte o soğuk betonlarda, pisliklerin içinde o kanalizasyonlarda insanlara nasıl zulmettiklerini artık kitaplar yazıyor. Tek kişilik hücrelerde 20 kişi çırılçıplak nasıl istiflendiklerini artık kitaplar yazıyor... Şimdi biz bu ayıplara son verdik, son veriyoruz. Allah’ın izniyle bu 12 Eylül, bunlara son verme miladı olacak” (“Erdoğan: Diyarbakır Cezaevi’ni yıkacağız”, 03.09.2010).

willing, this September 12 will be a turning point to end it (“Erdoğan: Diyarbakır Cezaevi’ni yıkacağız”, 03.09.2010).

The relation between torture in the prison and factors motivating the people attending PKK (Kurdistan Workers’ Party) came to the agenda with the words of a representative of the government in 2012. The Deputy Prime Minister of the period, Bülent Arınç stated that Gültan Kışanak, one of BDP ministers had been subject to such a torture in Diyarbakır prison when she was 17 years old, and he would attend to PKK if he was subject to the same thing. He also emphasized that more than half of the ex-prisoners getting out of the prison attended PKK (Hürriyet, 17.12.2012). On January 25, 2015, the PM of the period, Ahmet Davutoğlu visited Diyarbakır and stated that they would turn Diyarbakır Prison evoking painful memories into a culture museum and Diyarbakır would only be remembered with peace and culture (Kaplan, 26.01.2015). With this speech, contradicting with the former ones by Eker and Erdoğan stating that the prison would be demolished and new buildings with other functions would be erected instead of it, the idea of museum was officially declared by the PM. However, any official step was not taken for such a conversion.

One of the former prisoners, Gültan Kışanak became the mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality in 2014. Then, the municipality became more interested in the issue of Diyarbakır Prison and started works to transform the building into a museum. A meeting was held with non-governmental organizations in January 2015 and “Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center” was established in May 2015. Personnel and a place were allocated for it by the Municipality. Some exhibitions were organized, interviews were made, artistic works were performed by the Center. The last exhibition was related to the September 12 and after that, a trustee was appointed as the mayor of the municipality instead of Gültan Kışanak and the center was shut down. The place of the Center was given to the Families of Veterans and Martyrs. DP5 states that especially the exhibition related to former women prisoners attracted the most attention. The photographs, videos of and texts written by 22 women ex-prisoners attracted attention and the exhibition was visited by many people for 6 months (Interview with DP5).

The chairman of the 78ers Foundation, DP3 states that they issued a declaration to turn the prison into a museum with about 60 other NGO's and they established Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center. They aimed at collecting documents and establishing a memory center. They collected 100 thousand petitions demanding the museumification of the prison and submitted them to the Parliament. They also submitted these petitions to the related ministries. The Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Defence stated that the prison belonged to the Directorate General of National Estate and was at disposal of the Ministry of Justice. However, any step was not taken by ministries or other governmental authorities about the demand of 100 thousand people for converting the prison into a museum (Interview with DP3).

At the end of 2015, a sub-commission named “Diyarbakır No.5 Prison Investigation Commission” was established concerning the issue of human rights violations in Diyarbakır Military Prison after September 12 within Human Rights Investigation Commission in the Parliament. AKP MP Orhan Miroğlu, a former prisoner who stayed in Diyarbakır Military Prison after 1980, proposed establishment of that commission and he stated that one of the goals of the commission would be transforming Diyarbakır Military Prison into a museum for memory and dealing with the past (Karabağlı, 17.12.2015). The sub-commission held 14 meetings, interviewed with 27 persons including ex-prisoners, officials, lawyers, relatives of prisoners and a journalist and terminated its activities in the end of 2017 (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2017). Miroğlu stated that they would write a report and a book related to the issue, however they were not issued by the date of May 2021. Miroğlu stated that they invited many persons who witnessed the prison after the September 12 military coup, there was a “real reckoning” in Turkey and it was critical for that reckoning to take place under the roof of the parliament. He also mentioned that the idea of transforming the prison into a museum for dealing with the past was the right idea (Karabağlı, 17.09.2017).

The relation between this sub-commission and the non-governmental organizations working on the issue was very weak. One of the interviewees states that Miroğlu did not want former prisoners who would give the genuine information and authentic memories to come up before the commission, he rather preferred former prisoners who

were close to the government to speak in the commission (Interview with DP4). The sub-commission also requested information and documents from 78ers Foundation, however the foundation did not give them, because the sub-commission itself did not take the activities of the foundation seriously. As an employee of Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center, DP5 states that the sub-commission did not meet with them and although Orhan Miroğlu visited Diyarbakır for several times, he did not visit the Foundation or the Coordination Center. So, the foundation did not want to share information and the documents it had with the sub-commission (Interview with DP5).

The prison is still in use (known as Diyarbakır E-type prison) and new prisons, namely D-type, T-type and high-security prisons, have been built in Diyarbakır in the last decade due to increasing number of detainees and convicts in recent years. The debate about demolishing the prison and transforming it into a museum or school has faded away after 2015 due to the end of the so-called “Solution Process”. The issue rarely comes to the agenda of a large mass by the year of 2021 but a group of people still insist it to be transformed into a museum. In a different conjuncture, it is more likely to be discussed again both by the official authorities, human rights defenders and civil society organizations promoting museumification of the prison.

7.2. Torture and Gross Human Rights Violations in Diyarbakır Military Prison after the September 12 Military Coup

Diyarbakır Military Prison is an infamous prison both in Turkey and the world because of torture, violence and human rights violations committed especially between the years of 1980 and 1984. Although the exact number is not known, it is stated that more than 50 people died in the prison because of torture after September 12, 1980 (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 20). In the statement made by Turkish General Staff dated April 2, 1984, it was stated that there were 53 death cases in Diyarbakır Prison and there was no torture except some “individual” cases (Can, 18.05.2020). It is striking that although it is accepted that 7 prisoners died because of torture, and other prisoners died because of diseases, death fast, hunger strike, self-immolation or hanging themselves, deaths are normalized describing them as “individual” cases and systematic torture practice is denied.

The past atrocities experienced in the prison has a critical place in Turkish political and social life since the infamous torture and violent practices against the prisoners have been associated with the breakout of armed movement by PKK in 1984. In the aforementioned Coup and Memorandum Investigation Commission Report, it is argued that attitudes and practices of the coup plotters against Kurdish identity, such as the mistreatment in Diyarbakır Military Prison, was one of the important factors triggering radicalization of the Kurdish issue which built a foundation for PKK. The argument that eighty percent of the former prisoners who were released from the prison after 1984 joined PKK is also mentioned in the report (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 2012, p. 20). Similarly, Zeydanlıoğlu claims that the atrocities in the prison played an important role in radicalisation of a generation of Kurdish people and a great number of people from this generation joined the ranks of PKK (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009, p. 79). Yıldız also argues that resistance of the prisoners against oppression in the prison served as “building blocks” for the Kurdish resistance and motivated people to join PKK (Yıldız, 2016, p. 187). One of the former prisoners, Selim Dindar draws attention to the fact that the atrocities and torture in the prison turned the prisoners into militants. More than eighty percent of the prisoners joined PKK because it was very hard for the prisoners to return back to the normal life after witnessing that atrocity. The break of PKK movement was in 1984 and that date coincided with the date when a great number of prisoners were released from the prison (Düzel, 23.06.2003).

Since the prison is identified with torture, it is necessary to try to understand the function and goals of torture applied by the official authorities. According to Zeydanlıoğlu, torture in Diyarbakır Prison should be considered as an integral part of the nation building process in Turkey. The project of nation building was based on creating a homogenous and secular nation-state with a national identity based on Turkish language and culture. This project required to eliminate ethnic differences which led the way to forced assimilation (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009, p. 77). Similarly, Fırat and Topaloğlu argue that Diyarbakır Military Prison was like a laboratory where the prisoners were “rehabilitated through Turkification” and assimilation (Fırat and Topaloğlu, 2012, p. 81). However, Yıldız asserts the contrary to the argument of Turkification, claiming that the aim of torture in Diyarbakır Military Prison was not to

Turkify the prisoners and the goal was not “to assimilate the prisoners into Turkishness, but rather to destroy their Kurdishness” (Yıldız, 2016, p. 190).

Zeydanlıoğlu argues that the aim of torture in Diyarbakır Prison was to humiliate the prisoners rather than to obtain information (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009, p. 81). In parallel, Yıldız also argues that the primary object was not to obtain information, but to extract confession forcibly through torture. Whether the information obtained was true or not was not important for the torturer, rather the act of confessing was important, because confession transformed the prisoner into “an agent of power” (Yıldız, 2016, p. 195). The critical point to force the prisoners to confess by torture is affirmation of the truth of the state by the prisoners:

Confession turns the prisoner into a mnemonic device by making him affirm and validate the truth as established by the regime. It is, in a sense, embracing or relearning the language of the state... In addition to its disciplining and controlling function, forced production of repentance and confession in Diyarbakır prison was used as a form of truth-production and subjectification binding the prisoner to the dominant regime of power and truth and transforming him into a docile and obedient subject (Yıldız, 2016, p. 196-197).

As a former prisoner, Gültan Kışanak argues that although the aim of torture seemed to make the prisoners to confess, the main aim was to seize the soul of prisoners and damage their personalities (Kışanak, 2020, p. 129). Kışanak states that the prison was constructed as a part of preparations for the coup. She argues that one of the main goals of the military coup was to destroy Kurdish movement and torture system to be applied in this prison had been decided before the coup (Kışanak, 2020, p. 126). She states that the torture practices applied in the prison were not an “exception”, rather the systematic torture order had specific goals and was rooted in official state policies. As a result, the people who were responsible for these brutal practices were protected with impunity policy (Kışanak, 2020, p. 127).

The former prisoners who were interviewed within the scope of this study frequently mentioned the aim of torture as dehumanizing, depersonalizing the prisoners and destructing their personalities. For example, DP3 states that there were systematic torture methods in the prison and torture was more than being accidental or ordinary, rather it was a policy of denial and destruction. He mentions that Captain Esat Oktay Yıldırım, who governed the prison said them “I will say you to go your home, but you

will not go” meaning that the prisoners would lose their personality and would not want to leave the prison because they would be ashamed of themselves and the other people (Interview with DP3). In parallel, DP8 also states that torture targeted personality, identity and thoughts of the prisoners. Mentioning the attack on personalities of the prisoners, Orhan Miroğlu, one of the former prisoners and an AKP MP (between 2015-2018) says:

When I think of that prison, I remember the words on the plates hanged on necks of Jewish people by Nazis: Ich bin nichts! (I am nothing!). Everyone was nothing in Diyarbakır Prison, actually, everyone was forced to be and behave like nothing, and was treated as nothing⁵ (Miroğlu, 2010, p. ix).

The most common torture technics used in the Diyarbakır Prison were military training, beating, physical violence, food and water deprivation, starvation, bath torture, forcing the prisoners to memorize the Turkish marches, falanga, insulting, forcing the prisoners to crawl on snow nakedly, forcing the prisoners to listen to sounds of torture, plunging into cesspool (Arslan, 2011, p. 42). Militarist orders and practices formed an important part of torture. The governor of the prison, Esat Oktay Yıldırım had a dog named Co. As Yıldırım frequently reminded the prisoners, he thought the prison as a military school and the prisoners were forced to call him and his dog Co as “my commander” when they saw him in front of their cells or wards, as they were forced to call wardens as commander. They were said that “it is prohibited to sit and talk! Here is a military school and you are students at this school! You will not mention the name of prison!” (Bozyel, 2017, p. 93). When the meal was distributed to wards, the prisoners had to say “Thank God”, “Live long the army and the nation!” (Bozyel, 2017, p. 101). The judiciary was not out of these militarist structure. The prisoners also had to address judges and prosecutors as “my commander” (Bozyel, 2017, p. 144).

The militarist torture methods could be observed in many daily activities. Since the prisoners were deemed to be at a military school, they were even forced to play

⁵ In Turkish: “Bu cezaevini hatırladığımda toplama kamplarında Naziler’in Yahudilerin boynuna astıkları levhadaki kelimeler gelir aklıma: Ich bin nichts! (Ben bir hiçim!) Diyarbakır Cezaevi’nde herkes bir hiçti, daha doğrusu bir hiç olmaya ve bir hiç gibi davranmaya zorlanıyor, bir hiç gibi de muamele görüyordu.” (Miroğlu, 2010: ix).

volleyball standing at attention like a soldier. They were allowed to play volleyball once or twice a month but they were forbidden to run after the ball or jump. They could only hit the ball when it came just on the prisoner and then they had to stand at attention (Bozyel, 2017, p. 127)⁶. So, even playing volleyball was turned into a kind of torture and dominating the prisoners. The torture diffused through all kind of daily activities and the simplest human needs such as eating something or taking bath. DP3 states that even taking bath was also turned into an instrument of torture, so nobody wanted to take bath. When they were forced to take bath, either water was cut, or it was so hot or cold. They had to go out with the uncleansed soap on their bodies (Interview with DP3).

The efforts of the prison management to “Turkify” the prisoners were a part of torture. The most visible signs of Turkification project in the prison were painting the walls with pictures of Kenan Evren, Atatürk and other figures, Turkish flag, nationalist slogans written on the walls such as “Speak Turkish, speak a lot”, “Happy is he who can call himself a Turk” and forcing the prisoners to memorize national anthems and songs (Zeydanlıoğlu, 2009, p. 83). Bayram Bozyel, who stayed in Diyarbakır Prison for 5 years, tells about his arrival at the prison and what he saw were the paintings, writings, slogans covering the walls of the corridor going to wards at first glance. He states that he heard the voices of marches sang by the prisoners in about 40 wards at the same time (Bozyel, 2017, p. 93). All of the former prisoners interviewed within the scope of this study mentioned the marches that they had to memorize. There were tens of marches they had to memorize including the Turkish national anthem, Atatürk’s address to youth, student oath and many military marches. Old Kurdish prisoners who did not know Turkish had to memorize them and they charged prisoners who were teachers to teach those marches to other prisoners. For example, DP9 states that there were old women prisoners who were imprisoned because soldiers could not find their children or husbands and brought them. Since those women did not know

⁶ “Ayda bir veya iki kere öğleden sonra sözde voleybol oynanıyor... Oyun anında hiç kimse gülmüyor, konuşmuyor. Herkes oyun alanında esas duruşta bekliyor, yalnızca top tam “oyuncunun” üzerine gelip ona çarpacağı zaman oyuncu topa vurabiliyor ve tekrar esas duruşa geçiyor. Topun peşinden koşmak, topa atılmak, zıplamak, 5 No.lu’nun voleybol kurallarına aykırı ve yasak” (Bozyel, 2017, p. 127).

Turkish, she, as a teacher prisoner, was charged to teach them marches. It was very difficult for people who did not know Turkish or who were illiterate to learn them, and the prisoners charged to teach them were also beaten since they could not teach (Interview with DP9).

In addition to forcing the prisoners to memorize marches in Turkish, the prisoners and their visitors were not allowed to speak Kurdish. A considerable part of visitors, especially old women did not speak Turkish, and they could not talk with their imprisoned children during visits (Bozyel, 2017, p. 140). One of the soldiers who worked at Diyarbakır Military Prison Security Gate as sergeant between 1983-1985, Mahmut Noğay was listened by the aforementioned sub-commission established in the parliament. He stated that speaking Kurdish was forbidden and he witnessed that families who visited their children returned crying since they did not know Turkish and could not speak with their children. He also stated that there was a systematic torture and many people working at the prison in that period, including him, received psychological treatment (Grand National Assembly of Turkey, 30.11.2016).

Torture and human rights violations committed in the prison left permanent psychological and physical marks on the former prisoners. In the study conducted by Arslan, more than 40% of the ex-prisoners imprisoned in Diyarbakır Prison talked about psychological and relational problems that they experienced. Most of the problems were related to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms (Arslan, 2011, p. 59). In fact, the psychological and physical effects of torture continue in the daily lives of the former prisoners. Arslan states that about 2/3 of the former prisoners still reexperience the trauma of the past:

66,7 % of ex-convicts reported that they reexperience the traumatic event in various forms. The most common means by which trauma is re-experienced among ex-convicts is through having intense psychological distress upon exposure to trauma reminders. 43,3% of participants felt distressed when they were talking about their torture experiences. Some of them even cried during inquiries. They reported their discomfort at expose to trauma reminders such as the color of the ceiling, the noises of police radiophones, or enclosed spaces (Arslan, 2011, p. 70).

The need for restorative justice practices and taking steps to heal the former prisoners becomes clearer considering the fact that the past is not left behind. Arslan states that torture is like a current experience for the former prisoners and it seems like an

“unfinished business” for them (Arslan, 2011, p. 73). DP10, a psychiatrist who examined about 400 ex-prisoners after 2001 states that most of the ex-prisoners rejected to consult a psychologist or psychiatrist, but they had a will for reckoning. He, as a psychiatrist, thinks that nothing is over for the former prisoners. He states that they just postpone their psychological and psychiatric problems and it gets worse in time (Interview with DP10). This observation is also verified by a study conducted by Günseli Yarkin on coping mechanisms and emotions of the ex-prisoners who stayed in Diyarbakır Prison between 1980-84. In the study, it is stated that anger, sadness, shame, fear were the mostly expressed feelings by the former prisoners (Yarkin, 2013, p. 76). She states that almost two third of them suppressed their negative experiences to overcome the matter (Yarkin, 2013, p. 88).

The former prisoners that are interviewed within the scope of this study seem to cope with the effects of torture thanks to their political motivation and they did not want to talk about psychological dimensions of their experience since they wanted to emphasize social and political dimensions of the matter. Still, they mentioned about psychological problems they had after getting out the prison and some of them got therapy. For example, DP8 states that he could not walk forward after getting out the prison, he always wanted to turn backward because they paced back and forth in the prison. He startled when he heard police siren or radio sounds (Interview with DP8). Another former prisoner, DP9 also states that she still startles when she hears sound of any door, especially when she hears closing of an iron door as it reminds the prison door (Interview with DP9).

DP10, states that almost all of the prisoners had physical problems such as vision and hearing disorders, nervous system disorders, herniated disk, etc. (Interview with DP10). Forensic science specialist, also a member of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission, Şebnem Korur Fincancı states that 71% of 447 former prisoners who filled the question form had a health problem related to torture they were subject to. She adds that some of the complaints were somatization disorder complaints as result of direct psychological effects of torture. Almost half of the former prisoners had physical marks of torture (Fincancı, 2011, p. 8). The former prisoners who were interviewed also mentioned different physical problems they had

because of torture. DP1 states that her two teeth were broken by a warden and she started to feel shoulder and arm aches because of the torture and especially palestinian hanging. She both received physiotherapy for physical problems and psychotherapy for depression in Switzerland where she migrated as a political asylum-seeker after getting out the prison. She states that she did not have a normal sleep for years and had nightmares for a long time (Interview with DP1). DP3 states that he had gingival disease after death fast. He gets numb hands because of torture and has to wear orthopaedic shoes (Interview with DP3). DP7 states that there is serious trauma on his back and he got treatment for that problem. His backbone is also broken because of torture (Interview with DP7). DP9 states that she has gynaecologic problems and rheumatoid arthritis (Interview with DP9). So, it is possible to say that the former prisoners carry both physical and psychological effects of torture and violence on their bodies and dealing with the past is essential for healing their trauma and somatization disorders.

7.3. Realization of Justice in the case of Diyarbakır Military Prison

Although there have been several attempts and promising speeches to deal with the past and establish justice with respect to what has happened in Diyarbakır Military Prison, none of them could be completed. Establishment of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission, the sub-commission named Diyarbakır No.5 Prison Investigation Commission on the issue in the Parliament, Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center, judging Kenan Evren and Tahsin Şahinkaya, speeches admitting the torture and human rights violations in the prison by the governmental authorities were important steps, however these attempts could not come to fruition. So, the former prisoners still wait for justice to be established and gross human rights violations and torture in the prison to be dealt with.

The interviewees were asked what would be important for them to admit that justice is realized. The most common answers were the recognition of torture and atrocities; revealing the truth in general; judging the perpetrators; official apology and transforming the prison into a museum. Almost all of them mentioned the current situation in Turkey and ongoing injustice. Both impunity and recurrence of similar violations make the ex-prisoners hopeless about realization of justice.

Recognition of the torture and human rights violations and revealing the truth is very critical for the former prisoners. Since they were subject to injustice, the ex-prisoners want it to be recognized by society and the state. As a lawyer and former prisoner, DP2 states that he did not apply to legal remedies because he just wanted any of the cases related to Diyarbakır Prison to be resulted in favor of the prisoners and the responsible people to be punished. What mattered to him was to prove the reality of torture, not to recover damages. So, he expects the state to acknowledge that torture was a systematic policy rather than being arbitrary treatment by officials and to apologize from the former prisoners. He states that another important thing for him to establish justice may be transforming the prison into a museum so that the violence and violations there would not be forgotten and repeated (Interview with DP2). DP6 states that the political environment which allowed the matter to come to the agenda and be discussed was very important for them. Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission held a symposium on findings it obtained and the former prisoners participating in the symposium were very eager to share their experiences publicly. He argues that even such a public meeting and the opportunity to tell their experiences was considered as recognition by the former prisoners (Interview with DP6). This example shows the healing effect of being recognized and how it is critical to open space for the former prisoners to convey their experiences.

The matter of recognition is not limited to recognizing experiences of the former prisoners. The former prisoners who were interviewed also want the perpetrators to be disclosed to society. DP7 emphasizes that disclosing the perpetrators to their families and society is critical. He states that Kenan Evren and Tahsin Şahinkaya should be judged even they are dead, because acknowledging the injustice and revealing the truth is important. Even they are dead, society should know that those people were coup plotters and impeded development of democracy and human rights. He states that everybody including the wardens should be judged and punished. The society knows the victims and it should also know the perpetrators and that what they did was wrong. So, he demands acknowledging the responsible people as perpetrators and admitting the injustice the former prisoners were subject to (Interview with DP7). In parallel, DP8 states that the torturers had code names (for example the electrician's name was switch, the name of the warden of women's ward was cock) and the perpetrators still

conceal their identities. This means that they performed secret acts there, so any of the officials cannot disclose his name and say, “I worked there”. He says that it would be the most relieving thing if the responsible people talked about their memories. But he does not believe that this could be possible without democratization (Interview with DP8).

The most critical actor of torture in Diyarbakır Military Prison was Esat Oktay Yıldırım who ruled the prison after the September 12 military coup. All of the testimonies focus on him as the principal perpetrator. Yıldırım was killed by an ex-prisoner in 1988. He was on a public bus with his family when he was killed (Zeydanlıođlu, 2009, p. 88). His name, with the name of 44 soldiers who became martyred, was placed on the monument erected by Fatih Municipality in the “Martyrs Park” in Fatih, İstanbul in 1996. However, his name was removed from the monument in 2010 upon reactions (Aksu, 01.10.2010). Honouring him with putting his name on a monument prevents the truth to be revealed and the former prisoners to feel that the past atrocities are recognized. Removal of his name from the monument may be said to relieve the former prisoners in the meaning that it was acknowledged that his name was not worth to be put on a monument. One of the former prisoners, Abdullah Delibalta states that the placement of Yıldırım’s name on the monument made him disturbed and keeping his name alive on a monument showed that torture was not an individual act, but a state policy and the state approved the torturers (İmrek, 20.09.2009). Another former prisoner who was tortured in the prison, Halit Kurtay states that removal of his name from the monument was an important step for democratization of Turkey and justice was established. He says that step eased his conscience (Aksu, 01.10.2010).

Another example of honouring Esat Oktay Yıldırım is the court decree given by İzmir 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance imposing 105 days of prison sentence on Nagehan Alçı, Rasim Ozan Kütahyalı and Ümit Zileli on the ground of “insulting the memory of Esat Oktay Yıldırım” since they called Yıldırım as a “torturer”. In the justified decision, the judge stated that it was not proved that the prisoners were tortured in Diyarbakır Prison between the years of 1980-1982 when Yıldırım ruled the prison and he was an officer who was given commendation medal by the Presidency of the Republic and Turkish Armed Forces (Alçı, 13.06.2018). Such attempts showing

torturers as heroes or honourable officers of the state damage the feeling of justice of the former prisoners, prevent the truth to be revealed and new generations to take lessons from the past.

Judging the responsible people is also critical for the former prisoners to establish justice. Judging and punishing them makes it possible to reveal the truth and acknowledge the human rights violations. The former prisoners interviewed do not consider punishing the responsible people as individual vengeance, but they think it would be important in terms of recognizing the torture, violence and brutal treatment. DP6, a law professor and a member of the Truth and Justice Commission states that criminal justice is very critical for dealing with the past, because criminal procedure would mean to record the violations and to recognize them officially. He thinks that without judgments and individual penal responsibility, any kind of recognition, acknowledging the victimization or policies such as official apology or monuments would not be satisfying for the former prisoners. Since he was a member of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission, he participated in or read interviews made with hundreds of the former prisoners and he states that they had a demand and expectation about judging the responsible officials. The commission held several meetings with judicial authorities and it delivered all the findings it obtained to Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office (Interview with DP6). In terms of criminal trials, Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office launched an investigation after receiving about 1500 criminal complaints by the ex-prisoners. The commission members prepared a report on the issue and submitted it to the investigation carried by Diyarbakır Chief Public Prosecutor's Office. However, decision of non-prosecution was given in 2014 due to prescription (Tahincioğlu, 14.05.2015). DP6 states that there was an expectation that a serious indictment would be filed and a case would be brought before the court (Interview with DP6). However, as stated, judicial procedure was not concluded based on the decision of non-prosecution.

All of the interviewees emphasized that what mattered to them was recognition of torture and preventing the past to be forgotten. They also underline that they do not attach importance to be compensated materially by the state, namely being paid pecuniary or non-pecuniary damages. They demand the responsible people to be

judged and the truth to be revealed. For example, DP7 states that his petition was rejected by the court and he also made an individual application to the Constitutional Court. Then he applied to European Court of Human Rights, but it was not concluded yet. He states that the case was tried to be rejected based on prescription, however he and his friends insistently emphasize that prescription should not be valid for the crimes against humanity. He mentions that he struggles for the past not to be forgotten and keep the social memory alive (Interview with DP7). DP8 states that he wants all of the torturers, both the senior officials and the recruits to come up before the public. He states that it is adequate for the responsible people to admit their crimes even they are not punished (Interview with DP8).

The interviewees were asked what they felt when Kenan Evren and Tahsin Şahinkaya were judged and whether it meant justice for them. DP1 states that trial of Kenan Evren and Tahsin Şahinkaya was just like a *mise-en-scene*, it was not a real trial. It was for eyewash and to satisfy people, however she was not satisfied with this trial because that period and the military coup was not judged (Interview with DP1). DP2 who is a lawyer states that he got involved in the process of bringing the case before the court for the responsible persons of the period of coup d'état to be judged, however he did not file any case in his own name because he thought it would be enough if any of the cases resulted in favor of the former prisoners. He states that he had envisaged the trials would be prolonged not to punish Evren and Şahinkaya because the state paid attention for such cases to be prescribed not to punish the responsible persons (Interview with DP2). He states that since Evren and Şahinkaya are dead, the files are closed. However, it is impossible to ignore the torture in Diyarbakır Prison. The torturers are known, and the state has its own documents and records. There are testimonies of hundreds of people. So, there is no need for a judicial procedure to acknowledge the torture (Interview with DP2). DP3 emphasizes the fact that who tortured them were not Evren and Şahinkaya and he wanted all the people who were charged at Diyarbakır Military Prison to be judged. He also demands the state archives to be opened to public (Interview with DP3).

Another important point about judgments regarding establishing justice is that impunity is very offending for the former prisoners and stays as an obstacle in front of

justice and social peace. DP10, a psychiatrist who worked with ex-prisoners states that it is very wounding for the former prisoners that the torturers still live in that society without any punishment. He argues that even if the former prisoners get continuous treatment and the prison is transformed into a museum, not judging and punishing the responsible people and recognition of those people as heroes by the state and society negates the struggle for dealing with the past and results with disappointment. It is important for the torturers to reckon with the former prisoners who had traumas to establish justice (Interview with DP10).

Impunity means that the past events still continue and approved by the state, so it is one of the major obstacles in front of establishing the justice. Almost all of the former prisoners interviewed mention the ongoing human rights violations and violence and they emphasize that realization of justice is deeply connected to the current situation in Turkey. For example, DP3 states that when Turkey gets democratized, restorative practices such as pecuniary and non-pecuniary damages would come automatically and their struggle would gain meaning (Interview with DP3). A former prisoner and the Mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality between 2014-2016, Gültan Kışanak (who is imprisoned since October 2016) states that although 40 years passed over the military coup of 12 September, similar practices continue and torturers are not judged. Instead of them, people who mention the atrocity experienced in Diyarbakır Military Prison are judged. So, the “wound of Diyarbakır” still bleeds and cannot be healed (Kışanak, 2020, p. 133). It may be said that judicial process and punishing the perpetrators have critical importance to make the former prisoners felt justice is established and the past is faced.

7.4. Conditioned Forgiving, Forgetting and Apology

Forgiving the perpetrators and leaving the past behind is tightly related to the realization of justice, especially through restorative justice practices and official apology. The former prisoners were asked whether it was possible to forgive, whether and under which conditions they could forgive the responsible persons ranging from the wardens to Esat Oktay Yıldırım and the political leaders of the period. Almost all of them emphasized that it was a social problem, and they did not have a personal problem with the torturers. They frequently mentioned that torture was a systemic

matter, not an act of an individual choice. However, this does not mean that they forgive the perpetrators, or they have forgotten what they experienced. Only one of the former prisoners stated that she had already forgiven the perpetrators unconditionally. DP9 states that she does not want to reckon with anybody, she does not blame the perpetrators as individuals because she is aware of the system. She says that she does not have an individual problem with Kenan Evren, Esat Oktay Yıldırım or a junior soldier. The problem is the Kurdish issue, human rights violations and identity policies of the state. So, she says that she already forgave the perpetrators (Interview with DP9).

Although the interviewees stated that they did not have a personal problem with the torturers, Yarkın states that ex-prisoners who stayed in Diyarbakır Prison used dehumanization as a coping mechanism to cope with the fact that torturers enjoyed applying violence to them (Yarkın, 2013, p. 59). She argues that the ex-prisoners have a “fantasy of revenge” and they think of the torturers as evil. Since it is very difficult for the ex-prisoners to understand and accept the cruel acts committed by human beings against them, they dehumanize the torturers (Yarkın, 2013, p. 81). Parallel to the findings of Yarkın, Fırat and Topaloğlu also state that it was hard for the witnesses of the prison to explain the conditions of the prison and atrocities on the ground of reason, law or religion and that atrocity could only be made sense of through dehumanization (Fırat and Topaloğlu, 2012, p. 85-86). This coping mechanism of dehumanization may be thought as a result of the impunity policy which does not punish the torturers who are “real” humans and so does not allow to come to terms with the nonhuman brutal treatments in the past.

Yarkın states that 56.6% of the ex-prisoners in her study wished to punish the torturers or imagined doing it in the name of justice. Some ex-prisoners imagined killing or bombing the soldiers in the prisons and some of them stated that they were “relieved with the murder of Esat Oktay Yıldırım” (Yarkın, 2013, p. 68). These findings show that although the former prisoners who were interviewed did not talk about the issue as an individual problem or did not mention about their will to take revenge, the feeling of resentment and the will to punish the perpetrators is a reality for the former prisoners. In addition, it may be said that the lack of social justice and punishment

consolidates the feeling of resentment against the perpetrators and feeds such imaginations of individual revenge like killing the perpetrators.

As aforementioned, only DP9 states that it is not an individual problem and she has forgiven the perpetrators. The other former prisoners interviewed also emphasize the fact that it is a social and systematic problem but they argue contrary to DP9 stating that they would not and could not forgive personally, because only individual matters could be forgiven. DP1 says “they are my enemies. How can I forgive my enemies. Only two friends may forgive each other”. However, she states that she may forgive ordinary wardens because some of the wardens were also very sad to see the treatment against the prisoners and what’s more, some of them left the work since they could not tolerate it. But she also adds that the warden of the women’s ward also felt sorry about the way the women prisoners were treated and wanted to help them in the first days of his office, but he turned into a torturer in time (Interview with DP1). DP7 also emphasizes the fact that he would not forgive because it is not an individual problem. He would not judge the perpetrators because of beating or torturing him personally. He wants them to be judged because of beating or torturing in general (Interview with DP7).

DP10 underlines a critical matter stating that a personal forgiving would just bind the person who forgave but would not bind society if the person forgiven still continue to torture other persons. He argues that the critical question is what the benefit of individual forgiving to social justice is. If forgiving a torturer by any person would contribute to put an end to torture, it is important to forgive. Otherwise, it would only be meaningful for the individual, not society. And he also adds that he does not have the right to forgive any torturer individually because other people were also tortured by those people and that is a mass problem (Interview with DP10).

Forgiving is not unconditional for most of the former prisoners. It is generally conditioned on the apology by the perpetrators and “sincerity” of that apology and remorse. For example, DP3 states that if any of the perpetrators regrets and apologizes to society for his crimes himself, he would forgive him. But he emphasizes that accepting that apology is conditioned on the person’s sincerity. If a perpetrator says “I did, but I did it as my duty”, he would not forgive him. He uses the metaphor of a

bloody hand stating that perpetrators have bloods of victims on their hands and he would feel uncomfortable if he kept their hands. However, if the perpetrators accept that their hands are dirty, they are ashamed of their hands and wash them, society would forgive them and he would forgive any person who is forgiven by society. He states that he is in a social struggle rather than an individual struggle and it is not a matter of having a grudge against the perpetrators (Interview with DP3). DP8 emphasizes the fact that forgiving does not mean forgetting. If the torturers face with them with remorse, that would relieve him. He states that torturers should be embarrassed because of using force on the prisoners whose hands are tied. In case such an embarrassment and remorse are felt, he would forgive but not forget (Interview with DP8).

Apology seems at a very critical point for the former prisoners to forgive the perpetrators. For example, DP3 states that what would make him happy is not imprisoning Kenan Evren. If Evren admitted that he was sorry for what he did and he apologized, that would be the biggest punishment (Interview with DP3). DP10 also states that if the perpetrators apologize publicly and admit that they did wrong, it would be more healing for the former prisoners than killing the perpetrators. Even the perpetrators are dead, or they are killed, their mentality will continue to predominate. However, if the perpetrators recognize that they mistreated and tortured the prisoners, apologize to them and declare that they would do whatever they can to heal the former prisoners, that would be meaningful (Interview with DP10).

The interviewees also underlined the fact that an apology would not mean much if not accompanied by other restorative mechanisms. For example, DP7 states that if the state only transforms the prison into a museum but does not apologize and judge the perpetrators, or if it only judges the perpetrators but does not apologize, that would not be enough because all of those mechanisms are integral parts. Each of those mechanisms may relieve the former prisoners partially but would not solve the problem. He states that official apology is required not only to make the persons relieved but also society (Interview with DP7).

The interviewees were also asked whether they accepted the aforementioned speech of Erdoğan, then Prime Minister, about Diyarbakır Prison as an apology. “Sincerity”

seems to be the keyword for the prisoners about accepting an apology and forgiving. For example, DP1 used the word several times and she stated that she did not believe in sincerity of the state. She states that she did not believe in what Erdoğan said because she did not consider his words as sincere (Interview with DP1). DP2 states that it was important to make Erdoğan said such words however these words were said politically and related to the government's Kurdish initiative so there was not a serious decision and no step was taken. Anyway, it was important for other people to hear about the reality of Diyarbakır Prison (Interview with DP2). DP3 states that the practice of the state was not sincere. While Erdoğan said the aforementioned words about Diyarbakır Prison, it was continued to establish new police stations, slogans such as "one nation" were used. So, he thinks that discourses and practices of the government were inconsistent (Interview with DP3). DP6 states that there should be either efforts of sincere political elites or a social mobility that forces the political elites to take a step. Otherwise, fragmentary steps would not cause permanent change and have a limited social impact (Interview with DP6).

DP8 and DP9 think that the speech of Erdoğan was just a political tactic. DP8 states that such a speech requires to take practical steps. If it is an apology, it would be meaningful when practical requirements were met. They would not be relieved if such a speech or apology made just as a tactical act. He attaches meaning to motivation and intention of the person apologizing. He emphasizes that Erdoğan said those words not from his heart. He thinks that it is insincere to say "let's convert the prison into a school and forget that period". He underlines that they want to remember the past, not to forget it (Interview with DP8). DP9 also states that she did not trust in that speech because it was tactical and those words flew away. She mentions that she would not pay attention to any official whom she does not trust (Interview with DP9). DP7 states that he cared about what Erdoğan said and he thinks that it is important for such words to be said by an authorized person because society would hear and take it seriously. However, that speech was negated by Erdoğan afterwards (Interview with DP7).

Based on the interviews made with the former prisoners and the literature, it is possible to say forgiving is very difficult and would not be meaningful without an apology by authorities and perpetrators. The intention and practical results of the apology also

matter since the former prisoners attach importance to sincerity and permanence of the apology. Tactical apologies made for short-term political interests and contradicting with the expectations of the former prisoners are not accepted as sincere and would not serve to social peace. Moreover, individual forgiving does not mean much if the perpetrator does not show remorse and apologize and continue to commit violence or other kind of human rights violations, or accepted as a hero or an honourable officer by the state and society.

7.5. Debates on Museumification and Alternative Conversions of the Prison

As aforementioned, the debate about transforming Diyarbakır Prison into a museum came to the agenda in the second half of the 2000s and continued in the 2010s. An AKP MP, Mehdi Eker stated that they would demolish the prison and build schools instead of it. The PM of the period, Ahmet Davutoğlu stated that they would convert the prison into a museum. Several non-governmental organizations and the Mayor of Diyarbakır Metropolitan Municipality, Gültan Kışanak made attempts to convince the authorities to transform it into a museum and to lay the groundwork for such a museum. However, the debates and efforts about a potential museum were off the agenda after the change of the political atmosphere in the second half of the 2010s.

Museumification of Diyarbakır Prison has great importance since it has a specific place in the history of human rights violations in Turkey and symbolizes both the Kurdish issue and the violence after the September 12 military coup. The prison has witnessed an important period of Turkish Republic. Çaylı names Diyarbakır Prison as a “witness site” that is a space which witnessed atrocities in the past (Çaylı, 2015, p. 63). While the people who identify with the victims attach importance to the prison for memorialization of the victims, official authorities generally reject such demands for memorialization and suggest the prison to be turned into places that are irrelevant to the events to which the place bore witness, such as turning it into a school (Çaylı, 2015, p. 63). According to him, the prison has also functioned as an “archetypal reference for human rights violations” in Turkey (Çaylı, 2015, p. 69). In parallel, based on the interviews they made with the former prisoners of Diyarbakır Prison, Fırat and Topaloğlu argue that the prison has been a “place of memory” both for society and

Kurdish people because of the human rights violations committed in the prison between the years of 1980-1984 (Fırat and Topaloğlu, 2012, p. 77).

Transforming the prison into a museum is critical for dealing with the past because the place itself makes the people remember the past. All the interviewees stated that they wanted the prison to be converted into a museum. Having worked with hundreds of former prisoners as a psychiatrist, DP10 states that there were a few former prisoners who wanted to forget the past and the prison to be demolished, however a vast majority of the former prisoners wanted the past to be remembered and demanded museumification of the prison. He emphasizes that even if the former prisoners do not want to remember the past, their experiences live in their minds and forgetting is not possible for them. Trying to forget such tragic events without reckoning and therapy would just mean postponing the process of dealing with the past because traumas never get lost (Interview with DP10).

As a member of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission, DP6 states that there was a clear demand of the former prisoners for transforming the prison into a museum as a place of memory. He states that such a memorial would create social satisfaction to an important degree (Interview with DP6). DP5 who worked at Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center states that he met many people who were imprisoned in Diyarbakır Prison and only one or two people said that they wanted the prison to be demolished and transformed into a public garden for children. Most of the former prisoners wanted the prison to be transformed into a museum because they wanted their children, grandchildren, and other people to visit the museum and deal with the past there (Interview with DP5). He also mentions that there was a board at the Center and former prisoners wrote down some notes on that. Former prisoners stated their wish for the prison to be turned into a museum and serve to peace for the next generations not to experience the same atrocities again and society to deal with the past (Interview with DP5).

The former prisoners were asked what they would feel if the prison was demolished and a shopping center, park, school, or another building was erected instead of it. None of them wanted the prison to be demolished. All the former prisoners interviewed stated that they wanted the atrocities to which they were subject to be remembered and

conveyed to the next generations through museumification. DP1 states that demolishing the prison would mean to erase the memory. She mentions that there is an experience there and it should be transferred to the next generations. The people should know what happened not to experience them again. Even the similar events occur in the future, it would be important for the next generations to learn those experiences (Interview with DP1). DP4 states that some former prisoners wanted the prison to be demolished and transformed to a park when they got out of the prison, however they changed their minds and wanted the prison to be transformed into a museum for confronting the past especially after the official authorities mentioned to demolish the prison (Interview with DP4).

As mentioned before, there was a debate on converting the prison into a school or a campus after the statement of AKP MP, Mehdi Eker. Transforming the prison into a school would be traumatic for the prisoners since the prison was claimed to be a military school for the prisoners. DP8 states that the prison was already a school for them since Yıldırım claimed that the prison was a military school and the prisoners were military students, so they would not want the prison to be transformed into a school. He argues that Kurdish children are assimilated in schools. So, both the prison and school meant places to transform personality for him (Interview with DP8). DP3 also mentions the words of Esat Oktay Yıldırım that the prison was a military school and the prisoners were military students. He argues that transforming the prison into a school is a reflection of assimilation and Turkification policy of the state as they experienced in the prison (Interview with DP3).

Converting the prison into a school or another place is also associated with the policy of the state trying to make the past forgotten. DP4 states that the state wants to convert the prison into a school and in fact it says “let’s forget there, the prison stays in the past, let’s build a new life” with that attempt. He argues that this means to invite people to forget the past. In addition, it is impossible to build a new life on that prison because the state continues to resort to violence in other prisons. He also criticizes the form of museumification of Ulucanlar stating that it was converted into a museum as state-driven (Interview with DP4). As a psychiatrist, DP10 argues that it may be transformed into a trauma or rehabilitation school but it should not be converted into a state school.

If it is transformed into another function, it would not serve to dealing with the past and building a school would not be different from maintaining it as a prison for the former prisoners (Interview with DP10). One of the former prisoners, Abdullah Delibalta states that the prison cannot be converted into a school, it can only be turned into a museum for the past not to be forgotten. He demands torture devices and methods to be exhibited there (İmrek, 20.09.2009).

The former prisoners interviewed think that museumification of the prison would only be possible in parallel to democratization and a political decision to deal with the past. DP3 underlines that a democratic mentality would deal not only with Diyarbakır Prison but also complete reality of Turkish political history (Interview with DP3). However, in the existing political context, the former prisoners do not feel much hopeful about museumification of the prison in near future because as DP3 states, they cannot even make press statement in front of the prison for the prisoners who were killed and died in the prison (Interview with DP3). In parallel with DP3, DP8 also states that social problems, democracy problem, identity problem of Kurdish people, the issues of constitutional assurance, citizens' rights are not solved, and memorialization works cannot be developed due to these problems because all of them are complementary factors (Interview with DP8). DP4 draws attention to the human rights violations that are still committed in other prisons and the people who are imprisoned because of their political convictions. So, such a mentality would not transform the prison into a museum as the former prisoners demand (Interview with DP4). The emphasis on the broader issues also shows that the former prisoners do not address the matter of museumification of the prison as independent from the other political problems and issue of democratization.

7.6. The Restorative Aspects of a Prospective Museum

Although the former prisoners do not feel much hopeful about museumification of the prison, they want the prison to be transformed into a museum and emphasize the restorative aspects of such a prospective museum with respect to justice. The former prisoners associate establishment of such a museum with revealing the truth, apologizing, mourning, educating the new generations, democratization, etc. Most of them attach an essential importance to museumification of the prison construing its

potential results in broader terms. For example, DP3 states that museumification of Diyarbakır Prison means apologizing to the whole society and dealing with the past. The political atmosphere allowing museumification also means that democracy is established in Turkey (Interview with DP3).

The interviewees mainly point out the relieving potential of such a museum. For example, DP4 states that former prisoners have traumas and this would not be healed unless they reckon with the place itself. He mentions that a relative of him who stayed at the prison had claustrophobia. When he is in a closed place and thinks that the door may not be opened, he can't breathe, and he faints. So, DP4 argues that if the prison is transformed into such a social place as museum, that would relieve his relative. If the former prisoners may have the chance of telling their memories to other people there, it would be healing for them (Interview with DP4). DP5, who had the chance to talk with many former prisoners at Diyarbakır Prison Coordination Center argues that if the prison is transformed into a museum, it would be a place of therapy and relief for the former prisoners. He narrates that the former prisoners stated that they would not forget the torture and in fact, they did not want to forget, however they had signs of traumas in their minds and torture on their bodies. They always remember the past through their bodies. However, when the prison is turned into a museum, they would say "here is a museum and it is in our hands. We can use that place as we want. We were tortured here in the past, but now it is a memory museum and people will come here to take lessons from the past" (Interview with DP5). DP10, as a psychiatrist states that the aim of museumification of such places is not remembering the grief again and again, but to deal with that grief and overcome it. Such places would allow people to leave traumas behind and continue their lives more peacefully (Interview with DP10). Based on the expressions of the interviewees, it seems that museumification may help to heal traumas of the former prisoners.

A prospective museum would also be restorative in terms of revealing the truth and recognition of the past atrocities officially. As aforementioned, the former prisoners attach importance to revealing the truth about the past and recognition by the state and society. Transformation of the prison into a museum would mean acknowledging and admitting the human rights violations and torture by the state. DP8 states that

museumification will allow memories and stories of soldiers who were charged at the prison to take place in the museum. However, whose truth is to be exhibited and to what extent the truth is to be revealed will be determined by the political conjuncture and the actors participating in the museumification process. It is an important issue that whose past and memories are to be represented in the museum. DP10 states his hesitation about the content of a potential museum. He emphasizes that if memories and stories of certain people, for example, the former prisoners who committed the act of self-immolation are not exhibited but other former prisoners such as Orhan Miroğlu, who had an organic relation with the government as an AKP MP is exhibited, it would be meaningless (Interview with DP10). In fact, that is what happened in Ulucanlar Prison Museum. As mentioned before, the selective exhibition of the past and ignoring the existence of a certain group of survivors and victims is an important obstacle in front of the potential of a prospective museum to serve to the goals of dealing with the past.

The former prisoners were asked whether it would serve to mourn if the prison was transformed into a museum. It is clear that creating spaces and ways to allow the former prisoners to mourn is important for healing the trauma. As aforementioned, returning to the daily life becomes very difficult before the mourning process is completed. DP1 states that such a place would serve to mourning in terms of not only mourning for the people who are dead but for the lives left behind or the country that people had to leave. She states that mourning has a broader meaning than just commemorating the dead people and she thinks that the former prisoners could not even mourn for the people who died there because of torture. She believes that they cannot be “normal” people unless they can grieve for those people. When she talks to her friends from the prison, she realizes that the past is not over; they are locked in time. She says “we have stopped the life there” (Interview with DP1). DP7 states that the prison has a spiritual importance for the families and relatives of the prisoners who died there. If anything related to those people takes place in the museum, it would be a heritage for his/her families, friends and relatives. He mentions that it is necessary to deal with the past to complete and put an end to mourning. He states that if it is apologized for the torture, perpetrators are judged and punished, the prison is

converted into a museum, then, mourning process would be completed. Otherwise, the past will survive as a wound (Interview with DP7).

Museumification of the prison has the potential to create a space of mourning for the relatives of the former prisoners who are dead. DP3, the chairperson of the 78ers Foundation mentions the role of the museum for the relatives of the former prisoners giving the example of Sakine Arat, the mother of Cemal Arat who died in Diyarbakır Prison in 1984. As aforementioned, the 78ers Foundation submitted 100 thousand signatures demanding the prison to be transformed into a museum to the Petition Commission in the Parliament in 2013. After that, a committee met with the chairperson of the Parliament, Cemil Çiçek. Sakine Arat was among the members of that committee and she said to Cemil Çiçek those words:

I have lost my son there. Transform Diyarbakır Prison into a museum, so at least, I would go to the grave of my son and say to him 'my son, Cemal, that place has been converted into a museum. The next generation will commemorate and see you there' (narrated by DP3).

Talking to Sakine Arat, DP5 also narrates a similar expression by her. He states that she told to him:

If the prison is converted into a museum, I will go to my son's grave and say to him 'My son, you have a home now. Your friends have protected you and your struggle and transformed the place where you were tortured into a home. Nobody will be tortured there from now on' (narrated by DP5).

These words by the mother of a former prisoner who died there also show that not only the people who were imprisoned there but also their relatives, families need such a place to mourn and overcome the trauma. DP4 points out the fact that there is a social trauma about Diyarbakır Prison since people living around the prison also witnessed the violence applied to the former prisoners. He states that a woman living near the prison told to him that she saw how they were tortured in the prison yard and heard their screams (Interview with DP4).

The former prisoners also draw attention to the educative-preventive role of a potential museumification. For example, DP1 states that if such places are transformed into areas where the atrocities against the people are exhibited for preventing recurrence of the same events and educating the new generations, that would mean the real justice for her. The best way of establishing justice would be passing down the memory. She

gives the museumification of concentration camps in Germany as good examples and states that such initiatives protect the next generations from such threats (Interview with DP1). DP4 states that it is important to convert the prison into a museum so that it can take its place in the social memory. If the youth can learn what people experienced in that prison, they would struggle against such an attempt in the future. He emphasizes that the place should be kept alive for people not to experience the same events again. He argues that the museum should be “a living museum” to teach the past to the people. The museums should “touch” people so that people could understand that the conditions of the prisons are bad (Interview with DP4). DP7 states that he was affected even by Ulucanlar Museum and what they experienced in Diyarbakır Prison was streets ahead of the past of Ulucanlar Museum. So, he thinks that the people who visit such a museum would be more sensitive, resistant and would take lessons from the past. He wants his children to visit the prison if it is converted into a museum and to keep the past in mind. He argues that they would be more sensitive to such events in the future (Interview with DP7). Similarly, another former prisoner, Haşim Demir draws attention to the potential of the museum to guide the next generations and thinks that the prison should be converted into a museum as exemplary to draw lesson from the past (İmrek, 20.09.2009).

Although all the interviewees emphasized positive results of a potential museumification, DP6 drew attention to the possibility of causing negative effects with such a museumification in case it is not accompanied by other measures. As a law professor who investigated the examples from the world on the matter and who participated in Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission, DP6 argues that establishing a museum without taking other steps would not be meaningful, rather it could lead to even a reverse effect. He states that it is necessary for society to adopt a historical memory acknowledging that systematic human rights violations were committed in the past and that caused grievement for some people. For that, at least memory of September 12 should be collected on an official document or a report should be prepared about what happened after the coup. Such efforts would contribute to social peace. If only a museum is established and other steps are not taken, social groups who deny the atrocities in the past would continue to deny them. The important thing is to establish a common historical memory (Interview with DP6). Comparing

the cases of Germany and Yugoslavia, DP6 states that if such efforts are not supported by a general political framework, they may create an opposite effect. In Germany, establishment of places of memory was accompanied with a process of awareness-raising and acknowledgement and they were successful at attaining their aim to an important degree. However, in the former Yugoslavian countries such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, there is a strong denial about the atrocities in the past despite availability of memorials and information on the issue since a common memory could not be established. Therefore, an already-existing segregation becomes clearer through those memorials (Interview with DP6).

For a museum to serve to restorative justice, it is critical to protect its original form to an important degree. The former prisoners who were interviewed mention the importance of originality of the museum. As in the case of Ulucanlar Prison Museum, the former prisoners emphasize that the museum should be close to the original form of the prison. However, the prison has already been changed much and for example, the nationalist paintings on the walls mentioned by the interviewees have been erased. DP9 states that the paintings, cells or chained doors of her period are not available now. When they were imprisoned, there were not any unpainted place on the walls. All the walls were painted with the star and crescent, Turkish flags, images from Ottoman wars, etc. She states that she would want the prison to be transformed into a museum, however, it would be meaningless if those paintings and other places which have importance for them do not exist anymore. The museum would be important if its originality is protected but the authorities work to erase the memory and wipe the slate clean (Interview with DP9). Çaylı mentions that one of the interviewees in his study stated that they would want to see the original version of the prison as a museum and they, as former prisoners, were ready to paint all the walls, as they had been forced to do. Çaylı states that this is striking since it is beyond the material reconstruction of the prison and includes “personal bodily re-enactment of ‘the past’” (Çaylı, 2015, p. 72).

The former prisoners did not see all the wards and cells of the prison when they were imprisoned and they also want to see them. DP1 states that she would want to see the prison as a museum and that all wards should stay as the same with their numbers and

photographs of the prisoners who stayed there should be hanged on the walls. She stated that she did not see some wards and she always wandered them. If the prison was transformed into a museum, she would like to see the 5th ward (Interview with DP1). DP7 also states that each ward, each corridor of the prison carries a life experience, torture, violence and deaths and physical structure of the prison should not be changed. He wants a probable museumification process to be managed and organized by the former prisoners. He says that there are thousands of images that they cannot erase from their memories and they may revive the place in its original form (Interview with DP7). He mentions his visits to Auschwitz and Birkenau Concentration Camps as good examples. He says “They were very striking. Both gas chambers and the wards... I went into the wards, I touched their pain. I felt the place where they lived and their experiences” (Interview with DP7). DP8 states that they plan to transform the prison into a human rights and memory museum. He says they want to protect the structure of cells and wards as the same, to add animations of screams, sounds of marches, orders by the authorities etc. (Interview with DP8).

It was asked to DP4, an architect who worked with the Municipality for the plans to transform the prison to a museum, whether it was possible to restore the prison in a way to return it to its original form. He states that it may be possible to return it back to its original form and restore if not destroyed completely. But it needs a very elaborated work like an archaeological work. He also criticizes the restoration of Ulucanlar Prison Museum and says they just dismantled the plaster of walls, plastered it again and said “such a nice place”. He underlines that the place should not be transformed into a museum like Ulucanlar Prison (Interview with DP4). He states that they had started to design a plan of the prison based on the interviews they made with the former prisoners. They could not obtain the project of the prison from the Ministry of Justice and tried to draw the plan of the building including wards. However, this work was also interrupted after the coordination center was shut down by the trustee appointed as the mayor.

7.7. Evaluation

Discussions and attempts to transform Diyarbakır Military Prison into a museum have gained ground especially after the works of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and

Justice Commission. Experience of that commission is also critical for dealing with the past since it is considered as the first unofficial truth commission in Turkey. The commission collected hundreds of testimonies and opened the matter to public discussion. Indeed, the mere existence of the commission and being listened and recognized by others had a healing impact on the former prisoners. As mentioned before, the most critical demand of the former prisoners, namely “recognition” was an essential contribution of the commission to the issue. Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center and the sub-commission in the Parliament also collected information and documents related to the human rights violations in Diyarbakır Military Prison and a considerable amount of material has been collected by these commissions and initiatives, which can also give idea about how kind of a museumification the former prisoners would want and what we can expect from such a museum regarding dealing with the past atrocities experienced in the prison.

As mentioned in the first chapters, retributive and restorative justice measures complement each other in dealing with the past. In the case of Diyarbakır Military Prison, former prisoners made effort for the perpetrators to be judged, however they were not judged and punished mainly based on the ground of prescription. Although Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission identified many perpetrators based on testimonies of the former prisoners, none of them has been judged and punished. While the former prisoners still have difficulties due to psychological and physical problems and also their judicial records, the perpetrators can continue their lives without the fear of being judged and punished for their acts. As seen in this case, impunity policy stays as an important obstacle in front of dealing with the past and establishing justice. Unless the perpetrators are judged and punished and their acts are recognized as wrong, unjust and illegal by the public, it is very difficult to satisfy the justice demands of the survivors.

The speech by Erdoğan mentioned in the chapter is critical for the former prisoners since he acknowledged torture and nonhuman treatment in the prison and such an official recognition was very important for the survivors. However, the former prisoners do not consider it as an apology since they do not think that it was a sincere speech, rather it is thought to be just a strategic step. Erdoğan says “I wish Diyarbakır

Prison could speak” and talk about the nonhuman treatment there. However, there are hundreds of people who were subject to torture and who want to talk about it, but neither Erdoğan nor other official authorities made attempt to listen to them except the sub-commission established in the Parliament, which listened to a limited number of people. There is a problem of sincerity at that point as all the former prisoners interviewed emphasized. It was strategic for Erdoğan to subjectify the walls of the prison even they cannot speak, but he prefers not to listen to the real human who can speak and tell the truth. There are hundreds of witnesses, and they can talk about the past, so it should be questioned why the official authorities do not ask to former prisoners what they want. Instead of listening to the real subjects of torture, rather than the building itself, and asking to them how they feel and what they want, official authorities decide what to do with the prison and their plans continuously changes such as demolishing the prison, building schools instead of it, establishing culture museum, etc. The top-to-down approach of official authorities does not allow any of the former prisoners or their relatives, civil initiatives, and professionals to participate in discussions and decide what to do. Even the prison is transformed into a museum, the museum may cause more problems rather than solving the problems due to such a mentality which does not pay attention to the demands, expectations and ideas of the real subjects of museumification.

Moreover, what matters for dealing with the past, specific to this issue, is that the past did not pass away. The prison is still full of prisoners and human rights violations continue. The establishment and existence of Diyarbakır Military Prison is deeply related to Kurdish issue and dealing with that matter requires to talk about the reasons which caused the so-called “Kurdish problem” in Turkey, which policies and motivations fostered torture in the prison, how the building elements of Turkish nation-state and nationalist, racist policies played role in the matter. Turkification policy and problems experienced by Kurdish-speaking people keep going and museumification may open the way to discuss these problems since as Brett et al. emphasize, public memorials may connect the past and present and draw connections between them (Brett et al., 2007, p. 30). So, a potential museum may draw attention to the current problems, may help to explore causes of these problems going back to past and in that way, may serve to prevent recurrence of past atrocities.

It is critical for such a place which is considered as the source of one of the leading problems of Turkey, namely rise of PKK and armed conflict, to be transformed into a museum to help to solve the current problem. However, there has not been a serious attempt for its museumification. To compare it with Ulucanlar Prison Museum, it may be said that Diyarbakır Military Prison and problems associated with it does not allow the government to use it strategically as a museum since Ulucanlar Prison accommodated rightist, leftist and political Islamist figures in different periods and it has a long history starting from the foundation of the Republic. Diyarbakır Military prison was established just before the military coup of 12 September and the prisoners were associated with Kurdish issue in general. As Renan states, having suffered together in the past unifies nations and common griefs are more valuable compared to triumphs (Renan, 1990, p. 19). So, given the conditions of today's discourse on Kurdish issue, Ulucanlar allows to use discourse of "common grief" however, it is difficult to make the prisoners who suffered in Diyarbakır Military Prison as a part of the mentioned "common grief" of the nation.

Museumification of Diyarbakır Military Prison would be important for the inhabitants of the city since the prison is placed at the very heart of the city and thousands of people pass by it every day. There are many minibuses in the city which is written "the prison" on their windows and the bus attendants (muavin) shout as "prison, prison" to call the passengers to minibuses. Almost everybody in Diyarbakır have heard about stories told on torture in the prison, some of them have relatives, friends or neighbours who stayed in the prison. There are many buildings surrounding the prison and many people can watch the yard from their balconies. As mentioned before, public memorials have critical value due to being visible and a routine part of daily life. Therefore, museumification of Diyarbakır Prison would have an important impact on city dwellers, people living in the neighbourhood and passing by it every day and many people who have grown up with torture stories from the prison.

In addition to the aforementioned social and political impacts, a potential museumification is expected to have the most critical and valuable effect of the former prisoners. They still carry marks of torture both physically and psychologically. Even they deny handling the matter as an individual matter, or even if they want to forget

the past, physical wounds, diseases, psychological problems remind them the past continuously. It is impossible to relieve physical results of torture with a museum, but it is possible to help to heal traumas and relieve resentment. Although the interviewers did not mention the word “resentment” directly, it may be said that they had that feeling because they feel that their pains are disregarded.

Strawson defines resentment as a reaction to injury or indifference and emphasizes that the person who is injured demands “the manifestation of a certain degree of goodwill or regard on the part of other human beings” (Strawson, 2008, p. 15). Habermas also states that resentment is an expression of moral condemnation and arises in the lack of restitution for injury or offense. Such injury or offense disturb impersonal norms (Habermas, 2007, p. 48). So, what is demanded by those injured or suffered is recognition of immoral status of what has been done. Museumification may be accepted as recognition of immorality of torture and may be a solution to the resentment felt in the face of indifference and disregard. However, far from doing this, name of the leading figure of torture in Diyarbakır Prison, Esat Oktay Yıldırım was put on a monument, and it implies that what he did was accepted to be morally acceptable.

The feeling of resentment by the former prisoners may be thought as a reaction to forgetfulness as Jankélévitch emphasizes. He considers resentment as a reaction to the unforgivable crimes and as a means of protesting forgetfulness (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 572). As mentioned in the chapter, the former prisoners interviewed do not talk about forgiving without except one former prisoner who stated that she had forgave the perpetrators unconditionally. The lack of any apology or will to be forgiven by the perpetrators make forgiving insensible as underlined by Jankélévitch: “It is only the distress and the dereliction of the guilty that would make a pardon sensible and right” (Jankélévitch, 1996, p. 567). It seems that it is almost impossible to forgive without an apology and unconditionally. It is the perpetrators who must make attempt for the wrong acts they committed to be forgiven. As Schaap mentions, an apology “is intended to undo the meaning of a wrong by withdrawing endorsement of the insulting message one’s act communicated” (Schaap, 2003, p. 82). In addition, as the former prisoners emphasize, it is impossible to forgive in the name of the victims. Even the

perpetrators are forgiven, it does not mean that the past is forgotten. Under certain conditions, the former prisoners state that they may forgive, but not forget.

As mentioned, the most critical demand of the former prisoners is recognition of what they experienced. So, public and official acknowledgement of the past atrocities may be concretized in a museum and may meet the demand for recognition by the former prisoners to some extent. Museumification may also be considered as a means of “excuse” both for the survivors and society regarding the disturbed moral norms. At this point, it is important to re-emphasize the relation between public memorials and “our emotional and moral engagement with the past” as Irwin-Zarecka states (Irwin-Zarecka, 1993, p. 7). Preferences to put the name of a torturer on a monument and not creating any public memorials in the name of victims show what kind of “moral norms” are adopted and who is deemed as worthy to be remembered.

Museumification of the prison may create a place both for individual and shared mourning and may prevent the survivors to feel alone while suffering the pain of the past. It may also be a means for breaking the “conspiracy of silence” between the survivors and society which Danieli emphasizes. The mentioned silence intensifies “isolation, loneliness and mistrust of society” while it impedes the possibility of healing of the survivors and completing the process of mourning (Danieli, 2006, p. 344-345). So, museumification is critical for survivors for sharing their pain and not to carry the burden of the past alone.

In conclusion, a prospective museumification may be said to serve to restorative justice regarding its potential to reveal the truth, create a space for mourning, make the torture and human rights violations committed in the prison recognized and remembered by society, educate the new generations and prevent recurrence of similar atrocities in the future. For such a function, the interviewees draw attention to the importance of protecting the original form of the prison. Although the prison has been changed to a great degree since the 1980s, it may be restored and opened to the public as a human rights museum as the former prisoners demand. A change in the political atmosphere in the future may stimulate the debates and attempts concerning museumification of Diyarbakır Prison so as to deal with the past in a serious manner and realize restorative justice.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

The genocides, mass violence and gross human rights violations committed in the 20th century pushed the humanity to find solutions to overcome the effects of unforgettable, and to a certain degree, unpunishable past atrocities such as Holocaust. The questions faced were how the justice could be secured again, how it could be possible for the survivors to continue to live in the same societies with the perpetrators, how to confront the past, how to ensure non-occurrence of such atrocities again, etc. Limitations of the retributive justice and individual punishment revealed the necessity for restorative justice measures to deal and cope with the past, to heal the traumas and make it possible to live together as a society. Within such a context, memorialization initiatives and public memorials have started to be discussed more with reference to their strong symbolic value and role in reconstruction of collective memory as part of the process of coming to terms with the past. They have been attached more importance across the world in the last decades thanks to their restorative role regarding promotion of remembering the past atrocities against forgetfulness, signifying recognition of the immorality of the past events, recognition of dignity of the victims and wrong deeds of the perpetrators, creating places of mourning for the survivors and relatives of the victims, opening areas for confronting with the past, educating the new generations and social dialogue.

The debates and studies concerning memorialization and public memorials in the aftermath of mass violence and the periods of oppression have recently proliferated in Turkey in parallel to the world. This study is also a result of the rise of the studies on dealing with the past in the post-conflict societies. The idea of making this research dedicated to examining memorialization and public memorials began to develop in 2014 when the political atmosphere still allowed to be hopeful about bringing the

periods of violence and oppression in the history of Turkey to the public agenda and coming to terms with them. Since the effects of those periods extend into the present and future, it was exciting for me to search memorialization and public memorials that could go hand in hand with other concrete steps taken for dealing with the past.

There had been some promising official and civil attempts in Turkey to deal with the past especially between the years of 2005-2015, however the changing political atmosphere and strategies have blocked out the way of coming to terms with the violent past of Turkey since 2015. Nevertheless, there are still some initiatives and efforts, and it is probable for the matter to be discussed more and come to the public agenda again. The problem is that those changing political strategies, discourses, acts and motivations have also affected emotions, ideas, reactions, and expectations of the people with whom I interviewed. In case this study was conducted in a more optimistic political atmosphere and coincided with the proliferation of debates and initiatives about memorialization, the results would be different. Ongoing violence and human rights violations during the years when interviews were conducted (2017-2019) also damaged, for the most part, the belief of people in the possibility of dealing with the past and satisfying justice demands of the survivors.

Despite the negative political conditions in the period when interviews were made, the case studies verified the assumption that public memorials play a critical restorative role in coming to terms with the past after the periods of violence and oppression. The former prisoners interviewed, and representatives of civil society organizations involved in the debates mostly attach importance to public memorials such as museums due to their potential to recognize the past atrocities. The recognition of the violence, oppression and atrocities by official authorities and society, revealing the truth and not allowing them to be forgotten is the most emphasized demand and expectation of the survivors, and public memorials and other memorialization initiatives clearly serve to this function. It is possible to say that public memorials may play a significant role in restoring justice and broken social ties, taking lessons from the past and transmitting them to the new generations, creating areas of mourning and healing for the survivors and relatives of the victims, etc. to a certain extent and under certain conditions. However, public memorials do not have such a miraculous effect

automatically and immediately; they should be discussed, planned and worked through considering various dimensions and actors of the matter and as accompanied with other restorative and retributive justice measures.

I had certain assumptions in the beginning of the study. While some of them have been supported both by literature and the case studies, some of my assumptions have changed throughout the study. I have tried to exhibit them in the evaluation sections in chapters 5, 6 and 7. I have also faced certain challenges and realized the limitations of the study.

First, when I started to this research, one of my assumptions was that restorative justice measures contributed more than retributive justice in dealing with the past and retributive justice concerned only individuals to a great degree. However, both the literature review, specific cases from the world and the cases I have selected for the study showed me that the lack of retributive justice is a critical obstacle in front of successful implementation of restorative justice measures. Judging and punishing the perpetrators serve to socialization of the issue and public recognition. Impunity policy by the governmental and judicial authorities harm the struggle and motivation for dealing with the past and damages the belief in the probability of preventing recurrence of the past violence in the future, since perpetrators are not punished and some of them are accepted as heroes or, as state officials who just performed their tasks.

In this study, I have tried to investigate the restorative role of public memorials within the context of two prisons. Ulucanlar Prison has been transformed into a museum and museumification of Diyarbakır Prison has been debated much. Interviews made for both cases demonstrate that restorative justice practices are inadequate when not accompanied by judgment and punishment. These are complementary steps and retribution is very weak in Turkey damaging the belief in the possibility of establishing justice. What the survivors need is not just a memory boom or practices of remembrance, but it should be accompanied with retribution, public recognition, official apology. At that point, I think Booth is right in his emphasis on the inadequacy of remembrance itself: “We do not simply want crime to stand exposed in the light of truthful remembrance; we want it to be punished as well. Truth and retribution are what is wanted” (Booth, 2001, p. 782). In short, both restorative and retributive justice

measures are very weak in Turkey for dealing with the past and any of them do not serve to satisfying justice demands of survivors and relatives of the victims, and society in general. So, there is an important need for further studies that explore how retributive and restorative justice measures complement each other and how to include larger sections of society in the process.

The second assumption was that, the survivors, official authorities and civil initiatives were the subjects of the issue, and I did not attach adequate importance to the involvement of society in the process. However, interviews I made, and the case studies related to Turkey also showed importance of taking “collective moral responsibility” about the past by society. As I have mentioned before, Čehajić-Clancy argues that “acceptance of collective moral responsibility is crucial for restoration of broken and damaged intergroup relations and ultimately sustainable reconciliation” and “taking responsibility for the past is prerequisite for a peaceful future” (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 236). It is critical for the governmental authorities to make effort to deal with the past, to make official apology, to judge perpetrators and implement restorative justice measures such as memorialization and paying damages to the survivors and it is also critical for civil initiatives and organizations to take responsibility and open the way for dealing with the past. In fact, it is very normal to either the official authorities or civil initiatives to lead the process. However, at the end of my research I might argue that, indeed, it is even more critical to make society take moral responsibility for the past.

The case of Argentina provides a good example of involvement of society in memorialization efforts thanks to the local neighbourhood initiatives which spread the moral responsibility of the past to the ordinary people in society and transformation of hundreds of torture centers in the urban area into sites of memory. The example of stumbling stones in Germany may also be thought as a striking means to call the people living in the streets and buildings from where millions of people were taken to death to take moral responsibility for the past in their names and in the name of their family members who may be involved in the past atrocities or kept silent.

As Clark argues, the whole society should take place in reconciliation since all the people are affected and they should be involved in the process. So, in addition to

retributive and restorative justice measures, efforts made to involve society in the process is critical. The argument by Misztal that society has a “duty to remember” may also be thought as a call for this moral responsibility. Any of the perpetrators may be punished, any former site of violence may be transformed into museum or monuments may be erected, but this does not mean that society undertakes responsibility for the past. The campaign of “I Apologize” in Turkey may be thought as an attempt to take collective moral responsibility. The survivors are sometimes forced or expected to forgive and forget the past, but as mentioned, the unconditional forgiving is very difficult and seems to be impossible for the survivors to carry. They expect recognition and apology, and this should involve society, not only certain actors and perpetrators of violence, torture and gross human rights violations.

Third, I have attached a very positive role to remembrance in the beginning of the study. Forgetting seems impossible without confronting the past, since, as Adorno says, “the past that one would like to evade is still very much alive (Adorno, 2005, p. 89). It does not seem possible to evade from the past psychologically and politically since the results of past events continue to exist in the present, so it cannot be ignored that “our present is surrounded or burdened with economic, political, moral and cultural consequences of the past. Consequently, forgetting is not psychologically or politically possible” (Čehajić-Clancy, 2012, p. 237). Almost all the interviewees emphasized importance of remembrance and stated that they did not want to and could not forget the past. However, I have realized that remembrance itself may cause extra problems or may cause more damages than its benefits if it is not a result of sincere attempts to deal with the past and just become a political means. At this point, it becomes very critical how to remember the past, who decides what to remember for the act of remembrance and its concrete forms such as museums and monuments to play a restorative role in dealing with the past. It is a limitation of the study not exploring more potentially negative results of remembrance and memorialization under certain conditions.

It is probable that certain places of violence and torture will be transformed into museum and new public memorials, monuments, sites of memory etc. will be established in the future. Diyarbakır Military Prison may be transformed into a

museum, the content and design of Ulucanlar Prison Museum may be amended, new sites of memory or monuments may be established or erected. Based on the results of this study, some suggestions may be made for the future attempts and initiatives of memorialization.

First, inclusion and participation in all the stages is critical. The issue of museumification or erecting any kind of monument should be brought to the public agenda and a public discussion on the issue should be encouraged in the beginning. As mentioned, taking collective moral responsibility has the key importance for such attempts to serve to the planned goals and play a restorative role.

Museumification of Ulucanlar Prison provides valuable lessons to take about the importance of participatory design and decision-making for such places. Ankara Chamber of Architects organized a festival and an oral history workshop. However, former prisoners were not contacted while designing the project. Mayor of Altındağ Municipality excluded civil society organizations and initiatives from the process and became the sole decision maker. Professionals such as historians, sociologists, psychologists, curators, architects etc. who should be involved in the design of the museum were all excluded. A museum is not a place where only some historical places, objects, documents, etc. are exhibited irrelevantly; its aesthetic, architectural, cultural dimensions should also be handled and managed by professionals and specialists. For a future attempt, both the former prisoners, survivors, relatives of the victims, professionals, civil initiatives and related organizations should be involved in the process and decisions should be given after discussions with the concerned people. In case Diyarbakır Prison is to be transformed into a museum, there are many documents collected by the Coordination Center and interviews made by the Truth Commission. All the previous work conducted, and documents and information collected should also be considered during the process of decision-making and designing the project of the museum. Such an inclusion should allow to prevent top-to-down organization of the whole process and might also prevent possible patronization of various demands for justice.

Second, management of the museum or any other public memorial should be independent from the daily changing political motivations and actors. Limited number

of public memorials in Turkey have been established or erected mainly based on the political strategies and conjunctural needs of the governing parties. As a result, their design and content are also shaped by the governmental authorities and the actors concerned are excluded from the process. Such a place or public memorial should not be managed by municipalities, mayors or political parties since they always change. They should be managed by an independent and professional team that pay attention to demands, reactions and expectations of the survivors, visitors and other professionals.

There is no doubt that there may be additions, amendments in such places, however they should not be made based on daily changing political strategies such as the removal of certain biographies from Ulucanlar Prison and putting others' biographies as in the case of Sırrı Süreyya Önder and Selçuk Özdağ. It is also observed in speeches of the political actors about the fate of Diyarbakır Prison such as demolishing it, establishing school instead of it, transforming it into museum or cultural center. Those political actors do not provide any justification for their plans and they do not consult to any civil initiative or the former prisoners to decide what to do with the prison when it is closed down.

Third, protecting originality of the museums or any site of memory as much as possible should be attached importance. It was not protected in the case of Ulucanlar Prison Museum and restoration process was managed unprofessionally. More than restoration, it was realized as a process of beautification. The former prisoners insistently emphasized their demands to protect authenticity of the prisons where they stayed in the past. However, protecting originality should not mean to keep the place as stable. While the form is kept as original, the meaning of the place may be reversed as in the case of El Olimpo with social activities, bringing different sections and generations together and opening an area for social dialogue.

Fourth, the public memorial itself should make the people think about and question the reasons of the violence, human rights violations experienced. It should open the way to think about perpetrators as the victims and survivors and encourage people to discuss which rights were violated, who were the responsible people and what is to be done to prevent its recurrence. Such a place may also contribute to educate the new

generations about the past. There should be adequate information and documents on the related incidents including a database and information center as in the case of the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe. Means of digital media may also be used effectively for such projects.

Fifth, inclusion of the former prisoners or other related people in the case of other kinds of public memorials should be promoted both during and after the formation of the public memorial. The former prisoners may be employed as guides as in the case of Robin Island Museum or ex-residents of the place may guide the visitors as in the case of District Six Museum in South Africa. Such an inclusion would allow the subjects of the matter to tell their own stories to the visitors and contribute much to heal past traumas. It also contributes the public memorial to be an active, living place with personal stories told and listened and promote dealing with the past paying attention to the real subjects and storytellers of the past.

There is no doubt that the list of suggestions may be extended in the future, as the studies and debates about the matter revive in a more proper political and social atmosphere. The role of restorative justice mechanisms, specifically public memorials, will continue to be discussed in Turkey in the following years to confront with the past in parallel with the struggle of the humanity for justice and recognition of the immoral status of mass violence, torture and human rights violations. Even if the mass violence and human rights violations are stopped all over the world at this very moment, it will take a long time to heal the traumas of the past and come to terms with the past atrocities. So, the search for justice and questions concerning how to ensure it will continue to keep going for decades and I hope this study may add a small stone on the long way of the search and struggle for justice and for making voices of the survivors heard.

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APPENDICES

A. INTERVIEWEES

Case 1: Ulucanlar Prison Museum

Actors

- 1- Tezcan Karakuş Candan (Chairman of Chamber of Architects Ankara Section) and Ali Hakkan (Former Chairman of the Section)
- 2- Gürem Özbayar and Zeynep Kutlu (Project Designers of the Ulucanlar Museum)
- 3- Merve Bayıksel (Administrative Officer responsible for the Museum)
- 4- Hüseyin Esentürk (Chairman of Association of Revolutionary 78 Generation Ankara Section)

Former Prisoners

- UP1 (He stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 5-6 months in 1994-1995).
- UP2 (She stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 6 months in 2004).
- UP3 (He stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 3 months, the first time in 1986 and the second time in 1994).
- UP4 (She stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 6 months, in 1985-1986).
- UP5 (She stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 2 years, between 1982-1984).
- UP6 (He stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 3 months in 1982).
- UP7 (He stayed at Ulucanlar Prison for a total period of 4 years between 1995-1999).

Visitors

V1 (She is an accountant from Ankara).

V2 (She is an university student from Konya)

V3 (She is an university student from Ankara)

V4 (She is an university student from Ankara)

V5 (She is an university student from Ankara)

V6 (He is a police officer from Ankara)

V7 (She is a high school student from Hatay)

V8 (She is an university student from İstanbul)

Case 2: Diyarbakır Military Prison

DP1 (She stayed at Diyarbakır Military Prison for about 10 years, between 1981-1991)

DP2 (He stayed at Diyarbakır Military Prison 1982-1986)

DP 3 (He stayed at Diyarbakır Military Prison between 1981-1988)

DP4 (He took place in the activities of Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center)

DP5 (He took place in the activities of Diyarbakır Prison Museum Coordination Center)

DP6 (A member of Diyarbakır Prison Truth Investigation and Justice Commission)

DP7 (He stayed at Diyarbakır Military Prison between 1982-1986)

DP8 (He stayed at Diyarbakır Military Prison between 1981-1988)

DP9 (She stayed at Diyarbakır Military Prison for 1 year in 1982)

DP10 (He worked with about 400 former prisoners who were released after 2001,
psychiatrist)

B. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
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11 MAYIS 2018

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (İAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu

Sayın Doç. Dr. Cem DEVECİ

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız doktora öğrencisi Esin GÜLSEN'in "**Çatışma Sonrası Toplumlarda Kamusal Anıtların ve Hafızalaştırmanın Onarıcı Rolü; Arjantin, Güney Afrika ve Türkiye Örneği**" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay **2017-SOS-078** protokol numarası ile **11.05.2018 - 30.12.2019** tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.

Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

Üye

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

Başkan V

Prof. Dr. Ayhan Gürbüz DEMİR

Üye

Doç. Dr. Faşar KONDAKÇI

Üye

Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye

Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Pınar KAYGAN

Üye

C. CURRICULUM VITAE

Name: Esin Gülsen-Mutlu

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EDUCATION

PhD

October 2012- December 2021

Department of Political Science and Public Administration,
Middle East Technical University.

PhD Thesis: Restorative Role of Public Memorials and Memorialization after the Periods of Violence and Oppression: The Case of Turkey, Advisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Cem Deveci.

LL.B.

September 2017- July 2020

Department of Law, Marmara University

M.A.

September 2009- September 2012

Department of Public Administration, Mersin University.
Master Thesis: From the Middle Class to the Working Class: New Proletarianization Process. Advisor: Prof. Dr. Atilla Güney.

B.A.

September 1999- July 2005

Department of Sociology, Bosphorus University.

JOB EXPERIENCE

November 2020-

Assistant Coordinator at the Project named
“Online Encyclopaedia of Turkey” funded by
EED

December 2009- April 2016

Research Assistant at Mersin University

RESEARCH FELLOWSHIPS

PhD Research Fellowship, Centre Marc Bloch, Berlin, (October 2016- February 2017)

PhD Research Fellowship, Raoul Wallenberg Institute, (January 2018- January 2019)

TRAININGS

Qualitative Data Analysis Workshop on MAXQDA and NVivo organized by Raoul Wallenberg Institute, May 7-8, 2018, İstanbul

Methodology Workshop organized by Raoul Wallenberg Institute, April 28-29, 2018, Ankara

Historical Dialogue and Dealing with the Past Summer School, June 2016, organized by Regional Network for Historical Dialogue and Dealing with the Past (RNHDP)

COMPUTER SKILLS

SPSS, MAXQDA and NVivo

LANGUAGES

Turkish Native

English Proficient

Spanish A1

German A1

PRESENTATIONS

“Ulucanlar Prison Museum as a Memorialization Case: Whose Memory, Dealing with Which Past?” in the Symposium on *Transitional Justice in Turkey: Transforming Subjects, Methods and Tools* organized by Truth Justice Memory Center, November 27-29, 2020, Online presentation.

“Musical Habitus of the Turkish Migrants in Germany: The case of Metin Türköz and Yüksel Özkasap Songs”, with Mehmet Mutlu, Turkish Migration Conference 2017, August 23-26, 2017, Athens.

“Returning Home: William Saroyan and Onnik Dinkjian”, Turkish Migration Conference 2016, July 12-15, 2016, Vienna.

“Memory of the Art and Literature in Coming to terms with the Genocide: Colors, Voices, Words”, with Erdem Çolak, 14th National Social Sciences Congress, November 23-25, 2015, Ankara, Turkey.

“Tracing Deep Scars of 1915 in Art and Literature”, with Erdem Çolak and Selen Yamak, Turkish Migration Conference 2015, June 25-27, 2015, Prague.

“Resistance Against New Working Practices in the Service Sector in Turkey”, ISA World Forum of Sociology, August 1-4, 2012, Buenos Aires.

PUBLICATIONS

Journals

Gülsen, E. (2014) "Total Quality Management and its Application in Turkey ", *Toplum ve Demokrasi*, vol. 6, no. 13-14.

Book Chapters

Gülsen E. (2021) "Ulucanlar Prison Museum as a Memorialization Case: Whose Memory, Dealing with Which Past?" in *Transitional Justice in Turkey: Transforming Subjects, Methods and Tools*, Truth Justice Memory Center.

Gülsen E. (2015) "Truth and Memory on the Road to the Peace: Cases of South Africa and Argentina" (2015) in *Peace Book: Psychology of War and Peace from Individual to Society*, (ed) Ayşe Devrim Başterzi, A. Tamer Aker, Turkish Psychiatry Association Publications: Ankara.

Gülsen, E., Çolak E. and Yamak, S. (2015) "Tracing Deep Scars of 1915 in Art and Literature" in *Turkish Migration Conference 2015 Selected Proceedings*, (ed) Güven Şeker, Ali Tilbe, "Mustafa Ökmen, Pınar Yazgan, Deniz Eroğlu Utku and İbrahim Sirkeci, Transnational Press London Publications: London.

Gülsen, E. (2014) "Resistance Against New Working Practices in the Service Sector in Turkey", in *Global Management Local Resistances*, (ed) Ulrike Schuerkens, Routledge: New York

TRANSLATED BOOKS

Building Peace Together: A Practical Guide by QCEA, translated into Turkish with S. Başak Yanardağ, published by Friedrich Ebert Stiftung (2019), https://turkey.fes.de/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf-files/barisi-birlikte-insa-etmek.pdf.

D. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKE ÖZET

ŞİDDET VE BASKI DÖNEMLERİ SONRASINDA KAMUSAL ANITLARIN VE HAFİZALAŞTIRMANIN ONARICI ROLÜ: TÜRKİYE ÖRNEĞİ

Bu araştırmada, iç savaş, askeri darbe, etnik çatışma, muhalif gruplara ve azınlıklara uygulanan devlet şiddeti gibi kitlesel şiddet ve baskı dönemlerinin ardından geçmişle yüzleşme ve adaletin tesis edilmesi konusunda hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının ve kamusal anıtların onarıcı rolü incelenmektedir. Toplumun farklı kesimleri çatıştığında; politik, dini veya etnik ayrımcılığa dayalı olarak devlet çeşitli gruplara şiddet uyguladığında; askeri darbe yoluyla iktidarın ele geçirilmesi gibi örneklerde olduğu gibi toplum demokratik olmayan şekillerde yönetildiğinde veya tüm toplumu etkileyen bir iç savaş yaşandığında bozulan toplumsal ilişkileri onarmak çok fazla zaman ve enerji gerektirir.

Savaşlar, askeri rejimler, etnik veya dini çatışmalar, demokratik olmayan hükümetler, bu dönemlerde işlenen ağır insan hakları ihlalleri bir barış anlaşması, müzakere, ateşkes, hükümet değişikliği gibi yollarla sona erse bile bu dönemlerin toplumsal etkileri geleceğe taşınır ve geçmiş, geçmişte kalmaz; şimdiyi ve geleceği belirlemeye devam eder. Bu noktada, şiddet dolu geçmişle ne yapılacağı, onu unutmak mı yoksa hatırlamak mı gerektiği, eğer hatırlanacak ve anılacaksa bunun nasıl yapılacağı gibi konular önemli hale gelir. Hafızalaştırma girişimlerinin ve kamusal anıtların onarıcı bir rol oynaması ve toplumun adalet taleplerini karşılamaya hizmet etmesi için geçmişti tartışmaya açmak ve geçmişle yüzleşmenin zeminini hazırlamak gereklidir.

Geçmişle yüzleşme, mağdurların adalet taleplerinin nasıl karşılanacağı, bozulan toplumsal ilişkilerin nasıl onarılacağı, hakikatlerin nasıl açığa çıkarılacağı ve geçmişle ilgili olarak alternatif bir toplumsal hafızanın nasıl inşa edileceği hakkında tartışmayı ve düşünmeyi gerektiren uzun ve kapsamlı bir süreçtir. Bu süreç boyunca,

cezalandırıcı ve onarıcı adalet tedbirleri birbirlerini tamamlayacak şekilde uygulanmalıdır, çünkü bunlardan birinin eksikliği geçmişle yüzleşmenin başarıya ulaşmasını muhtemelen imkansız hale getirecektir. Geçmişle yüzleşme sürecinde adaletin tesis edilmesi için tüm tedbirleri bu çalışma kapsamında incelemek imkansız olduğu için onarıcı tedbirler bağlamında hafızalaştırma girişimleri ve özel olarak kamusal anıtlar incelenmektedir.

Toplumsal hafıza ve hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının, özel olarak da kamusal anıtların şiddet ve ağır insan hakları ihlalleri sonrasında ne derece ve hangi şartlar altında onarıcı olabileceğini araştıran bu çalışmada şu sorular sorulacaktır: Kamusal anıtlar geçmişin yaralarını iyileştirmeye nasıl yardım eder; geçmişteki yanlışların resmen tanınmasına ne ölçüde hizmet eder; geçmişten alınan derslerin genel olarak topluma ve sonraki kuşaklara taşınmasına yardım ederler mi; bireysel ve toplumsal yas için bir alan sağlama kapasiteleri var mıdır; çatışan taraflar ve toplumun farklı kesimleri arasında diyalog kurma konusunda bir rol oynarlar mı? Bu soruların yanıtları, literatür taraması, dünyadan seçilen belli örnekler ve Türkiye’de geçmişle yüzleşme ve hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının tarihiyle birlikte Türkiye’den, derinlemesine incelenecek olan iki örnek üzerinden yanıtlanmaya çalışılmıştır. Bu örnekler, Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi ve Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi’nin müzeye dönüştürülmesiyle ilgili tartışmalar ve girişimlerdir.

Çalışma için bu konunun seçilmesinin nedeni, Türkiye’de geçmişle yüzleşme konusunda deneyimlenen sorunlarla yakından bağlantılıdır. Türkiye tarihinde, şiddet ve insan hakları ihlalleriyle bağlantılı olan pek çok dönem vardır ve bazı adımlar atılmış olmasına rağmen bunların neredeyse hiçbiriyle samimi bir yüzleşme gerçekleştirilmemiştir. Aynı şiddeti yeniden yaşamamak için bu geçmişle ne yapacağımız konusu önemlidir. Yaşananları unutmaya seçeneği geçerli bir seçenek değildir çünkü geçmiş, bugünü siyasi, kültürel ve toplumsal olarak belirlemeye devam etmektedir. Bazı siyasetçiler ve kurumlar toplumu unutmaya, geçmişi inkar etmeye zorlayabilirler ancak en azından mağdurlar ve onların yakınları için maruz kaldıkları şiddeti ve insan hakları ihlallerini unutmak kolay değildir. Unutmak mümkün değilse nasıl hatırlayacağız, adaleti tesis etmek, geçmişin yükünü hafifletmek, toplumsal bağları onarmak için ne tür bir hatırlama pratiği gerekir? Failler yargılansa ve

cezalandırılrsa, çatışmanın sebepleri sona erse bile geçmişin etkileri uzun süre devam edecektir. Şiddet ve insan hakları ihlalleri toplumsal sorunlar olduğu için geçmişle yüzleşmeyi tüm topluma yayarken toplumsal hafızanın da yeniden inşa edilmesi gerekir ve müzeler, hafıza sahaları, heykeller gibi kamusal anıtlar toplumsal hafızayı yeniden inşa etmenin önemli araçlarıdır.

Çalışma, genel olarak üç kısımdan oluşmaktadır. Birinci kısım, konuyla ilgili temel kavramlar ve teorik yaklaşımlara dayalıdır. Daha sonra Türkiye’den ve belli ülkelerden geçmişle yüzleşme örnekleri ve tartışmaları ele alınmaktadır. Son olarak, soruların yanıtlarını bulmak üzere Türkiye’den iki örnek detaylı bir şekilde incelenmektedir. Yürütülen çalışmanın cevap aradığı soruların kesin cevapları olmadığı ve görüşmecilere sorulan sorular onların düşünceleri, duyguları ve beklentileriyle ilgili olduğu için yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine mülakat yapılmıştır. Mülakatların yanı sıra, Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi örneğinde ziyaretçilerin tepkilerini gözleme şansı da olmuştur. Çalışma boyunca müze defalarca ziyaret edilmiş ve ziyaretçilerin darabasının önünde selfie çekmeleri, ağlama veya yanlarındaki insanlarla şakalaşma gibi davranışları gözlemlenmiştir. Ziyaretçilerle müze çıkışında mülakatlar gerçekleştirilmiştir. Mülakatların büyük kısmı çalışmanın konusu olan iki cezaevinde kalmış olan eski mahkumlarla yapılmıştır. Bunun yanı sıra, tartışmalara ve müzeleştirme girişimine/sürecine dahil olan sivil toplum kuruluşları temsilcileri ve aktörlerle de görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiştir. Görüşmecilere ulaşmak için kartopu yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Skype üzerinden yapılan iki görüşme dışında bütün görüşmeler Ankara, İstanbul ve Diyarbakır’da yüz yüze gerçekleştirilmiştir. Kimliği belli olan sivil toplum örgütü temsilcileri ve pozisyonlarından dolayı kimlikleri saklanamayacak olan görüşmeciler dışındaki kişilerin ismi kullanılmamıştır. Eski mahkumlar UP1, UP2, (Ulucanlar Prison (Cezaevi) kısaltması), DP1, DP2,.... (Diyarbakır Prison (Cezaevi) kısaltması) olarak adlandırılmıştır. Ziyaretçilere tedirgin olmamaları için isimleri sorulmamış ve V1, V2... (Visitor (ziyaretçi)) olarak adlandırılmışlardır.

Çalışma toplamda sekiz bölümden oluşmaktadır. Giriş bölümünün ardından ikinci bölümde geçmişle yüzleşmenin adaletin tesis edilmesi, hatırlama, unutmama, özür, affetme ve yaşla ilişkisi incelenmektedir. Çalışmanın ana soruları bu teorik

tartışmalarla bağlantılı olduğu için, literatür bu sorular bağlamında ele alınmaktadır. Üçüncü bölümde toplumsal hafıza, hafızalaştırma ve özel olarak, toplumsal hafızayı şekillendirmenin araçları olarak kamusal anıtlar ele alınmaktadır. Kamusal anıtların çeşitli biçimleri ve bunların geçmişle yüzleşmede onarıcı ve iyileştirici rollerine değinilmektedir. Çalışmada, toplumsal hafıza geçmişi yeniden yazmak ve geleceği şekillendirmek açısından bir mücadele alanı olarak kavranmaktadır. Bu nedenle, devlet, resmi makamlar ve sivil girişimler arasındaki toplumsal hafızayı yeniden inşa etme mücadelesi de incelenmektedir.

Dördüncü bölümde, Almanya, Arjantin ve Güney Afrika'dan belli kamusal anıt örnekleri incelenmektedir. Almanya'dan örnek seçmenin amacı, geçmişle yüzleşme girişimlerinin Almanya'da diğer ülkelere göre daha uzun bir tarihi olması ve incelenecek farklı kamusal anıt örnekleri olmasıdır. Arjantin ve Güney Afrika örnekleri ise Türkiye'deki şiddet dönemleriyle taşıdıkları benzerlikten dolayı seçilmiştir. Bu örnekler, aynı zamanda kamusal anıtların çeşitli biçimlerinin ne derecede ve hangi koşullar altında şiddet dönemleri sonrasında onarıcı bir rolü olabileceği hakkında değerli açılımlar sunmaktadır.

Beşinci bölümde Türkiye'den belli hafızalaştırma ve geçmişle yüzleşme örnekleri tartışılmaktadır. Türkiye'de hafıza rejiminin özellikleri ve geçmişle yüzleşme girişimleri ve artan toplumsal hafıza çalışmalarına değinilmektedir. Gayri resmi bir yüzleşme girişimi olarak "Özür diliyorum" kampanyası ve resmi örnekler olarak 12 Eylül yargılamaları ve Başbakan Recep Tayyip Erdoğan tarafından dile getirilen Dersim "özrü" incelenmektedir. Bu tartışmalar ve örneklerle, derinlemesine incelenen iki örneği daha iyi anlamak için bir zemin oluşturmaya çalışılmaktadır.

Altıncı bölümde, temel olarak eski mahkumlar, sivil toplum örgütü temsilcileri, ziyaretçiler ve projenin tartışılması ve hayata geçirilmesi sürecine dahil olan kişilerle yapılan mülakatlara dayalı olarak Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi örneği incelenmektedir. Müzeleştirme sürecinin aktörleri, Altındağ Belediyesi ve diğer sivil toplum örgütleri arasındaki çatışma ve cezaevinin bir müze olarak restorasyonu sırasında ortaya çıkan sorunlar analiz edilmektedir. Müze, geçmişle yüzleşme ve adalet taleplerini karşılama potansiyeli bakımından ele alınmaktadır. Bunun yanı sıra, geçmişten ders alma, geçmişteki şiddetin yeniden ortaya çıkmasını önleme ve gelecek kuşakları eğitme

potansiyeli de incelenmektedir. Türkiye’de geçmişle yüzleşme iddiası olan az sayıda kamusal anıt olduğu ve toplumun farklı kesimlerinden ziyaretçileri ağırladığı için Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi önemli bir örnek olarak öne çıkmaktadır.

Yedinci bölümde, benzer şekilde, mülakatlara dayalı olarak Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi’nin müzeye dönüştürülmesiyle ilgili tartışmalar ve girişimler ele alınmaktadır. Öncelikle 2000’lerin ikinci yarısında konuyu kamu gündemine taşıyan tartışmalar, resmi konuşmalar ve sivil girişimler ele alınmakta ve daha sonra 1980 askeri darbesi sonrasında cezaevinde işlenen ağır insan hakları ihlalleri ve işkenceye değinilmektedir. Eski mahkumlar için adaletin ne ifade ettiği, unutmanın veya failleri affetmenin mümkün olup olmadığı, muhtemel bir müzenin nasıl bir onarıcı potansiyel taşıyabileceği gibi sorular tartışılmaktadır. Sonuç bölümünde ise çalışmanın sonuçları, çalışma sırasında başlangıçtaki varsayımlarda yaşanan değişimler ortaya konulmakta ve gelecekteki olası hafızalaştırma çabaları ve girişimleri için bazı öneriler sunulmaktadır.

Çalışmanın ilk örneği olan Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi, 1925 yılında Türkiye’nin ilk modern cezaevi olarak kurulmuş ve 2006 yılında kapatılmıştır. TMMOB Mimarlar Odası Ankara Şubesi’nin girişimiyle koruma altına alınmış ve 2011 yılında müzeye dönüştürülerek ziyaretçilere açılmıştır. Müzeleştirme sürecinin başlangıcında Altındağ Belediyesi, Adalet Bakanlığı, Ankara Barosu ve Mimarlar Odası Ankara Şubesi arasında imzalanan dördümlü protokol sayesinde katılımcı bir karar verme mekanizması için koşullar uygunken Altındağ Belediyesi ve belediye başkanının tutumları nedeniyle süreç dışlayıcı bir hale gelmiş ve belediye başkanı tek karar verici olmuştur. Türkiye’deki diğer hafızalaştırma ve kamusal anıt örneklerine paralel olarak Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi de toplumsal hafızayı yeniden inşa etme ve geçmişle ilgili neyin hatırlanacağı, neyin unutulacağı üzerinde yürütülen mücadelenin açık bir örneği olmuştur.

Cezaevinin restorasyonu ve müzeleştirilmesi sırasında ortaya çıkan en önemli özellikleri, dışlama, orijinalliğin bozulması, homojenleştirme ve seçici anlatıdır. Altındağ Belediyesi, eski mahkumları ve sivil toplum örgütlerini karar verme ve müzeleştirme sürecinden dışlamıştır. Bu nedenle, katılımcı olmayan, yukarıdan aşağıya bir müzeleştirme süreci ortaya çıkmıştır. Aynı zamanda profesyoneller ve

uzmanlar da dışlanmıştı. Restorasyon sürecinin en önemli etkilerinden biri de cezaevinin orijinalitesinin/aslına uygunluğunun bozulmuş olmasıdır. Cezaevi, aslı korunarak müzeleştirilmek yerine “güzelleştirme” sürecinden geçerek temiz, ferah ve hijyenik bir hale dönüştürülmüştür. Geçmişin izleri silinmiş ve mahkumların anıları ortadan kaldırılmıştır. Görüşmeciler bu süreci, “cezaevi ruhunu kaybetti”, “tarih katliamı”, “karikatürize, steril ve yapay” gibi ifadelerle tanımlamışlardır.

Ulucanlar Cezaevi'nin müzeleştirilmesi sürecinin bir diğer özelliği homojenleştirmedir. Müze, politik farklılıkları, mahkumların ideolojik çeşitliliğini ve farklı gruplar arasındaki çatışmayı silikleştirerek cezaevinde kalan mahkumları kimliklerini ve maruz kaldıkları şiddeti göz ardı ederek homojenleştirmektedir. Müzede seçici bir anlatı kurulmuş ve belli kişiler ve olaylar bu anlatının dışında bırakılmıştır. Bunun en göze çarpan örnekleri, 90'lı yıllarda Ulucanlar Cezaevi'nde uzun süre kalmış olan Kürt parlamenterler, 1999'da cezaevine düzenlenen operasyonda öldürülen devrimciler ve cezaevinde kalmış olan kadın mahkumların görünmez kılınmasıdır.

Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi'nin onarıcı potansiyeli dikkate alındığında, eski mahkumların özellikle cezaevinin orijinalliğinin bozulmasından dolayı müzenin geçmişle yüzleşmeye hizmet etmediğini düşündükleri görülmektedir. Mülakat yapılan bütün eski mahkumlar cezaevinin müzeye dönüştürülmesinin iyi ve doğru bir fikir olduğunu düşünmelerine karşın hiçbiri müzenin son halinden mutlu değildir. Özellikle geçmişin gerçekliğinin tahrip edilmesi ve cezaevinin aslına uygunluğunun bozulmasından dolayı ciddi eleştirileri vardır. Eski mahkumlar, herhangi bir resmi özür olmadığı, failer cezalandırılmadığı ve gerçeklik tahrip edildiği için müzeyi bir özür olarak da kabul etmemektedir. Görüşülen eski mahkumlardan biri bunu şöyle ifade etmektedir: “Bizim izlerimiz bu mekanda ne kadar kaldı? Bizim deneyimlerimizi ne kadar anlattılar? Koşularımızı değiştirdiniz, ‘Dünyanın bütün işçileri, birleşin!’ yazısını sildiniz, yerine bir Türk bayrağı koydunuz. Böyle özür olur mu?”

Eski mahkumların pek çoğu ülkedeki genel politik ortam değişmediği sürece müzenin tek başına çok fazla şey ifade etmeyeceğini belirtmektedir. Bu tür hafızalaştırma çalışmalarına demokratikleşme adımları, resmi özür ve sorumluların yargılanması gibi adımların eşlik etmesinin önemli rol oynadığı görülmektedir. Geçmişte şiddete maruz

kalanların müzeleştirme gibi adımları geçmişle yüzleşmenin ve adaleti tesis etmenin bir parçası olarak düşünebilmesi için genel politik atmosfer de oldukça önemlidir. Hafızalaştırmaya eşlik etmesi gereken tedbirlerin, onarıcı adalet mekanizmalarının yanı sıra cezalandırıcı adalet pratiklerinin uygulanmadığı durumlarda bu tür girişimlerin onarıcı etkisi sınırlı kalmaktadır.

Bütün olumsuz yanlarına rağmen müzenin empati ve diyalog kurma açısından değerli bir imkan sağladığı söylenebilir. Müzede, farklı politik görüşlere sahip kişiler, toplumun farklı kesimlerinden, farklı şehirler, kültürler ve farklı kuşaklardan insanlar yan yana gelmektedir ve bu durum “öteki” hakkında düşünme fırsatı da sunmaktadır. Ancak, müzenin genç kuşaklar açısından eğitici rolünün zayıf kaldığı söylenebilir. Müzeyi ziyaret eden ve geçmiş hakkında bilgisi olmayan gençler için koğuşların girişinde sergilenen gazete kupürleri ve avlularda sergilenen bazı fotoğraflar dışında eğitici bir materyal olmaması dikkat çekicidir. Müzenin amaçları düşünüldüğünde, yeni kuşakları eğitime ve onların geçmişten ders çıkarmasına katkıda bulunma yolunda ciddi bir potansiyel taşımadığı gözlenmektedir. Her halükarda, bütün eksiklere rağmen, cezaevinin kapatıldıktan sonra yıkılmaktan veya başka bir yapıya dönüşmekten kurtarılmış olması ve müzeye dönüştürülmesi önemli bir adımdır. Özellikle müzenin içeriği ve yönetiminde yapılacak bazı değişikliklerle pek çok sorunun aşılması mümkün görünmektedir.

Çalışmanın ikinci örneği olan Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi (Diyarbakır 5 No’lu veya E Tipi Cezaevi olarak da bilinmektedir) 1980 yılında, 12 Eylül darbesinden hemen önce kurulmuştur. Cezaevi, özellikle 1980-84 yılları arasında çok ağır işkencelere ve insan hakları ihlallerine tanıklık etmiştir. Resmi kaynaklara göre cezaevinde 50’den fazla kişinin yaşamını yitirdiği bilinmektedir. Kürt sorununun hem ortaya çıkışı hem de çözümü açısından cezaevinin oldukça önemli bir yeri ve sembolik değerinin olduğunu söylemek mümkündür.

Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi, 2007 yılında bir hakikat komisyonunun kurulmasıyla sivil toplumun gündemine geldi. Bir grup akademisyen, insan hakları savunucusu, siyasi aktivist, avukat, vb. tarafından kurulan, Türkiye’nin ilk gayri resmi hakikat komisyonu olarak düşünebilecek olan Diyarbakır Cezaevi Gerçekleri Araştırma ve Adalet Komisyonu tarafından 517 eski mahkumla görüşme gerçekleştirildi; binlerce sayfalık

bilgi ve belge toplandı. 2009-2010 yıllarında, Kürt açılımı politikasına paralel olarak, Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi'nde özellikle 12 Eylül sonrasında işlenen insan hakları ihlalleri ve işkenceyle ilgili resmi açıklamalar yapılmaya başlandı.

2010 yılında Diyarbakır'ı ziyaret eden Başbakan Erdoğan'ın yaptığı konuşmada cezaeviyle ilgili söyledikleri, cezaevinde yaşananların resmi olarak tanınması olarak düşünülebilir: "Ah şu Diyarbakır Cezaevinin bir dili olsa da konuşsa, 12 Eylül sonrasında yaşananları bir anlatsa... Ah şu 5. koğuş dile gelip, o insanlık dışı işkenceleri, o insanlıktan uzak muameleleri bir söylese..". Bu konuşma, işkencenin resmi olarak kabul edilmiş ve itiraf edilmiş olmasından dolayı eski mahkumlar için de önemli ve heyecan verici bir konuşmaydı. Sonraki yıllarda devlet yetkilileri tarafından farklı zamanlarda cezaevinin kapatılacağı, yıkılacağı, okula ya da müzeye dönüştürüleceğiyle ilgili farklı açıklamalar yapılmış olmasına karşın cezaevi hala faal durumdadır.

Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi'nin müzeye dönüştürülmesiyle ilgili önemli girişimlerden biri de 2015 yılında Diyarbakır Büyükşehir Belediyesi (bu dönemde belediye başkanı, kendisi de 12 Eylül sonrasında cezaevinde ağır işkencelere maruz kalmış olan Gültan Kışanak'tır) tarafından sağlanan bir mekanda Diyarbakır Cezaevi Müzesi Koordinasyon Merkezi'nin kurulmasıdır. Bu merkezde sergiler düzenlenmiş, bilgi ve belgeler toplanmış, bazı görüşmeler gerçekleştirilmiş ancak çalışmalar bir sonuca ulaşmadan belediye başkanının görevden alınarak yerine kayyım atanmasının ardından merkez kapatılmıştır. 2015 yılının sonlarında, cezaevindeki insan hakları ihlallerini araştırmak üzere mecliste İnsan Hakları İnceleme Komisyonu bünyesinde "Diyarbakır 5 No'lu Cezaevi İnceleme Komisyonu" adlı bir alt komisyon kurulmuştur. Bu komisyon 27 kişiyle görüşmüş ve 2017 yılında faaliyetlerini sona erdirmiştir. Son yıllarda, yeniden yükselen şiddet ve çatışma ortamında cezaevinin müzeye dönüştürülmesi konusu geri planda kalmıştır ve 2021 yılı itibarıyla bu konuda atılmış somut bir adım yoktur.

Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi'ndeki işkenceler ve insan hakları ihlallerinin gündeme gelmesiyle birlikte faillerin yargılanması da tartışmaya dahil olmuş ve eski mahkumlar, sorumluların yargılanması ve cezalandırılması için birtakım girişimlerde bulunmuştur. Ancak, sorumlular özellikle zamanaşımı gerekçesine dayanarak

yargılanmamış ve cezalandırılmamıştır. Diyarbakır Cezaevi Gerçekleri Araştırma ve Adalet Komisyonu'nun eski mahkumların tanıklıklarına dayanarak pek çok faili tespit etmesine karşın bu failerle ilgili resmi işlem yapılmamıştır. Eski mahkumların işkencenin sonucunda yaşadıkları psikolojik ve fiziksel sorunlar başta olmak üzere pek çok sorunla baş etmeye çalışmasına rağmen failer eylemleri için yargılanmaktan ve cezalandırılmaktan korkmadan yaşamlarına devam etmektedir. Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi örneğinde görüldüğü üzere cezasızlık politikası geçmişle yüzleşme ve adaletin tesis edilmesinin önünde büyük bir engel olarak durmaktadır. Failer yargılanmadığı ve cezalandırılmadığı ve eylemleri kamuoyu tarafından yanlış, adaletsiz ve hukuksuz olarak kabul edilmediği sürece mağdurların adalet taleplerinin karşılanması oldukça zor olacaktır.

Araştırma kapsamında cezaevinde kalan eski mahkumlarla yapılan görüşmelerde, adaletin tesis edilmesi için neyin önemli olduğu sorulmuştur. Eski mahkumlar tarafından verilen en yaygın yanıtlar işkence ve ihlallerin tanınması; hakikatlerin ortaya çıkarılması; failerin yargılanması; resmi olarak özür dilenmesi ve cezaevinin müzeye dönüştürülmesidir. Geçmişte yaşanan şiddetin ve işkencenin resmi olarak ve kamuoyu tarafından tanınması ve kabul edilmesi yönündeki talebin bir müzeyle belli ölçüde karşılanabileceğini düşünmek mümkündür. Müzeleştirme aynı zamanda, özellikle mağdurlar ve onların yakınlarından özür dilemenin bir aracı olarak da düşünülebilir.

Eski mahkumlar, maruz kaldıkları işkencenin ve ihlallerin yanı sıra özür de talep etmektedirler. Affetmenin mümkün olup olmadığı, hangi koşullarda faileri affedebilecekleri sorulduğunda affetmenin mağdurların pek çoğu için failer tarafından özür dilenmesine ve bu özür ve pişmanlığın samimiyetine bağlı olduğu görülmektedir. Başbakan Erdoğan'ın bahsi geçen konuşmasında işkenceyi kabul eden ifadeleri, sonrasındaki süreç ve herhangi bir somut adım atılmaması sebebiyle samimi bulunmamakta ve politik bir taktik olarak değerlendirilmektedir.

Başbakan Erdoğan, 2010 yılında Diyarbakır'da yaptığı konuşmada "Keşke Diyarbakır Cezaevi'nin dili olsaydı" dedikten sonra orada yaşanan insanlık dışı muamelelere değinmektedir. Yaşanan işkencenin ve şiddetin kabul edilmesi önemli olmakla birlikte, konunun öznesi olan eski mahkumlara bu konuda söz hakkı verilmemesi,

Erdoğan ya da diğerk yetkili makamların mecliste kurulan alt komisyon dışında onları dinlemek için herhangi bir çaba göstermemiş olması bu konuşmanın samimiyetini sorgulatmaktadır. Başbakan Erdoğan için konuşması mümkün olmayan cezaevi duvarlarını özneleştirerek “dili olsa da konuşsa” demek, ancak konuşabilecek durumda olan, konuşmayı isteyen ve hakikatlerden bahsedecek olan gerçek insanları, işkenceye maruz kalmış eski mahkumları dinlememek politik bir tercihtir. Cezaevinin yıkılması ya da müzeye dönüştürülmesi konusunda da eski mahkumlara ne istedikleri sorulmamıştır; değişen politik atmosfere göre zaman zaman konu gündeme gelmekte, sonrasında herhangi bir somut adım atılmamaktadır. Cezaevinin müzeleştirilmesi ihtimaliyle ilgili olarak eski mahkumları, mağdurları, onların yakınlarını, sivil girişimleri ve konunun uzmanlarını tartışmaya dahil etme ve ne yapılacağına birlikte karar verme yönünde de herhangi bir girişim olmamıştır. Müzeleştirmenin gerçek öznelerinin talepleri, beklentileri ve düşünceleri dikkate alınmadan başlatılacak herhangi bir sürecin geçmişle yüzleşmenin amaçlarına hizmet etmesi de mümkün görünmemektedir.

Görüşme yapılan eski mahkumların hepsi cezaevinin müzeye dönüştürülmesini istediğini belirtmiştir. 2000’li yılların başında cezaevinden çıkan yüzlerce mahkumla görüşen bir psikiyatrist, mahkumlarla görüşme yaptığı zaman sadece çok azının geçmişin unutulmasını ve cezaevinin yıkılmasını istediğini, ancak önemli bir çoğunluğun geçmişin hatırlanmasını ve cezaevinin müzeleştirilmesini talep ettiğini belirtmiştir. Failleri koşulsuz olarak affettiğini söyleyen tek bir kişi olmuştur. Diğerleri ise bunun bireysel bir mesele olmadığını, özür dilenmesi, pişmanlık gösterilmesi durumunda onların da affedeceklerini ancak affetmenin unutmak anlamına gelmediğini ifade etmişlerdir.

Cezaevi, müzeye dönüştürülmesi durumunda mağdurlar ve cezaevinde hayatını kaybedenlerin yakınları için tamamlanmamış olan yasın tutulacağı bir mekan işlevi de görebilir. Cezaevinin müzeleştirilmesinin, mekanın şehrin merkezinde, büyük bir yerleşim yerinin ortasında olması, binlerce insanın her gün bu cezaevinin önünden geçmesi ve daha da önemlisi, şehirde yaşayan insanların önemli bir kısmının cezaevinde kalmış bir yakını, tanıdığı ya da komşusu olması sebebiyle şehrin sakinleri için de büyük bir anlamı olacaktır. Bütün bu toplumsal ve siyasal etkilerin yanı sıra,

elbette potansiyel bir müzeleştiririnin en önemli ve değerli etkisi, geçmişin izlerini fiziksel ve psikolojik olarak üzerinde taşıyan ve geçmişini istese de unutamayacak durumda olan eski mahkumlar üzerindeki onarıcı etkileri olacaktır. Şiddete ve insan hakları ihlallerine maruz kalanlar için geçmişte yapılan yanlışlığının ve haksızlığının kabul edilmesi, bunun kamuoyuna bir müze yoluyla sunulması geçmişle yüzleşmeye önemli bir katkıda bulunacaktır.

Çalışmada derinlemesine incelenen her iki örnekte de mülakatların yapıldığı dönemde hakim olan olumsuz siyasi koşullara rağmen, ortaya çıkan sonuçlar kamusal anıtların ve hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının şiddet ve baskı dönemlerinin ardından geçmişle yüzleşme sürecinde önemli bir onarıcı rol oynayabileceği yönündeki varsayımı doğrulamıştır. Görüşme yapılan eski mahkumlar ve tartışmalara dahil olan sivil toplum örgütlerinin temsilcileri kamusal anıtlara özellikle geçmişte yaşanan şiddetin tanınması konusundaki potansiyelinden dolayı önem atfetmektedir. Şiddet, baskı ve insan hakları ihlallerinin resmi makamlar ve toplum tarafından bilinmesi ve kabul edilmesi, hakikatlerin açığa çıkarılması ve bunların unutulmasına izin verilmemesi mağdurların en çok vurguladıkları talep ve beklentileridir ve kamusal anıtlar ve diğer hafızalaştırma çalışmaları bu taleplerin karşılanmasına hizmet edebilir.

Çalışmanın sonuçlarına dayanarak, kamusal anıtların, belli koşullar altında ve belli bir ölçüde adaletin tesis edilmesi ve bozulan toplumsal bağların onarılması, geçmişten ders alınması ve bunların sonraki kuşaklara aktarılması, mağdurlar ve yakınları için yas tutma alanlarının yaratılması ve travmalarının iyileştirilmesi konusunda önemli bir rol oynayabileceklerini söylemek mümkündür. Ancak, kamusal anıtların otomatik olarak böylesi bir etkisi yoktur; bunların konunun çeşitli boyutları dikkate alınarak ve aktörler dahil edilerek ayrıntılı bir şekilde tartışılması, planlanması ve üzerinde çalışılması ve bu tür girişimlere diğer onarıcı ve cezalandırıcı adalet tedbirlerinin eşlik etmesi gereklidir.

Çalışmanın başında, varsayımlardan biri onarıcı adalet mekanizmalarının geçmişle yüzleşmeye cezalandırıcı adalet mekanizmalarından daha fazla katkıda bulunduğu ve cezalandırıcı adaletin büyük ölçüde bireyleri ilgilendirdiği yönündeydi. Bununla birlikte, hem literatür taraması, hem dünyadan örnekler ve Türkiye'den seçilen örnekler cezalandırıcı adalet önlemlerinin eksikliğinin onarıcı adalet önlemlerinin

başarılı bir şekilde uygulanmasının önünde önemli bir engel olduğunu göstermiştir. Faillerin yargılanması ve cezalandırılması konunun toplumsallaşmasına ve kamuoyu tarafından tanınmasına hizmet etmektedir. Hükümet ve yargı makamlarının izlediği cezasızlık politikası geçmişle yüzleşme konusundaki mücadele ve motivasyona zarar verirken, failer cezalandırılmadığı ve bazıları kahraman ya da görevlerini yapan devlet görevlileri olarak kabul edildikleri için geçmişte yaşanan şiddetin gelecekte tekrar etmesinin önlenmesi ihtimaline olan inancı da zedelemektedir.

Mağdurların ihtiyacı olan şey sadece bir hatırlama pratiği değildir; buna aynı zamanda cezalandırma, kamusal tanınma ve resmi özür de eşlik etmelidir. Bu noktada, hatırlamanın kendisi yetersiz kalabilmektedir. Özetle, geçmişle yüzleşme konusunda Türkiye’de hem cezalandırıcı hem de onarıcı adalet mekanizmaları oldukça zayıftır ve bu haliyle hiçbiri mağdurların ve yakınlarının, ve genel olarak toplumun adalet taleplerini karşılamaya hizmet etmemektedir. Bu nedenle, cezalandırıcı ve onarıcı adalet pratiklerinin birbirlerini nasıl tamamladıkları ve toplumun daha geniş kesimlerinin sürece nasıl dahil edilebileceği konusunda daha ayrıntılı çalışmalara ihtiyaç vardır.

Çalışmanın eksik yönlerinden biri, konunun öznelere olarak mağdurlara, resmi makamlara ve sivil girişimlere önem atfederken toplumun geçmişle yüzleşme sürecine dahil olmasının önemini yeterince incelenememiş olmasıdır. Çalışmanın sonuçlarına ve Türkiye’deki pratiklere bakıldığında toplum tarafından geçmişle ilgili “kolektif ahlaki sorumluluk” almanın önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Geçmişle yüzleşme pratiklerinde resmi makamların veya sivil girişimlerin süreci yönetmesi normal olmakla birlikte, toplumun bu sürece dahil olması ve geçmişin sorumluluğunu alması kritik önemdedir. Faillerin cezalandırılması veya eski bir şiddet mekanının müzeye dönüştürülmesi tek başına anlamlı olmakla birlikte, bunların geçmişle yüzleşmede konusundaki etkilerinin topluma yayılması kolay olmamaktadır. Bu noktada, toplumun geçmişin sorumluluğunu alması konusu önem kazanmaktadır. Türkiye’deki pratikler arasında incelenen “Özür diliyorum” kampanyası kolektif moral sorumluluk alma yönünde bir girişim olarak düşünülebilir.

Çalışmanın bir diğer sınırlılığı hatırlama pratiğinin kendisine pozitif bir rol atfederken potansiyel olumsuz etkilerini yeterince incelememiş olmasıdır. Geçmişle yüzleşme

gerçekleşmeden unutmak mümkün görünmemektedir. Hemen hemen tüm görüşmeciler hatırlamanın önemini vurgulamış ve geçmişi unutmayacaklarını ve unutmak istemediklerini söylemişlerdir. Bununla birlikte, geçmişle yüzleşmede samimi çabaların bir sonucu olarak ortaya çıkmadığında ve sadece bir siyasi araç olarak kullanıldığında hatırlama pratikleri beklenmeyen sorunlara neden olabilir ve onarıcı etkilerinden daha fazla hasara yol açabilir. Bu noktada, geçmişin nasıl hatırlanacağı, hatırlama eylemleri ve pratikleri için neyin hatırlanacağına kimin karar verdiği ve bu pratiklerin müze veya anıt gibi somut formlarının nasıl seçildiği gibi hususlar hatırlamanın geçmişle yüzleşmede nasıl bir onarıcı rol oynayacağını belirlemektedir. Belli koşullar altında hatırlamanın ve hafızalaştırmanın olası olumsuz sonuçlarının daha ayrıntılı olarak incelenmesi bu açıdan önemlidir.

Diyarbakır Askeri Cezaevi, Mamak Cezaevi, Madımak Oteli gibi belirli şiddet ve işkence merkezlerinin gelecekte müzeye dönüştürülmesi ve yeni kamusal anıtların, hafıza mekanlarının oluşturulması muhtemeldir. Bunların yanı sıra Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi gibi halihazırda var olan hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının da içeriği, tasarımı ve yönetiminde değişiklikler yapılabilir. Bu çalışmanın sonuçlarına dayalı olarak gelecekteki hafızalaştırma girişimleri için bazı öneriler sunulabilir.

Birincisi, hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının her aşamasında mağdurların, onların yakınlarının, sivil toplum kuruluşlarının, sivil inisiyatiflerin, konuyla ilgili aktörlerin sürece dahil olması ve katılımcı bir pratikle süreci yürütmek çok önemli görünmektedir. Herhangi bir müzeleştirme girişimi veya diğer kamusal anıtlarla ilgili tartışmalar kamuoyunun gündemine sunulmalı ve bu konuda geniş bir tartışma süreci yürütülmesi teşvik edilmelidir. Daha önce vurgulandığı gibi, toplumun geniş kesimlerinin bu tür girişimlerde yer alması ve geçmişle yüzleşmede bireylerin konunun öznesi olmasalar da moral sorumluluk hissetmesi bu tür girişimlerin hedeflenen amaca ulaşması ve onarıcı bir rol oynaması açısından önemlidir.

Ulucanlar Cezaevi'nin müzeleştirilmesi süreci, bu tür yerler için katılımcı tasarımın ve karar vermenin önemi hakkında değerli dersler sunmaktadır. Mimarlar Odası Ankara Şubesi cezaevi kapatıldıktan sonra binlerce kişinin katıldığı, 15 günlük bir festival ve eski mahkumların katıldığı bir sözlü tarih atölyesi düzenlemiştir. Ancak restorasyon projesinin tasarlanması ve uygulanması sırasında eski mahkumlarla

iletişim kurulmamış ve fikirleri, beklentileri, duyguları, önerileri sorulmamıştır. Daha sonra, başta imzalanan dördümlü protokole rağmen AKP'li Altındağ Belediyesi diğerkurumları, sivil toplum örgütlerinin ve inisiyatifleri süreçten dışlamış ve tek karar verici konumuna gelmiştir. Müzenin tasarım ve içeriğinin belirlenmesine dahil olması gereken tarihçiler, sosyologlar, psikologlar, küratörler, mimarlar, vb. profesyoneller de sürece dahil edilmemiştir. Bu tür bir hafızalaştırma çalışmasının ürünü olan bir müze, sadece tarihsel mekanların, objelerin, belgelerin gelişigüzel sergilendiğı bir mekan değildir; aynı zamanda estetik, mimari ve kültürel boyutları da uzmanlar ve profesyoneller tarafından düşünölmeli ve yönetilmelidir. Gelecekteki olası bir girişim için, şiddet mağdurlarının, onların yakınlarının, profesyonellerin, sivil inisiyatiflerin ve ilgili kuruluşların dahil olduğı bir karar alma süreci, ilgili hafızalaştırma girişiminin geçmişle yüzleşmeye hizmet etmesi bakımından kritik önemdedir.

Diyarbakır Cezaevi'nin müzeye dönüştürölmesi ihtimalinde ise, Diyarbakır Cezaevi Müzesi Koordinasyon Merkezi tarafından toplanan bilgi ve belgeler, Diyarbakır Cezaevi Gerçekleri Araştırma ve Adalet Komisyonu tarafından yapılan mülakatlar, yine bu komisyonun topladığı bilgi ve belgeler, konuyla ilgili yapılan tüm çalışmalar karar verme ve müzenin tasarlanması sürecinde mutlaka dikkatle incelenmeli ve dikkate alınmalıdır. Bu tür bir dahil etme tüm sürecin yukarıdan aşağıya doğru örgütlenmesinin önüne geçecektir.

İkinci olarak, müzelerin, hafıza mekanlarının veya diğerkamusal anıtların yönetimi günlük olarak değışen politik motivasyonlardan ve aktörlerden bağımsız olmalıdır. Türkiye'deki sınırlı sayıdaki kamusal anıt esas olarak politik stratejilere veya iktidar partilerinin konjonktürel ihtiyaçlarına dayanarak oluşturulmuştur. Bunun sonucu olarak da, bu hafızalaştırma çalışmalarının tasarımı ve içeriğı de hükümetin o dönemdeki ihtiyaçlarına ve söylemlerine göre şekillenmiş ve konunun öznelerine ve ilgili aktörlere fikirleri sorulmamıştır. Bu tür hafızalaştırma çalışmaları ve kamusal anıtlar belirli zaman aralıklarıyla değışen belediyeler, belediye başkanları veya siyasi partiler tarafından değil, mağdurların, ziyaretçilerin ve konuyla ilgili kişilerin taleplerini, tepkilerini, düşüncelerini, önerilerini ve beklentilerini dikkate alan bağımsız ve profesyonel bir ekip tarafından yönetilmelidir.

Bu tür kamusal anıtlar ve hafızalaştırma çalışmalarında zaman içinde eklemeler, değişiklikler yapılabilir ancak bunların günlük olarak değişen politik stratejilere dayalı olarak yapılması bu girişimlere zarar verecektir. Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi'nde bunun en çarpıcı örneklerinden biri geçmiş yıllarda cezaevinde kalmış olan eski HDP milletvekili Sırrı Süreyya Önder'in müzede sergilenen biyografisinin "Çözüm Süreci" olarak adlandırılan sürecin sona ermesinin ve Önder'in tutuklanmasının ardından müzeden kaldırılması ve onun yerine o dönem AKP milletvekili olan Selçuk Özdağ'ın biyografisinin konulmasıdır. İlerleyen dönemlerde başka bir partiden bir belediye başkanının gelip mevcut biyografileri değiştirmesi de muhtemeldir. Bu noktada, konunun ilgilileri ve uzmanların dahil olduğu bağımsız bir yönetimin önemi ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu durum, Diyarbakır Cezaevi'nin kaderiyle ilgili olarak siyasi aktörlerin yaptığı konuşmalarda da gözlemlenmektedir. Bazı dönemlerde cezaevinin yıkılacağı, yerine okul yapılacağı söylenirken başka bir dönemde müzeye veya kültür merkezine dönüştürülmesinden bahsedilmektedir. Bu ifadeleri kullanan siyasi aktörler bu tercihleri için herhangi bir gerekçe sunmadıkları gibi cezaevinin kapandıktan sonra nasıl bir yere dönüştürüleceği konusunda herhangi bir sivil inisiyatife veya eski mahkumlara fikirlerini de sormamaktadır.

Üçüncü olarak, müzelerin veya diğer hafıza mekanlarının orijinalliğini ve gerçeği yansıtmaya kapasitesini olabildiğince koruma hususuna dikkat edilmelidir. Ulucanlar Cezaevi Müzesi'nde cezaevinin aslına uygun hali korunmamış, gerçeklik tahrif edilmiş ve restorasyon süreci sırasında geçmişin izlerin önemli ölçüde silinmiştir. Restorasyon süreci, profesyonel bir müzeleştirmeden ziyade bir güzelleştirme ve hijyenik hale getirme süreci olarak yaşanmıştır. Eski mahkumlar, geçmişte uzun yıllarını geçirdikleri cezaevinin gerçekliğinin korunmamasıyla ilgili eleştirilerini ısrarla vurgulamıştır. Bununla birlikte, cezaevinin orijinal halinin korunması mekanın tamamen olduğu gibi bırakılması gerektiği anlamına gelmemektedir. Cezaevinin aslına uygun biçimi olabildiğince korunurken, Arjantin'deki El Olimpo örneğinde bahsedildiği gibi mekanın anlamı, toplumsal faaliyetlerle, farklı kesimleri ve kuşakları bir araya getirerek ve toplumsal diyalog için bir alan açarak tersyüz edilebilir.

Dördüncüsü, kamusal anıtlar insanları, geçmişte yaşanan şiddetin ve insan hakları ihlallerinin nedenleri hakkında düşünmeye ve bunları sorgulamaya teşvik etmelidir.

Mağdurların yanı sıra failer hakkında da düşündürmeli ve insanların, hangi hakların ihlal edildiğini, sorumluların kim olduğunu ve bu olayların yeniden yaşanmaması için ne yapılması gerektiğini sorgulaması için alan açmalıdır. Bu tür bir mekan, geçmişle ilgili yeni kuşakların eğitilmesine de katkıda bulunabilir. Bunun için, ilgili olaylar hakkında mümkünse bir veritabanı ve enformasyon merkezi aracılığıyla da desteklenen yeterli bilgi ve belge sunulmalıdır. Bu tür projeler için dijital medyanın olanakları da etkin bir şekilde kullanılabilir.

Son olarak, cezaevleri örneğinde eski mahkumlar ve başka tür uygun kamusal anıtlarda konunun öznesi ve mağduru olan kişilerin bu hafızalaştırma çalışmaları tamamlandıktan sonra da desteklenmesi ve çalışmaya dahil edilmesinin yolları üzerine düşünülmelidir. Cezaevlerinin müzeye dönüştürülmesi durumunda, Güney Afrika'da Robin Island Müzesi'nde olduğu gibi eski mahkumlar ya da District Six Müzesi'ndeki gibi ilgili yerleşim yerinin eski sakinleri rehber olarak istihdam edilebilirler. Bu tür bir dahil olma hali konunun öznelere ziyaretçilere kendi hikayelerini anlatma olanağı sunabilir ve geçmişin travmalarını iyileştirmeye katkıda bulunabilir. Aynı zamanda, ilgili hafıza mekanının anlatılan ve dinlenen kişisel hikayelerle aktif ve yaşayan bir yer olmasını sağlayabilir ve geçmişin gerçek öznelere ve hikaye anlatıcılarına alan açarak geçmişle yüzleşmeyi destekleyebilir.

Yukarıda sayılan önerilerin sayısının artırılabilmesine kuşku yoktur. Daha uygun siyasi ve toplumsal bir atmosferde bu konudaki çalışmaların ve tartışmaların artmasıyla birlikte daha derinlikli öneriler de ortaya çıkacaktır. İnsanlığın adalet arayışı ve şiddete karşı mücadelesine paralel olarak Türkiye'de de önümüzdeki yıllarda, geçmişle yüzleşme bağlamında onarıcı adalet mekanizmalarının ve özellikle kamusal anıtların rolü tartışılmaya devam edecektir. Çok yakın bir zamanda dünya üzerindeki kitlesel şiddet ve insan hakları ihlallerinin her türüne son verilse bile, geçmişin travmalarını iyileştirmek ve geçmişle yüzleşmek uzun bir zaman alacaktır. Bu nedenle, adalet arayışı ve adaletin nasıl tesis edilebileceğiyle ilgili sorular önümüzdeki uzun yıllar boyunca tartışılacaktır. Bu süreçte, bu çalışmanın, adalet arayışı ve mücadelesine ve şiddet mağdurlarının sesinin duyulmasına ufak da olsa bir katkı sunması umut ediyorum.

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