

**T.C.
YILDIZ TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES AND SOCIAL SCIENCES
CULTURAL STUDIES**

PHD DISSERTATION

**TRAUMA AND MEMORY AS ELEMENTS OF IDENTITY IN
POLITICS: DERSİM 38 CASE**

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**THESIS ADVISOR
ASSOC. PROF. KEREM KARAOSMANOĞLU**

2024

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Gökçe ERGİN CEMEL tarafından hazırlanan “Trauma and Memory as Elements of Identity in Politics: Dersim 38 Case” başlıklı çalışma, **13/02/2024** tarihinde yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda oybirliği ile başarılı bulunmuş ve jürimiz tarafından İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Ana Bilim Dalı Kültürel Çalışmalar Programında **DOKTORA** tezi olarak kabul edilmiştir.

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ÖZET

KİMLİK UNSURLARI OLARAK SİYASETTE TRAVMA VE HAFIZA: DERSİM 38 ÖRNEĞİ

Siyasi bir deneyim olarak grupların kolektif hafızasını şekillendiren kolektif travmalar, kolektif kimliklerin inşasını etkilemekte ve güncel politikadaki söylemleri şekillendirmektedir. Bu tez, 1937-1938 yılları arasında Türkiye'nin doğusunda, Dersim'de gerçekleştirilen, resmi kaynaklarda “Askeri Disiplin ve Cezalandırma Harekâtı” olarak tanımlanan; Dersimlilerin yerel dilinde ise kıyım ve kargaşa anlamına gelen Tertele şeklinde ifade edilen Dersim 38’e odaklanır; onun Dersimlilerin kolektif hafıza ve kimliğindeki rolünü ve güncel politikadaki yansımalarını analiz eder. Araştırma, niteliksel görüşmeleri standartlaştırılmış araçlarla, Olay Kontrol Listesi, Kolektif Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği ve Bellek Özellikleri Anketi, birleştiren karma yöntem yaklaşımını kullanır (N= 67, %50,7 erkek, ortalama yaş =38.46). Bulgular, Dersim 38'in kolektif bir travmatik olay olarak yıllar geçtikçe canlılığını koruduğunu, Dersimliler tarafından yoğun duygularla hatırlandığını ve onların kimliği hakkında çok şey söylediğini gösterir. Dersim 38'in hafızası, etnik bağlılığı güçlendiren nesiller arası kolektif kimliğin inşasına önemli katkı sağlar. “38”in hatırlanma biçimleri günlük algıları şekillendirir ve günlük siyasi söyleme dâhil olur. Dersimliler, Dersim 38'i çoğunlukla, 1994 Köy Boşaltmaları, “Cemevi Saldırıları”, Dersim'deki İnanç Merkezleri ve Kutsal Canlılara Müdahaleler, “Ovacık- Gözeler'deki Restorasyon”, Dersim 38'in Yıldönümleri gibi Dersim /Dersim 38 ve/veya Dersim Aleviliği ile ilgili durumlar (yüzde 26,9) ve aynı oranda, Suriye Savaşı, “Arap Alevilerin Cihatçıların Arap Alevi Katliamları”, “Roboski Katliamı”, “Ankara Garı Katliamı”, “Suruç Katliamı” , Soma Maden Faciası gibi yalnızca Dersim Alevilerine ya da genel olarak Alevilere yönelik olmayan şiddet eylemleri aracılığıyla (yüzde 26,9) hatırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Kolektif Travma, Kolektif Hafıza, Kolektif Kimlik, Etno-dinsel Kimlikler, Dersim, Dersim 38

ABSTRACT

TRAUMA AND MEMORY AS ELEMENTS OF IDENTITY IN POLITICS: DERSIM 38 CASE

Collective traumas that shape the collective memory of groups as a political experience affect the construction of collective identities and shape the discourses in current politics. This dissertation focuses Dersim 38 defined in the official sources as the "Military Discipline and Punishment Operation" that carried out in Dersim, in Eastern Turkey, between 1937 and 1938 whereas called Tertele, meaning slaughter and chaos in the Dersim vernacular and analyzes its role in collective memory and identity of Dersimlis (people from Dersim) and reflections in current politics. This study uses a mixed-method approach integrating qualitative interviews with standardized instruments: Event Checklist, Collective Self Esteem Scale, and Memory Characteristics Questionnaire (N= 67, 50.7 % male, mean age =38.46). The findings demonstrate Dersim 38 as a collective traumatic event remains vivid over the years and remembered with intense emotions and tells much about self-definition of Dersimlis. The memory of Dersim 38 seems to contribute significantly to the construction of a transgenerational collective identity that strengthens ethnic allegiance. The ways in which "38" is remembered shape daily perceptions and are incorporated into daily political discourse. The memory of Dersim 38 is mostly remembered directly through 'the events related to Dersim/Dersim 38 and/or Dersim Alevism' (26.9 percent) : The 1994 Village Evacuations, "Cemevi Attacks", Interventions in Faith Centers and Sacred Creatures, "Restoration in Ovacık – Gözeler", Anniversaries of Dersim 38; and 'violence acts that not only targeting Dersim Alevis, or Alevis generally' (26.9 percent) : Syria War, "Massacres of Arab Alevis by Jihadists", "Roboski Massacre", "Ankara Train Station Massacre", "Suruç Massacre", Soma Mine Disaster.

Keywords: Collective Trauma, Collective Memory, Collective Identity, Ethno-religious Identities, Dersim, Dersim 38

PREFACE

The research presented in this dissertation was conducted in the Department of Cultural Studies of the Yildiz Technical University, under the supervision of Assoc. Prof. Kerem Karaosmanoğlu. Prof. Nalan Turna and Assoc. Prof. Sezin Öner Yaman were also jury members in the thesis monitoring committee from the beginning; Prof. Şükrü Aslan and Assoc. Prof. Mehmet Beşikçi were also a part of this process in the thesis defense jury dated February 13, 2024. I thankfully acknowledge the encouragement and assistance of these supervisors. I think that the valuable opinions, criticisms, and suggestions of all my professors enriched this study. Every detail I learned from each of them will be a guide for my future work.

It was not easy for me to get a doctorate in Cultural Studies, outside the field of psychology that I am familiar with. The readings of Cultural Studies, which are quite complicated than the psychology readings and discipline that I was used to, were very challenging for me. I even thought about quitting my doctorate two times. Over time, I realized that I had to learn to look at things from a broader perspective, and tried to do so, and today, as I finish my doctorate, I am very happy that I did not give up. I had a very difficult time in this process; but developed for sure. Although the PhD process took longer than I planned, seven years in total, and made me quite tired, I became a wife, a mother during this process... I met many new roles. Although the transitions between these different roles are quite challenging for me, I think I could manage the process well by ensuring that my roles support each other.

This study was about the remembrance of Dersim 38, as a traumatic event, in current politics, and as expected, it would not have happened without the support of Dersimlis... I would like to thank all Dersimlis who participated in the study and all my friends, institutions and associations who helped me deliver my work to them.

Finally, I am grateful to my child, Rayen who was later involved in this process and made this work more meaningful and my husband, Yakup and my mother, Şükran, father, Hüseyin, sisters, Seyran and Beste and Derin, Duru, Dahud, Raşel for their love, patience, and support throughout the course of this work.

Gökçe ERGİN CEMEL

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ABBREVIATIONS

CHP	: Republican People's Party
AKP	: Justice and Development Party
ITT	: Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma
MCQ	: Memory Characteristic Questionanire
SPSS	: Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
APA	: American Psychology Association
ITT	: Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma
PTSD	: Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
MP	: Member of Parliament
MHP	: Nationalist Movement Party

1. INTRODUCTION

The parliamentary and presidential elections held in Turkey on May 14, 2023, before the 100th anniversary of the proclamation of the Republic, were of critical importance as they were a decisive election for the administrative system of the second century of the Republic. Turkey went to the important election with two alliances formed by various political parties playing their trump cards very bravely: Nation Alliance (*Millet İttifakı*) and People's Alliance (*Cumhur İttifakı*). The Nation Alliance, united with the goal of "Strengthened Parliamentary System" against the "Presidential Government System", attracted a lot of attention as the formation of six political parties¹ having 'divergent' ideological views, which are unlikely to come together on common ground in a 'normal' political environment. The name of Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu, the leader of the main opposition party (CHP) at that time, one of the members of the Nation Alliance, was frequently on the agenda as the joint presidential candidate of the Alliance, although the Nation Alliance did not explain the questions about the common presidential candidate by stating that they focused on system change rather than the name of the candidate. Yet, the messages from the Alliance, statements made within the CHP and the reactions from the AK Party, the government party, were interpreted as if Kılıçdaroğlu was the presidential candidate. Even the 'possible' candidacy of Kılıçdaroğlu started to be discussed over his Alevism, "a modernist current of Islam" (Legendre, 2023) that has been "politicized as an identity movement" by the 1980s in Turkey with its religious, ethnic, and political aspects (Ersoy, 2012, p.225). Alevism also refers to a social segment that has been subjected to "oppression, exclusion and massacres" from the Ottoman Empire to the present day in Turkey (Köker, 2023).

Kılıçdaroğlu's Alevi identity has been interpreted as the cause of some 'disputes' even within the Nation Alliance that he was a part of. On March 3, 2023, while the Nation Alliance was expected to announce its presidential candidate, a crisis broke out; İYİ Party leader Akşener from the Nation Alliance, asserted that "Personal ambitions were

¹ People's Alliance: Justice and Development Party (AK Party) and Nationalist Movement Party (MHP); Nation Alliance: Republican People's Party (CHP), İYİ Party, Saadet Party (SAADET), Democrat Party (DP), Democracy and Progress Party (DEVA), Gelecek Party

preferred over Turkey. The Alliance has been turned into a notary. The Party was forced to choose between death and malaria” and signaled that she would leave the Alliance. Uneasy that the five political parties at the Alliance, except the İYİ Party, suggested Kılıçdaroğlu, Akşener even called for the candidacy of CHP mayors Yavaş and İmamoğlu instead of Kılıçdaroğlu. Although Akşener's outburst was announced by her on the grounds that "Personal ambitions were preferred over Turkey", the cause of the crisis in the ‘backstages’ and social media was attributed to Kılıçdaroğlu's Alevi faith, thinking that the conservative electorate would render a candidate with Alevi faith unelectable. In fact, according to Köker, this was an expression of anti-Alevism that sometimes implied and sometimes openly expressed (Köker, 2023). The crisis within the Nation Alliance was somehow ‘sweetened’ and Kılıçdaroğlu, ‘an Alevi’, was announced as the joint presidential candidate on March 6, 2023.

Starting before the election and intensifying afterwards, Kılıçdaroğlu's Alevi origin became both the “explicit/implicit basis” for objections to his candidacy (Zırh, 2023). Yet, the debates have not always been solely on Kılıçdaroğlu’s Alevi identity, the very fact that Kılıçdaroğlu is originally from Tunceli, formerly ‘Dersim’, a region which is known for its “active Alevi-Kurd population” (Gezik, 2020) in a country where most of the population consists of Sunni Turks, has been enough to start a discussion on Alevi and ‘Dersimli’² identities within the context of presidential debate in Turkish politics. This necessitated focusing on the phenomenon of ethno-religious identity of Dersim that mostly associated with Kurdish Alevism, in the current political atmosphere although Kılıçdaroğlu has implied he is “Turkmen”, not Kurdish, by ethnic origin saying his ancestors and grandfathers came to Turkey from Khorasan of Iran and helped the Turkification of Anatolia as "Anatolian Saints" (*Anadolu Erenleri*). (Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu “Sen kim oluyorsun da benim Müslümanlığımı sorguluyorsun”, 2018).

The presidential election has not been the first time that Kılıçdaroğlu’s identity has been a matter of discussion. Since the day he became the leader of CHP, he has been the target of AK Party pointing to his Alevi identity and Dersimli roots although Kılıçdaroğlu emphasizes at every opportunity that he is against politics based on identity. At the Tunceli Rally on 17 March 2014, Kılıçdaroğlu, as CHP Chairman, stated that Erdoğan slandered him since he is from Dersim (Tunceli Mitingi

² Meaning ‘From Dersim’

17/03/2014, 2014). In the following years, in 2019, Erdoğan's criticisms of the CHP were also made through Dersim and therefore Kılıçdaroğlu (Erdoğan'dan Kılıçdaroğlu'na: Dersimli olan zât, Dersim olayları ile ilgili bizim gösterdiğimiz vicdani tavrın 10'da birini göstermiyor, 2019). However, the identity of Kılıçdaroğlu, as a candidate in the presidential elections, is explicitly discussed for the first time in Turkish politics by wider circles from both supporters of the ruling party and the opposition. The commonly highlighted conclusion, especially in social media, has been that it would almost be impossible for 'an Alevi from Dersim' ever to be elected the President of Turkey.

On April 19, Kılıçdaroğlu published a video with the title '*Alevi*' (Kılıçdaroğlu: Sevgili evlatlarım, ben Aleviyim, 2023) that has received immense support for freely discussing his Alevi heritage and for his call to end polarizing politics. He has talked about his Alevi heritage, called on young people who are going to vote for the first time to make Turkey a country where "we no longer talk about identities, differences, and separations"; and gave the message that Turkey will overcome identity politics. This video of Kılıçdaroğlu could be interpreted as his effort to create an environment where identities can express freely, instead of identity politics where identities are turned into a competitive arena:

I am an Alevi. I am a sincere Muslim who was brought up with the belief of Allah³, Muhammad Ali.... Our identities are what makes us who we are. And of course, we have to claim them with dignity, we cannot choose them. We are born, grow and live with them. But there are very important things in life that we can choose. We can choose to be a good person, to be honest, to be moral, to be conscientious, to be virtuous and just. We can choose to live a better life in a free and wealthy country. We will no longer talk about identities; we will talk about achievements. We will no longer talk about separations and differences. We will talk about our partnerships and shared dreams. Will you join our expedition of change? Will you stand with me in this change? Will you say, the right one is the honest one, the moral one? against this system that says, there is no from Alevi.

His video on Twitter received more than 200,000 likes in a few hours and his move was interpreted by the political scientist Elisa Massicard as an attempt to break the taboo of "Alevi cannot govern Turkey" (Legendre, 2023); Massicard has noted that Kılıçdaroğlu broke a taboo with the video in which declared his Alevi faith; his Alevi identity had previously been viewed as an "incriminating campaign issue" as Alevi had a "terrible and frequently sulfurous image" among a largely Sunni community:

³ Turkish word, meaning God

This "coming out" – when everyone in Turkey knows Kılıçdaroğlu is an Alevi – is a way of reclaiming that identity and turning the stigma around. Beyond that, the CHP leader is promoting a very important discourse of tolerance and recognition of diversity (Legendre, Elections in Turkey: 'By claiming to be an Alevi, Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu broke a taboo', 2023).

Similarly, for Köker (2023), Kılıçdaroğlu's video emphasizing "what is really important is not my Alevism, but my sincerity, honesty and desire for a free and fair society" prevented his Alevism from being used as a trump card in this process and also removed Alevism from being a taboo in Turkish politics. On the other hand, the possibility of Turkey's new president is an 'Alevi from Dersim', for some groups, has turned into a means of producing new 'marginalizing' discourses against Alevis and Dersimlis in particular. This marginalizing discourse against Alevis in general that re-emerged with Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy also had the feature of triggering the past collective traumatic experience of the Alevis in the current political atmosphere: "1514" (Gürtaş, 2020, p.310), 1978 Maraş, 1980 Çorum, 1993 Sivas (Sökefeld, 2020) as well as 'Dersim 38'⁴ and 1994 Mandatory Village Evacuations for the Dersimlis in particular. Within this series of incidents, Dersim 38 is called, in the official circles, "the military campaign" that took place against parts of the Dersim in 1937-38 that had "not been brought under the control of the state" (Kieser, 2011); the military operation within the framework of the requirements of the new Republic and the constructive character of Kemalism that aimed at "civilizing" Dersimlis who named by Uluğ (1939) as the slaves in the hands of tribal leaders in the region. In other words, the Dersim Issue in 1937-1938 was expressed in official language as the suppression of the uprising of the rebellious tribes in the region and the reclamation of the region (Demirer, 2018). Whereas Dersimlis call it '*Tertele*' meaning "destruction, annihilation" (Öncü, 2020), slaughter and chaos in the Dersim vernacular Kirmanchki (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013; Mutlu, 2023). According to researchers and intellectuals from Dersim, "a great massacre" (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2012), takes place in the region on the grounds of "suppressing the rebellion". Dersimlis commemorate this "great massacre" as "*Roza Şaye*", meaning "dark day" (Öncü, 2020; Mutlu, 2023). The operation resulted in a particularly high death toll, many thousands of civilian victims (Kieser, 2011): More than 70 thousand people were murdered and fourteen thousand

⁴ "Dersim 38"/ "38" is a common way in which Dersimlis refer to the "*Dersim Massacre*" and the trauma suffered by their people (Bathory & Celik, 2013). Throughout the research, Dersim 38/38 will be used to express the events that took place in the region between 1937 and 1938.

were exiled (Saltık, 2023). In addition to costing the lives of thousands of people, the military-political campaign was supported by social-cultural programs (Demirer, 2018).

Contrary to those saying that the ‘reason’ for the operation is the "security issue in the Eastern provinces" (Uluğ,1939; Toprak, 2012), it is explained in Dersim circle by ethno-religious reasons rather than security problem. Gürtaş (2020), claims that the reason for the “massacre” is in the “Turkish-Islamic synthesis”⁵ during the Republican period: the "Dersimli Kizilbash"⁶ fell into the "enemy" category in two respects, as they were both Kurdish and Kizilbash (p.318). According to Aslan (2018), the "Dersim Massacre" was legitimized as one of the necessary consequences of the construction of a nation state. Similarly, Yüksel (2018) evaluates the “massacre”, forced migration and settlement practices that Dersimlis were subjected as the result of nationalist ideology in the process of nation-state formation. The “systematic operation” carried out by the state “in the name of reforming Dersim and civilizing Dersimlis” is a serious trauma and has very deep meanings for Dersimlis and constitutes the key concept of Dersim literature (Aslan, 2010, cited in Yağan, 2019). *Tertele* expresses “a great break” in terms of Dersim's history and identity (Gürtaş,2020, p.319); its narratives are full of stories of pain, devastation, lost lives, desolation, rootlessness, years of silence and those who were massacred and had to kill their children (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019; Yağan, 2019). The trauma of 38 has also been “collectivized” among Dersim generations as a transgenerational phenomenon (Gürtaş, 2020, p.321). Dersim 38, beyond being merely a historical event, has turned into “a discursive and symbolic space” (Ersoy, 2012) that shape the identity construction of Dersim Alevis (*Dersim Alevileri*) who have a different collective memory from both other Alevis and the Kurds who are thought to be ethnically affiliated (Gürtaş, 2020).

According to Saltık (2023), the authority's perception against Dersim/Dersimlis has been not limited to 38, and Dersimlis continued to be subjected to state pressure after 38: the resettlement policies implemented after Dersim 38, the internal and external migration intensified after the 1960s, the 1980 Military Coup, the forced evacuation

⁵ The phrase "The Religion of the Republic of Turkey is Islam", included in the 1921 and 1924 Constitutions, was also abolished in 1928 (Çubukçu, 1985).

⁶ Another word used instead of Alevi

of villages in 1994 that all resulted in the formation of the “internal and external Dersim diaspora” in the big cities of Turkey and in Europe (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p. 73). Beyond being just a static event, Dersim 38 has become a frequently ‘remembered’ and/or ‘reminded’ phenomenon in domestic politics. It is clear that Dersim 38 has become the material of politics in different political times and conditions; the speech of CHP deputy Onur Öymen in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey in 2009, emphasizing what happened in Dersim was a “rebellion” (Onur Öymen’in TBMM’de, demokratik açılım görüşmesinde yaptığı tarihi konuşma, 2016) and Erdoğan’s, the prime minister at the time, calling the incident a “massacre” in his speech and the "Dersim apology" that showing the Dersim-oriented debates in Turkish politics (Gürtaş, 2020, p.309). Most recently, with Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy, Dersim/Dersim 38 has been ‘echoed’ in current Turkish politics once again that let us to reflect on how the past, but mostly those associated with collective traumas, finds its power to penetrate contemporary politics (Jasiewicz, 2015) and how certain representations about the past can evoke strong positive and/or negative emotions in parties at conflict, which in turn can affect political attitudes and preferences.

It has been asserted by Resende and Budrye (2004) that the past creates social implications in politics called the political component of remembering traumatic events. The enduring images of the past, but especially the traumatic events and “the ways in which they are experienced, felt, perceived, memorialized and forgotten” (p.1), interact with present; and shape current political opportunities and limits (Jasiewicz, 2015), as with those ‘remembered’ with Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy. Trauma produces and alters images in deep ways that differ from ordinary (Becker, 2014); societies that experienced a major conflict often struggle to establish a stable order and the memory of trauma can linger for decades and give rise to new conflicts (Wilson & Bleiker, 2014). Traumas, “the political ones” (Kristeva, 1989, cited in Resende & Budrye, p.1), “shape and perpetuate collective memory, which in turn affects the construction of identities and interests” (Edkins 2003, cited in Resende & Budrye 2014, p. 3). Hirschberger (2018) talks about “a process” that starts with collective trauma, transforms into collective memory, and culminates in a system of meaning that allows the group to redefine who they are and where they are going. Similarly, for Volkan (1988), but from a more psychoanalytical framework, groups may have struggled with several profound events in their past, yet some of them, “the chosen traumas”, remain vivid over the centuries which have a formidable psychodynamic

role in current politics. Collective trauma, also called cultural, social, political, historical trauma, does not just embed itself in the victim's inner world but also transmitted within the family and across generations (Gampel, 2000), called "intergenerational transmission of memory", a process by which biographical knowledge contributes to the construction of representation of a shared past (Svob, et al.,2016). The mental representations of the traumas experienced by the group are shared among members of the group and therefore the damaged self-images associated with the mental representations of the shared traumatic event are "deposited into the developing self-representation of children in the next generation as if these children will be able to mourn the loss or reverse the humiliation" (Volkan, 1997, p.46).

Memories and identities, Gillis (1994) notes, are not things we think "about", but things we think "with" (cited in Prager, 2009, p.141). In this dissertation, I aim to analyze memory of Dersim 38, said to shape the identity of Dersimlis as one of the most traumatic experiences of Dersimlis, that lately remembered 'with' Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy in Turkish current political atmosphere. There are many studies written on Dersim 38 focusing on collective trauma; so, what is the purpose of this study? My primary motivation here, as a clinical psychologist working on trauma from an individual perspective in the therapy room, was to make sense of trauma within cultural studies from a collective framework. I was familiar with the process of any individual experiencing a traumatic event; but what happens when a social group, rather than an individual, experiences a traumatic event? Since it is not possible to bring any group that has experienced trauma into the therapy room, examining trauma from a collective framework and examining its relationship with memory, identity and politics required a multidisciplinary approach. What makes 'Dersim 38' a particularly good case study of remembered traumatic memory in current politics is that it combines two separate elements such as Alevism and Kurdishness. While Alevism or Kurdishness are already very deep topics on their own, Dersim 38 gives the opportunity to study them together through trauma, memory, and identity. This study takes a multifaceted approach, focusing on memory and identity studies in sociology literature as well as clinical, social, and political psychology literature. This dissertation aims to analyze the possibility of a similar kind of "process" suggested by Hirschberger (2018), can be considered in relation to Dersim 38 as "chosen trauma" (Volkan 1998), perpetuating the collective memory and constituting the collective

identity of Dersimlis. Specifically, it will attempt to address the following questions: how do traumatic collective experiences of 38 affect the processes associated with the collective memory construction of Dersimlis and expressions of 38 in current politics? How does traumatic collective memory, the memory of 38, relate to ethno-religious identity politics?

1.1. The Case: *Dersim 38*

Before looking at the remembrance of collective traumatic experiences in politics in detail, this subheading aims to briefly summarize Dersim 38, a necessary step for readers not familiar with Dersim and Dersim 38.

Dersim, “officially” renamed “Tunceli” by the “Law on Administration of Tunceli Province” (*Tunceli Vilayetinin İdaresi Hakkında Kanun*) (Appendix 1) in 1935, is still used to refer both the geographical location including the city of Tunceli and the culture connected with this region (Çelik, 2013). As an autonomous region between Sivas, Erzincan, and Elazığ in Eastern Anatolia of Turkey, Dersim had lived on its own for many years with its hard-to-reach geography (Aygün, 2009) and stood out with its multi-ethnic, linguistic, religious, and tribal diversity (Çelik 2013). Dersim, like an umbrella, has hosted various ethnics including Armenian, Kurdish, Zaza, and Turkmen, as well as many religious beliefs, primarily Kizilbash-Alevism (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019); and the belief “Kızılbaş-Alevism” or “Dersim-Kızılbaşness” (*Dersim Kızılbaşlığı*) that defined as specific to Dersim (Gezik, 2020). Yet, this Kizilbash Alevism is not the only thing defined “unique” in the region; referring to the tribal system, Uluğ (1939) claims that there is a “unique feudalism” in the region, formed by seyyids and aghas together: “Dersim people are slaves in the hands of these aghas and seyyids, who have great privileges in Dersim (p.59). Two basic elements, “Tribe (*Aşiret*) and *Ocak/Pirlik*” affiliation constitute the “historical identity” of Dersim Alevis; while the tribe institutions deal with the social, political, and economic areas, *Ocak/Pirlik* affiliation is related to the religious domain (Gürtaş, 2020, p.315). The “tribal feudalism” and “banditry” that continued for four and a half centuries both put Dersim in a situation that could be considered “disconnected” from the state in the Ottoman Period and also caused the Republic to concentrate on the region (Uluğ, 1939). Uluğ explains the Republic's ‘interest’ in Dersim through the feudal order in

the region; the duty of the Republic is to “civilize” Dersimlis who are slaves of the tribal system (Uluğ, 1939).

Dersim, described as a problematic "legacy" from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic, has been exposed to military operations, oppression, violence, exile, and assimilation in both periods (Akpınar, et al., 2018, p.312) while on the other hand Barkey (2008) has claimed the success of the Ottomans by being an open and tolerant empire, which they established by incorporating and integrating the wide variety of ethnic and religious groups they encountered. For Akpınar et al. (2018), the Islamization policy during the Ottoman period was replaced by Turkification policies during the Republic period in Dersim; the dominant nationalist ideology determines "who" will be included in the nation imagination within the drawn borders, and this creates an area where cultural differences based on religious, ethnic, and linguistic elements are tried to be eliminated (Yüksel, 2018, p.358). In the report submitted by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to the government in 1926, Dersim was emphasized as “extremely dangerous” for the Republican government (Aydın, 2013): “an abscess that needed an urgent surgical operation from the Republic” (Hallı, 1972). In the report of the Gendarmerie General Command (*Jandarma Umum Kumandanlığı*), Dersim was described as "a troop with the elements of aggressors and robbers, who have not been penetrated for centuries, have caused important troubles to the government, and whose habit is to mischief" (Gendarmerie General Command Report, 1932, p. 239). The other reports and documents prepared about the region by General Inspector Ibrahim Tali, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak and Minister of the Interior Şükrü Kaya also emphasized the need for “reforms” by pointing out the tribal system in the region (Kalman 1995, cited in Kieser, 2011). Yet, researchers evaluating the military operations carried out by the Republic against Dersim in terms of “slaughter”, “massacre” and “ethnic cleansing”, emphasize that the situation is multifaceted. In their views, Dersim has gained an ethnic dimension (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019) and fell within the scope of the “Turkification policy” after the establishment of the Turkish Republic by the 20th century (Aygün 2009, p. 41; Aydın, 2013). According to Ağuıçenoğlu (2018), the reports are full of countless insults directed at Dersimlis because of their Kurdish/Zaza and Alevi identities; and it is woven around a main idea for assimilation purposes, such as that the Alevi and Kurdish tribes were actually Turks and later moved away from their Turkishness by leading a wildlife. They also argue the view of the founding elites

of the Republic where Dersim has been an unwelcome "Pandora's box" that constantly needs to be "tamed, disciplined, and kept under control" (Aslan, 2010, cited in Orhan, 2013, p. 263). According to them, Dersim that did not fit into the idealized image of the nation-state has called "the biggest problem within the national borders", an outsider", a foreign element in the state discourse (Göner 2017, p. 1) and as a city that needs to be "improved", "subjugated", "captured", "Sunnified" and even "colonized" (Aygün 1990, cited in Tosun & Bal, 2013, p. 131). Demirer (2018) similarly stated that Dersim was defined as a mental and spatial "other" that hindered the national identity construction process and was associated with "backwardness", "closedness to the world" and "absolute dependence on traditional authority relations" in the modernization process (p.41). After the modern Republic chose to give Turkish and Sunni Muslim identity to the new nation (Çelik, 2013), Dersim has been described as "troubling, out of norm, dangerous and unimportant" and its contradiction to this new goal was emphasized (Demirer, 2013). It has appeared to be in marked contrast to the politico-cultural landscape of 1930s Turkey (Kieser, 2011) and has been one of the target regions within the policies that the Republican administration started to implement in the 1930s (Aydın, 2013). Kieser (2011) expresses the relationship between Turkish ethno-nationalism and Dersim as follows:

...radical Turkism (Turkish ethno-nationalism) with racist undertones marked the ideological climate of the 1930s... Kemalist Turkism – the ideology of the new political élite tied to the single-party régime – albeit triumphalist, expressed the need for a connection to deeper roots and made a huge effort to legitimize Anatolia as the national home of the Turks by means of historical physical anthropology.

"The Law of Resettlement" (*İskân Kanunu*) (1934) (Appendix 2) and the "Tunceli Law" (*Tunceli Vilayeti'nin İdaresi Hakkında Kanun*) (1935) have detailed "the annihilation of Dersimlis" (Çelik, 2013). On May 4, 1937, the Disciplining and Punishment Operation (*Tedip⁷ ve Tenkil⁸ Harekâtı*) was authorized by the Council of Ministers in the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (Aygün 2009). The decision has been made to solve the problem through "extended massacres and displacement of people" (Göner 2017, p.1). During the operation that started in March 1937 and ended in 1938, according to official figures, 13,160 people were killed and 11,818 people were exiled to the villages in western provinces although the exact number of those killed and exiled is not known (Hallı, 1972). However, according to the accounts of

⁷ "Uslandırma" (Yıldırım, 2012): Taming

⁸ "Yok Etme" (Yıldırım, 2012): Annihilation

Dersimlis and witnesses, 70 thousand people, mostly elderly, women and children, were killed in villages, caves, on the banks of streams by bombing, shooting, burning, using chemical gas, and being thrown off cliffs (Kurul, 2020). Although official statements state that the military campaign targets “bandits and reactionary tribal and religious leaders who mislead innocent people” (Kieser, 2011); Kieser (2011) argues that the high number of deaths and abundance of evidence prove that the killings were not limited to rebel tribes:

On a secret level, right from the beginning – in particular, with the decision of the Council of Ministers of 4 May 1937 – parts of the Dersim people as a whole were targeted, at least for relocation pursuant to the 1934 Law of Settlement.

Toprak (2012) suggests evaluating the military operation as the "civilization mission" of the Republic as a part of the integration process under the umbrella of the nation-state; the Republic dreams of a unitary country with the 1921 Teşkilat-ı Esasiye Kanunu but the most difficult problem faced by the Republic in this period was the integration of remote regions, including Dersim, with the nation state, and this requires “the task of bringing civilization”. The Republic’ concern, Toprak (2012) claims, has been “the security” rather than the ethnic; therefore, the process of building a “homogeneous society” by the Republican regime, should not be understood outside of its historical context. Similarly, Uluğ (1939) attributes the Republic’s intervention in the region to ‘the order’ created by the aghas and seyyids in the region and the duty of the Republic is to end this feudalism. The Dersim case, Uluğ (1939) claims, was about civilization of the people who were under “the material and moral oppression and captivity” of the aghas and seyyids; and this was the "constructive" feature of Kemalism. Yet, on the other hand, in Dersim circles, Dersim 38 is an ‘ethnic and religious issue’ beyond being a security one. Dersim 38 is the product of a policy aimed at Turkification, Sunnization and ethnic cleansing with military, political, social, and cultural dimensions (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019). Dersim has been expected to be assimilated within Turkishness in terms of ethnicity and religion, and exposed to massacres, exiles, and embargoes (Tosun and Bal, 2013). The military operations of 1937-38 are defined as the most systematically planned and practiced violence aimed at the annihilation of Dersimlis (Bathory & Celik, 2013) and reminds “the practices of fascism” that flourished in Germany according to Aydın (2013, p.107). The operation, referred to "the campaign to suppress the rebellion in the region" in the official ideology/history due to seventy years of oppression and bans, remained a taboo until

the late 1990's (Çelik,2013) and also called the "black box" of the Republic (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019). After 74 years of limited archives and interviews with the witnesses of Dersim 38, Nezahat and Kazım Gündoğan (2019) conclude, what happened is not a rebellion; but a "planned and systematic" operation carried out by the state (Atay, 2013, p.356) that aimed at Turkification, Sunnization, and even "ethnic cleansing" (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019):

This operation was the product of a policy with military, political, social, and cultural dimensions aimed at Turkification, Sunnization, and even ethnic cleansing. There was a great massacre in the region on the grounds of suppressing the rebellion. ... Many families were exiled to other parts of Anatolia.... One of the unknown issues until now is the distribution of girls from Dersim to families in military and civil bureaucracy as adoption. In this way, the government assimilated many Alevi Kurdish and Zaza children with Turkish-Sunni culture (p.23-24).

Based on the idea that the events in 1937-38 were no longer a rebellion, the demand for the official acceptance of Dersim 38, called "the secret that everyone knows" (Aslan, 2010), began to be voiced louder over time. Dersimlis demand that the state authority officially "accept" Dersim 38, "apologize" and open all the documents in the state archives (Kurtuluş, 2013, p.353). Neyzi (2002) claims there is a long history of violence towards Dersimlis arising from their faith, ethnic origins, customs, and traditions but Dersim 38, causing the death and migration, is a very important unifying element for the Dersim people (Neyzi,2002). *Tertele*, the result of a series of extremely brutal operations (Gezik,2020) has marked a turning point in Dersim history (Aygün,2009) and formed the central idea of Dersim literature (Aslan 2010, cited in Yağan, 2019). It politicizes the "typicalness" of Dersim and constitutes a central reference point for Dersimlis in defining themselves (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p.69). Dersim 38 creates "cleavages" in the collective memory as an "important turning point" (Gezik, 2020, p.10) and has left behind significant psychological traumas, specifically a reminder of rootlessness for the following generation of 38 (Karatay et al., 2017). The discourses of the Republican period regarding Dersim not only defined Dersim as a place with deep differences from the rest of the country, but also caused the creation of clichés about Dersim that lasted for many years (Demirer, 2018).

This dissertation, with all the information briefly mentioned above and an interdisciplinary perspective, aims to examine the Dersim 38, called a traumatic experience, and its place in the collective memory of Dersimlis, the process of shaping the collective identity, and its direct and indirect connotations in current politics.

1.2. Outline

The dissertation begins with the relationship between the Alevi and Dersim roots of Kılıçdaroğlu, the candidate in the recent Presidential elections in Turkey, then explains its connection with Dersim 38 and continues with a brief summary of it. Pointing to the process between collective trauma, memory and identity, this dissertation states that it will examine Dersim 38 within the framework of these relationships. The purpose of the study and research questions are also included in the Introduction section. The theoretical part starts with the interdisciplinary dialogue between collective violence and collective trauma followed by the general definition of collective trauma; its difference from the individual trauma, psychodynamic understanding of it and intergenerational transmission of the trauma. The relationship between violence and trauma and the collective aspect of violence are discussed. The various forms of memory are explained; specifically, the collective characteristic of remembering, namely collective memory, and its difference than autobiographical memory is emphasized. It continues with remembering traumatic memories and its relationship with collective identity construction and current politics. Collective identity is defined from a psychodynamic perspective, named as “melancholic identities” related to the collective losses. The next section, named Dersim, includes the politicized geography of Dersim, its ethno-religious heterogeneity, Alevism, and its politic side and importantly Dersim 38 as the key part of the study. After explaining the details about Dersim 38, it is analyzed how it is remembered a collective traumatic memory among Dersimlis. In the method section, there are additional questions used for the purposes of the study, such as the details of the three scales used in the study (*War Event Checklist*, *Collective Self-Esteem Scale*, and *Memory Characteristics Questionnaire*), information about the participants, and the question of remembering Dersim 38 in today's political environment. The last part, Results, explains the empirical evidence supporting the claim that there is a process that continues the collective memory that started with Dersim 38 and forms the identity of Dersim, and that the memory of Dersim 38 continues to exist in daily politics.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Collective Violence and Collective Trauma: The Interdisciplinary Dialogue

Violence is usually understood in terms of individual or interpersonal violence, however, there is another type of violence that affects lives: collective violence such as mass torture, genocide, and ethnic cleansing that inflicted by larger groups such as states, organized political groups, and terrorist organizations (Ray, 2008). Collective violence is part of the broader study of collective behavior and shares at least two characteristics: “They are done by collectively and they are meant to achieve social, political or economic change” (Barkan & Snowden, 2001, p. 3). The dynamics of large-scale violence are “unique” and, in some ways, “incommensurable” with individual violence (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000, p.10). The essential issue is distinguishing collective violence from individual or interpersonal violence: the targets of collective violence typically are only a means to an end, at that end is “social change” and acts of violence are not examples of collective violence unless they have this purpose (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, p.5). Collective violence “intertwines psychic, social, political, economic, and cultural dimensions; targets the psyche and the sociocultural order and changes the societies in which it occurs” (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000) : “It is scripted to destroy elemental culturally constituted expectations and functions” (p.10).

The twentieth century has been “violent and destructive” (Prager, 2009, p.139) ; it has witnessed “the most barbaric episodes of collective violence” (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000) : “the genocide of the Armenians” in 1915-1916 (Bozarslan, 2008, p.337), the Holocaust as “the most notorious and best-evidenced case of genocide” (Mann, 2004, p.180), “the Cambodian killing fields, the unprecedented state terror generated by the Latin American counter-insurgency campaigns, the organized ethnic cleansing and sexual assaults in the former Yugoslavia”, “the suffering and systematic devastation in Kosovo, the ethnic cleansing and rape in Bosnia and the genocidal killings in Rwanda and Burundi” (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, p. xi). Hüppauf (1997)

similarly argues that the twentieth century was characterized by “an extraordinary presence of violence”:

The twentieth century opened with the first modern war which killed almost ten million, experienced another world war, the Holocaust and other genocides, the explosion of nuclear bombs and the ensuing fear of holocide, forty years of a dubious peace for which it coined the term 'cold war', and after this period of warfare without military battles finally came to an end, it is marred by an un-precedented omnipresence of violence in wars, civil wars and civil societies. There can be little doubt that this century was characterized by an extraordinary presence of violence.

The acts of collective violence appeared to affect every region of the world in the last decades of the twentieth century (Alvarez, 2010) ; nations have collapsed by witnessing the “resurgence of the systematized torture, forced disappearances, group rapes, and ethnic massacres and cleansings as organized practices for dealing with historical and cultural chagrins, political dissent, ideological orthodoxy, and ethnic and gender differences” and destroyed by “hatred and destruction” (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, p.6). The memory of collective violence was neither fleeting nor unsubstantiated; its reality has even been the founder of many generations (Traverso, 2019). Large-scale violence has impacted and changed cultural identities (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Contemporary thinkers have struggled to capture the depth and enormity of this reality, especially the effect on human beings of the knowledge of their own capacity to destroy (Prager, 2009, p.139):

In April 1994, Rwanda was immersed in a brutal wave of organized violence that left an estimated one million people dead in a period of only three months. Civil war, genocide against the Tutsi minority group and violent reprisal attacks until 1998 horrified its inhabitants. The thoroughly planned and state-monitored genocidal violence was specifically marked by the extensive participation of the local population: neighbors went after neighbors by means of guns, machetes or sticks during house-to-house searches, at roadblocks or at central congregation points. Looting, destroying property and genocidal acts including murder and sexual violence were common. (p.2)

Mass organized violence, such as war and genocide, has particularly long-term consequences on mental health and psychosocial conditions (Rieder & Elbert, 2013) :

In the aftermath of 1994, genocide survivors showed high rates of mental health and psychosocial problems due to the inconceivable, dehumanized brutality that most of them had been exposed or witness to. Entire family systems as well as the general social fabric that formerly provided support were destroyed due to losses of family members and growing mistrust and fear following the genocide. A great majority of the survivors were female and woman-headed households proved to be especially vulnerable, suffering from the effects of economic deprivation, which included a lack of food, housing, and money for the education of their children. (p.2)

Violence in the form of wars, genocides, ethnic cleansing, or political/military repressions left its mark on the lived experience of the 20th century as “trauma” (Traverso, 2019). Throughout the twentieth century, people have started to speak continually about “*being traumatized*” by an act of violence, first in Western societies and then, soon after, throughout the rest of the world, and have employed “the language of trauma” to explain “what happens, not only to themselves but to the collectives that they are part of it as well” (Alexander, 2004, p.2). Traumatic histories of nations have generated interest in a new set of social questions, no less relevant to collectivities as to individual persons: whether it is either possible or desirable for survivors of trauma to forget the various horrors they have lived through, of trauma’s legacy over time, of social memory, and of the quest for reconciliation and the possibility of forgiveness (Prager, 2009, p.140). An urgent need arose to develop knowledge about trauma resulting from collective violence from a global perspective (Ray, 2008).

Focusing on the experience of those living through these events, both their being overwhelmed by its enormity and incapable of fully absorbing its impact, many suggest that human experience itself has been transformed by the unique scale of events and the potential for danger to which people are aware and to which they have been subjected. (p.139)

Robben & Suárez-Orozco (2000), in *"Cultures under Siege: Collective Violence and Trauma"*, underline the importance of analyzing trauma and violence in conjunction rather than separately. The complexities of large-scale violence and trauma require interdisciplinary and multilayered perspectives since collective violence and trauma cannot be reduced to a single level of analysis or mono-causal explanations and they avoid “silver bullets”, single origins, and mechanistic causation” (p.9) and broaden the dialogue between psychoanalysis and anthropology by focusing on a set of empirical and theoretical issues around the study of violence and trauma; the interdisciplinary dialogue between psychoanalysis and anthropology leads to the mutual enrichment of violence and trauma although psychoanalysis and anthropology belong to quite different intellectual traditions. The intra-psychic level of analysis of psychoanalysis (paying attention to the intrapsychic mechanism) and the socio-cultural level focus of anthropology (working on interpersonal and socio-cultural formations) develops mutually intelligible and fruitful conversation around the enduring problem of collective violence and trauma (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000):

Of the two disciplines, psychoanalysis has a more systematic history of involvement with the topic of violence via the study of aggression. Although anthropologists have studied war and aggression.... Freud himself initiated an elaborate psychoanalytical discourse on the problem of human aggression, violence, and destructiveness. Freud saw aggression as a fundamental and enduring aspect of human nature... He links human destructiveness to his changing theory of drive. In his latter writings Freud links aggression, violence, and destructiveness to the so-called 'death instincts'. Yet in other portions of his work Freud articulates a slightly different view of aggression and violence... Freud places the re-curring eruption of violence in human societies in the context of unresolved tensions between social constrictions and unconscious impulses. In several passages of *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud directly links aggression to socio-cultural formations and frustrations. (p.26-28)

There are also various disparate psychoanalytic interpretations of aggression and violence such as Melanie Klein's innate theories of aggression and violence and interdisciplinary approach to human destructiveness of Erich Fromm (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000, p.4-5). Even while psychodynamic terms such as "narcissistic injury" and "pathological mourning" may be essential for comprehending violence, Robben and Suárez-Orozco (2000) argue that one should not undervalue the significance of social, economic, and institutional factors in structuring the human potential for destruction.

On the issue of aggression, psychologist anthropologist John Ingham claims:

Organized violence has occurred, and continues to occur, at every level of social complexity. Murder and feuding were frequent among hunter-gatherers, peoples sometimes thought to be relatively peaceful. Headhunting and murderous retribution against suspected sorcerers were common among horticultural societies. Many tribal societies were warlike. Most preindustrial states were militaristic, and some even ritualized their hegemony with human sacrifice. And wars between states and, increasingly, terrorism and ethnic violence are commonplaces in the modern world. (p.2)

In *the Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, Mann (2004) focuses on ethnic cleansing as "one of the main evils of modern times" (p.2). For him, ethnic cleansing is not primitive or alien; it is modern and belongs to civilization. The dark side of democracy, Mann claims, has always carried the possibility that the majority might tyrannize minorities in certain types of multiethnic environments (Mann, 2004). Even though there is a tendency to think of a government as providing safety and security for its citizens, for all too many people who belong to certain marginalized and persecuted groups, their own government has been means of their destruction

(Alvarez, 2010). Aslan (2010), for instance, argues that Dersim witnessed the most brutal attacks in "modern" history. Democracy, Mann (2004) claims, means rule by the people but in modern times "the people" have come to mean two things: the first is "demos" meaning the ordinary people, the mass of population. Yet in our civilization the people also mean "ethnos", an ethnic group, a nation, - a people that shares a common culture and sense of heritage, distinct from other peoples. But if the people are to rule in their own nation-state, and if the people are defined in ethnic terms, then its ethnic unity may outweigh the kind of citizen diversity that is central to democracy. When one ethnic group forms a majority, for then it can rule "democratically" but also tyrannically (Mann, 2004). The state creates popular perceptions of right and wrong, good, and evil, and works vigorously to reinforce and defend them. One powerful instrument for accomplishing this is the law, and states often attempt to legitimize their destructive actions by enacting statutes that support their policies as in the case of the Nazis who used the law to increasingly marginalize the Jews of Germany (Alvarez, 2010).

2.1.1. Collective Trauma

People generally assume that the world is a reasonably safe, predictable, and meaningful place; and this set of ideas, Janoff-Bulman (1992) asserts, is at the heart of our fundamental assumptions about who we are, what the world around us is like, and how we make sense of those two. When things happen as expected in our lives, our assumptive environment assists us in perceiving a balanced contingency between what we do and what we get as an outcome. However, when this pattern is substantially disrupted, as in the case of trauma, it can have a devastating impact on this balance and lead our core assumptions to be "shattered" (Janoff-Bulman, 1989). So, what is this thing called trauma?

There is no universal consensus on the definition of trauma despite its widespread use (Koh, 2021); yet, as a general and comprehensive definition; trauma, a psychological term, refers to a pattern of experience that individuals cannot fully assimilate and is used to explain the damage suffered by human beings caught in the vortex of the capacity to destroy (Piager, 2009, p. 139). According to Janet (cited in Levine, 2017), for an event to turn into a trauma, very intense and repressed emotions must prevent the memories from being "processed properly" (p.14). Studies in the field of trauma

show that trauma is not stories about bad events that happened at a time in the past, but "physical sensations at the moment when a life-threatening event occurs" (p.14). Janet reflects on how traumatized people are stuck in the past (cited in Levine,2017):

While they have an obsessive desire to leave the horror they have experienced behind, they also continue to act and feel as if the horror is still happening. When they fail to leave the trauma behind, all their energy is spent trying to control their emotions and they are prevented from responding to the demands of the moment. (p.14-15)

The study of "traumatic memories" has a long and considerable history in the fields of psychology and psychiatry; it dates to neurology founder Jean-Martin Charcot's work with hysterical victims at the Salpetriere Hospital in Paris in the 1870s (Van Der Kolk, cited in Levine,2017). In 1889, Pierre Janet, one of Charcot's students, conducted studies in the field of trauma, today called PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder). Yet, since Western psychology and psychiatry have placed so much emphasis on the manifestation of trauma in individual psychopathologies, the term "massive trauma" became a prominent "psychiatric concern" only after the First World War, when shell-shocked men produced the same symptoms as hysterics (Robben and Suárez-Orozco, 2000, p.23):

The symptoms of combat trauma- crying fits, anxiety attacks, tremors, exhaustion, irritability, jumpiness, loss of appetite, apathy, depression- were at the first diagnosed as a physical affliction of the nervous system caused by the concussive effects of exploding shells...The symptoms were re-evaluated as a psychological trauma. (p.13)

Human-made massive trauma was seen as an exclusive military affair until the Second World War because most casualties have always been inflicted on military personnel. The Second World War eventually brought about the treatment of massive trauma among large civilian populations:

The diagnosis of collective trauma became of acute significance during the post Second World War decade when increasing numbers of concentration camp survivors, resistance fighters, veterans, and sailors of the mercant marine, and their children began to suffer from the aftereffects of their war experiences. The unfathomable traumas inflicted in Japanese and Nazi Germany concentration camps demanded urgent professional attention.

The development of the psychiatric treatment of trauma has also contributed to a collectivization of massive trauma; it has been understood individual symptoms can be generalized into common patterns; for example, survivors of Nazi persecution and survivors of the Hiroshima bombing showed some identical psychic problems"

(Krystal, 1968, cited in Robben and Suárez-Orozco, p.24). The collective recognition of Nazi concentration camp survivors and Vietnam War veterans has led psychotherapists to look for shared symptoms in each group, thus tending towards a homogeneous treatment that creates a collective memory.

The historical development of the concept of massive trauma from “shell shock” to “post-traumatic stress disorder” reveals remarkable periods of cross-fertilization between the disciplines of anthropology and psychoanalysis. (p.4)

The term “concentration camp syndrome” was first coined in 1954 and would influence the direction of scientific investigation as much as the term ‘post-traumatic stress disorder’ would become a standard concept in the 1980s.

In 1980, as the number of veterans of the Vietnam War diagnosed with psychological problems kept growing, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) established a new diagnostic category, called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). (p. 139)

The power of trauma that transcends its individual impact resulted in its conceptual language circulating in the sociological lexicon (Abrutyn, 2023). With the 20th century, the emphasis on being “traumatized” by an event and the use of “language of trauma” accelerated the focus on the collective aspect of trauma (Alexander, 2004); because it has been understood that not only individuals but also the whole society is faced with traumatic events (Levine, 2017), and the consequences of mass trauma affect individuals as well as social groups and cultural formations (Robben and Suárez-Orozco, 2000). The affiliation of large social groups with massive trauma influences society ranging from social restoration to disintegration (p.21). Throughout the ages, Levine (2017) claims, people have lived under the torture of memories that filled them with feelings of fear, horror, helplessness, anger and revenge, and the feeling of irreparable loss haunted them like a scourge; trauma has become an important part of human life experience (p.25). Over the past few decades, numerous studies have highlighted the importance of the sociocultural environment for how individuals and even entire communities experience trauma. Trauma related to forced displacement for instance, has psychosocial impacts not only on the individual but also on the family, community, and society at large. Communities tend to be more dependent, passive, silent, leaderless, distrustful, and suspicious. Other negative effects noted in the literature include the disruption of traditional structures, institutions, and familiar lifestyles, as well as the deterioration of social and ethical norms and loss of social capital (Somasundaram, 2014, cited in Theisen-Womersly, 2021).

Hirschberger (2018) defines collective trauma as the psychological reactions to a traumatic event that affect an entire society; collective trauma does not merely reflect an historical fact, but it is also “a cataclysmic event that shatters the basic fabric of society” (p.1). Saul’s (2013) landmark definition of collective trauma emphasizes trauma’s larger social impact that occurs at numerous levels, with “shared injuries” to a groups’ social, cultural, and physical ecologies (p. 1). If an experience experienced by two or more people is collective in nature, their shared traumatic experience, according to Koh (2021), be described as a collective trauma; but for an experience to be evaluated collectively, there must be some degree of “sameness” in the subjectivity of that experience (p.118). The difference between individual and collective trauma is conceptualized by Erikson (1976) as:

By individual trauma, I mean a blow to the psyche that breaks through one’s defenses so suddenly and with brutal force that one cannot react to it effectively... By collective trauma, on the other hand, I mean a blow to the basic tissues of social life that damages the bonds attaching people together and impairs the prevailing sense of communality. The collective trauma works its way slowly and even insidiously into the awareness of those who suffer from it, so it does not have the quality of suddenness normally associated with trauma. But it is a form of shock all the same, a gradual realization that the community no longer exists as an effective source of support and that an important part of the self has disappeared... We no longer exist as a connected pair or as linked cells in a larger communal body. (p.4)

Collective trauma is devastating for groups as well as individuals and has an impact that affects not only the direct victims but also the entire society and it also transforms the way those who experience it perceive the world and the dynamics of both in-group and out-group (Hirschberger, 2018). Collective trauma is associated with a dramatic loss of identity and meaning, a tear in the social fabric that affects a group of people that has achieved some degree of cohesion (Hirschberger, 2018). Using the word ‘cultural’, Alexander (2004) proposes a model of “cultural trauma theory” with the following definition:

Cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways. (p.1)

In Alexander’s (2004) formulation, cultural trauma theory is a new empirical and scientific concept suggesting new meaningful and causal relationships between previously unrelated events, and perception (p.1) and this new theoretical concept partakes so deeply in everyday life and language: “Such rootedness in the lifeworld is

the soil that nourishes every social scientific concept.” (p.2). At this point, Abrutyn (2023) claims that many enduring questions remain largely open by asking: What are the differences and similarities between Erikson's (1976) collective trauma and the work on cultural trauma (Alexander et al. 2004)? Should we consider them separate, the same, or similar concepts? Koh (2021) suggests defining a common trauma experience based on geographical commonality as “collective trauma”, whereas calling the experience of shared trauma based on a person's identity, ethnicity, or culture as “cultural trauma”. Although collective and cultural trauma are overlapping concepts; cultural trauma, for Koh, is both a subset and unique form of collective trauma: Not every aspect of collective trauma is cultural trauma:

The traumatic event of the terrorist attack on the World Trade Centre on September 11 highlights the important difference between collective trauma and cultural trauma. All 2,977 individuals who died that day had the shared traumatic experience of being present at that time and place when that event unfolded, and it could be said that they shared a collective trauma. The same could be said of those who were near that place and the hundreds of firefighters and rescue workers who attended. Many millions more, in the United States and worldwide, who watched the repeated screening of the airplanes crashing into the towers on television may have shared a collective vicarious trauma. For the Americans, however, it was arguably also a cultural trauma, as the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre were a cultural icon for enterprise and national pride. It may also be construed as a cultural trauma for many in other commercial centers around the world, thousands of miles away, who looked upon the World Trade Centre as a symbol of the free market, trade, and capitalism, even though they may not have experienced any direct trauma either as individuals or as a collective. (p.127)

Similarly, the Protestant Reformation, and the imposition of Western values on colonial societies in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries are qualified by Smelser as cultural traumas (Smelser, 2013, cited in Koh, 2021). Cultural trauma, Koh (2021) claims, occurs when the “system” through which a collective makes sense of its experience is “corrupted, distorted, compromised, or destroyed”; and the “thinking” system of the collective mind is its culture (p.129). Koh also suggests a model called “complex cultural trauma” giving “greater emphasis to the continuous experience of trauma and its impact on the function of the collective mind” (p.129):

Complex cultural trauma could begin with the corruption of cultural substrates; for example, by the overvaluing of some collective experiences over others or by censoring the response to particular shared experiences. The privileging of certain cultural processes while devaluing others will also distort the formation of cultural products. In some instances, such as colonization, slavery, and genocide, the whole cultural apparatus is compromised or destroyed. In many instances, cultural trauma

involves a pervasive distortion or destruction of its substrates, instruments, and products as well as superimposed, defined events. Significantly, a destruction of a collective's thinking apparatus—its culture—will severely compromise its ability to make sense of definable adverse events. (p.129)

There are also different concepts of collective trauma in the scientific literature: “collectivized trauma” and “symbol-mediated collective trauma” (Kühner, 2007 cited in Gürtaş, p.320), “chosen trauma” (Volkan, 1988, 1999, 2004, 2006), “national trauma” (Neal, 1998) and “political trauma” (Kristeva,1989). According to Kühner (2007), the concept of “collectivized trauma” emphasizes the importance of a collectivized traumatic event for the collective identity of the group and “symbol-mediated collective trauma”, on the other hand, focuses on the part of the group that does not have the symptoms of trauma but is severely shaken by experiencing a partial identification with the victims due to its closeness to the group. For Kühner, collective trauma, with content opposite to these two concepts, describes a real, that is, a massively experienced trauma (cited in Gürtaş, 2020). Volkan uses the term “chosen traumas” (Volkan, 1988, 1999, 2004, 2006) to define shared historical mental representations that is linked to large groups' difficulty in mourning. Arthur Neal (1998) analyzes “national trauma” that has been “created by individual and collective reactions to a volcano-like event that shook the foundations of the social world” (p. ix). National traumas, according to Neal (1998), vary from personal traumas in that they are shared with others; and fear and vulnerability play a role in national trauma responses (p.4). On the other hand, Kristeva (1989, cited in Resende & Budryte) emphasizes the “political” traumas; for Kristeva (1989), trauma can be personal or political: the former is typically regarded in terms of a person's specific, unique mental identity, whereas the latter may be interpreted in terms of widespread occurrences like wars that result in collective traumas (cited in Resende & Budryte).

Regardless of how trauma is named, trauma, as an experience whose consequences persist through time (Piager, 2009), applies to any society, ethnic group, social category, or class that has been exposed to extreme traumatization, such as social, cultural, political, ethnic, or religious persecution leaving life-long problems (Krystal, 1968, cited in Suarez and Orozco, 2000, p. 24). Trauma has no geographical or cultural limitations, and the theory of cultural trauma applies, Aleaxander (2004) claims, without prejudice, to all situations when societies have, or have not, constructed, and experienced cultural traumatic events (p.27). According to Neal (1998), any

collectivity may be traumatized by extraordinary events that are explosive enough to create disruption and radical change in a short period of time (p.3). Another important point Alexander (2004) emphasizes is that events are not inherently traumatic and do not create collective trauma themselves; instead, they are “socially mediated attribution” that may be made in real time, as event unfolds or it may also be made before the event occurs, as an adumbration, or after the event has concluded, as a post-hoc reconstruction” (p.8). Similarly, Gabor Maté claims: “Trauma is not what happens to you; it is what happens inside you as a result of what happens to you” (Benazzo & Benazzo, 2021). For Alexander (2004), societies can be subjected to massive disruptions that do not become traumatic; for traumas to emerge at the level of collectivity, social crises first must become “cultural crises” (p.10). Alexander also importantly underlines that events are one thing; but ‘representations’ of these events are quite another. Trauma is not the consequence of a group experiencing pain; rather, it is the outcome of severe discomfort infiltrating the center of the collectivity's sense of its own identity and collective actors “decide” to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to their sense of who they are, where they came from, and where they want to go (Alexander, 2004, p.10). The gap between "event" and "representation", Alexander asserts, might be viewed as the "trauma process" (p.11); and bridging the gap depends upon a “spiral of signification” (Thompson, 1998, cited in Alexander, p.12) consisting of four critical representations: the nature of the pain, the nature of the victim, relation of the trauma victim to the wider audience and attribution of responsibility (Alexander, 2004, p.12-15). Alexander also talks about “the cultural construction of trauma”:

The persons who compose collectivities broadcast symbolic representations of ongoing social events, past, present, and future. These group representations can be seen as claims about the shape of social reality, its causes, and the responsibilities for action such causes imply. The cultural construction of trauma begins with such a claim. It is a claim to some fundamental injury, an exclamation of the terrifying profanation of some sacred value, a narrative about a horribly destructive social process, and a demand for emotional, institutional and symbolic reparation and reconstitution. (p.11)

The catastrophe, Hirschberger (2018) claims, is reflected in the group's collective memory not just as a repetition of the events, but also as a continuing reconstruction of the trauma to make sense of it. Collective memory of traumatic events, Hirschberger sees, is a dynamic psychosocial process related to the construction of meaning: Collective trauma may jeopardize collective identity that may raise issues about the

value of the group, as well as essential belief systems for both victims and perpetrators (Hirschberger, 2018). Experiencing trauma is understood as a sociological process that defines a painful injury to the collectivity, establishes the victim, attributes responsibility, and distributes the idea and material consequences (Alexander, 2004, p.22).

Apart from the horrific loss of life, collective trauma is also “a crisis of meaning since there is a process that begins with a collective trauma, transforms into a collective memory, and culminates in a system of meaning that allows groups to redefine who they are and where they are going” (Hirschberger, 2018, p.1). Although trauma is unquestionably harmful, Hirschberger (2018) claims, it may contribute to the development of a national narrative, a sense of identity, and cognitive working models that ostensibly serve to protect the group's safety and well-being and to give it with values and rules for the future. Hence, collective trauma may enable the creation of many dimensions of meaning and social identity, such as purpose, values, efficacy, and collective worth (Hirschberger, 2008). Hirschberger's study analyzes the process of meaning making for historical victims and offenders, argues that while there are certain pathological components to meaning borne out of trauma, these meaning structures, in the end, contribute to group identity and cohesion, give a sense of history and destiny, and propel organizations to use the disaster as a springboard for growth (Hirschberger, 2018). Similarly, in his enlightenment theory, Alexander (2004) suggests that trauma is as a kind of rational response to abrupt change, whether at the individual or social level: The events that trigger trauma is perceived clearly and the effects of these responses are both problem-solving and progressive. The responses to such traumas, in enlightenment version of trauma, is about the efforts to alter the circumstances that caused them: “The very fact that a disruptive event has occurred means that new opportunities emerge for innovation and change.” (Neal, 1998, cited in Alexander, 2004, p.4).

2.1.2. The Psychoanalytical Understanding of Collective Trauma

There are many methods of measuring individual trauma; but measuring collective, cultural, political, or national trauma becomes ‘problematic’. Collective trauma becomes a concept that is analyzed and interpreted rather than a phenomenon that can be measured. At this point, its meaning gains value from the psychoanalytical

perspective. The psychoanalytical version of trauma theory places “a model of unconscious emotional fears and cognitively distorting mechanisms of psychological defense between the external shattering event and the actor's internal traumatic response” (Alexander, 2004, p.5). When horrible things happen to people, according to the psychoanalytic version, they can become so terrified that they “repress the experience of trauma” itself (Alexander, 2004). The traumatizing event becomes distorted in the actor's imagination and memory, “rather than activating direct cognition and rational understanding and the truth about the experience is only “unconsciously” perceived: “In effect, truth goes underground, and accurate memory and responsible actions are its victims” (Alexander, 2004):

Traumatic feelings and perceptions, then, come not only from the originating event but from the anxiety of keeping it repressed and trauma will be resolved, not only by setting things right in the world but by setting things right in the self. (p.5)

Psychoanalysis, Mitchell (1998) claims, started “not with memory but with forgetting” (cited in Mistral, 2003, p.139); the interest in the absence of memory, combined with the prevailing explanation of mental problems, particularly hysteria, as being related to an earlier trauma, resulted in the assumption that painful experiences are constituted as repressed memory. The conflictual disturbance caused by repressed memories is seen as responsible for a patient's mental problems (Alexander, 2004). According to the psychoanalytic version, the truth can be recovered, and psychological equanimity restored, only, as historian Saul Friedlander (1979) once put it, “when the memory comes” (cited in Alexander, 2004, p.5). Cathy Caruth's approach focuses on the complex permutations that unconscious emotions impose on traumatic reactions (cited in Alexander, 2004); the traumatic event cannot be left behind because “the breach in the mind' experience”, according to Caruth, “is experienced too soon”:

The abruptness prevents the mind from fully recognizing the event. It is experienced “too unexpectedly...to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness.” Buried in the unconscious, the event is experienced irrationally, “in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor.

For Caruth (1996), trauma is an overwhelming experience of sudden or catastrophic events, in which the response to the event occurs in the often “delayed, uncontrolled and repetitive appearance of hallucinations” (cited in Resende & Budryte, p.2). There are a paradox lies in trauma:

Trauma is felt, but not understood; it is memorized and recalled, but not necessarily experienced; it defies language, but insists on being communicated; it refuses to be incorporated into normality but goes on perpetuating itself in memory; it is triggered at a specific moment in time, but alters its linearity; it must be forgotten, but it is always being recalled and relived. Trauma is a slayer of certainties, a shaker of truths: it irrevocably changes our spatial and temporal concept of the world and ourselves. (p.2-3)

Caruth (1996) has argued that traumatic events are by definition “incomprehensible” because partial forgetting describes characteristic of trauma (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000, p. 7): “Trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual past’s, but rather in the way its very unassimilated nature; the way it was precisely not known in the first instance returns to haunt the survivor later on” (p. 7). A traumatic event is one that ‘shatters our expectations and our preconceptions of how the world functions’ (Edkins 2001, cited in Robben & Suárez-Orozco, p.3). Gampel (2000) applies Freud’s term “the uncanny”: qualities of feeling that arouse dread and horror and as a return of what has been repressed (p.50). The experience of the uncanny represents a form of dialectic between reminiscence and forgetting (p.49). Gampel expands the meaning of the uncanny to include frightening experiences that cannot be expressed in words. Those who experience social violence such as the Holocaust are faced with an unbelievable and unreal reality that is incompatible with anything they knew previously and as a result, they can no longer fully believe what they see with their own eyes; they have difficulty in distinguishing between the unreal reality they have survived and the fears that spring from their own imagination (Gampel, p. 50).

The term ‘chosen trauma’ is formulated by Volkan (1997) as “the shared mental representation of the traumatic event in a large group’s history in which the group suffered catastrophic loss or experienced helplessness, humiliation, dehumanization, helplessness, inability of mourning, vengeance and hatred” (Volkan, 1997). The term “chosen” specifies the ‘unconscious’ choice of the traumatized group on carrying the past generation’s mental representation to its own identity since a large group does not consciously choose to be victimized or suffer humiliation. Groups may have struggled with many traumatic events in their past, yet some of them, the chosen ones, remain vivid over centuries (Volkan, 1997) which keep people together since it is connected to “the past generation’s failure to mourn losses after experiencing a shared traumatic event” (Volkan, 1997). According to Koh (2021), even though some events are considered historical regarding the linear dimension of time, they can be indeed

timeless psychologically. The traumatic wound is not bound by time; when an individual mind finds itself in a mental space where it re-encounters a traumatic event from years ago, it does not re-experience it as a historical event of the past but as something that is occurring very much in the present and it responds to that experience accordingly. The so-called timelessness of collective traumatic experiences can be observed when a large group responds to a present-day crisis as if it takes them back to a critical event in the past. Koh uses the phrase “takes them back” rather than reminding because it is not a matter of memory but one of re-experiencing the present as if the past was occurring in totality (Koh, 2021). Innes and Steele analyze collective trauma through its relationship with ontological security: “seeking of consistent self through time and space; and desire to have that self-recognized and affirmed by other” (Innes and Steele, cited in p.15). The concept of ontological security comes from psychologist R.D. Laing (1969):

...described the ontologically secure agent as someone who has a sense of his presence in the world as a real, alive, whole, and in a temporal sense, a continuous person’ and noted that if ontological security is absent, the ordinary circumstance of everyday life constitutes a continual and deadly threat. (p. 16)

Insecurity develops in the ontological security-seeking process in several ways, and trauma generates an extreme form of that insecurity (Ines & Steele, 2014). Trauma can serve as a resource for shaping the present and future group self (Kinnvall, 2004 cited in Ines & Steele, p. 17). Groups construct “a sense of self” against, with, and amongst others through a “security-seeking process” (p. 17) and the need for ontological security can be seen most clearly where it is absent: in situations in which traumatic events make ontological security and insecurity legible (p.18):

Situations of trauma and crisis highlight ontological insecurity... In times when social change occurs, and the routines of a particular society are disrupted in a traumatic way- for example through violent revolution- the need to recreate a sense of ontological security is more evident. (p.28)

The 9/11 terrorist attacks and the subsequent “War on Terror” are treated as a “reaffirmation of identity in the face of ontological insecurity” by the actions of the United States: “The ontological insecurity creates space for the political act of reconstructing identity via the ruptured biological narrative” (Ines & Steele, p.26).

Some of the main emotions both the individual and collective traumatized mind seeks to isolate and avoid are shame and humiliation; these emotions are seen by Koh (2021)

as an integral part of a traumatic experience. The mind tries to protect itself by separating the traumatic wound from the rest of it so that it can continue to function. Technically, the mind is said to repress or dissociate the trauma; commonly, it is named forgetting (Koh, 2021). This process is usually spoken of as encapsulation, a wrapping up of the wound and hiding it from consciousness. One of the more consistent observations of massive trauma such as genocides is the collective unwillingness or inability to talk about it in its aftermath; there is often a collusive silence in the generation that had direct experience of that trauma. This has been seen in the large population of Holocaust survivors who migrated to Melbourne in the aftermath of the Second World War, and in survivors of the Armenian and Cambodian genocides (Koh, 2021). The goal is to restore collective psychological health by breaking down societal suppression and restoring memory. To do this, social scientists emphasize the significance of discovering some collective way of removing repression and allowing the pent-up emotions of loss and grieving to be released through public acts of memorial, artistic representation, and public political action (Alexander, 2004, p.7).

2.1.3. Intergenerational Transmission of Trauma (ITT)

Infants, from the minute they are born, are surrounded by stories of their parents, and family, and how this new life will develop and enrich the ongoing narrative (Fiese et al., cited in Fivush, 2008). The preschool years and adolescence are two critical developmental periods for autobiographical memory: in the preschool years, autobiography is just beginning to emerge, and in adolescence, autobiographical memories start to coalesce into an overarching life narrative that defines oneself, others, and values (Fivush, 2008). “Autobiographical narrative”, as called by psychologists, defines who we are in relation to our family, our nation, and history and shapes the understanding of history in the making and in the past (Fivush, 2008). Narratives are canonical linguistic frameworks that organize event memories into comprehensive chronological and causal sequences and provide the building blocks of a life story (Fivush, 2008). Autobiographical memories are created and recreated in daily interactions in which we share our stories with others. Walter Benjamin postulates the distinction between “transmitted experience” (*Erfahrung*) and “lived experience” (*Erlebnis*) and emphasizes the transmitted aspect of memory. Lived experience is an “individual, perishable, volatile and temporary experience”; the transmitted experience, on the other hand, represents an experience that “naturally”

lasts from one generation to the next and forms the identities of the groups in the long run (Traverso, 2019, p. 11).

The intergenerational transmission of trauma is a manifestation of the collective impact of collective trauma on society (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000, p.25). “Collective violence is encoded into cultural narratives that psychologically implicated in the transgenerational workings of trauma” (Robben & Suárez-Orozco, 2000). Traumatic events change the course of history and leave a legacy that persists not only in the lives of individuals but also in their descendants (Koh, 2021). Collective memory of trauma differs from individual memory in that it lasts beyond the lives of the direct survivors of the events and is recalled by group members who may be geographically and temporally far from the traumatic events. Subsequent generations of trauma survivors, who were not there at the time of the events, may recall them differently than the direct survivors, and so the construction of these historical events may alter from generation to generation (Hirschberger, 2018).

Eagle (2014) discusses collective or historical traumatization, in which entire groups of people experience a sense of common persecution or victimization:

The idea of historical trauma is associated most strongly with the history of first nation people in America and the genocidal violence to which they were subjected. Collective trauma is the term that tends to be used about the response of groups of South Africans subject to a brutal apartheid and colonial history, as well as about the response of groups of Jewish people to the Holocaust. Such trauma may be understood to be transmitted intergenerationally via both conscious and unconscious mechanisms, such that those of generations past those directly victimized nevertheless carry the experience of trauma within themselves. In some respect identity and collective trauma come to be intertwined. Such conceptualizations of trauma may encompass a somewhat broader definition of traumatic stressors including not only relations of oppression that threaten actual survival of the group, but also more ideological forces that threaten the eradication of cultural or group identity. In this framework racism, xenophobia or fundamentalisms based on oppression may be understood to produce collective traumatization. (p. 13)

Transmission begins in families through what is being communicated as well as “what is not directly communicated”; through stories and silences, children learn about the groups’ past suffering. (Bezo & Maggi, 2015, cited in Buljubasic & Hola, p.10). Children, therefore, can be persuaded that the harm occurred and internalize the victim’s identity (p.10). Trauma is transmitted through “narratives, memories, moral imperatives, relational models, and embodied models of being-in-the-world to one’s

descendants... (and) involves imparting shared traumatic experiences resulting from histories of racism, genocide, persecution, dispossession, colonialism, and other collective losses and suffering” (Denham, 2020, cited in Buljubasic & Hola, p.10). Various cultural products – art, commemorations, and memorial days, holidays, and museums related to the violent past can integrate and further historical trauma. In schools, educational programs, and textbooks; the various channels of communication in the media, and politicians, prominent group members can also revoke and/or enhance the trauma.

From psychoanalytical perspective, Gampel (2000) introduces the concept of ‘radioactivity’ to describe how traumatic experiences can continue as emotional damage to future generations. A radioactive leakage occurs when parents’ debilitating traumatic memories affect their children who often internalize incomprehensible fears and anxieties that undermine a healthy separation of inner and outer reality. The mental representations of the tragedies experienced by the group are shared among members of the group. The damaged self-images associated with the mental representations of the shared traumatic event are “deposited into the developing self-representation of children in the next generation as if these children will be able to mourn the loss or reverse the humiliation” (Volkan, 1997, p.46). Such depositing generates an intergenerational transmission of trauma. When the chosen trauma passes among generations it alters its function: the truth about the past is no longer important for the group, but the considerable point is that through sharing the chosen trauma, members of the group are tied together. In other words, the chosen trauma becomes an indistinguishable part of the group’s identity (Volkan, 1997). The role of the intergenerational transmission of collective trauma, Buljubasic and Hola assert, may lead to group radicalization; future generations may consider themselves historically victimized by “the other”. Groups transfer the burdens and effects of past traumatic experiences which affect group members who do not have any direct traumatic experience. Such a legacy of collective traumatic events can persist over generations and encompass psychological and social reactions. The political violence survivors, “relating to the Holocaust, the Armenian genocide, the internment of Japanese-American during World War II, and colonization of indigenous peoples”, confirm the reoccurrence of collective trauma among generations that did not directly experience these events.

Alexander (2004) discusses “carrier groups” which are the collective agents of the trauma process (p.11). Carrier groups, for Alexander, have both ideal and material interests, they have positions in the social structure, and they have discursive abilities for communicating their claims that might be referred to as "meaning making" in the public realm. Carrier groups also can be generational, pitting the viewpoints and interests of a younger generation against those of an older generation (Alexander, 2004).

An enormous body of knowledge has been gathered on intergenerational transmission of trauma in communities addressing traumatic experiences: the experience of slavery among African-Americans, colonial political violence in Australia, war grandchildren in Germany, the Jewish diaspora, survivors of the Holodomor – a mass starvation of millions of Ukrainians from 1932 to 1933 and descendant of displaced Palestinians during the Nakba of 1978 (Bezo & Maggi, 2015, cited in Buljubasic & Hola, p.10). Generations who were not directly affected by the war and /or political violence report numerous issues such as “the feeling of emptiness, consequences from a silencing of the past, and questions related to an untold or hidden past” (p.11). Levine (2017) states that in his clinical work with the children and grandchildren of Holocaust survivors, he frequently encountered symptoms of general anxiety and depression. These people talk about frightening images, sensations, and emotions related to specific events that could not have happened to them, but which, according to Levin, had happened to the patients' parents. Children clearly experienced their parents' traumatic memories as if they were their own (p.211-212). Kahane-Nissenbaum (2011) explores the intergenerational transmission of the Holocaust in the third generation through their perceptions and interpretations of the Holocaust. The third generation has been found proud of their grandparents for having the force to survive the Holocaust and has perceived them as heroes (Kahane-Nissenbaum, 2011). Referring to commitment to Judaism, Zionism, and Israel, a sense of responsibility has been indicated by the third generation to carry out the legacy of their grandparents. The third generation also remembers the negativity experienced by their grandparents, but at the same time, they create “their own legacy through meaning, strength, and pride” (p. 63). Guilt and anger have been transmitted, but as a new identity in the third generation. “Anger is no longer only directed at the Nazis but at oneself in the form of regret because of not asking more questions while the first generation was alive” (p.63). The third generation is

also found motivated to prevent their grandparents' experiences from being forgotten or not allowing for their religion or heritage to become extinct (Kahane-Nissenbaum, 2011). Svob et al. (2016) attempt to investigate intergenerational transmission within a social-cognitive model considering the ways autobiographical memory transforms into collective memory (p.849). Svob et al. (2016) investigate the intergenerational transmission of war-related memories in second-generation post-war Croatians and find war-related memories impacted the second-generation's identity to a greater extent than did non-war-related memories.

Children of Holocaust survivors have tended to become over-achievers who restrain their normal aggression and rebellion to compensate for the losses of their parents and magically undo the harm done to them. Survivor-parents show an over-protectiveness towards their children which is interpreted by psychiatrists as a combination of a reemergence of object feelings suppressed during the Holocaust and a defensive anxiety about new losses. (p.25)

The first generation of Palestinian refugees was severely impacted by the suffering and agony of the Al-Nakba meaning "Catastrophe," "Great Disaster," and "Great Loss" that applied to the Palestinian condition immediately following the end of the 1948 war (Adwan, cited in Adwan, et al., 2011, p.197).

Palestinians who once lived in prosperity in their homes and on their lands were suddenly expelled and uprooted and thus forced to become refugees. They lost everything, their homes, lands, material possessions and other belongings (books, pictures, clothes, furniture, and kitchen utensils etc.). Families were separated and fragmented and their communities, neighborhoods and societies were destroyed. (p.197)

Yet these emotions have survived the ages and are still very much felt now; second, third, and even fourth generations of refugees today still carry with them the overwhelming sense of loss, anguish, guilt, and living as strangers, regardless of their social situation (Adwan et al., 2011).

2.2. Memory, Trauma, Identity and Politics

2.2.1. Memory in Various Forms

Memory has many forms and operates on many diverse levels, and the things that we remember are of many different kinds and are remembered for many reasons (Misztal, 2003). There are different types of memory defined as procedural, semantic, personal, or autobiographical memory that retrieve the past into the present by summoning the past "as past" (p.10); habit memory bringing the past into the present by acting and

collective or social memory consisting of social constraints and influences (Mistzal, 2003).

Individually held experiences that affect an individual's identity are referred to as autobiographical memories (Hirst and Manier, 2008) that described by Tulving (2002) in terms of two types of long-term memory: semantic (knowledge about the self) and episodic (event-specific knowledge related to prior personal experiences) memory. Autobiographical memory retrieval is thought to be typified by the episodic memory component, which enables the recall of past experiences in great detail (Conway, 2001; Rubin, 2005). Autobiographical remembering as a recollection of past events includes a complex mechanism where encoding, rehearsal and retrieval processes take place that interact reciprocally (Öner & Gülgöz, 2015). The qualitative aspects of autobiographical remembering include “event characteristics” (EC) factor represents the actual experience and is associated with the time of encoding; “phenomenological characteristics” (PC) factor combines the sensory-affective features associated with the experience of retrieval and “rehearsal characteristics” (RC) factor is about the repeated recollection and reconstruction of the experience by thinking and talking during the time between encoding and retrieval” (2015, p.3). The frequency of rehearsal, for instance, plays important part in the memory experience at the time of retrieval, in addition to the meaning attached to the event and the degree to which an event has been encoded and retained will determine how well it will be recalled (2015, p.1). Berntsen (2021) asserts the “involuntary autobiographical memories” that are personal events that come to mind spontaneously, without conscious recall; these spontaneous memories of past events are common in daily life, and that they constitute a context-sensitive, associative method of recalling prior events that requires little executive control.

Human memory performs several psychological processes that make it possible to encode, preserve, transform, and reconstruct lived experiences and according to this viewpoint, the study of memory is a part of cognitive psychology, neurophysiology, biology, and, in the case of memory disorders, neuropsychology, clinical psychology, and psychiatry (Cordonnier et al., 2022). These fields of study investigate "memory in the head" (p.1) through an individual-focused approach. Memory, on the other side, is a subject of analysis for sociology, history, anthropology, philosophy, and

communication studies investigating “memory in the wild” (p.2) from the perspective of the human and social sciences (Cordonnier et al., 2022).

The individual, Kenny (1999) asserts, has two different memories that intimately linked (Kenny, 1999): individual memory and collective memory that often become confused where individual memory is also called autobiographical memory whereas the collective memory as “historical memory” (Halbwachs, 1950) :

Individual memory receives support from the collective memory in order to confirm some of the memories, clarify some of them and even fill some of the gaps; it finds a place for itself in it and merges with it for a while. However, it does not give up moving in its own direction by gradually assimilating this residue left to itself. Collective memory includes individual memories but does not mix with them. It evolves following its own laws. Even if some individual memories are included in it, they turn into a whole in such a way that they no longer contain a personal consciousness. (p. 63-64)

Accordingly, throughout the previous 25 years, autobiographical memories of personal events are examined by psychologists while sociologists concentrate on collective memories of national and world events (Schuman & Corning, 2014); the articles on collective memory are mostly by social scientists (e.g., anthropologists, historians, political scientists, sociologists) rather than psychologists (Hirst & Manier, 2008). Yet, Hirst and Manier (2008), discussing the place of psychology within the literature on collective memory, assert that psychologists have become increasingly well-equipped to engage collective memory and study individuals as embedded in complex social networks. Psychological work has begun to turn into a guide in distinguishing collective memory from “shared” or “collected” memories on the distinction between autobiographical and episodic memory (Conway & Pleydell-Pearce, 2000, cited in Hirst and Manier, 2008). Therefore, the current overview offers an interdisciplinary synthesis of both studies building theoretical knowledge on how autobiographical and collective memory are intertwined (Heux, et al., 2022). Burnell et al. (2022) suggest similar to how autobiographical memories serve individuals, collective memories also serve a collective with "directive, identity, and social functions." (p.2) and in comparing collective memories with autobiographical memories, they find slight variations in how frequently the two types of memory perform these functions. Autobiographical memory is aided by historical memory, says Halbwachs (1950); because ultimately the history of our own life is also a part of the general history; but historical memory covers a much wider period than autobiographical memory (p. 65).

Similarly, the study of memory, Becker (2014) asserts, has evolved from the largely individual, psychological interest into a more “collective” study: previously, memory studies focused on how individuals process past experiences into a complex, yet personal, narratives; yet it has contextualized through the collective experiences of the people who recall and give meaning to events (p.61).

2.2.2. Collective Memory

Remembering, Mitzal (2003) notes, is more than just a personal: memory is “social” since every memory exists through its relationship with what has been shared with others: language, symbols, events, and social and cultural contexts (p.11); and the act of remembering is itself “interactive, promoted by cultural artefacts and cues employed by social purposes” (Schudson, 1997, cited in Mitzal, 2003, p. 12). There is “collective” nature of memory that introduced as the “societal remembrance” (Halbwachs, 1992): a memory of the past that is shared by people who belong to the same social group (Svob et al., 2016). Collective memories are widely held “memories of community members that bear on the collective identity of the community” (Assman, 1999, cited in Hirst and Manier, 2008, p.2). Collective memory also has different related names such as “shared memory”, “collaborative memory” (Orianne & Eustache, 2023), “social memory”, “collective remembrance” or “popular history making” (cited in Kansteiner, 2002, p.181). Phrases like “national memory,” “public memory,” “vernacular memory,” and “countermemory” are also included in the lexicon of memory studies (Kansteiner, 2002).

The idea of what memory is and how it connects to the present has wondered by many thinkers for centuries although the ‘collective’ nature of memory has been paid little attention by traditional accounts (Mitzal, 2003a). In *Durkheim on Collective Memory* (2003a), it is argued by Mitzal that although the term ‘collective memory’ is introduced to sociology by Maurice Halbwachs and modern memory discourse, in general, relies on his description of the process of social remembering, the study of collective nature of memory can be traced back to Durkheim’s approach on “the need for historical continuity” (p.123) even though the notion of collective memory is not explicitly used by Durkheim. Mitzal claims that Halbwachs’s conceptualization of collective memory as “shared social frameworks of individual recollections” (Mitzal, p.124) follows Durkheimian orientation that “every society exhibits and requires a

sense of continuity with the past and that past confers identity on individuals and groups allows us to see collective memory as one of the elementary forms of social life” (p. 136). Misztal’s establishment of the link between Durkheim and his student Halbwachs is based on Misztal’s reconstructions of Durkheim’s assumption in the *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life* written in 1912. In the *Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*, Misztal states, Durkheim views the past as the constitutive factor in creating group solidarity and identity which created through remembering together (Misztal, 2003a). For Durkheim, rituals and their symbolism have significance as means of transmitting social memory and seen as the essential condition of the continuity of collective identity and social life (Misztal, 2003a). According to Misztal, such a reconstruction of Durkheim’s assumptions on “how past endures in the present” (p.137) enables to rethink the term of collective memory in Durkheimian orientation (Misztal, 2003a). Yet Halbwachs’s concept of collective memory, Misztal asserts, is more than a mere application of Durkheim’s theorizing of collective memory as a social fact that confers identity on individuals and groups (Misztal, 2003a, p.21). Halbwachs, moreover expands Durkheim’s idea of collective memory beyond its original connection with rituals.

Although the collective aspect of memory goes back to Durkheim for Misztal; Halbwachs, the student of Durkheim, is accepted as the first who introduce the concept of collective memory and establish the study of societal remembrance. (Hirst & Manier, 2008). Halbwachs's work serves as the main theoretical framework for the majority of historians who investigate collective memories, they interpret collective memories as widely held representations of the past, in line with Halbwachs (Kansteiner, 2002). It is suggested by Halbwachs (1992) that all individual memory is formed within social structures and understood only through a group context. People acquire their memories in society and “it is also in society that they recall, recognize and localize their memories” (Halbwachs, p.38). In this sense, Halbwachs maintains, “there exists a collective memory and social frameworks for memory; it is to the degree that our individual thought places itself in these frameworks and participates in this memory that it is capable of the act of recollection” (p.38). The mind reconstructs its memories under the pressure of society, the memory is constructed in the group and the individuals do the remembering (Halbwachs, 1992). For Halbwachs, collective memory is always “socially framed” since social groups determine what is

“memorable” and how it will be remembered: “The individual calls recollections to mind by relying on the frameworks of social memory” (Halbwachs, 1992 cited in Mitzal, 2003). For Mitzal (2003b), Halbwach’s assertion that every group develops a memory of its own past that highlights its unique identity is still the starting point for all research in the field (Mistzal, p.51). It is suggested by Misztal (2003b) that the division of past into “memorable” and “forgettable” is a social convention, as it is society that ensures what they remember, and how and when they remember it. Collective memory, Mistzal asserts (2003b), is not only what people really remember through their own experience, it also incorporates “the constructed past” which is constitutive of the collectivity; it refers to both to a past that is commonly shared and a past that is collectively commemorated (p.13).

Despite Halbwachs' pervasive power in the field of collective memory, a lot of historians find Halbwachs's emphasis on anti-individualism problematic and they have created social terms like “social memory” and “collective remembrance” to find alternatives to the sociological approaches (Kansteiner, 2002). The exact relationship between the individual and the collective is an ‘unresolved’ topic in studies of collective memory (Kansteiner,2002): At first glance, the confusion between individual and collective memory seems justified by recent psychological and neurological research, which has repeatedly highlighted the ‘social aspect of individual remembering’. Social environments, Kansteiner (2002) claims, are inextricably linked to our capacity to reconstruct, remember, and reorganize both verbal and nonverbal experiences, even at the neurological level. In this sense, for Schudson (1995) “there is no such thing as individual memory”; instead, memory is social: Memory is established in “institutions” rather than in the individual human minds in the form of “rules, laws, standard procedures, and records, a whole set of cultural practices through which people recognize a debt to the past or through which they express moral continuity with the past” (p. 346). Although memory seems as an “individual property”, it is so commonly “shared” making it social or collective (p. 347). Even though memories are uniquely situated in each person's mind, they are nonetheless social and cultural because language serves as a supra-individual cultural constriction; and they activate in reaction to social cues, rehearsal, or stimulation (Schudson, 1995). Psychologists may view collective memories as “shared individual memories”;

however, this emphasis on individual memories, Schudson (1995) argues, is mistaken for some social scientist.

So, is every memory related to society called “collective memory”? How the shared or collected memory can be distinguished from the so-called collective memory? How do groups form and reform the collective memories? What connection exists between the collective memories of a community and the personal memories that each member of the community has of the past? Hirst and Manier (2008) argue that if a memory is widely held by members of a group, but has little meaning for the group, then it should be named as a “shared” or “collected” memory, but not a collective memory. The case the Madrid terrorist attack of 11 March 2004 may illustrate how collective memories can be distinguished from shared or collected memories:

The memories of Spaniards for the facts about the Madrid terrorist attack of 11 March 2004 are part of the Spanish collective memory because these memories shape Spanish collective identity. But although Spaniards also probably share a memory of the fact that Princess Diana died in a car accident, this memory is probably not properly classified as part of the Spanish collective memory, because it has little bearing on the identity that Spaniards hold as a community. (p.2)

The sociology of memory asserts the collective memory is “quite different from the sum total of the personal recollections of its various individual members, as it includes only those that are commonly shared by all of them” (Zerubavel, 1997, cited in Misztal, 2003, p. 11). Collective memories are not aggregated or shared individual memories, but social representations contained, not “in the head”, but “in the world”. (Olick & Robbins, 1998, cited in Hirst and Manier, p.4). Collective memories, Olick (1999) argues, can be treated as “the patterns of publicly available symbols objectified in society” to show the power of society in forming public representations of the past and keeping these representations. Similarly, Irwin-Zarecka (1994) defines collective memory as a socially articulated and maintained reality of the past rather than as a collection of individual memories. Kansteiner (2002) suggests avoiding “perceiving and conceptualizing collective memory exclusively in terms of the psychological and emotional dynamics of individual remembering” (p.185) since the laws governing individual memory may not always apply to collective memories (Hirst and Manier, 2008). J. Assmann (1995) evaluates collective memories outside of the individual by distinguishing “communicative memories” from “cultural memories”. Communicative memories are transmitted between people through communication that have something of the character of “everyday memories” that individuals, not

collectives, hold whereas cultural memories occur when communicative memories are transformed into “objectivized culture”, the culturally institutionalized heritage of a society (Assmann,1995). Collective memory is a widely shared knowledge of past social events that are collectively constructed through communicative social interactions, which can have significant impact on behavior, feelings, and thoughts (Schuman & Scott, 1989).

Though it is evident that memory has become a key concept in the social sciences and humanities, Kansteiner (2002) asserts, it is still unclear to what extent this convergence represents true shared methodological and intellectual interests. The concept of collective memories as separate from individual memory has not yet been adequately developed in collective memory studies (Kansteiner, 2002).

2.2.3. Remembering Traumatic Memories in Politics: “*Past in the Present*”

For Traverso (2019), memory has entered the field of social sciences quite late, and it is almost impossible to find traces of the word memory in the intellectual debates of the 1960s-70s. Yet it is rare to find a word as “wasted” as memory (p.9) since memory is often used as a synonym for history. It is highlighted by Traverso that memory has begun a “transhistorical” category that conquers history. “History and memory are born of the same anxiety and share the same concern: processing of the past. However, there is a hierarchy between two” (Traverso, p.19). History, a method of writing about the past, answers the questions raised by memory. Hence, history arises from memory, and it is a dimension of it (Traverso, 2019). Memory, like a kind of guardian, accompanies the flow of history because it forms its inner foundation (Traverso, p.25). Memory is separated from the past by adding "subjectivity and experience" to the past (p.10) and memory traverses the ages (p.28-29). History and memory, Pierre Nora asserts, are far from being synonymous since they are opposite in every respect: “memory is life, it appeals to the senses, it is magical, it tends to sanctify memories, and it has a singular orientation, whereas the orientation of history is universal” (cited in Traverso, 2019, p.30-31). Similarly, Kansteiner (2002) claims that history is not collective memory, even though it is occasionally composed of similar materials. When thinking about how a collective memory is formed, it is important to remember

that memory is typically more “unreliable and malleable” than history (Hirst & Fineberg, 2012). Collective memory, Halbwachs claims, is not the same as history and differs from it in at least two respects:

Collective memory is a continuous stream of thought with a continuity that is in no way artificial because it preserves from the past only what is still alive or can remain alive in the consciousness of the group that nourishes it. (p.98)

The second feature that distinguishes collective memory from history is the existence of more than one collective memory (Halbwachs); for Halbwachs, history is one and there is only one history, but there is no universal memory (p. 102-103). Similarly, considering the formation of collective memory, Hirst and Fienberg (2012) emphasize the difference between history and memory; while history or facts do not change, how historical events are collectively remembered can change. For instance, according to public records, older Danes recall the weather on the day of the German invasion of Denmark as being worse than it actually was and also the day of the German withdrawal is remembered by those same Danes as being better than it actually was (Berntsen & Thomsen, 2005). That is, the remembered past does not always accurately describe history: “Memories need not be accurate in order to be included in a community’s collective memory” (Hirst and Fineberg, 2012, p.89). A community, Hirst and Fineberg (2012) assert, needs to take action to protect its history, whether formally or informally, purposefully, or accidentally. In “*Dynamics of Distortion in Collective Memory*”, Schudson (1995) claims that memory is distortion which is inevitable:

If memory were only a kind of registration, a true memory might be possible. But memory is a process of encoding information, storing information, and strategically retrieving information, and there are social, psychological, and historical influences at each point. (p.348)

Memory, composed of lived experience, is highly “qualitative”, singular and in a “state of constant transformation” due to its subjective character (Traverso, p.20). Because of its subjective character, memory is never frozen; rather, it is in constant transformation (p.20). Memory is a construction; hence, is always filtered with information added later the first moment. Memory, whether individual or collective, is always “an image of the past filtered by the present” (Traverso, p.21) and recreated over and over as a fluid concept (Becker, 2014). “What happens to us” is largely shaped by the present since it is memory that “puts things back in their place”(p.21). As quoted by Benjamin, “History is not just a science, for it is also a form of remembrance.”

(Traverso, p.22). The present "without future and past" will constantly give birth to both, according to its needs (Hartog, cited in Traverso, p. 22). Halbwachs' work on collective memory, Traverso notes, is about the dissociation between the geometric constructions of historical narrative and the emotional fluctuations of the memory (p.28). The properties and mechanisms of memory, Halbwachs argues, are fixed and universal, other than in some trivial ways, but are configured and reconfigured by social factors (cited in Hirst and Manier, 2008). Although collective memory seems to be about distant historical and social events, it frequently favors the interests of the present (Kansteiner, 2002). Collective memory is always "mediated" and arises from both "conscious manipulation" and "unconscious absorption" (p.180).

Memory constructs social identities by incorporating them into a historical continuum and providing them with meaning, that is, content and orientation. After reinterpreting the past according to cultural sensibilities and the political demands of the present, it turns into collective memory (Traverso, 2019, p. 10). Collective memory not only reflects the past but also shapes "present reality" by providing people with understanding and symbolic frameworks that enable them to make sense of the world (Mistral, 2003). Memory is always in the present and has become a "political trump" (Traverso, 2019, p.16). "Historical memory", Becker (2014) notes, carry important political consequences; different generations bring different frames of reference to respective historical memories (p.61).

On collective memory, Halbwachs adopts an instrumental presentist approach stating social constructions of memory are formed by the needs of the present. Halbwachs's instrumental presentism is further expanded by Pierre Nora (1996) who indicates collective memory is used by groups to interpret the past: Groups select certain dates and people to remember and eliminate others and invent traditions to sustain the collective memory, yet these memories become divided from the past (Nora & Kritzman, 1996). Hirst and Manier emphasize the importance of such an attitude by showing A. Assmann argument; is that collective memories must be defined in terms of "the function" they play in society. Collective memory is shaped by present issues and understandings and the groups select certain memories to explain current issues and concerns (Halbwachs, 1992). Different people have varying levels of interest in their past at different times (Irwin-Zarecka, 2017). Recalling historical events in a group context is contingent upon their alignment with current interests

(Kansteiner,2002). Becker (2014) gives the example of the Iranian, who lived through the 1979 revolution:

The Iranian who lived through the 1979 revolution views the 2009 protests through that lens; a supporter of the revolution may view the protesters as traitors to the principle of the 1979 revolution; opponents of the current regime see a parallel between protest taking to the streets in 2009 and those who did so in 1979. (p. 61)

The social implications of collective trauma give rise to collective memory in which historical remembrance and intergenerational processes play an important role (Robben & Orozco,2000, p.24). There is an emerging interest in understanding traumatic events and the ways in which they are felt, memorialized, and forgotten as well as how they influence identities in world politics (Resende and Budryte, 2014), named “the traumatic dimension of political” by Edkins (cited in Resende and Budryte, p.9). Feeling, forgetting, remembering, and memorizing traumatic events create social and political implications in world politics (Resende & Budryte, 2014). In addition to Assmann’s “communicative and cultural memory”, Aleida Assman develops a third category, “connective memory”: “imposed, selected, enforced, inevitably politicized memories designed to create a closely guarded group identity (Becker, 2014, p.62). Similarly, Steele (2008) discusses the role of trauma in disrupting collective memories:

... but traumatic experiences disrupt the ability to channel certain events into a coherent narrative. Since the biographical narrative of the state that constitutes state identity can be understood as collective memory, trauma can destabilize that memory.

Volkan analyzes remembering traumatic memories through his term “chosen trauma” that have a strong role on current political conflicts which intensify collectives’ sense of belonging which may end in unwillingness to solve problems involving its current enemies (Volkan, 1998). “Chosen glories”, opposed to chosen traumas, whereas defined as the “shared mental representations of a large group’s ancestors’ victories in history which arrange feeling of we-ness” (Volkan, 1997). Chosen glories, Volkan argues, are passed on to following generations through “transgenerational transmissions” made in interactions and through participation in ceremonies remembering past successful events. In stressful situations, in Volkan’s formulation, political leaders reactivate the mental representation of chosen glories and heroes associated with them to encourage their large-group identity (Volkan, 1997). Large groups tend to maintain mental designs for events, including a shared sense of achievement and victory among group members. Over time, these events and the

people involved in these events become the elements of large group identity and therefore chosen victories are passed down from generation to generation. At times, such as war, leaders reactivate elected victories to bolster group identity (2005, p.66-67).

Jasiewicz (2015) searches for an answer to the conditions under which the past becomes a resource and is used for present; she explores the ways that the past interplays with the present to shape collective political action in Poland by comparing the Jewish, German, and Ukrainian minorities' demands related to the past. Using the claims-making method, Jasiewicz analyzes the variation in the frequencies and content of three national minority groups' references to the past. She concluded that the past turns into a potent resource for political action; representations of the past are not fixed but rather that minority and state actors negotiate the past through time. Poland's cultural structure abounds in taboos that maintain symbolic boundaries between the majority and minorities, muting certain narratives and trumpeting others (Jasiewicz, 2015). Similarly, Olick and Levy (1997) analyze the work of collective memory through the analysis of Holocaust memory in German politics: The Holocaust exerts its power in German politics both mythically and rationally: from the postwar period to the present, powerful images of the Nazi past have shaped West Germany. The former president of Yugoslavia and later Serbia, Sloban Milosevic, similarly, use historical trauma in public narratives to evoke emotions and mental representations of loss (Buljubasic & Hola, 2021). The collective trauma of the past became an event in the present: from July 1988 to March 1991 the media publish more than 4000 articles awakening historical traumas, and television broadcasts of the anniversary which are the ultimate trigger for large-scale atrocities (La Brosse, cited in Buljubasic & Hola, 2021). Garagozov (2016) focuses on the relationship between collective memory and emotions; and explores this relationship on the Azerbaijani population in relation to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict as a kind of collective trauma that has a particular impact on Azerbaijani collective memory. He underlines even if participants have no particularly painful personal experiences and memories of the conflict, they have a painful collective memory framed by social context peculiar for a society under the protracted traumatic conflict, a society with the collective trauma (Garagozov, 2016).

2.2.4. Traumatic Memories and Large-Group Identity

Memory enables groups a “constitutive, relational, and purposive content” and facilitates understanding group’s national interests and political actions (Wang, 2018). For Kansteiner (2002), the worry about memory in non-academic settings demonstrates how memory is valued in situations where identity is questioned. Kansteiner also claims that the relationship between memory and identity hasn’t been extensively explored in memory studies, despite this fairly obvious connection and therefore proposes reconsidering memory studies through the lens of identity construction.

Collective memory is a process of identity construction, the sense of self-esteem, continuity, distinctiveness, belonging, efficacy, a sense of meaning (Vignoles et al., 2006) and preservation of a positive collective identity (Tajfel & Turner, 1979). One primary function of collective memories is to create and maintain social identity: “history provides collectives with narratives that tell them who they are, where they came from, and where they should be going. It defines a path which helps to construct the essence of a group’s identity” (Liu & Hilton, 2005, cited in Hirshberger, 2018).

The historical memory, as a fluid concept, forms a unique, yet ever-changing identity; when there is experienced trauma, “it tends to cast a longer and more indelible shadow over the creation of the memory and hence identity” (Becker, 2014, p. 57). Traumas, representing the extremities of human experience, are the cases in which collective identities are most intensively engaged (Mistral, p.139). Traumas, as hypersensitive moments, indelibly mark an individual or state’s images (Becker, p.62): the trauma’s impact, as an emotional form of identity building and transformation, creates images in profound ways that are differentiated from normalcy (Becker, 2014, p.62). Conceptualizing trauma and memory as “sensitizing concepts” (p.8) and examining their intersections allows understanding better the processes behind the construction of group identities (Resende & Budryte, 2014). For Koh (2021), the concept of collective memory has elements of both “shared or collective trauma” and “individual or personal trauma” (Koh, 2021) and when talking about collective memory, we mean both “the commonality of what is remembered together” and “the things that each individual remembers individually”. It is similarly stated by Jenkins (1996) that:

Traumatic experience can also be conceptualized collectively; person-centered accounts alone are insufficient to an understanding of traumatic reactions. In

addition to the social and psycho-cultural dynamics surrounding any traumatic response, the collective nature of trauma may be related to ... the political ethos characterizing an entire society.

“Trauma creates and interprets memory and takes a role in the formation of identity” (Berker, 2014, p.58). Trauma, as a political experience (Resende & Budryte, 2014), shapes and maintains collective memory, which in turn affects “the construction of national and transnational identities, national interests and foreign policy behaviors” (Edkins, 2003). It is argued by Hirschberger (2018) that there is “a process that begins with collective trauma, transforms into a collective memory, and concludes in a system of meaning that allows the group to redefine who they are and where they are going” (p.1). The collective memory of traumatic events is a dynamic psychosocial process that is about the construction of meaning; the memory of trauma increases existential threat which activates a search for meaning and the construction of a transgenerational collective self-increasing group cohesion and group identification (Hirschberger, 2018).

Eyerman (2004) explores the notion of cultural trauma in the formation of African American identity. The cultural trauma, “slavery”, grounds the identity formation of all African American as a form of remembrance. As cultural process, trauma of slavery is linked to the formation of collective identity and the construction of collective memory. Collective identity, Eyerman asserts, means a process of “we” formation. The traumatic experience of slavery may not be something directly experienced by all African Americans, however “come to be central to forge a collective identity out of its remembrance”. Slavery unites all “African Americans in the United States, whether they had themselves experienced slaves. Whether or not all African Americans directly experience slavery, blacks in the United States are identified them with slavery.

While this shared history may have its origins in direct experience, its memory is mediated through narratives that are modified with the passage of time and filtered through cultural artifacts and other materializations that represent the past in the present.

In *Catastrophe and Exile in the Modern Palestinian Imagination*, Saloul (2012) explores the cultural memory of al-Nakba (1948 Israeli independence, or *the Catastrophe* as it is known in Palestine) as a powerful narrative signifier of the modern Palestinian imagination (Saloul, 2012) :

The Arabic word Nakba means “catastrophe.” Palestinians use the word to refer to the events that took place in Palestine before, during, and after 1948. These events

culminated in the establishment of the State of Israel, but also in the loss of Palestine. The direct outcomes of these events were both the destruction of more than 450 Arab villages and towns—most of which were renamed with Israeli or Hebraized names—and the forced expulsion of more than 780,000 Palestinians who used to reside on 78 percent of the territory of the Palestine Mandate. Today, there are approximately ten million exiled Palestinians. While four million of them are internally displaced in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and inside Israel, the majority of Palestinians are scattered across the Middle East and beyond. (p.1)

Al-Nakba unites the Palestinian past and present unite; Palestinians all over the world maintain a shared national identity since al-Nakba (Saloul, 2012). Not a single Palestinian family has escaped the impact of this loss and specific identities, cultural beliefs, and lifestyles have been created as a result of exile that dispersed families and communities and forced or restricted migration. A sense of overwhelming belonging to one another in a shared exile and the wide range of personal experiences of the loss of the country, for Saloul (2012), are two salient aspects of contemporary Palestinian identity. Since 1948, the tangible Palestinian identity has been consistently and methodically unmapped out of time and place. These characteristics help to ease the cultural remapping of this identity (Saloul, 2012). The Palestinian word "*Nakba*" refers to the total devastation that the state of Israel's creation in 1948 inflicted upon Palestinian society (Adwan, et al., 2011): “the issue of the Nakba and the collective memory became a central component in the cultural and political identity of the Palestinians in Israel, in the territories occupied in 1967 and in the Palestinian ‘Diaspora’” (p.164).

Similarly, In *Holocaust in Historical Perspectives*, Bauer (1978) traces the events of Holocaust as a traumatic memory from the background of Nazi antisemitism. The Jew is imagined by Nazi as “the incarnation of evil, the bearer of social and even physical disease, the germ that brought sickness and destruction upon cultures” (Bauer, 1978). For Bauer, the Holocaust is a form of genocide; however, it is a unique, unusual, and unprecedented form of genocide since “it is to lead to the death of every single individual with three or four Jewish grandparents”. All other genocides are local; but in the case of the Holocaust, Germany aims to conquer the whole world and reach all Jews. It was a universal, global, and brutal ideology. Bauer says in an interview in 1998:

There is a great difference of opinion within the Jewish community since there is no common interpretation of self. However, the Holocaust has had a tremendous impact on Jewish identity, but the impact varies in different parts of the Jewish

community. For some people, it is a call to return to Orthodox religious observance. For others, it is a call to integrate into the non-Jewish world to avoid such things from happening in the future. And for yet others, it is a combination of insisting on particularity and extending a hand outside to the general concern of humanity to oppose mass murder and genocide. For some, it is a political tool to achieve political ends. The post-Holocaust birth of a Jew, whether he or she is conscious of it or not, is a statement against Nazism. The Nazis wanted to destroy the Jewish people, but Jews exist. Their very existence is a statement of a fight against Nazism, and a victory, if you like, over Nazism. Therefore, all these things impact on how Jews see themselves.

The impact of Holocaust, Becker (2014) asserts, leaves deep scars and a deep memory image upon Israel; upon its founding in 1948, with its foundational ideology coming from the roots of insecurity in Europe, the need for Israel to be an oasis of Jewish majority in the light of Antisemitism is deeply rooted. Historical memory has compelled Israelis to view any security through the lens of trauma (p.66). The Serbian collective victimization in the 1389 Kosova Battle is one of the main markers of Serbian identity prior to the 1990's Yugoslav wars; the former president of Yugoslavia and later Serbia, Sloban Milosevic, used historical trauma in public narratives to evoke emotions and mental representations of loss (Buljubasic & Hola, 2021). The devastating impact of "the Armenian Genocide of 1915" has a huge impact on the Armenian statehood, the Diaspora, national ideology, identity, and values of Armenians (Aleksanyan, 2016). "The Turkish policy of genocide", Aleksanyan claims, has organized mass murder and deportations of Armenians from their historic homeland, and destroyed the socio-economic, political, spiritual, and cultural spheres of the Armenian society, the Armenian civilization, and turned into a huge moral and psychological trauma for Armenian people. As a result of prolonged absence of the national statehood of the Armenians, the Armenian people dispersed throughout the world. In all countries where Armenians settled, they began to form the Armenian diaspora, which played and continue to play an important role in the development and strengthening of the international status of Armenia. Armenian Genocide totally changes the socio-political role of national institutions, the effectiveness of which hung from the potential of civilization, values, and culture. In this regard, post-genocidal society to preserve its unity had to develop new mechanisms, but thus increasingly reckon with the interests of the superpowers (Aleksanyan, 2016). For Bauer, there is a partial similarity of Holocaust with Armenian massacres since both are motivated largely by extreme nationalism and religious fanaticism (Bauer, 1978). Richmand (2013) explains that the Russians expelled the Circassians from their homeland by

carrying out hundreds of raids for no reason other than ethnic hatred, and while at least 600,000 people lost their lives due to massacre, hunger and hundreds of thousands had to leave their homeland : by 1864, three-quarters of the population had been wiped out and the Circassians became one of the first stateless peoples in modern history after the Circassian Genocide (Richmond, 2013). In “*Circassians and the Politics of Genocide Recognition*”, Catic (2015) investigates the development and relevance of the Circassian genocide acknowledgment campaign at the turn of the twenty-first century. It contends that, at its core, the Circassian genocide recognition initiative is an identity-driven project born of a fear of extinction stemming from the experience of being a vulnerable ethno-national group living with memories of massacres, deportations, exile, and fragmentation (Catic,2015).

Vamik Volkan analyze large-group identity in terms of “chosen traumas” that defined as the mental design of an event that causes a large group to face a severe shared sense of loss and despair, to become a victim of a group, or to have shared feelings of humiliation and hurt. The role of chosen trauma in maintaining large group identity and its cohesion is more complex than “chosen victories”, Volkan claims: the past successes are recalled from these chosen glories, yet they do not influence large-group identity as chosen traumas do. Volkan (1998) formulates the term “large-group identity” that evolved from his participation as a facilitator in psychopolitical dialogues between representatives of large enemy groups such as Arabs and Israelis, Cypriot Turks and Cypriot Greeks, Estonians, and Russians. Large-group identity is referred to “the togetherness of thousands or millions of individuals linked by an intense sense of sameness based on belonging to the same ethnic, religious, national, or ideological group.” (Volkan,2005, p.14). In such large groups, most of the individuals may never meet with others belonging to the same large group. Yet, “a sense of belongingness”, usually a language, songs, dances, and representations of history is “shared” among members of the large group. Group identity is closely linked to the individual's sense of ethnic, religious, or national identity and is not something that is consciously focused on the flow of daily life (Volkan 2005, p.3). In situations of common stress, such as economic crises, social turmoil, war, terrorist attack, or drastic political change, group identity becomes much more important than the identity of individual members of the group. Influences and consequences of traumas that are caused by “others” also do not remain regional, if a foreign large group shames, and

destroys the lives of a number of individuals in the name of their large-group identity in one region of a country, others belonging to the same large-group identity in the other region of the country also feel their pain and rage (Volkan,2000). Large-group identity connects people in sentimental ways regardless of where they live, when a large group's identity is humiliated, people belonging to that identity psychologically find it easy to humiliate, victimize and kill individuals belonging to the enemy group in the name of identity. Aggression is used to repair, protect, and maintain their large-group identity. Large-group psychology primarily is related with a shared need to repair, protect, and maintain large-group identity. The "enemy-other" is created in the relationship between the traumatic history and the breakdown of a collective sense of self. There is an important similarity between self and other and the other is invested with the undesirable traits of the self. The enemy is a "reservoir of unwanted self" (Volkan, 1998).

Volkan, having Turkish-Cypriot origin, analyzes the large-group identity of two ethnic groups living on the island, Greeks, and Turks, based on the historical conflicts between them from psychoanalytic perspective. The chosen traumas of both ethnic groups, in Volkan's analysis, are formed in historical conflicts and shape the large group identity of both groups. Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots, and Greeks and Turks in general, pick and highlight two different events as the most traumatic and devastating for their community from their common history:

The arrival of the Turks on the island in July 1974 and the separation of the island by the Turks is the most devastating social trauma experienced by the Greek Cypriots. During this period, many young Greek soldiers are killed, some are captured, and some are recorded as missing. Tens of thousands of Greeks must flee to the south of the island while Turkish soldiers take the northern part of the island. For Turkish Cypriots, the most traumatic event begins in 1963-64 when they are forced to live in the besieged areas and suffer humiliation, dehumanization, and violation of human rights. Historical developments after 1974 summer also traumatize Turkish Cypriots slowly and often in an unseen way since Greek Cypriots are introduced as victims and Turkish Cypriots are introduced as aggressors in the world public. While the Greek part of the island is recognized as a state by all states; Turkish part of the island is accepted as a legitimate state only by Turkey.

Volkan also cites the research of Tenzel and Gerst who use Cyprus as a psychopolitical laboratory and explore the cultural and psychological dimensions of the ongoing intercultural conflict in Cyprus by examining the beliefs, values and stereotypes and cognitive structures of the two ethnic groups. Each subculture in Cyprus, Gerst and

Tenzel assert, perceives the personality traits and values of its own group in a similar way; and each subculture perceives the characteristics of the other group in “related but negative terms”, uses the same dimensional reference frame but adapts the negative side of each dimension for the other group (Volkan, 1997, p.49) : Turkish Cypriots and Greeks have twin images, in other words, each group seems to appreciate similar traits, but both opposed ownership by claiming them. According to Volkan, the reason why two groups see each other as opposite images is the strong barriers, psychological walls that cannot be demolished as emotions have been invested in these walls, that are built against unification over the four centuries they lived together (Volkan, 1997, p.81).

2.2.5. “Melancholic Identities”⁹: Post-traumatic Loss, Remembering and Identity

People tend to form groups within themselves, to identify topographically as members of a group, and identity refers to the strong emotional bonds that are formed between oneself and other people (Prager, 2009). According to Prager (2009), identity has evolved into the foundation and justification for group action, and “identity politics” has served as a cognitive map for actors to orient themselves toward others (Calhoun, cited in Prager, 2009, p.141). Although the clumsy application of psychoanalytic and psychological techniques often results in misrepresentations of the nature and dynamics of collective memories, according to Kansteiner (2002), the idea that identity could be multiple, or better defined as a process, is widely recognized in the social sciences and psychoanalysis (Frosh and Baraitser, cited in Prager, 2009, p. 158). Since collective trauma and memory cannot be measured 'easily' as in their individual forms, psychoanalytic interpretations such as melancholic identities, post-traumatic loss or narcissistic injury are frequently used to make sense of the relationship between collective trauma and memory and identity.

In addition to identifying trauma as an experience whose consequences persist through time (Prager, 2009), Freud, for instance alerts us to the imprecise and constructed character of its remembering, “the impossibility of the pure retrieval of experience” (cited in Prager, p.142). Freud links identification and identity to “the experience of loss”; identity and internalization thus require an understanding of the process by

⁹ Jeffrey Prager, *Identity in Question* by Anthony Elliott & Paul du Gay

which individuals psychologically respond over time to loss. This “backward-looking” interest in identity formation, Prager asserts, has generated a “new interest” in a distinctive form of identity, a “melancholic one”, and it has placed Freud’s *Mourning and Melancholia* and his *The Ego and the Id* center stage in theorizing the relationship between losses and identity-formation (Prager, 2009). In *Mourning and Melancholia* (1914), mourning, Freud states, is “regularly the reaction to the loss of a loved person, or to the loss of some abstraction which has taken the place of one, such as one’s country, liberty and an ideal, and so on” (Freud, 1917, p.243). Freud describes normal mourning as a process in which, over time, a detachment of libidinal, or eroticized, energy from the lost object occurs and the narcissistic love, or identification, that had been the fuel of attachment is restored back to the mourner him or her-self. Eros now can attach itself to new objects, and mourning ostensibly has come to an end. The melancholic, in contrast, is unable to complete mourning; rather, the lost object does not become psychically detached. Instead, it is incorporated within the self and the ambivalent feeling directed to the lost objects expresses itself as an agent of criticism and judgment that mobilizes, in the name of the idealized dead object, a sustained internal attack against the self. Melancholia ensures that the present is lived as if it were the past, when the present is experienced as less vivid and meaningful than an earlier time, and when the individual is dominated by an “internal psychical reality” that takes precedence over the reality of the external world (Freud, 1954, cited in Prager, 2009).

Melancholics suffer, Freud argues, from a lowering of self-regarding feelings to a degree that finds utterances in self-reproaches and self-reviling and culminates in a delusional expectation of punishment’ (cited in Prager, 2009). Different than for the mourner, the passage of time for the melancholic does not relieve the intense suffering that comes from the trauma of a world disrupted. In mourning, it is the world which has become “poor and empty”, Freud writes, “in melancholia it is the ego itself” (cited in Prager, 2009). It is suggested by Freud that the melancholic has little capacity to have ambivalent feelings “come into the open”, a process that would otherwise aid in the detachment process. Instead, the idealized dead object becomes internalized, and directed inward, forever clouding the freedom of the individual. Identity is a product of the internalization of the lost object, a force that unconsciously comes to stand like “a garrison army guarding to forever preserve the memory of the loved one” (Prager,

p. 149). Melancholia is a pathological condition, one from which recovery is possible, albeit difficult (Prager, p.145).

For Prager (2009), melancholy has emerged as a key category not only in the analysis of individuals but also of whole communities and nations as well. Melancholic community as a social category describing a collectively defined in some sense by its history of traumatic losses yet is different than an individual who suffers a form of psychological distress as Freud defines (Prager, 2009). Melancholia has increasingly been invoked to describe members of groups who live with a memory of their traumatic origins. Melancholia is synonymous with remembering and “traumatic loss” becomes a more or less conscious feature of contemporary identity:

In today’s political cultural milieu preoccupied with the sense of trauma and social repair, the concept of loss and its role in identity-formation, especially as it refers to the loss of “country, liberty, and ideal” serves as a companion concept to that of trauma and its aftermath: remembering losses melancholically, those incurred in the past through traumatic violations of the self, becomes the foundation for identity-formation in the present. (p. 144)

Employing Freud’s study on “*Mourning and Melancholia*”, Alexander, and Margarete Mitscherlich in *The Inability to Mourn* (1975), sought to understand the enduring impact of the Second World War on the post-war German population (Mitscherlich & Mitscherlich, 1975). Germany, they (1975) argue, struggling with a deep sense of collective responsibility, guilt, and shame, sought to break all “affective bridges to the immediate past”. Forgetting the past, the Mitscherlichs argued, was a defensive strategy by the German people to prevent a melancholic holding on to their shameful past but which served, as well, to make impossible mourning the losses experienced at the hands of the Allied powers. In *Postcolonial Melancholia* (2006), Paul Gilroy employs Freud’s concepts of mourning and melancholia and describes how members of contemporary Western societies have succeeded in repressing the brutalities of colonial rule that were “enacted in their name and to their benefit” (Gilroy, 2005) For Gilroy (2005), the result has been the creation of a pathological political culture dominated by fear of immigrant, anxiety over multiculturalism, and a yearning for a romanticized past when the nation putatively was culturally “pure.” The Mitscherlichs and Gilroy, according to Prager (2009), each argue that for members of a society to know and remember loss and to overcome a defensive denial of the painful experiences that encourage not knowing are keys to melancholy’s prevention and they hold out the

possibility that despite the traumas of the past the present need not remain forever its victim (p.146).



3. DERSİM

This dissertation, where it is not possible to cover the entire history of Dersim or all its components, deals with Dersim all through its ‘politicized’ geography, social structure, ethnic diversity and Dersim Alevism that not independent of each other and thought to be related to Dersim 38 and its reflections on current politics. Throughout the dissertation, these ‘intertwined’ concepts are generally explained from a non-chronological framework in relation to each other. However, Dersim during the Ottoman period, the repositioning of Dersim with the establishment of the Republic and the subsequent Military Operation, *Tertele*, are discussed chronologically. Dersim's geography is examined from a psycho-political perspective under the title of "Politicized Geography" rather than providing general geographical information. Similarly, the social and administrative structure of Dersim or the ethno-religious diversity in the region was examined from a political perspective.

Researchers, adopting the assumption that cultural values should have a “single origin”, may fall into the error of ignoring the "transitions" between geography, history, place, and rituals (Zırh, 2020, p.356). It should be emphasized here that Dersim is a geography where the "transitions" need to be understood and analyzed with their intensity, diversity, frequency, and political consequences. Similarly Aksoy (2020) emphasizes the impossibility of rejecting the intercultural interactions, ethnic transformations and fusions in Dersim (p.169) since the name of the territory has been home to a “multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-faith, and multi-tribal society” (Çelik 2013, p. 137) and hosted various ethnic groups such as Turks, Turkmen, Kurds and Zaza (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p. 67), as well as many religious beliefs, primarily Kizilbash-Alevis and Armenians (N. Gündoğan and K. Gündoğan 2019).

3.1. The “politicized” geography

The province of Tunceli, formerly Dersim (Figure 1), is today surrounded by the provinces of Elazığ in the south, Bingöl in the east, Erzincan in the north, Erzurum in the northeast in terms of geographical borders ; high mountains and deep valleys cover

most of its area and most of the land is not suitable for agriculture (Kaya K. , 2013). As can be seen from the Figure 1, the borders of Tunceli province do not cover the entire historical Dersim (Burkay, 2018).

Figure 1. “Map of the city of Tunceli and the larger Dersim area (in red) before the establishment of Turkish Republic”



Source: Dinç, 2017

In *Dersim Tarihi* (History of Dersim), Saltık (2023) claims, Dimilice-speaking settled tribes of different races have lived in the most distant past of Dersim. In the following centuries, Dimilice has started being called “Kirmanch” or “Zazaki”, and in those centuries, Luwians, Lelegs, Pelasgians and Kisiss live in Anatolia together with the Dimilis (p.9). Bayrak (2019) claims although there are different opinions about the origin of the name Dersim; the common view is that this place was called "*Daranis*" by Greek historians before Christ and "*Dersim*" over time by the locals, meaning "Silver Gate". The historian Ptolemy’s naming of Dersim as “*Daranalis*”, covering a wide area including the Munzur Mountains, has been used for centuries (Kaya, 2019). The etymology of the name Dersim is associated with the root *Taur*, meaning "mountains"; and the native archaic name meaning "Mountain Region" is transformed into "Taurezium" in Latin during the Roman period; then, under the influence of Iranian dialects that became dominant in the region, it takes the form of "Dersim" (Tarihi ve Coğrafyası ile Dersim, n.d.) : the word Dersim is Persian origin and consists of the words "silver" (*sim*) and "door" (*der*) (Kaya,2019). Yağan (2019) notes it is rumored that Sim Creek (*Sim Deresi*) gives its name to Dersim; and it also called

“walled” (*Duvarlı*) because of its geographical structure in Zazaki (Aygün, 2007), a language spoken by Zazas in Eastern Anatolia.

The origin of the name of Dersim, Kaya (2019) claims, goes back to the Deylemmites who lived in the Deylem region in the south of the Caspian Sea. The Deylemmites are a pre-Persian people and constantly defended their homeland against Arab, Persian and Turkish armies. The efforts of the Deylemmites to protect their homeland last until the Mongol invasion in 1256. It is thought a part of Deylemler, who fled from the Mongols and migrated to the west, settled in today's Dersim and the Deylem tribes, who left their homeland and migrated to Anatolia, settled in this region, and made their own name dominant in the region (Kaya, 2019). In some sources, the name of Dersim is given to the region because of its rich mineral deposits; in some other theses, Dersim means "silverwood" derived from the word "Darsım", a Zaza word; "dar"(tree) and "sim" (silver); and Dersimlis use this name because of their "worship of trees" (*Tarihi ve Coğrafyası ile Dersim*, n.d.). In some sources, the word Dersim is associated with the name of an Armenian religious leader named Der Simon who lived in the region and another interesting claim is the name of Dersim is written as “Desim” before 1847 and this name is the name of the Desimli Tribe and turns into Dersim due to a typo (*Tarihi ve Coğrafyası ile Dersim*, n.d.). In past Ottoman sources, this region is often called "Dersim", although it is sometimes written as "Desim" (Bayrak, 2019), Desimlu, Desimli, Ekrad-ı Disimi, Desimi Ekradı, Desim, Dirsim - Dersim (Kaya, 2019).

There are strong traces of the existence of many civilizations thousands of years ago in Dersim; many underground findings show the existence of thousands of years of life in Dersim. The lands of Dersim have been the living space for Sumerian, Hittite, Urartu, Assyrian, Roman, Byzantine and many other civilizations (Saltık, 2023). In many parts of Dersim, the presence of dens, thought to have been carved out of the rocks by ancient people and used as shelters, tombs from different periods, castles, and tunnels carved inside the castle are proofs that human communities lived in Dersim in ancient times (Saltık, 2023):

The archaeological studies carried out in the area due to the Keban Dam led to the discovery of Hittite records in Elazığ. Excavations in Elazığ revealed that Dersim was inhabited in the Old Hittite, and even that there were important Hittite settlements here. (p.10)

Antranik [*Yeritsyan*] (1900/2022), based on his journey to Dersim in 1888, described that Dersim is located at the western end of the Armenian plateau, halfway between

Erzurum, Diyarbakır and Harput, at an altitude of 2500-3000 meters above sea level (Antranik, 1900/2022). This region, where Armenians have lived since ancient times, later became a region where Assyrians and Turks lived especially in the surrounding area, but predominantly Kurds and Armenians lived together (Aksoy, p.172). Sharing his observations about Dersim's geography, history, and inhabitants, Molyneux-Seel (1914) describes the region in more detail:

The Dersimli have a tribal organization similar to other nomad Kurds, and have in all about forty-five tribes, some of which are quite small, being merely fragments of larger ones. The chiefs of the most important tribes are Seids. These Seids are religious chiefs, and hence exercise an unbounded influence over the tribesmen. The Dersimli are semi-nomads they inhabit their villages in winter and "yailas" in summer, though the latter are never at any great distance from their villages. When not engaged in inter-tribal warfare, they occupy themselves entirely with pastoral pursuits, only growing enough corn in the vicinity of their villages to supply their own immediate needs. The Dersimli number about sixty-five thousand. (p.52)

Molyneux-Seel, claiming that "the Dersimli have had no intercourse with the Turks" until the recent years, points out the difficulty of explaining the fact that the Turkish name Dersimlis give to their religion: "Yol Oushaghi", and also their many tribes: "Bal Oushaghi, Arslan Oushaghi, Topouzli, Areli" (p.68); in addition to the tribes with Arabic or Persian names, that often combined with the Turkish word Oushaghi: Beit Oushaghi, Sham Oushaghi, Haiderli, Bahtiarli (Molyneux-Seel, p.68). It is also possible to come across stereotyping in old texts describing Dersim/Dersimlis. For instance, regular cultivation in Dersim, Antranik observes, is not given much importance: "The farming of Dersimlis, like their lifestyles, is primitive" (p.91).

Antranik's "*Dersim Seyahatnamesi*", including the details of his trip to Dersim in 1888, describes the physical geography of Dersim in detail.

It was an ordinary spring evening. The moon was illuminating the Kiğı mountains and valleys with its silvery light. I was amazed by this magnificent view and fascinated for a moment, thinking I was in another world.... It was the year 1888... My heart was beating like crazy; I wanted to travel from one end of the world to the other.... This time we were going to a completely foreign land, Dersim, where there is a lot of talk about, but few people know and see. (p.9)

The book, including details on geography, climate, mines, religion, and various beliefs of Dersim, as well as the life of Dersimlis and their clashes with the Ottomans (1828-1895) can be considered the oldest source written about the region. Antranik's Dersim, located in the middle of Erzurum, Diyarbakır and Harput, has dense and rich forests (p.89) and a "high and isolated" location (p.85). Antranik divides Dersim into two

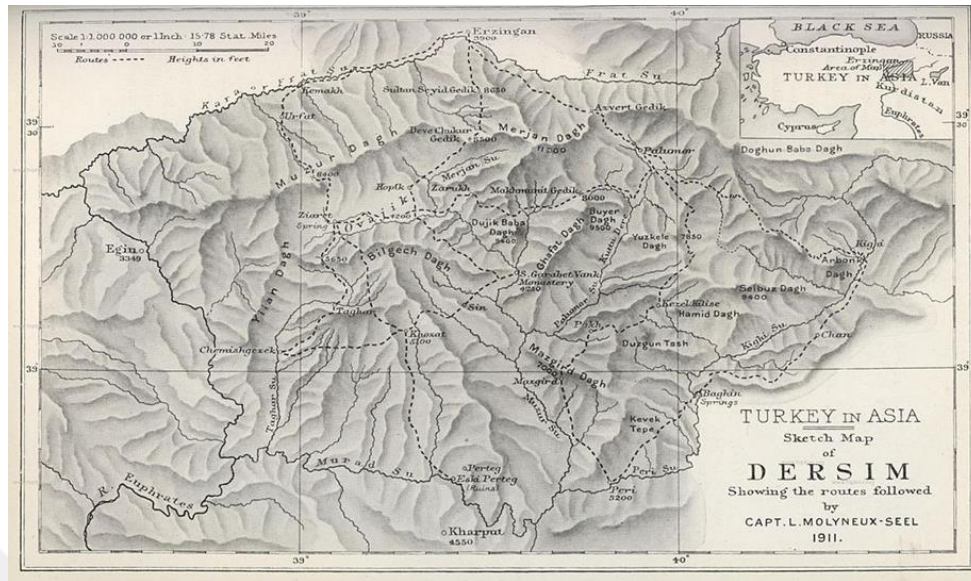
regions as plain and mountainous: while the plain area is the whole of Çarsancak (almost the entire southern part of Dersim) and Tercan (the entire piedmont of the northeastern part of Dersim); the mountainous region of Dersim is located between these two. These two main regions, Antranik notes, are administratively divided into three main parts: those that are subordinate to the Ottoman State, those that are semi-subordinate, and those that are autonomous or rebellious. Those who are subject to the Ottoman Empire live in the plains of Dersim, those who are semi-subordinate are in beautiful slopes of the mountains around Dersim, on the other hand, autonomous and rebels live on the snow-covered hills of Dersim, deep in the dark and silent forests and on the tops of inaccessible and fearsome mountains and cliffs (Antranik, p.98). As much as Antranik describes the difficult nature of Dersim, the beauties of the nature of Dersim are detailed by Antranik with a lyrical tone:

Dersim's spring is short but very beautiful, green, and pleasant. Especially at the beginning of June, all the nature rushes, blooming valleys, ..., clear flowing streams create a fascinating landscape. The air is clean, cool, sparkling; the view of the colorful mountains covered with flowers, the valleys, the newly sprouted trees, and the chirping of the birds among the flower beds are magnificent. The glow of the star-filled blue sky at night, the greenness of the mountains in the daytime, and the variegated beauty of the valleys enchant people and warm their hearts. (p.87-88)

...the rocks, the rivers, the mountains, and the forests are not here the dull, lifeless things pictured by the Western mind, but a part of animate nature bound intimately to the life of each inhabitant by the strange and grotesque legends, handed down to him through countless generations. Such stories are necessary, therefore, to a sympathetic understanding of these wild tribesmen." There are two streams surrounding Dersim like an "indestructible castle: Munzur and Lıçık. (p.88)

30 years later, Molyneux-Seel, the vice-consul of the United Kingdom in Van in 1911, in "*A Journey in Dersim*" (1994), introduces "the little-explored tract of country" with the map of Dersim (Figure 2) showing the roads traveled by him (p. 49). The physical geography of Dersim is described as "extremely mountainous and rugged" (p.49) but also "an oasis - green, fresh, and full of grateful shade" (p.50). by Captain L. Molyneux-Seel, vice-consul of the United Kingdom in Van, in 1911.

Figure 2. Map of Dersim showing the roads traveled by Captain L. Molyneux-Seel, vice-consul of the United Kingdom in Van, in 1911.



Source: Molyneux-Seel, 1911

Dersim lies in the angle formed by two large branches of the Euphrates, called respectively the Frat Su and the Murad Su, and a line drawn through Kighi, Palumor, and Erzingan would form the northeastern boundary. The area thus comprised is roughly 7000 square miles (Molyneux-Seel):

Between the higher mountains, Dersim is a tangled mass of deep V-shaped valleys and ravines for the most part thickly covered with forests of stunted oak, also containing a sprinkling of hawthorns and wild pear trees...Almost everywhere in Dersim, water is abundant. (p.49)

The general impression of Dersim received by a traveler whose eye has become accustomed to the bare parched mountains of Kurdistan, is that of an oasis - green, fresh, and full of grateful shade. (p.50)

Although Antranik and Molyneux-Seel use a lyrical language when describing the geography of Dersim, Dersim and all the struggles over it are ‘never’ independent of the political identity that is dressed on its geography; its geography holds a ‘political’ meaning. Arguing that geography plays an important role in the shaping of history, Aksoy (2009) underlines taking into consideration the physical geography of Dersim when trying to understand the historical, cultural, and political identity formations in the region (p.55). Similarly, Uluğ (1939), in "*Tunceli Medeniyete Açılıyor*", describes the physical geography of Dersim is through the “banditry”: The rebellious and rugged nature of Dersim has filled the region with tales of banditry and Aliboğazı, Kutuderesi,

Kalanderesi, Dojikbaba, Bobyazbaba, Zelbaba have been a “shelter” for the bandits of Dersim as an “indestructible fortress” (Uluğ,1939).

Dersim lands, with its steep mountains, streams buried in the middle of its cliffs, caves and lairs hundreds of meters wide and tall, and oak trees covering steep slopes, have been prone to bandits and brigands for centuries. Its history is full of stories of these banditry. (p.17)

The mountains in Dersim “resemble a wall, as a natural barrier, which even large empires cannot get beyond” (Aksoy, 2009, p.55; Burkay, 2018) and make Dersim inaccessible from outside (p.64). Its physical features make Dersim a “closed location” (Aksoy, 2009); according to Uluğ (1931), Dersim is even more “closed than Tibet”. Due to its distant mountainous terrain and geographic location, Dersim is impermeable to outside influences and is hence unreachable (Van Bruinessen, 1988, cited in Çelik, 2013). Dersim, with its geographical structure and difficult living conditions, transforms into "a geo-political area that is wanted to be controlled rather than occupied and settled” (Aksoy, 2009, p. 64). With its hard-to-reach geography, Dersim is a center where those who are outside the power are "pushed", “a political shelter, a potential place of opposition” (Aksoy, p.81), and “a place of exile” (Abdülhalik Renda, cited in Toprak, 2012, p. 546). Kieser (2011) similarly establishes a connection between Dersim's topography and Alevis; It was vital to the survival of Alevis in Dersim; the valleys, caves, forests, and mountains in Dersim offered many shelters and hiding places (p.2).

The geography of Dersim, Toprak (2012) notes, makes dominating the region difficult both in the Ottoman and Republican periods; while the hard geography of Dersim made it difficult to maintain public order in Ottoman period (p.570), the physical conditions of the region negatively affected situations such as sending soldiers and taking control of the region in the Republican period (p. 571). Dersim's frightening, majestic, impenetrable mountains and virgin forests made it difficult for the Ottomans to dominate here (Antranik, 1900/2022, p.157); Dersim's indescribable location, with its forest-covered nature, is effective in Dersim's invincibility against the Ottomans (p.170). The geographical structure of Dersim, Zırh and Akçınar argue, has been effective in the “transformation of the discomforts into opposition against the central-political structure” since the Ottoman Empire (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p. 68). In the Republican Period, the geography of Dersim, Toprak asserts by considering the reports on Dersim in the period, is influential in the decision of the “Dersim Operation” : The

government of the Republic had difficulties in reaching Dersim, they could not control the region and deliver its services such as education and health to every corner of Dersim ; therefore, in the reports, the suggestions have been such as the migration of the people in the north to other regions (Toprak, 2012), one of those suggestions have been the migration of the people living in the areas not suitable for agriculture such as Ovacık and Nazimiye to the western provinces. Similarly, this “rebellious nature abetting banditry”, for Uluğ (1939), is behind the newly established Republic's “intervention” in Dersim.

3.2. Dersim as a battlefield: ethno-religious stereotyping and search for ‘origin’

Dersim has hosted various elements intertwined with each other: Alevi, Zaza/Kurmanji, Armenian and Turkmen identities that formed the ethnographic and demographic structure of Dersim until 1915 (Tosun & Bal, p.138). Priest Boğos Natanyan, visited the region in 1878, noted the total population of Dersim was around 136,000, of which approximately they were 103,000 Zaza-Kurds, 23,000 Armenians and 10,000 Turks (Antranik, 1900/2022.) Vitali Guinet, conducting geography research in Turkey in 1885, later published a geography book "Asian Turkey" in 1891 dividing that the sects of Dersim is divided into three: “Muslim, Kizilbash and Kurdish: 15,460 Muslims, 27,830 Kizilbash, 12,000 Kurds (Zazas)” (cited in Uluğ, p.89). In a similar way, Aydın (2020) defines Dersim as the place of "historical contacts" between Alevi, Kurdish, and Armenian identities, in other words, as an ethno-religious identity; and highlights the necessity to understand the “religious and cultural transitions” among these categories.

Tanıl Bora (2013), analyzing the texts written about Dersim at different times (Hasan Reşit Tankut's *Sociological Studies on Zazas* (1932-1935), Memduh Şevket Esendal's impressions of Tunceli in the report he wrote about his Eastern Trip (1942), Necmeddin Sahir Sılan's Tunceli reports (1943, 1945, 1949, 1952)), highlights the “ethnic stereotypes” against Dersim/Dersimli. The first thing that stands out in these texts, Bora claims, is the “backwardness and barbarism” of Dersim (p.78); Tankut’s “*Sociological Studies on Zazas*”, describes this barbarism with the following expressions: They (Zazas) are completely mountain people... They preserve almost all

the characteristics of primitiveness... Nature created Zaza as a mountain creature." (Tankut, cited in Bora, 2013, p.78). In Tankut's eyes, Dersimli-Zaza is absolutely "unreliable and dangerous" (p.80); Dersim is like "a nest of irrational evil that can only be understood rationally to a certain extent" (p.81). Tankut, Bora (2013) asserts, even makes ethno-cultural judgments against Dersimlis-Zazas: "Zaza lies a lot, cheats a lot... both cowardly and abusive... That's why they've always been harmful and dangerous... always spoiled and disobedient... Even though he begs for mercy, he shows no mercy." (p.80).

Bora makes all these evaluations under the title of "Uncanny Dersim" (*Tekinsiz Dersim*), using the concept of "uncanny" in the sense of both "dangerousness and the fear created by the unknown" (p.80); he thinks there is an uncanny image that has been created for Dersim. Silan's description about Dersimlis "as a barbarian people who are incompatible by nature" and his statements stating that Dersim's deep poverty stems from natural conditions: "A harsh nature; steep mountains, scary caves, wild valleys, a neglected country with no roads, no bridges, no buildings, surrounded by raging waters" (Silan, cited in Bora, p.79), paints a landscape of "the uncanny", for Bora (2013). Memduh Şevket Esendal's descriptions of the region, Bora also claims, even remind Hobsbawm's concept of "social banditry": "In this difficult life, the people of Tunceli could have been expected to occasionally commit robbery and act as bandits, which is what they did" (Esendal, cited in Bora, p.79).

In addition to the ethnic stereotyping against Dersim/Dersimlis, the search for an ethnic origin for Dersim has been constant until today. Dersimli sometimes has been "a pure Turk", sometimes Kurd, Zaza or Armenian as well. The policy of inculcating Turkishness in Dersimli, "policy of considering Kurds/Zazas as Turks", is very common (Bora, 2013). The report of General Command of the Gendarmerie (*Jandarma Umum Kumandanlığı*) in 1932 noted the difficulty of determining the racial situation in Dersim; also emphasized Dersimlis who occupied "Western Dersim" declared they came from Khorasan, and that there was no such claim in Eastern Dersim (p.60). Dersimlis emerged from the spread of Turks from Khorasan to these lands; they are "the real Turk of Khorasan" and all their customs, religion, and everything they believe belong to Central Asia (Uluğ, 1939, p.30):

About 1200 years ago, Ahmet Yesevi, departed from Khorasan, came to a place around Malatya, founded a village that he named here, his sons Sheikh Hasan and

Seyit Ali took their families, they spread to the high springs of Dersim, his sons and daughters were descended. Karabal, Abbas and Ferhat Servants, and from Seyit Ali's sons, Koç, Damascus and Resik Servants have increased. (p.25)

The book, *Dersim*, also emphasizes the local people in Dersim come from the “same origin with the Turks”, and based on the physical anthropology findings, it is claimed they are from Khorasan (Toprak, 2012, p.565). Arif Bey from Mardin, the governor of Dersim in 1903, describes the ethnicity of Dersimlis as follows:

Dersim is not Kurdish as ignorant people think; "the people are Turkish, they speak Turkish, this place is a very old home of the Turks. There is no memory of any generation since the Turks, but these wrong paths always open the door to Kurdishness. (p.156)

When Dersim is taken together with its surroundings, Uluğ (1939) claims, the oldest inhabitants of this place were the "Hittites, the great Turkish entity of Central Asia": It is very likely that archaeologists will one day encounter Hittite artifacts in Dersim; graves confirming these possibilities have already begun to be unearthed" (Uluğ, 1939, p.27). Based on his cultural study in Dersim, Uluğ notes, "the people of Tunceli" have preserved many of the morals and customs of Central Asia; burying the dead with their favorite items such as weapons, daggers, bracelets, or belts is the same old Turkish custom" (p. 133). Both the tale of Dersim and its music consisting of five full-tone scales are from Central Asia (p.135).

Uluğ also states that in Dersim, in addition to those who are from Khorasan and Harzem, there are also people called “Zaza” among the tribes settled in these mountains (p.70-71). Zazas, in Uluğ's definition, are “the children of Central Asia”; not different from Anatolian Turks in terms of emotions and lifestyle” (Uluğ, p.71). The nation named “Az”, recorded as a part of the Turkish community in the Orhon Monuments, Uluğ claims, may be a word transformed from “Az- Az” to Zaza as the principle of repetition of primitive nations:

Sas was the name of one of the Turkish tribes living in the Altai mountains in Central Asia. Dr. Rıza Nur records the existence of a Turkish community called Sas. All these are documents showing that Sas or Zazas lived as a unit within the Turkish federation. (p.72)

According to Besim Darkot, Dersimlis are “mountainous Turks” but the people living in this region were called “Kurds” during the Ottoman period, and “Dersimlis became Kurds not because they were actually Kurds, but because they were called Kurds” (Beşikçi, cited in Bora, 2013, p.83). “The denialist discourse” claiming with great certainty that the people of Tunceli, or “so-called Kurds and Zazas” are Turkish, has

rectified at regular intervals until the 2000s (Bora, 2013). Evidence regarding the Turkishness of Zazas was gathered even from Ibn Khaldun's *Mukkadime* (Ersöz, cited in Bora, p.83). Bora asserts, the narrative that the Kizilbash people are “Turks from Khorasan” and that they keep alive the “old Turkish traditions dating back to Central Asia” has been embellished (p.83). According to Bora, the statement “Dersim is truly Turkish” by Falih Rıfkı Atay (Beşikçi, cited in Bora, p.84) shows that the thesis ostensibly is about the “absence” of Kurds/Zazas (Bora, 2013).

On the other hand, Mazher Aren, saying “there is no bedouinism, primitiveness, brutality or mercilessness in Turks”, opposes those who think “Dersimlis are Turks” (Bora, p.84). According to Bora, 4th General Inspector General Alpdoğan's calling Dersimlis “mountain Turks” is an expression of the strategy of winning over these people by “granting them Turkishness”, rather than the Turkishness of Dersimlis (p.84). Similarly, what Tahsin Uzer says at the same meeting, who does not trust the “Turkishness of Kurdish thesis”, shows the “fragility of this strategy” for Bora; because Uzer admits that it is not possible for Dersimlis, whom he defines as Kurdish, to become Turks by calling them Turks (Bora, p.85). Similarly, Tankut, one of the main authors of the thesis that “Zazas are originally Turks”, also mentions that it is a difficult task to convince Kurds/Zazas of the Turkishness granted to them:

I will claim that Zaza is Turkish, but what do I gain from this claim? Because after me, Zaza will still speak Zaza and live in Zaza. It should be believed that temporary suggestions and propaganda will not be sufficient in this work... None of them are Turks today, and they are alien to Turkishness at heart, insidious enemies, and far from Turkishness. (p.85)

Bitlis Bey Şerif Han, in “*Sharafname*”, does not consider Zazas as Kurds; since he does not find any similarity between Kurdishness and Zaza's character, morality and body structure, the dialect Zazas speak and their way of life (Uluğ, p.75-76). On the contrary, Vitali Guinet included Zazas in the Kurdish classification in the geography research in Turkey in 1885, where the sects of Dersim is divided into three: Muslim, Kizilbash and Kurdish (cited in Uluğ, 1939). The book *Dersim*, emphasizing Zaza as the same as Turkmen in terms of character, does not subject the Dersim sect to an “ethnic distinction”, but speaks of a “sectarian difference” stemming from Shiism (Toprak, p.566). Zazas, “the mountainous Turks”, are divided into two sects: Shafii and Hanafi (Uluğ, 1939).

As can be seen, there are many studies on Dersim ethnic origin, on the basis of Turkishness, Kurdishness and Zazakiness, and discussions on this subject continue today. Although this study is not about the ethnic origin of Dersim, it is necessary to mention the following points regarding the "Kurdishness" of Dersim, which is considered the center of Kurdish-Alevi (Gezik, 2020). According to Ağuenoğlu (2018), the first reason why Kurdish nationalism does not focus on Alevism sufficiently is that Alevi had relatively little weight at the intellectual level in Kurdish organizations before 1960; the other reason is that the Alevi, who took an active role in Kurdish nationalism after 1960, generally kept their distance from the world of faith due to their socialist tendencies. For these reasons, Alevism was not a phenomenon to be taken into consideration and researched within Kurdish movements until the 1980s (Ağuenoğlu,2018). According to Ağuenoğlu (2018), the book “*Dersim in the History of Kurdistan*” (1952) of Nuri Dersimi, one of the Kurdish intellectuals with Alevi origin, is considered a beginning in this field although it does not devote much space to Alevism. According to Dersimi, Alevism spread from Arabia to Khorasan¹⁰ of Kurdistan and Iran under the name of Caferi sect in the 11th century and spread strongly among the Kurdish tribes of Khorasan (cited in Ağuenoğlu, 2018).

The caliphate-supporting Sheikh Sait Uprising in 1925, supported by Kurdish and Zaza tribes, can be considered as an important point in understanding the state's positioning of Kurds and Zazas, and therefore Dersim, ethnically. After the “Sheikh Said Uprising” covered the provinces of Gaziantep, Urfa, Siverek, Diyarbakır, Siirt, Bitlis, Van Muş, Genç, Elazığ, Ergani, Mardin, Malatya and Maraş, the northern and southern coasts of Lake Van, the districts between Muş, Genç and Elazığ, all the districts of the Dersim province, and Kahta, Hisniansur and Behisni districts in the south of Malatya, the region is defined as the “revolt area” in the reports, and also regarding the “ethnic identity” of the region titled “*Kurds*”, it is emphasized that most of the people in these regions are “Kurds” (Toprak, 2012, p.545). The book *Dersim*, focusing on the anthropological findings of the Kurds and Kurdish language, claims the locals in Dersim speak half Turkish and half Persian language while living in their homeland on the eastern side of the Caspian, migrated to the West against the Genghis invasion, and remained under the influence of Iranian language and culture for a long

¹⁰ According to Dersimi, Khorasan, shown as the center of philosophical maturation of Alevism, is a Kurdish region, contrary to the claim of Turkish nationalists (cited in Ağuenoğlu,2018).

time during this migration, partly “Shafiism and mostly Kizilbash” (Toprak, 2012, p. 566). Similarly, in 1908, while describing the dual social structure (Tribe and *Ocak* Belonging) in Dersim's identity formation, the United States Consul in Harput referred to the Dersimlis as “*Dersim Kurds*” in the report: “There are approximately 50 Kizilbash tribes, each headed by an Agha, or leader, chief, and each with a Sayyid, or religious leader” (Akgül, cited in Gürtaş, p.315). Molyneux-Seel (1914), based on his journey in Dersim in July, August, and September 1911, also used the word “*Kezelbash Kurd*” when defining the inhabitants of Dersim (Appendix 3).

Fırat (2018) looks at the ethnic diversity in Dersim within the framework of Weber and Barth's approaches to ethnicity that evaluated in constant change. According to Fırat (2018), Dersim 38 has weakened the tribal identity in the region and brought the “Kırmanc” identity to the fore due to this collective crushing fate; this identity includes Kirmancki/Zaza and Kirdashki/Kurdish speaking Alevi communities but not Sunni-Zazas, Sunni Kurds, Turkish Alevi and Yazidis.

In addition to the issue of finding ethnic origins in Dersim, there is also its religious identity, which has been questioned to this day. Discussions on Dersim's religious identity mostly focus on Kizilbashness, and over time, a concept called “Dersim's ethno-religious identity” is formed, in which ethnic and religious identity are discussed together.

In 1939, Uluğ notes:

Dersim is Kizilbash Muslim; some of them are Zaza and some of them recognize the *ijtiha* of an imam named Caferi Sadik. However, the influence of the totem religion brought by the tribe from Central Asia is dominant in the religion of Dersim. In the four corners of Dersim, a variety of totems are scattered, the genus and type of which cannot be imagined. (p.32)

But much earlier, based on his trip to Dersim in 1888, Armenian Antranik (1900/2022) notes, Dersimlis have their own religion that they transmit orally without relying on any book (p.122). Yet, Antranik adds, he does not know what name this religion should be given; Dersimlis are neither Christian, Muslim nor Jewish; on the contrary, it is a mixture of all, a mixture of old and new religions. Dersimlis, Antranik even notes, are more oriented towards Judaism since the religious rituals of Judaism are mostly seen among them; the only difference is that the Dersimlis believe Ali as the only holy person sent by God (p.122). Antranik also says that Dersimlis respect Jesus as much as Ali, based on the following words of the dedes and seyyids:

Christians saw the same saint sent by God as Jesus, and we saw him as Ali. So much so that there is no big religious difference between us and you, the only difference is the names: Isevi and Alevi. (p.122)

Sharing his observations about the religions and rituals of the people of Dersim, Antranik states Dersimlis have circumcision, just like Jews and Muslims, and that they do not fast during Ramadan (p.122). In Antranik's observations, it is also seen that the religion, ritual, and social life of Dersimlis are conveyed in an intertwined way:

St. Sarkis and St. Kevork are the only saints worshiped by Dersimlis as Hızır and Hıdır; the first is the ruler of the land, the second is the waters...Seyyids and dedes have a duty as clergy to visit Kurdish houses indiscriminately, and to offer moral and religious advice. Seyyids and dedes whose visits are for consolation, they take their instruments, which are to them an inseparable companion what the Bible is to the Christian clergy, and they begin to sing traditional songs and laments. Every man from the Kureşan tribe is considered a seyit. When a seyit is given the rank of dede, a special ceremony is held: Seven dedes gather in that seyid's house and sing with the accompaniment of their instruments.... It is the duty of the dedes to ensure peace among the people. Whoever is at odds with someone, the dede reconciles them. Dersimlis have an unshakable belief that the soul returns again. One of the Seyyids told me that after death, people are reborn as mindless reptiles, birds, insects, butterflies, flies, and mosquitoes. Dersimlis worship the sun, the moon, various bright stars, dawn, sunset, ... with awe. Likewise, they believe in fire, water, earth, stone, wood, plant, and tree. (p. 123-125)

According to Antranik's definition, Dersimlis also welcome people who have taken refuge in their region due to any oppression, regardless of their religion or nationality, whether they are Armenian or Kurdish, with love (p.129-130).

Molyneux-Seel, concerning the curious religious beliefs and traditions of the Dersim inhabitants in "*A Journey to Dersim*" in 1991, sheds light on the difficult problem of ethno-racial origin in the region. Molyneux-Seel asserts, Dersimlis are called by the Turks "Kezelbash"¹¹ meaning "red-head", "a term of opprobrium which they apply also to the Persians and to other unorthodox Mohammedans" (p.51); whereas Molyneux-Seel calls them Kezelbash Kurds. The Kezelbash sect, though themselves repudiating the term "Islam", are Mohammedans of the Shiite branch, and their religion embodying also certain Christian rites (p.51) The Kezelbash religion is not confined to the Dersimli nor to the Kurd race, but, on the other hand, the dialect Zaza, which differs widely from Kurmanji, does appear to be confined to this sect (p.50-51).

¹¹ Same as the "Kizilbash"

Connected with the Kezelbash Kurds, nothing is of more interest than their curious religious beliefs. As I have before mentioned, they must be considered as Mohammedans of the Shi'ite branch, although their religion contains practices and beliefs borrowed from Christianity. The Kezelbash repudiate the term "Islam," which they apply to the hated Turks, and all call themselves "Yol Oushaghi," or "Children of the True Path. Their hierarchy contains the dignitaries Seid or priest, Murshud or bishop, Murshuden Murshudu or archbishop. All Seids and Murshuds claim descent from a certain Imam Bakir, who is therefore the founder of their religion as apart from other Mohammedan sects (p.64).

The Kezelbash have no special religious book, but they accept as inspired the New Testament, the Pentateuch, and the Koran. They are instructed in their religion by the Seids, whose hands they kiss and whose words they accept as the message of God. According to their means they pay to the Seids a certain tribute called Kharaj (p.66)

They have neither church nor mosque, nor do they perform the "Namaz." But in the morning, commencing with prostrations before the sun, they invoke the aid of Ali. Public devotions are performed also in the houses of the Seids, where both men and women are received, provided they be true Kezelbash (p.66)

Taylor, the British consul in Diyarbakır, who visited Dersim in 1866, similarly asserts "Dersimlis were originally the successors of a pagan Armenian generation". The official or religious officials in the region, Hasluck mentions, say that the so-called Kizilbash communities were of Armenian origin as "race" (cited in Zırh, 2020, p.356). This idea, Zırh asserts, stems not only from physiological similarities, but also from some commonalities in traditions: the understanding of Ali in Kizilbash evokes Jesus in Christianity, the trinity of Hak-Muhammad-Ali and the holiness of 12 symbols" (Zırh, p.356).

Soon after leaving Kezel Kilise one enters a small oval valley called Der Ova. Der Ova is a corruption of Der Ohan, which signifies in Armenian, "Seigneur Jean," a monastery thus styled having given its name to the little valley. (p.56)

Molyneux-Seel similarly states that the Armenian Bishop of Kığı, who made a long study about Kurds of Dersim, claimed that they were of "pure Armenian race" (p.49), and gives details about this claim by mentioning his own observations about the Armenians in the region: "Two-thirds of the inhabitants are Armenians" (p.53). He also adds:

Kezel Kilise is the residence of a Kaimmakam and has a garrison of half a battalion... It hardly merits to be called a town, as it consists merely of some thirty houses, including various well-built stone Government buildings. The inhabitants consist mainly of civil and military officials. The remainder comprise a few Armenian craftsmen, some Turkish merchants, and four houses of Kezelbash Kurds. An Armenian, who has been employed many years as bread contractor for the troops, stated, on the strength of what was related to him by an octogenarian

now deceased many years, that sixtyfive years ago there were Armenians in all the villages throughout Dersim, and that the number of churches, in addition to four monasteries, amounted to 136. (p.55)

He also mentions the following inscription on the tombstone on an Armenian grave:”

I am the tailor of 9000 Armenians" (p.53). Without accepting the tailor's estimate of the number of clients as accurate, Molyneux-Seel concludes that the number of Armenian inhabitants in his time was considerable:

In the upper part of the town is a picturesque little mosque with a ruined minaret. The Turkish inhabitants state that it is 750 years old, thus placing the date of its erection in the century before the Ottoman dynasty. All the Armenian churches in Dersim have long been destroyed, but the Armenians of the towns (there are none now in the villages) zealously guard the memory of the sites of those near them. Above the town on the west slope of the rock fortress is one of these ancient sites. Though no stone remains of the former church, the Armenians assemble at the spot twice a year, Christmas, and Easter, for the performance of a religious service. There exist altogether seven ancient sites of churches and three of mosques. (p.53)

...Between the watershed and the Kighi Su is a so-to-speak interpolated broken chain of mountains, the most prominent of which is the majestic Selbuz Dagħ with its conical snow-clad peak. The name Selbuz is a corruption of Surpluis, which signifies in Armenian "Holy light". (p.54)

Chemishgezek is the largest town in Dersim... It has a thousand houses, of which two-thirds are inhabited by Ottomanized Kurds and the remainder by Armenians. The bed of the Dagħar Su is wide, and in the face of its further precipitous bank, 150 feet high, are some ancient rockchamber excavations, in which tradition says a certain Greek prince named Chemish once took refuge and originated thus the name of the town. In the neighbourhood are several Armenian villages and several villages inhabited jointly by Armenians and Greeks. These Greeks have lost their language and speak either Turkish or Armenian but maintain the tradition of their Greek origin. (p.63)

Similarly, Antranik says that a large number of Armenians lived in Dersim, especially in the Dujik area, who were completely free and exempt from all taxes, and were actually known as Mirakians (*Mirakyanlar*) living in the Der-Ovan, Zokhur, Ek1z, Havlor, Torud regions (p.131). Bumke (1989) indicates Duzgun Baba, one of the most important holy places of Dersim, is also considered a holy visit by the Armenian communities living in the region (cited in Zırh, 2020); but for Hasluck (1929), this overlap is not limited to holy places, but that Armenians can take part in various social rituals of their Alevi neighbors (Zırh, p.355). According to Tosun and Bal (2013), Dersim's geographical location, far from state control, has become a haven for Armenians (p.140). They also noted that the Alevis embraced the Armenians in 1915, and that some Armenians in Dersim kept their faith among Alevis by hiding their identities (Tosun & Bal, 2013). Tosun, and Bal also focus on the cultural interaction

between Dersim and Armenians, whom it defines as one of the ancient peoples of Dersim.

Since there was no regular population census in the region before 1914, it is difficult to obtain demographic information about the Armenians in this period; it is possible to obtain information about the social and political situation only through witnesses such as a few Armenian merchants and a few high-ranking clergies. It is claimed that Çarşancak and Çemişgezek districts in the Dersim sanjak have a more densely Armenian population. The people of the Peri-centered town of Çarşancak consist of Armenian, Turkish and Kurdish. (p.137)

At this point, Aksoy draws a general theoretical framework showing the level of cultural interaction and possible elements of continuity between Armenians and Alevi Kurds. Dersim, historically as a part of Northwest Armenia, has been a place where Armenians have lived since ancient times who has made a significant contribution to Dersim culture. As Aksoy points out, there are indelible traces of the Armenian people in the cultural spirit of Dersim (p.19). Aksoy examines the Armenian influences and ethnic cohesion in Dersim through place, tribe, and personal names. For instance, Balikan Mountain, located between Hozat and Ovacık, resembles the name of the Christian Armenians, the Pavlikans (p.20); the question of whether Dersim Alevism is a continuation of Pavlikanism has occupied researchers for a while. Ali Haydar Cilasan claims that traditions such as putting molasses on the grave, common among Dersim Alevis, are borrowed from the Armenians (Zırh, p. 355).

3.3. Alevism

There has been ongoing dispute on an “authentic” definition of Alevism (Karaosmanoğlu, 2013), defining Alevism points to serious confusion in terms of both the heterogeneity Alevism contains, the uncertainty of the difference between religion and culture in Alevism (Sökefeld, 2020; Ersoy, 2012) and whether Alevism can be regarded as within Islam or outside of Islam (Şahin, 2005, cited in Karaosmanoğlu, 2013). For Ersoy (2012), the fact that Alevism is primarily related to a religious and social field, rather than political codes, creates difficulties in defining Alevism (p.225). Alevism shows partial differences in terms of its religious practices and ethnic affiliations and does not fit into a generally valid definition (Gürtaş, 2020). The definition of Alevism has been turned into an “enigma” associated with “ambiguity” and “ambivalence” (Karaosmanoğlu, 2013, p.583-584).

Alevism, a form of belief, defines itself as Turkish, Turkmen, Yörük, Kurdish and Zaza but becomes “the common belief” of groups that develop within historical contexts and speak different languages (Aydın, 2020); and for exactly these reasons, the emerging traditional explanations, “the essentialist approach”, trying to base Alevism on an “origin”, are insufficient to understand the ethno-religious character of Alevism (p.11). According to Şener (2007), for example, 99% of Alevis are Turkmens, and those who speak Kurdish today are Turkmens who have become Kurdish over time and have forgotten their own origins (cited in Ağuıçenoğlu,2018). Rather than explaining Alevism in a single theoretical framework, a special perspective needs to be developed to define ethno-religious character of Alevism, according to Aydın (p.11); similarly, Sökefeld suggests it would be more appropriate to adopt an “eclectic approach” from different institutional perspectives (Sökefeld, 2020, p.431). The characteristics of Alevism, Karaosmanoğlu (2013) claims, contradict “essentialism” and instead emphasizes an “anti-essentialist position” that allows understanding the concept of “the syncretic character of Alevism”, the "distinctive mark in Alevi culture that has flourished as an idiosyncratic feature of a unique historical development” (p.583). According to Aydın (2020), instead of essentialism, approaches that try to understand ethnicity within social practice, the ethnographic method of anthropology, are more convincing (p.12). Aydın reminds Andreas Wimmer’s “comparative analysis of ethnic situations” derived from Wimmer’s Central America cases; highlighting that ethnic situations are a special case that is shaped in different degrees, different ways and different social structures and historical contexts (2000, p.13). Wimmer, Aydın claims, proposes to get rid of the "standardizing" view of gathering ethnic groups under a single definition by emphasizing the ethnic groups emerging from other ethnic groups, or the clusters that do not have an ethnic context become ethicized under historical conditions (Aydın, p.13) and this approach adds dynamism to the analysis of ethnic boundaries (p.13). Based on the acceptance that Alevism is an ethno-religious social formation and identity, Aydın analyzes Alevism with its founding elements, the path it has followed in history, the moments when identity and grouping re-establishes itself on this path, the deterioration and restructuring of ethno-religious solidarity, as well as the strategies Alevism follows in the face of emerging historical conditions (p. 14).

Alevism is also recognized as a belief shaped in the "border conditions" between Islam and Christianity and it is a kind of "meta-dox, a belief-culture beyond all doxes" (Zırh, 2020, p.354). As well as being a heterodox belief system, Alevism has a syncretic nature including various sub-heterodox definitions; from various paganist elements to some patterns of Mazdekism and Manichaeism, from Shamanism to Zoroastrianism and it was also fed from many belief systems (Sökefeld, 2020, p. 426-427). Alevism, the extension of the Sufi movements, "the collective intellectual-religious product of the Middle East", is seen as a continuation of the ideas in Iraq and Iran between the 8th and 13th centuries; therefore, if an ethnic origin is to be sought for Alevism, Gezik (2020) claims, this is mostly limited to the Iranian and Arab duo (p.24). The history of Alevism and similar groups is explained with reference to 'three' main sources:

The first of these is Sufism and is dealt with in three periods: first, the emergence of individual Sufism encountered until the 900s; second, sect formations based on systematized rules between 900 and 1250, and finally popular Sufism, which developed around charismatic dervishes from the middle of the 13th century. While the second main source is Shiite and extreme Ali supporters; the third source is ideas like the Khurramis, seen as the continuators of the late antique Iranian culture and religious world. (p.264-265)

These three main currents that have different dynamics, Gezik (2020) claims, met between the 9th and 13th centuries, influenced each other, and formed the new intellectual, religious and opposition movements (p.265). Based on a historical identity and taking its current form with a historical construction, Alevism has renewed itself according to the social context and relationality of each period (Geçgin, 2020, p.425). Furthermore, Alevism is not only a belief system with theological references, but also a social structure and collective identity that is the product of a collective consciousness (Çakmak & Gürtaş, 2020); yet the conceptuality created in Alevism studies is both "alien" to Alevism and reproduce the existing Islamic domination, Alevism, therefore, has survived to the present with "an isolationist defense position and reflex" (p.34).

In addition to many belief concepts (except ritual practices), Alevis, as claimed by Sökefeld (2020) accept the founding legends in Shiism as references. Alevis attribute Alevism and the emergence of the term Alevi to Ali, the cousin and son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammed, as well as the fight around who would be the successor of the Prophet: "Alevis, like Shiites, have the understanding that Ali is the legitimate

successor of the prophet, appointed by the prophet and predestined with a spiritual characteristic” (Sökefeld, p.399):

On the other hand, the caliphate of the first three caliphs (Ebubekir, Ömer and Osman), who were the founders of the Sunni tradition and who made himself accepted in the discussions that arose in the process of appointing the caliph after the death of the Prophet (Hz. Muhammed), is not accepted as legitimate by the Alevis, on the contrary, it appears as a usurpation of rights. (p.399)

Kieser (2011) expresses this situation with the following words:

The Alevis venerated Ali, Muhammed’s son-in-law. They refused the Sharia and remained attached to unorthodox Sufi beliefs and practices widespread in Anatolia before the 16th century, when the Ottoman state embraced Sunnite orthodoxy; the beliefs were mostly linked to Anatolian saint Hacı Bektash (13th century). Since many of the Alevis had sympathised with Safavid Persia in the 16th century, they were lastingly stigmatised as heretics and traitors.

Gezik points to two periods as the historical beginning of Anatolian Alevism: 13th and 15th-16th centuries; while the first period focuses around Hacı Bektaş-ı Veli, the second takes shape around Safavi interventions and Shah İsmal (cited in Gürtaş & Çakmak, p.259). Sökefeld claims, Alevism has been shaped as an independent religious tradition by many waves of migration and fights for sovereignty in the 13th century and emerged in Anatolia, a geography where different, even non-Islamic, mixed religious influences, and traditions (cited Çakmak & Gürtaş):

The history of the emergence of Alevism (in Anatolia) cannot be attributed to a specific person, nor can it be historicized within a certain year or a certain period. Instead, the basis of today's Alevism can be considered as an extended time frame in which a religious worldview emerged over a complex political and religious field and spread over a long period of development. (p.399)

According to Gezik (2020), Alevi studies, have become widespread in Turkey and Western Europe in the last decade, bear the traces of all three lines and have not moved away from a kind of “roots search” approach (p.24):

According to some, Alevism is a national belief system peculiar to Turks, in which the Turkmen who came to Anatolia from Inner Asia fused their belief systems with the religious figures of the Islamic world. According to some, it is a heterodoxy shaped under the influence of Iranian religions, and according to others, it is a reinterpretation of the Christian heterodoxy in Anatolia within the framework of Islam. In fact, some interpretations take the roots of Alevism back to the Sumerians. There is no doubt that Alevism is a syncretic formation; however, while searching for an origin for Alevism, we neglect many of the historical factors that shaped this form of belief and turned Alevism into an ethnic condition. (p. 11-12)

Alevism is condemned to distant regions by official authorities as a "marginal", "non-social" and "non-religious" community, as in the examples of Seljuk, Ottoman Empire

and Turkish Republic, which sided with a certain sect: Sunnism (Yaman, 2020, p.276). Alevism, Sökefeld claims, is ultimately the "other" of Sunni Islam:

The core of Alevi morality is a special depiction of man and God. In the center of Alevism, people stand; in other words, God must be sought and found in man, not in written texts or creeds that exist outside of man. While the Qur'an, which is regarded as God's own revelation, is the supreme authority for literature-centered Islam, the worship of human idols and charismatic figures is central in Alevism and other Sufi and heterodox forms of Islam. In Alevism, man is seen as a being who has embarked on the path to integrate with God, and it is emphasized that people can travel a different distance on this path. The aim here is to reach the level of "insan-i kamil" integrated with God. (p.406)

Some argue that Alevism has nothing in common with Islam, citing the impact of shamanism, Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Buddhism, and Christianity (Karaosmanoğlu, 2013). However, in general, Alevism, says Aksoy, even though it has theological and ritualistic roots different from Islam, it has historically found its final shape in Islam (Aksoy, 2020, p.34). For many Alevis, Karamanoğlu (2013) states:

Alevi belief has strong connections with the more spiritual aspect of Islam that developed in Anatolia with the help of the Sufi-Bektaşî tradition and that it blended with the shamanistic rituals of the Turkmen tribes as opposed to the Sunni roots of Arabic Islam. (p.586)

The existence of Alevism as an ethnic identity in Turkey has many objective and subjective dimensions and Alevism also has a fluid aspect allowing the Alevis to redefine themselves (Karaosmanoğlu, 2013). Alevism, as an identity component with strong religious and ethnic aspects, contains ethnic affiliations; the Bektashi practices (*Bektaşilik*) and Kurdish Alevism exemplify the fragmented structure of Alevism (Ersoy, 2012). The Bektashi practices, for instance, is an expression of a non-Arabized Islamic line (Ersoy, p.229). The term Alevi is applied to communities in Turkey with diverse lifestyles and cultural backgrounds, such as Kizilbash, Bektaşî, Tahtacı, Nalcı, Abdal, and Sıraç. (Koçan and Öncü, 2004, cited in Karaosmanoğlu, 2013) and Turkish Alevism differs significantly from the Shia tradition in Iran and the Alawites of Syria (Karaosmanoğlu, 2013). Gezik (2020) talks about the need to bring clarity to what and which groups exactly the Alevis and the concepts of Alevism include:

There are different sub-groups that qualify as Alevis within the borders of today's Turkey: Bektashis, Kizilbash, Tahtacılar, Nusayris, Dersim-based hearths and their suitors, Chepnis, etc. If we take the Ottoman Empire as a basis, it is necessary to include groups such as the Druze (Dürzüler), Kakais (Kakailer), Shabaks (Şabaklar), Ehli Haklar. (p.206)

Despite all these differences and diversity, with the Turkish national project, the term Alevi gained a "standard" character, representing the unity of many people groups in Anatolia, especially the Anatolian Kızılbaş, heterodox Islamic groups and Bektashi Sufis (Livni, 2002, cited in Karaosmanoğlu, 2013).

3.3.1. Dersim as the region of Alevi Kurds: “Kizilbash/Dersim Alevism”

The religious roots of Alevi Kurds lie in the Sufi movements that took shape from the second half of the Middle Ages and their branches that became popular between the 12th and 15th centuries (Gezik, 2020, p.63). This religion, Kızılbashness, developed as a movement opposing Sunni Islam, spread in the region through “holy families”, as opposed to the lodge organization (p.63). These families, *the Seyyids*, connected themselves to the Prophet's cousin Ali lineage, were in harmony with the tribal structure active in the region and accepted traditional beliefs to be able to influence the region (p.63).

Researching the complex structure and current formations of the “Alevi Kurds”, Gezik states, studies on Alevi Kurds are influenced by “three main political streams”: The first consists of Western missionaries, officials and researchers who were active in the Ottoman Empire from the 1880s to the 1920s. The encounter with Alevi groups in the Ottoman Empire, known as an Islamic community, creates a surprise for these people. The difference in the lives of the Alevis from the Sunni belief has been constantly emphasized by Western observers and this difference is explained by the “racial and religious origins” of the Alevis. For the Western missionaries, Alevis have Christian motifs in their beliefs and rituals, and they, unlike Sunnis, are close to Christians: “Alevis are the followers of the indigenous peoples of Anatolia and probably their communities, which were Christian until recently, trying to protect themselves under the name of Muslims” (Gezik, p.20). According to Gezik, the work of the western missionaries on Alevi Kurds is “an effort to write Christian history for Alevis” (p.20). The documents written in different years regarding the ethno-religious structure of Dersim by Guinet (1885), Antranik (1900/2022), and Molyneux-Seel (1911) can be considered in this context. The second group is the supporters of Turkish nationalism, who took an interest in the subject within the framework of their own national interests after 1910s. Alevis are considered in this group as a community that preserve their “Turkish national character from Central Asia” (p.21) to the present despite all the

Arab and Iranian influence in the Ottoman culture. Therefore, all the characteristics of Alevis were attributed to Central Asia or ethnically Turkish rather than Anatolian or Middle East as geographical origin. In these studies, languages other than Turkish used by Alevis were ignored and every difference at the level of belief was associated with Turkish Shamanism. The last group, on the other hand, is a Kurdish version under the influence of Kurdish nationalism that became visible after 1984 aiming to embrace all Kurds. Like the Alevi history that Turkish nationalism wanted to create in its own way, the Kurds tended to look for everything in their own region and Kurdish ethnicity (Gezik, 2020). The uprising of Sheikh Said constitutes a turning point for the word "Kurd" and after the uprising, the word "Kurd" is not included in the press and broadcast activities (Toprak, 2012, p.557). The state develops a double discourse towards the Kurds: on the one hand, their existence is "denied", while on the other, the state insists they certainly existed, but "only" as an "oppressive and feudal ethno-class" (Bozarslan, 2008). On Kurdish identity, Bozarslan also argues, there is not one exclusive type of Kurdish identity due to assimilation policies, voluntary or forced displacement, mixed marriages, as well as internal religious and linguistic differences. In Turkey, while most Kurds are Sunni Muslims, a significant majority is Alevis; some Kurds speak Zaza, others Kirmanji (Bozarslan, 2008). Based on Bozarslan's definitions above, we know that Dersim represents the "Kurdish Alevis" group, and we can guess that Dersim's Kurdishness is perceived as a feudal ethnic class in this dual discourse of the state towards the Kurds.

Dersim, where Alevi Kurds live, has been an important challenge for the new Turkish State. The Kocgiri Uprising, the first rebellion marked by open Kurdish nationalism (Kieser,2011) in 1921 in Koçgiri, the Alevi Dersim area, threatened the Kemalist–Kurdish alliance (Bozarslan,2008). Later, many Sunni Kurdish dignitaries gradually followed the path of the Kurdish Alevi insurgents and the main reasons for the rupture seem to be linked to three factors (Bozarslan,2008): "by the end of 1923, Turkish nationalism was recognized as the official and dominant ideology of the country and different languages were seen as a threat accordingly, the abolition of the Caliphate, the only common ground remaining between the Kurds and the Turk and finally ending the War of Independence without liberation of southern Kurdistan" (Bozarslan, 2008). The most significant result of the end of the Kurdish alliance with the Kemalist state, Bozarslan (2008) claims, was a succession of revolts from 1924 to 1936: The Seyh

Said revolt in 1925, the Ararat revolt of 1930 and the Dersim revolt of 1936–1938, left an unforgettable mark on both the history of Kurdish nationalism and that of the Turkish Republic. “The 1937 Dersim Rebellion”, Ersoy (2012) asserts, is a Kurdish Alevi rebellion and one of the most important symbols of the fragmented Alevi identity. The revolt took place in the Dersim territory aimed at dispersing the Kurdish Alevi population and replacing it with a Turkish population. Intellectuals such as Nuri Dersimi and rural forces led by a religious dignitary, Seyyid Rıza, played an important role in the Dersim revolt, which was suppressed by the massive extermination of both rebels and civilians (Bozarslan, 2008).

Among Alevi Kurds, Gezik (2020) focuses on the Dersim, as “the center” of the religious organizations of Kurdish Alevis (p.26) and defines Dersimlis as those who knew how to preserve their own structure until the 1930s (p.64). For Ağuıçneoglu (2018), Alevism is the basic building block that forms Dersim's unique identity, and while this belief system determines the political stance of the people of the region and their relationship with the dominant structure, it also constitutes the main source of their marginalization.

Dersim also draws attention with its incorporation of identification processes such as Alevism and Kurdishness. Yet, Gezik questions the limits of making a serious determination about Alevi Kurds since the complex structure of Alevi Kurds poses a problem in Alevi-Kurdish studies in terms of ethnic (Kırmanc, Zaza, Kurdish, Kırdaş) and religious (Alevi, Kizilbash, Ali Divine, Ehl-i Haq) definitions. For instance, while the definition of Kurdish-Alevi became popular in parallel with the rise of the Kurdish national movement; the Zaza-Alevi issue emerged as an emphasis of Zazas who did not want to see themselves within the Kurdish identity (Aydın, 2020, p.27). Westerners who first encountered Alevi Kurds use the adjectives "Kizilbash", "heterodox", "Alevi" or "Shia"; although rarely encountered, some travelers have also made the definition of "Pagan"; the definitions of “Kizilbash”, “Alevi” and “Rafizi” are also seen in the works of the first period Turkish writers. Kurdish and Dersim researchers describe their community as "Alevi" and "Kizilbash" and the term "Kizilbash Alevism", which is increasingly used by this group, is also noteworthy (Gezik, 2020, p.32). Shiite means supporters, those who are friends of Ali are called Shiites or Alevis. The word Kizilbash appeared later. Shiites are of the opinion that the caliphate belongs to Ali and his children, and that Abu Bakr, Omar and Osman became unjust caliphs.

Shiism makes Dersim live far and apart from the Ottoman community, making it alien to the true Turkish existence. According to an Alevi narration, Ali wrapped a red cloth around his head when he was angry and then he really became Haydar; that is, the lion of *Allah*. According to another legend, Shah Ismail's father, Dervish Safavid Haydar, used to make Turkmen soldiers wear red caps on their heads.

Sılan's report on Dersim in 1952 emphasizes the main difference of the Dersim through Alevism (Bora, p. 88); Dersimlis "show loyalty to old habits such as worshipping the sun and water" and there exists a unique world of belief in Dersim, different from the familiar Alevism. According to Tankut, Dersimlis do not have the concept of Sharia and *Allah*, and they tend to worship human beings (Bora). There is a unique world of faith in Dersim, different from the usual Alevism. For Bora, what is implied is the existence of a world under the umbrella of Alevism, but different from standard Alevism, connected to pagan cultures, and closed enough to prevent the modernity of the state from penetrating. Uluğ (1939) states:

The Red Cap (Kizilbasness) continued with these distinctive effects even after Iran ceased to be a tool of its expansion policy. This ignorant and treacherous belief, which dominated the souls with a mysticism so deep that it could alienate even two brothers from each other and turn them into enemies, was the fathers, grandfathers, and saints in Anatolia until the Republic period; On the other hand, it encouraged lodges, sheikhs, madrassas, and bigots. (p.77-78)

Tankut, saying Alevism itself is un-Islamic, emphasizes the distinctiveness of Dersim Alevism, the magical religion through its "otherness": "There is no Sharia or the laws of *Allah*. They tend to worship humans" (Tankut, cited in Bora, 2013):

Apparently, there is only Islam in Turkey. However, the truth of the matter is not like that. Those who consider Alevism to be a sect of Islam or a sect of it are completely deceived. Alevism is not Islam. (p.89)

According to Tankut, providing evidence of fire worship, Alevi Zazas preserve Shamanism under the mask of Islam. Tankut, also evaluates Alevism with its closeness to Christianity due to similarities in belief: the trinity expressing the three states of God, the belief of the twelve Apostles and the twelve imams, the similarity between making the cross and bringing the claw to the chest with the belief that faith is in the chest, drinking alcohol during worship (p.90).

Dersim Alevism is also tried to be explained in terms of its difference from Sunnism. The conflict between Alevis and Sunnis, Gezik explains, dates to the 16th century; the war between the Sunni Ottomans and Kizilbash (Shiite) Shah Ismail in the first quarter

of the 16th century creates an irreversible Sunni-Alevi divide in the region for the first time. Alevi groups within the Ottoman borders, sympathetic to Shah Ismail, pay a heavy price in the post-war period with the defeat of Shah Ismail. The Sunni Kurdish principalities, sided with the Ottomans, played an important role in the “massacres” committed against the Alevis in this process (Gezik,2020). The Alevis, who would be under constant pressure, could only protect themselves in the mountainous and isolated areas from which they retreated (Gezik, p.48). Similarly, Sökefeld states:

In the 16th century, Kizilbash occupies an important place among the pioneers of today's Alevism, and until the middle of the 20th century, Alevis in Turkey are described as Kizilbash, with the red-colored headgear they wrap around their heads. The Kizilbash were supporters of the Safavid sect, a militant Sufi community that arose in the inhabited region of present-day Azerbaijan. This sect, which was Sunni in origin, gradually began to adopt a Shiite content, and the leader of the sect, Shah Ismail, became the Persian Ruler in 1501 and declared Shi'ism as the state religion. A relentless power struggle began between the Ottomans and the Safavids for the dominance of Eastern Anatolia; The Ottomans began to see the Anatolian Kizilbash as dangerous allies of their enemies. (p.400)

Gezik (2020) also investigates the historical traces of the conflict between Alevi Kurds and Sunni Kurds. Although there are different versions of the distance between the two groups, Gezik states the elders of Dersim explain the reason for the disagreement between them and the Sunni Kurds as follows:

In 1925, before Sheikh Said (Sunni Kurd) started the revolt, he sent two of his envoys to Dersim to meet with Seyid Rıza (Alevi Kurd) to make the people of Dersim participate in the planned rebellion. Seyid Rıza accepted the ambassadors and had a sacrifice cut for them. The meat that Seyit had prepared for the guests was rejected by the ambassadors. As a justification, they showed "the eating of a sacrifice slaughtered by a Kizilbash will not be accepted by their religion". Thereupon, Seyid Rıza said how they could expect those who do not eat from his own hand to fight with them, and after stating that this would not happen to his guests, he wished them success and said goodbye.

In the late 19th century, frictions between the two groups restarted under the Islamist Sultan Hamid; the Hamidiye Regiments, formed by Hamid from Sunni Kurdish tribes, increased the pressure on the Alevi tribes in the region. When the sultan's political power first began to shake in 1908, the positions of these troops were also affected. The Republic, founded in 1923, showed these unions and the sheikhs who led them religiously could never return to their former status and the Sheikh Said Rebellion that broke out in 1925 was an expression of the satisfaction of these groups (Gezik,2020, p.48-49). Their aim was to restore their position and the political power of the sultan, who was its guarantor. The rebels tried to include the Alevi tribes in the rebellion to

achieve their goals, but all their attempts were inconclusive. With the hope that they could get rid of religious oppression with the Republic, Alevis had supported the formation of the Republic and Mustafa Kemal from the very beginning, and they took an active part on the side of the Republic themselves. Sheikh Said Rebellion, which stands out with its religious side, has an important place in the history of the Early Republic; the conflicts between Sunni Kurds who participated in the rebellion and Alevi tribes who did not, the participation of Alevi tribes Hormek and Lolan in suppressing the rebellion together with the army are interpreted as the natural results of the conflict between the two groups (Gezik,2020)

The historical distance between Hacı Bektaş Lodge and Dersim lodges has given rise to a definition of belief specific to the region: “Kizilbash -Alevism” (Kızılbaş Aleviliği) or “Dersim-Kızılbashness” (Dersim Kızılbaşlığı) (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p.68). The term Kizilbash Alevism has a leftist and oppositional meaning to the "Bektashi Alevism" that criticized by the Alevi Kurds for its closeness to the state (p.32). Dersim is also region where Sunni and Shafi communities, the majorities in Turkey, are also in a minority position; and the narrative that historically the region hosted different beliefs such as Armenians but "melted" into Kizilbasness is another component of Dersim-Kizilbash.

The political stigmatization of Alevism as "Shahçı" and its demonization under the name of "Kizilbasness " paved the way for the persecution and constant suspicion of Alevi groups (Aydın, 2020). Sunni theologians declared Kizilbash/Alevis as “heretics, infidels” (Çelik,2013) and “traitors” (Kieser, 2011). While Alevism already causes Dersim to be positioned as the "other", the dominant Alevi Kurdish/Zaza population creates a situation of "double otherness" (p.133). Dersim is considered not only as a Republican problem, but also as an Alevi Kizilbash problem that has existed since the Ottoman period but gained an ethnic dimension (Kurdish, Kirmanc-Zaza, Armenian) with nation-state policies. (N. Gündoğan & K. Gündoğan p.16).

Tribal affiliation and loyalty to dede/seyyid families, emerged as a form of “spiritual organization of unique belief pattern of the Kizilbashness” are used when describing Dersim identity (Zırh & Akçınar, p.68). Tribe and *Ocak* affiliation are the two basic elements that make up the historical identity of Dersim Alevis (Gürtaş):

Generally, everyone has a Tribe to which it belongs and a “Ocak” to which it is connected through the pir-talip relationship. Although tribal and Pirlik institutions

show very close similarities in social terms, they have functionally different features. While the Pirlik institution is more concerned with the religious field, the ağalık/tribal institution is more concerned with the social, political, and economic field. However, in some exceptional cases, as seen in the example of Seyid Rıza, it is seen that these two institutions live side by side in Dersim. (p.315)

Dersim Alevi identity is different from the general Alevi identity in terms of both internal and external perception, because Dersim Alevis are different from other Alevis due to both their 38 Tertelesi and their ethnicity. Dersim Alevis also have a different collective memory from the Kurds, to whom they are thought to belong ethnically. Again, according to Gürtaş, although various historical events create traumatic associations for all Alevis, the collective memory of Dersim Alevis, such as 1514, constitutes a significant difference from the memory of other Alevis (Gürtaş, p. 309-310).

3.4. The Politics of Alevism and Dersim

Alevism, in addition to being a belief system with very old historical and social roots, also positions itself as a movement with political discourse and demands (Çakmak & Gürtaş, 2020). For Çakmak and Gürtaş, “exclusionary discourse” and “violence policies” that developed against Alevism have a historical continuity in “Ottoman-Turkish social history”; Alevism could not save itself from being the “constant subject of the exclusionary and systematic violent policies” of the dominant Islamic political discourses, both in the ummah-centered society of the Ottoman Empire and also within the nation-state of the Republic defining itself as “modern” (p.35). Alevism is thought of in an ethnic context due to the Republic's categorization of identities such as Turkishness and Sunnism as fundamental foundation characteristics and the mistrust of Alevis that comes from the Ottoman history. Alevism, for Elhan (2022) emerged as a political issue during the Ottoman Empire in the 16th century and was addressed in the contexts of modernization, nationalism and nation-building in the 19th and 20th centuries. The new republican administration attempted to Islamize, nationalize, and integrate Alevis into the national society (Elhan, 2022); however, the state's policy toward Alevism was framed more in terms of Turkishness than Alevism (Küçük, 2008, cited in Elhan,2022).

Alevism has gained momentum as a political movement after the 1980s and been “instrumentalized” by both the Kemalist official ideology and conservative politics

(Ersoy, 2012). In the emergence of Alevism as an identity, the “historical grievances of Alevis”, “*Madımak*”, or the “Sivas Massacre”, the murder of 33 people by burning to death at Madımak Hotel in Sivas, play an important role in establishing and maintaining a sense of collective (Ersoy, 2012). The historical existence of Alevism as the formation of an identity is evaluated by Ersoy in the context of its relationship with Madımak Case; the violence faced by Alevis, Ersoy claims, has been turned into a tool for establishing their own identity. The demand of Alevis that “Madımak Hotel should be turned into a museum” points to the integrative effect of the trauma phenomenon in the formation of identity belonging (Ersoy, 2012). The fact that Alevis make the Madımak hotel a museum to be a political demand and make it a part of public debate is interpreted by Ersoy (2012) as addressing the oppression and persecution they have been subjected to for centuries as the founding element of the collective identity. Alevism has been instrumentalized by the political power; sometimes this was seen as Alevism being a part of the discourse of the Kemalist official ideology, and sometimes as a community whose votes were sought by conservative politics; however, Alevism, Ersoy (2012) highlights, as an autonomous identity politics emerged in the 1980s (Ersoy, p.226).

The Alevi identity has also long been appealing to many political ambitions in Turkey (“popular Alevism that is loyal to republicanism in Turkey”) and Europe (“Politicized Alevism which goes in hand with a leftist tradition”) (Karaosmanoğlu, 2013, p. 586). Alevism was also excluded in the context of modernization and identity; they have been seen as ethnically carriers of Turkishness however they also represent “backwardness” within the modernization project (Elhan,2022). It is claimed by Aydın (2020), a system in which the Alevi existence is officially accepted, and religious and cultural institutions are recognized by the state has not been achieved so far. In different periods, Alevism has always been in a “defensive position against the state”, and this situation has constantly fed the political factors that establish the identity of Alevis and in the eyes of Alevis, the state has always remained a “Sunni apparatus” and an “organ of oppression”, and the concern to produce and maintain positions against the state has become an inseparable element of Alevi identity (Aydın, p.27). Alevism is analyzed by Köker (2023) in terms of “hiding”, the inability of Alevism to reveal itself publicly in the public environment. Yet, according to Köker, this state of hiding has been replaced by increased demands for rights for a while. Unlike about

thirty years ago, Alevism is now a publicly "known", "recognized", "demanding", "organized" identity. A series of demands, ranging from opposition to compulsory religion courses to the acceptance of Cemevis¹² as places of worship, are actually related to the dimensions of the Alevis' demand for "equal citizenship" (Köker, 2023).

The foundations of discrimination faced by Alevis in terms of religion-politics relations, Yaman (2020) asserts, were laid before the Republican period; the Ottoman administration followed a strictly sectarian policy, supported religiously by the fatwas¹³ of the Sheikh al-Islam¹⁴ that has transformed into the lifestyle of the civil-military bureaucracy over the centuries (p.281). Starting from the 16th century, Aydın (2020) claims, the Ottoman Empire followed a path that defined itself through a "Sunni identity", which had an impact on "limiting" the Empire's attitudes towards Alevism and similar non-orthodox religious interpretations (p.26). The essence of this way of life is based on the premise that "Islam equals Sunni Islam" and there is an "oppressive" and "imposing" prevailing understanding created by this process (Yaman, p.281). The earliest legitimacy of today's "rebellious and disorderly" Alevism discourse, Ersoy (2012) asserts, dates to the period of Yavuz Sultan Selim in the 16th century; after "Turkmen Kızılbaş" openly stated their support for the Shiite Iranian Shah Ismail against the Sunni Ottoman Empire of Yavuz Sultan Selim they were accused of treason (Ersoy, p.227) and pushed out of the system in every field by the influence of politics and official religion in the Ottoman period, which was also the capital of the Sunni caliphate (Yaman, 2020, p.271). Yet seeing that a completely exclusionary attitude towards these heterodox groups would harm the state itself, the Ottomans chose to act "as if these groups were not heterodox" and to control these groups through their religious leadership (Aydın, 2020, p.26). For Aydın, defining Alevism through Bektashism was accepted as the most "reasonable" way since the "Ottoman Islam" was open to Sufi interpretations that strongly supported the existence of sects (p.26). The Ottoman Empire entered an integration with the dervish lodge of Hacı Bektaş-i Veli, an important religious figure of the Alevis, to Islamize the conquered places (Ersoy, 2012). In the period started with Yavuz Sultan Selim and continued with Suleiman I, the Ottoman Empire largely ignored "rural Alevism", except for the practice of "oppression, forced migration and violence (Aydın,2020,

¹² The main place of worship in Alevism.

¹³ Religious rule

¹⁴ The chief religious official in the Ottoman empire

p.46). However, the practice of eliminating Bektashi dervish lodges during the reign of II. Mahmut (1808-1839), and its reinterpretation within the framework of a kind of “Sunnization” during the reign of Abdulhamid (1876-1909) points to the second period of “great oppression” against the Alevi existence of the Ottoman Empire” that ended after 1909, when the Unionists saw Alevism as a potential for Turkism; however, Bektashi dervish lodges were closed with the enactment of the Law on the Closure of Dervish Lodges and Zawiyas in 1925 (p.46). During the Early Republican Period, Alevism was at its most “popular” as a political center of power (Ersoy, 2012); The Republic, based its foundation on Turkish nationalism, followed a path that defined "Alevism/Bektashism" together as a “cultural integration” as the expression of a "non-Arabized" line of Islam (p.228-229).

Dersim, both as an independent identity on its own and as the representative of Kurdish Alevism within this fragmented structure of Alevism (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013), is a deep source for analyzing the state's relationship with Kurdish Alevis in Early Republican period. What Alevis experienced in the history of the Republic shapes their memories (Zırh B. C., Yüzüncü yılında Alevilerin Cumhuriyet'i, 2023). According to Aslan (2010), Dersim's linguistic, cultural, religious, and social originality has been a sharp existential criticism of the state and their ideologies that have been dominant in the region. Ethnicity in Dersim, when considered together with its political projections, is a "politicized" issue and “being from Dersim” (*Dersimlilik*), articulated by pointing to different ethnic categories such as Kurdish and Zaz, has acquired a distinctive political meaning (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p.68-69). Dersim has been defined as a distinctive category of belonging with reference to language, ethnicity, belief, and culture from a historical framework and gained a unique political meaning (p.69). Military operations, “1937-38 Tertelesi” and the 1994 Village Evacuations (1994 Köy Boşatmaları), have politicized the originality of Dersim (p.69). In all official reports, the religious practices, language, and other characteristics of Dersimlis were presented as “problem”; in particular, "cultural identity" was perceived as an opposition dynamic, and the transformation of this cultural identity was aimed (Aslan, 2010). According to Bozarslan (2018), Dersim has an important place in the Kurdish imagination as a place of Kurdish-Alevi resistance but not a region where "feudalism" was dominant or “Turks” were forcibly "Kurdified" by "Kurdishness" as a feudal ethno-class; it was a region where the radicalization that emerged with the collapse of

the Empire took place on the basis of both Alevism and Kurdishness (Bozarslan, 2018). Bozarslan (2018) also claims, considering both Kâzım Karabekir's reports and military reports in the 1930s, Dersim was defined as Kurdish and Shiite by the state and was accused of protecting Armenians during the genocide. Hence, Dersim 38, the Military Operation took place in 1937-38, was not only where Alevism was positioned, but also 'how' 'Alevism, including Kurdishness', was positioned.

With the law dated 25 December 1935, "Tunceli Law", the name of the province is changed to Tunceli (Kaya, 2019). Dersim, no longer used "officially" after renamed Tunceli. Therefore, Zırh and Akçınar (2013) argue, the province called Tunceli today does not include the "cultural geography" that was known as Dersim at the time (p.64), but Dersim is 'still' used to refer to both the geographical location that includes the city of Tunceli and the culture associated with this area (Çelik, 2021). The political and administrative definition of the region in which the province known as Tunceli is located today spread over a wide period from the Ottoman (1847) to the Republic (1946) and the arrangement of this area was sometimes accompanied by military operations. The "Tunceli Law" erases not only Dersim, but also the local names of the region, "Mamekiye" and "Kalan" (Aygün, Dersim Nasıl Tunceli Oldu..., 2007). Working with immigrants from the "cultural geography" of Dersim in Berlin, Zırh and Akçınar (2013) argue Dersim is used as a category of "belonging" and holds an ambiguity (p. 60). "Being from Dersim" is an "anomalous category of belonging" with its language, ethnicity, belief, and cultural elements from a historical framework; has acquired a distinctive political meaning. The use of Dersim as "the spatial representation of the people" instead Tunceli as "the spatial representation of the state" is an important political reference in the definition of Dersimliness (p.68-69) and considered a political attitude in today's politics and a reference to 38 in general. The name Dersim, expressing the region, local culture, and history, has different uses such as "Tunceli (Dersim)", "Tunceli-Dersim" or "Tunceli/Dersim" holding a political meaning (Atay, 2013) :

The use of Dersim in parentheses after the name Tunceli - Tunceli (Dersim) - produces a very important meaning; the parenthesis has become a symbol here. This usage, in which the name "Tunceli" is prioritized and the name "Dersim" is subordinated still indicates the existence of some constraints.

Instead of the use of "Tunceli (Dersim)", Atay suggests the use of "Tunceli/Dersim" or "Tunceli-Dersim" as it may give a sense of "equivalence and equality; and also

produce a more unifying symbolic meaning”. Atay also voices the demands for using the name of Dersim “alone” to eliminate the “destructive, oppressive, and humiliating effect” of the name "*Tunç-eli*" that has always preserved its sad connotations in the social memory and is identified with the oppressive state, according to Atay (2013). According to Aslan (2010), the policy of "disciplining" Dersimlis, as a different/original cultural tradition, has never changed since the Ottoman period and continued by using force, exiling, banning language and belief practices, building schools and places of the dominant belief. Throughout this process, Aslan claims, the actors guiding the central politics have changed, but the mentality over Dersim has never changed.

Debates about whether Dersim 38 was a "*Rebellion or a Massacre?*" have occupied the agenda of Turkish politics for a long time both in the 2009 local elections and the 2010 Referendum (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013) where Dersim 38 turns into a “practice area” (*tatbikat alanı*) (Aslan, 2010, p. 10). The local elections of 29 March 2009, Zırh and Akçınar (2013) claim, become a very important period for Dersim to gain a central importance in the country's agenda. Dersim became the fighting front of three parties, AK Party, CHP, and DTP¹⁵ that want to leave Dersim with an election victory¹⁶. Political conflicts in Dersim, started with local election, continued with the "Period of Initiatives" (*Açılımlar Dönemi*), also called as “Democratic Initiative” or “Kurdish Initiative”, the name of the process initiated by AK Party to resolve the Turkey-PKK conflict. CHP's Onur Öymen's statements in the Turkish parliament evaluating the events of 1938 as a “rebellion” at the "Democratic Initiative General Meeting" on November 10, 2009, caused great reactions among Alevi and Dersim organizations both in Turkey and Europe and also left the Kemalists in a difficult situation (Zırh and Akçınar, 2013). Human rights defender and former president of the Tunceli Baro Association, Hüseyin Aygün, accused Öymen of "misrepresenting Turkey's history" and corrected him: "Dersim 38 was not a rebellion, but a massacre, a unilateral military operation. Do not misrepresent history" (Öymen'in Dersim'deki Katliamı Desteklemesi Utanç Verici, 2009). Aygün also asked the Tunceli MPs of the period, including Kılıçdaroğlu, to react to Öymen's statements. Kılıçdaroğlu invited Öymen to “do what is necessary” regarding his remarks about Dersim 38:

¹⁵ Democratic Society Party (2005-2009)

¹⁶ DTP won the election with 30% of the votes.

Öymen's emphasis on the Dersim rebellion in his speech and his desire to establish the connection between the PKK terrorist organization and the Dersim rebellion caused serious reactions in many circles. First, I would like to underline this carefully. The incident that took place in Dersim geography is a human tragedy. People living in this region have come to this day by listening to the pain of that period, the lost lives of that period, and the laments of that period. There were very serious incidents that were incompatible with humanity during that period. But I would like to express that it is not right to bring these events and use them as if they were an element or like the fight against the terrorist organization today. Our people living in this geography have never considered the events that took place in this geography to carry this situation into the future with a sense of revenge, as required by the philosophy that we do not hold grudges against anyone... (Kılıçdaroğlu: Öymen gereğini yapsın, 2009).

Kılıçdaroğlu's stance on "doing what is necessary" instead of Öymen's resignation was criticized by Democratic Society Party (DTP) Group Deputy Chairman Selahattin Demirtaş at the time: "It is a tragedy that will go down in history that the Dersim massacre file is once again tried to be closed and that this is done by Kılıçdaroğlu, a Dersim massacre victim and a native of Dersim" (Kılıçdaroğlu Dersim'den Çark Etti, 2009). Deniz Baykal, CHP's chairman at the time, evaluated the incident as a lynching campaign against CHP through Öymen:

They want to gradually turn this incident into a lynching campaign against the CHP through Mr. Öymen's words. We will not give this an opportunity. Dersim events are one of the most tragic events in history. It is not right for someone to scratch this wound to gain profit. "It is unthinkable that any CHP member would approve of what happened in Dersim. (Öymen'in Dersim'deki Katliamı Desteklemesi Utanç Verici, 2009).

The Öymen Case was not only limited to the Alevi and Dersim public, but also attracted significant attention in pro-government newspapers of the period, such as Yeni Şafak and Zaman (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013); Albayrak even described Dersim as "Alevi's Stockholm Syndrome" pointing out the closeness of Alevis to CHP (Albayrak, 2009). CHP's "silent policy" on the Dersim issue, also began to be heavily criticized (Zırh and Akçınar, 2013). The rift in politics caused by the "Öymen Case" began to deepen towards the 2010 Referendum and Dersim, once again, became one of the important tools of current politics (Zırh and Akçınar, 2013). The prime minister of the time, Erdoğan, called what happened in Dersim in 1938 as a "massacre" at the rallies held for the 2010 Referendum; reminding that CHP Chairman Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu is from Dersim, Erdoğan said:

You know what they say about Dersim, right? Who bombed the villages of Dersim because they did not pay taxes? By the order of the President of his time... Who was

he? İsmet İnönü was at the head of CHP. So, CHP bombed Dersim. It is said that 20 thousand, 30 thousand, 40 thousand, 50 thousand people were executed without trial. Come and clean this first. ("Dersim'i CHP bombaladı", 2010)

By pointing out the CHP as responsible for the “Dersim Massacre”, Erdoğan also said in 2011, "If it is necessary to apologize on behalf of the state, I apologize" (Erdoğan'ın Dersim özüne sevinmeden önce hatırlanması gereken gerçekler!, 2011).

Because that period was the period when CHP was in power alone. This is what CHP has in its past, thank God we don't have this in our past...Dersim is one of the most painful and tragic events in our recent history. Dersim is a disaster waiting to be enlightened and questioned with courage. Dersim is the most painful and bloody of the dozens and hundreds of tragedies of CHP governments... The one who will apologize for the Dersim disaster and face this tragedy is not the AK Party, not the AK Party government, but the CHP, which is the owner of this disaster, this bloody work. They are CHP's deputies from Tunceli, and the Chairman of CHP is of Tunceli origin" (Başbakan Erdoğan'dan Dersim özü, 2011).

Erdoğan's radical discourse ("*Dersim Massacre*") that tried to break the "emotional alliance" between the Alevis, and the CHP shows how Dersim has been turned into a material in domestic politics and internal fights in Turkish politics are carried out through Dersim (Aksoy, p.171). Alevis, on the left side of politics, are expected to rethink their political positions and support AK Party, which can call Dersim 38 a “massacre” instead of the CHP describing it as a “rebellion” (Zırh & Akçınar, p. 49). However, according to Zırh, this historical incident referred to as a massacre by Erdoğan, could be attributed to CHP Chairman Kılıçdaroğlu being from Dersim (Zırh, 2020, p. 328-329) since being from Dersim is identified with "being Alevi" (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p.30). With this “apology”, Dinç (2021) argues, Erdoğan not only tried to "embarrass" the CHP, but also instrumentalized Dersim's traumatic history “to challenge Kemalism and eventually replace it with Erdoğanism.”

An interesting aspect of the discussions on Kılıçdaroğlu's Dersim origin was that Kılıçdaroğlu, from Ballica Village in Tunceli Nazımiye district, was a member of the "*Kureyşanlı*", a group well known and respected among Alevis but associated with Turkmenism (Erdem, 2021). Kılıçdaroğlu made the following statement to Fikret Bila on December 3, 2011, in response to the AK Party Deputy Chairman Hüseyin Çelik, who opened an agenda regarding Kılıçdaroğlu's origins during the discussions about the “Dersim Massacre” in 2011:

My grandfather is Seyit Mahmud Hayranî. We belong to a Turkmen tribe that came from Khorasan. They came from Khorasan and settled in Akşehir, Konya. Then, after the Yavuz Sultan Selim-Shah Ismail war, they migrated to Dersim. They come

from the Turkmen tribe. They are not Kurds. But I'm not someone who cares about ethnicity. (cited in Erdem, 2021)

Dede Zabit Güler from Kureyşan Ocak:

Kureyşan Ocağı means Khorasan. Kureyşan means from Khorasan. They left the city of Seydi in Khorasan and settled in Zeyrek Village of Nazimiye, formerly known as Red Church, via Erzurum. They come during the reign of Seljuk Ruler Alaeddin Keykubad I. Keykubad lives in Paşaköy and invites people from Khorasan to his presence. (İşte Kılıçdaroğlu'nun Aşireti, 25)

Contrary to the traditional claims that the Kureyşan and Dersimli Alevi communities came from Khorasan or Deylem, Taş (2019) mentions the possibility that Kureyşan and Dersimli Alevi communities came from Kermanshah. For Taş, Kermanshah, claimed to have been inhabited by Turkmen for a period of time, is today a region where the majority of the population is Kurdish, and among them there are many people who adhere to the Yaresan belief, which has many similar characteristics with Anatolian Alevism (Taş, 2019). While the debates regarding the origin of Kılıçdaroğlu's *Ocak* and ethnicity continue; Kılıçdaroğlu directly/indirectly stated that he is 'Turkmen'. His Turkmen Alevism was sometimes criticized by Dersimlis, and sometimes praised beyond ethnic distinctions by calling him '*Piro*', meaning leader and founder in Alevism. The presidential election, in which Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy was discussed from the beginning to the end, resulted in the victory of Recep Tayyip Erdoğan: Kılıçdaroğlu received 47.82% of the votes (25,504,552 votes) across Turkey and his rival Erdoğan received 52.18% (27,834,692) votes. Although "an Alevi from Dersim" could not become the president of this country, it was Kılıçdaroğlu who won in big cities such as Istanbul (51.78%), Ankara (51.23%), Izmir (67.13%) and in his hometown Tunceli (80.26%) (Cumhurbaşkanı Seçimi, 2023). Even though Türkiye left the election behind, it could not get out of the election atmosphere for a long time. While Erdoğan's victory in the election was explained by the current political conjuncture and management approach in Turkey and Erdoğan's very advantageous start to the race with the state resources, some said that it was due to the Nation's Alliance and Kılıçdaroğlu's own mistakes (Solaker, 2023). During the election process, AK Party started the race well ahead due to its unlimited state resources and extensive media control; however, according to Uzgel, "it was problematic to nominate Kılıçdaroğlu as a candidate against a leader like Erdoğan, who is strong, uses conservatism and religion, and combines nationalism and Islamism" (cited in Solaker, 2023). Uzgel said that the profile that Kılıçdaroğlu followed in order to get right-wing

votes was not credible in the eyes of the public. Following the election, chairman candidate Özgür Özel won the election at the 38th Ordinary Congress of the CHP on 4-5 November 2023 and became the new Chairman of the CHP. Özgür Özel's use of the word Dersim during his visit to Tunceli on January 22, 2024, attracted reaction, especially from the nationalist wing; a day later, MHP Chairman Devlet Bahçeli blamed the CHP by saying "There is no place called Dersim in Turkey" at his party's group meeting. (<https://gazeteoksijen.com/turkiye/bahceliden-ozgur-ozele-tunceli-tepkisi-turkiyede-dersim-diye-bir-yer-yoktur-200773>, 2024). It seems that 'Dersim', which has had a place in local politics for many years, will continue to occupy the agenda.

Two other issues that Dersim has become politicized are its relationship with Armenianness and intervention on its geography. "Closeness to Armenians" is an important component of Dersim Alevi belief practices that imply their similarity to Christianity. Dersim has also always existed with "suspicion of Armenian origin in the modern Turkish official mentality" (Aksoy, 2020, p.170): "Armenianness is presented as the "illegal" identity of Alevi Kurds" (p.172). The relationship of Armenian identity and culture with Dersim is being problematized and turned into a part of politics in a way that will benefit the continuation of Turkish-Islamic hegemony (Aksoy, 2020, p.171). "Armenian identity", Aksoy claims, has been added to the Dersimliness (Dersimlilik), recently formulated as 3K: Kurdish, Kizilbash and Communist (*Komünist; Turkish*) made researching "the place of Armenians in Dersim history, culture and identity" an attractive subject.

The ecological movements in Dersim in recent years - Dam and HES Projects - have not perceived as an investment for the region, but as a continuation of "the control practices of the modern state" (Orhan, 2013, p.236); the general opinion is that Dam and HES projects are complementary to 1938:

After the massacre, the tension in the relations between the central government and the local continued with modern state-specific control practices such as education, health or security based on official language. The conflict environment and the state of emergency practices in the region carried the pressure environment up to the 2000s. Therefore, throughout the history of the Republic, Dersimlis felt the modern state practices in their daily lives more frequently than those living in other provinces did. (p.263)

For Orhan (2013), the events of 1937-38 has deepen "the conflict between the ruling groups and the local" and accordingly the priority of every policy of the central

government in “feudal, backward and rebellious Dersim” (Demirer, 2013, p.345), has perceived by the locals, Dersimlis, as “control of the place” (Orhan, 2013). The geography of Dersim, Saltık similarly claims, is now being poisoned with hydroelectric power plants and cyanide; its lands are polluted, its nature is being plundered by mineral exploration, and Dersim is tried to be drowned by the Dams (Saltık,2023, p.169). Zırh and Akçınar also add:

In addition to two traumatic migration processes such as the 1938 Tertelesi and the Village Evacuation of 1994, the European Gate opened in the 1960s, career migrations as a result of social, class and political mobility based on education in the axis of Tunceli Teacher High School, and the destabilization brought about by the conflicts that escalated in the region towards the end of the 1980s, the destabilization brought about by the escalating conflicts in the region towards the end of the 1980s, paved the way for Dersim communities to migrate to Turkey's big cities and various countries in Europe, thus creating a large Dersim diaspora. (p.67)

According to Aslan (2018), the settlement practices in 1938, then the evacuation of villages in the 1990s, and finally the dams in the region are actually all about separating people from their land.

3.5. Dersim in the Ottoman Empire

During the Ottoman Period, Dersim was perceived as a region where the central authority had difficulty in controlling due to its physical conditions and also as a serious problem within the framework of "Islamic Union policies" with its Christian and Alevi population (Akpınar, et al.,2018).

The Battle of Chaldiran in 1514 marks a critical period between the Ottoman Empire and “the Kizilbash” (Uluğ, 1939; Sökefeld,2020). “A relentless power struggle” began between the Ottomans and the Safavids for the dominance of Eastern Anatolia after Iranian Shah Ismail, the "spiritual leader of the Kizilbash", became the Persian Ruler in 1501 and declared Shi'ism as the state religion (Sökefeld, p.400). Although the Kızılbaş relations with Shah Ismail were cut off at the end of the war that resulted in the Ottoman victory (p.400); the Kizilbash, Sökefeld asserts, continued their rebellion against the Ottomans and were subjected to intense persecution (Sökefeld, 2020, p.400) and mass executions (Çelik, 2013). Like Sökefeld, saying because of the oppression, the Kizilbash retreated mainly to the hard-to-reach mountainous areas of Anatolia (p.400); Uluğ claims Dersim became a Kizilbash stronghold after the Battle of Chaldiran (p.32). The term Kizilbash has since then been replaced by “Alevi” (van

Bruinessen, 1999, cited in Çelik, 2013). On this subject, it is claimed by Sökefeld as follows:

As a result of these pressures, the Kizilbash retreated mainly to the hard-to-reach mountainous regions of Anatolia. Here, Dressler talks about an "intra-Ottoman migration" that caused the Kizilbash to live a closed life. The Kizilbash turn into a community that can be described as an endogamous and originating group, which some authors describe as an "ethnic group". (p. 400)

After the Battle of Chaldiran, Dersimlis started to draw attention with their outrage against the surrounding regions and Sunnis (Toprak, 2012, p. 570). Yet, contrary to those, who claim that the fact that most of Dersimlis were not Sunni-Muslim caused conflict with the Ottoman central authority (Aygün 2009; Gündoğan N. & Gündoğan, K., 2019), Gezik (2020), pointing to Sohrweide and Lewis, argues the effect of religion in the Ottoman administration's policy against "Dersim Alevis" is controversial (p.70-71). Sohrweide states that the "Alevi massacres" in the 16th century was carried out by "political reasons" rather than religious reasons (Sohrweide, 1965, cited in Gezik, p.71) and Lewis also adds that "sectarian groups" are suppressed only when they turn to political authority (cited in Gezik, p.71).

Antranik (1900/2022), hearing the stories of the clashes between the Ottoman Empire and Dersim from folk historians of the time, witnesses and Seyits who participated in the clashes, claims that Dersim's political history began in 1828 with the clashes with the Ottomans (1828-1895):

When Russia declared war for the first time against the Ottoman caliph Sultan Mahmud for the freedom of the people and dispersed his power with great courage and Greece declared independence, Sultan Mahmud felt that the various peoples of his empire, which was spread over a very wide area, could quickly take Greece as an example, which would endanger the sacred throne of the caliphate. Therefore, in order to get rid of this unfortunate experience and to secure his throne, he immediately ordered all the different nations in the Ottoman Empire to change their religions, but for an unknown reason, he immediately changed the edict and started reforming all the provinces in the empire. (p.155-156)

According to Antranik, during the reforms of the Ottoman Empire, the Ottoman army encountered "great resistance" in Dersim, and harsh clashes started between the army and young Dersimlis. The pasha, commanded the Ottoman army, could not defeat the mountainous Dersimlis with the available forces and this delayed the control of the Dersim. The next Ottoman move to Dersim was during the Russian war (1855-1856); while the Ottoman army was advancing towards Russia, it suddenly attacked Dersim: "The Ottoman army turned Dersim into ruins" (p.158). According to Antranik, the

1877 Ottoman-Russian War was another period in which tensions between the Ottoman Empire and Dersim increased; tension increased when the Ottoman Empire demanded taxes and soldiers for the war from Dersim, which it had made dependent on itself. While the Ottomans were fighting with various tribes of Dersim, they were also trying to besiege the entire Dersim mountain range. Conflicts between the Ottoman Empire and Dersim tribes continued for years; when the Sultan realized that he could not take Dersim to himself by force of arms, he re-established the Janissary under the name of Hamidiye Regiment (p.168). Some of the Ovacık and Çarşancak tribal chiefs, receiving various titles, were enlisted in the Hamidiye regiment; most of them were district governors in Dersim districts (p.170). In Dersim, which "appears" to be connected to the state; according to Antranik's account, the conflicts sometimes calmed down and sometimes continued with intensification; but the "rebellious" Dersim was always under the eyes of the Ottomans (p.157).

Molyneux-Seel (1914), in his work "*A Journey in Dersim*", describes Dersim's relation with the Ottoman Empire as follows:

Dersim, probably, became nominally, or rather geographically, a part of the Ottoman dominions at the beginning of the sixteenth century, when Kurdistan and the province of Diarbekir were subjected and annexed by Sultan Selim I. Subsequently the Kurds, who had always enjoyed special privileges, became practically independent and very turbulent, and in 1834 an Ottoman army was sent to pacify the country. No attempt was then made, however, to enter the mountain fastnesses of Dersim, and its tribes remained wholly independent, paying no taxes or tribute, and recognizing in no way the Ottoman authority. In 1848, Dersim became a Kaza, the seat of government being at Khozat; but the Ottoman Government still exercised no effective authority over the Dersimli. Resolved to put an end to this situation, the Turks, in 1874-75, sent a military expedition into Dersim. Though the troops completely failed to subjugate the tribesmen and suffered severe losses, a footing was obtained in the country and governorships were established at Mazgird, Ovajik, Kezel Kilise, and Chemishgezek. In these places the Turks constructed barracks and government buildings, utilizing for this purpose the stones of the then numerous but half-ruined Armenian churches. The garrisons of these towns sufficed merely to maintain at their posts the governors, whose authority did not extend beyond their immediate environs. The Dersimli continued to defy the government. They paid no taxes, contributed no soldiers, and plundered and pillaged as they liked. This situation continued until 1908, when a second expedition, under the command of Ibrahim Pasha, Mushir of the 4th Army Corps, was sent to complete the subjugation of the country. The troops penetrated the mountains simultaneously from Khozat, Palumor, and Kezel Kilise. The Dersimli, though they offered a stout resistance, as is testified by the graves of the fallen Turkish soldiers to be seen in various parts of the country, were in the end reduced to complete submission. Their villages were destroyed, their flocks seized, and they were left in a state of wretched poverty. (p.51)

Similarly, Uluğ (1939) states, Dersim, under Ottoman rule for four and a half centuries, lived a life of a typical "tribal feudalism" created by the hands of seyyids and aghas that could be considered "disconnected" from the state (p.145). Uluğ, in 1932, also asserted:

Dersim, which was under the influence of Kizilbash at the time of the establishment of the Osmanoğulları, was unaware of the Ottoman Empire during the reign of Mehmet the Conqueror, and the Ottoman Empire was indifferent to Dersim. During the reign of Yavuz Selim, Dersim was included in the map, but "locked its door from inside with a unique stubbornness. (p.26)

In the Ottoman period, Toprak (2012) claims, the existence of the state was very "limited" in the East and Southeast that were in a relatively "autonomous position" (p.550), and the tribal chiefs and the aghas represented the government in the region (p.570). Similarly, Uluğ (1939) explains the interventions in the region during the Ottoman period in terms of "measures taken against the problems created by the tribal order in the region" rather than ethnic or religious reasons. Like all eastern provinces, Dersim was governed by a kind of feudal order until the Tanzimat years (Toprak, 2012) and the mission stated that these lands were "problematic" preferred not to interfere with that region if it remained in peace, and for this reason, the existence of the state in this geography could not be mentioned until the Republic (p.541).

During the Tanzimat period, "the beginning of a new life" in the country, Tanzimat statesmen reached out to Dersim (Uluğ, 1939, p.146). In 1860, Erzurum Marshal Samih and Commander İsmail Hakkı Pasha wanted to build police stations in Dersim and ensure public order by connecting them with telegraph wires. The Ottoman administration began to enter Dersim with the barracks built in Hozat and Mazgirt between 1860 and 1877, and those who complained about this were the Dersim aghas, who were afraid of the weakening of their influence and dominance (p. 148). After the start of the Russian war, the soldiers in the Hozat and Mazgirt barracks retreated to the front, and the tribesmen who saw this attacked these centers, burned the barracks, and plundered the towns. According to Uluğ (p.148), this "bitter betrayal" once again reminded of the necessity of establishing a state administration in Dersim. The Ottomans, adopted the Nizam-ı Cedid method in military service, aimed to dominate this geography by enlisting Dersimlis, but could not succeed even though they tried to bind the tribal chiefs to themselves and be effective in the region by distributing insignia, ranks, and gifts (Toprak, 2012, p.570). Although the Ottoman Empire

organized 11 military operations in Dersim starting from 1877 in order to dominate Dersim from the mid-19th century and arrested the tribal chiefs and exiled them to Rumelia, the formation of new tribal chiefs could not be prevented in these regions (p. 570). In 1880, the "Dersim province" was established, covering the districts of Pülümür, Nazimiye, Hozat, Mazgirt, Pertek, Ovacık and Çemişgezek. The Ottomans placed Turkish law enforcement officers and administrators in the places they captured in Dersim, Turks who broke away from the surrounding tribes came and settled in Hozat; but it was not possible to connect Dersim to the state with its ağas, seyyid and tribal mentality (Uluğ, 1939, p.148) When the army withdrew from Dersim, these officers were harassed by the Kurds (Uluğ,1939). During the reign of II. Abdülhamid, a statement dated 3 June 1896 was prepared with the intention of sending Nakşibendi Sheikhs to Dersim, establishing a lodge, and inviting the people of Dersim to enlightenment, who were believed not to be on the right track. The report, titled "*Layiha on the Reform of Dersim*" and prepared jointly by the General Inspector of Anatolia, Müşir Şakir Pasha and the 4th Army Commander Mehmet Zeki Pasha, was submitted to the Bâb-ı Âli. Arif Bey from Mardin, who served as governor of Dersim in 1903, emphasizes that Dersimlis were held captive by the seyyids who controlled the spirituality of the people regarding sectarian issues and the bandit aghas who controlled the worldly affairs of them (Uluğ, p.155). According to him, weapons and men of military age should be collected in one movement; the agents of banditry, provocation, and encouragement under the titles of seyyids and aghas should be caught and exiled with their families to distant places such as Shkodra, Tripoli and Fezzan. Bâb-ı Âli abolishes the governorship in Dersim, which does not pay taxes, on the grounds that "the huge gap between its income and expenses has not been closed." In 1905, Anatolian Reform General Inspector Müşir Şakir and 4th Army Marshal Zeki Pasha suggested "to bring twenty battalions of soldiers into Dersim without creating a fuss; to have the Erzincan-Harpur Road built by Dersimlis by paying twenty money a day and tayın bread¹⁷ (tayın ekmeği); to create a rift between the tribes." He adds that their aim is to make people believe that they want to make a living in Dersim. Şakir Pasha later wrote the following in his opinion:

Dersim has been a banditry for a long time. So far, we have marched on it with soldiers three times; we either captured the chiefs and ağas, killed them, exiled

¹⁷ Soldier bread during the Ottoman Empire eaten especially by the Janissaries made from flour & millet and leavened with grape juice.

them, or pardoned them. In all three cases, new ağas emerged. I think the expedition will be of no use. The reason for banditry is first poverty, then the crimes go unprosecuted and the people's adherence to superstitions. Let's make the laws prevail, let's keep things easy, if the ağas resist the reforms, let's strike their brains like lightning and disperse their troops.

Based on Abdülhalik Renda's reports, Toprak (2012) mentions, the issue defined as Turkey's "Eastern Issue" kept the governments busy after the Tanzimat (p.544). The reports of Derviş Pasha Operation, Hamidiye regiments, Neşet Pasha Operation, Mutasarrıf Arif and Celal Bey are shown as the concrete results of the developments in this period (p.544). In the first years of the Second Constitutional Monarchy, Toprak states, similar movements followed the others. From the last quarter of the 19th century, military operations were started in the region: 1907, 1908, 1909 and 1916 Operations (Toprak, 2012, p.571). No results were obtained from the Neşet Pasha Operation and the 1908 Operation, which left the tribes in a difficult situation but was interrupted with the declaration of the Constitutional Monarchy. In 1909, Müşir İbrahim Pasha emphasized that Dersim was a centuries-old chronic wound and stated that there were two options to be made here: "punishment and reform": "The main thing is the second part; I think, punishment is part of it."

3.1. Dersim as an “outsider” in the Republican Period (1921-1938)

Uluğ (1939) literally defines the “Reform Attempts” in Dersim as an issue that was not resolved in the Ottoman Empire and continued with the Republic's handling of this case. According to Uluğ, the attempts have been insufficient over a long period of three-quarters of a century because of the "inaccuracy in the diagnosis of a problem that needs to be treated" (p.145). The region defined as "Eastern Provinces" by the Republic has been neglected for centuries and Dersim draws attention with its "unique feudalism" created by the seyyids and aghas among the eastern provinces. According to Uluğ, it did not seem possible to tie Dersim to the new Republican state with its aghas, seyyids and tribal mentality (p.168); and it would be the Republic that brought civilization to Dersim:

The measures taken by the Republican administration to bring our Eastern provinces, which have been neglected for centuries, to the benefits of civilization have been the most accurate and virtuous. It is possible to express these measures with the words reconstruction and civilizing. The Republican government extended

its savior hand to Dersim with these principles, on time and on the first available day. (p.145)

For Aydın (2013), even before the Republic, when the national struggle was still going on in 1920, Dersim had been a “headache” for the Turkish Grand National Assembly during the Koçgiri Uprising (1921) (p.97). The Uprising of the Koçgiri, an Alevi-Kurdish tribe, is generally described as the first reaction and "rebellion" of the Kurds against the Ankara government and Mustafa Kemal (Kızıldağ Soileau, 2023). Saltık (2023) states that more than 6 thousand people were murdered in the Koçgiri Rebellion, which he defines as a “massacre” (p.154-155). Kızıldağ Soileau (2023) states that there are some approaches arguing the Koçgiri Uprising was the beginning of the Kurdish national movement in the Republican Period that continued with the Sheikh Said Rebellion (1925) and ended with the “1938 Dersim Rebellion” (p.18). Ertuna similarly evaluates the Uprising as "the first step of the Kurdish war of independence" and claims that this step sprouted and manifested itself again with the Sheikh Said and Dersim rebellions during the Republican Period (cited in Kızıldağ Soileau, 2023, p.19).

On the other hand, Uluğ (1939) claims that the Republic's first contact with Dersim began with the Sheikh Said Rebellion instead the Koçgiri Uprising (p.168). Similarly, Gezik (2020) argues the first design of Dersim 38 was made during the 1925 Sheikh Said Rebellion that started two years after the establishment of the Republic: The Kurds, led by Sheikh Said, declare with the revolt they do not accept the attempts of the rulers in Ankara to create “socio-cultural and ethnic changes” in their region (p.109). Considering the Sheikh Said Rebellion as a warning, Gezik states, Mustafa Kemal and his supporters decide to take certain “measures” against possible reactions from the region and on May 26, 1925, it is decided to carry out “general cleaning” in the region and, Dersim was among the regions although it did not directly participate in the Sheikh Said rebellion (p.109). Thus, as Uluğ claims, Gezik also asserts the interest in the Dersim region ‘officially’ started in 1925; however, implementing policies in this region, known for its “traditional rebel tribal structure and an active Alevi-Kurdish identity”, Gezik claims, is anticipated that it will not be smooth (p.109). Saltık (2023) also claims that “the Closure of Lodges and Zawiyas” (*Tekke, Zaviye ve Türbelerin Kapatılması*) in 1925 started a difficult process for the Alevi/Kızılbaş, who had 600 lodges from the Ottoman to the Republic period.

Yet, the first official report about Dersim in the Republic Period comes in 1925; Civil Inspector Hamdi Bey describes Dersim as the "source of trouble" for the Republic Government and emphasized "the necessity of taking a definitive action on this trouble for the sake of the country's well-being" (Gezik, p.110). The report, warning that Kurdishism would spread rapidly if measures were not taken, emphasized the necessity of "a deep-rooted military cleansing" to "civilize" the region in terms of economy, education, health, and administration (p.110). In 1939, Uluğ claims:

Dersim is a boil for the Republic, a definitive surgery must be performed on this boil. Dersimli, who is extremely intelligent, cunning, and deceitful, is aggressive and obedient considering that the government is weak and strong. It is impossible to try to civilize people by opening schools, building roads, or ensuring welfare. The ağa and seyit encourage banditry. Measures must be taken quickly for Dersim. Weapons should be collected, general punishment should be carried out, and in the meantime, deceit should always be detected in the actions of those who rush to serve. After collecting weapons, the ağas and seyyids must be exiled, should give land to the people, should protect the producer, empty places should be settled in Dersim, roads should be built and should work for 25 years with civil servants who will instill the national ideal. (p.169)

If such a "reform" was carried out and the aghas, chiefs and seyyids in the region were exiled to distant provinces, the Kurds in the region could be "Turkified" (Gezik, p.110). The main issue that Hamdi Bey emphasized in these reports is that the agha and seyyid encouraged the banditry in the region (Uluğ,1939) The Republican Government then assigns the governor of Diyarbakır, Cemal Bardakçı, to conduct investigations in Dersim; according to Bardakçı, the distance of this "pure Turkmens" from the state stems from "sectarian influences"; and Dersimli must be "convinced" that sectarian divisions do not play a role in the national structure (Uluğ, 1939). Bardakçı also claims that the poor people in the region are armed to protect their property and lives; for this reason, jobs should be created in Dersim, and the people should be settled in the plains in Elazığ and Malatya for agriculture (Uluğ,1939). For Uluğ (1939), the locals in the "Eastern provinces" were used as slaves; and there is a tribal system in the region as well as feudalism and landlordism, which is no different from an actual rebellion and disobedience against the Kemalist regime. The aim of the Republic, therefore, was to eliminate the social injustice to ensure the full freedom of the people who need to be "civilized" and "saved" from the hands of feudal aghas, landowners, and tribal leaders (Uluğ,1939). For this purpose, the 1st General Inspectorate (*1. Genel Müfettişliği*) was established at the end of 1927 to achieve fundamental reforms in some of the eastern provinces, including Dersim (Uluğ, 1939).

According to Doctor Tali Öngören assigned to region, the problem in Dersim was the tribal regime, the poverty of the people and the scarcity of land suitable for agriculture; in order to get results, Dersim had to be cleansed from the aghas and seyyids (Uluğ, 1939). The report given by Diyarbakır Governor Ali Cemal to Ankara in 1926 was effective in launching an operation against the Koç Uşağı tribe and Inspector General Dr. Tali Öngören's report in 1928 gave information about the Kurdish activities in Dersim (Gezik,2020). The phrase "The Religion of the Republic of Turkey is Islam", included in the 1921 and 1924 Constitutions, was also abolished in 1928 (Çubukçu, 1985). Between 1 November 1927 and 11 November 1938, Minister of Internal Affairs Şükrü Kaya and Gendarmerie General Commander Kazım Orbay inspected the Eastern regions, especially Dersim. During this inspection tour in 1931, it was emphasized that State must take full precautions against the tribal system in Dersim (Çavdar, 2004 in Aydın,2013):

The state must take full measures to save Dersim. The tribal system and tradition in Dersim must be destroyed. The danger of this system is that the tribes are armed. Dersim must surrender its weapons. The state organization should be established in Dersim with force, justice, and culture. For this, the administrative organization must be reorganized. (p. 98)

The Ağrı Rebellion in 1930, Gezik asserts, also accelerated the interventions against Dersim and Fevzi Çakmak's reports in 1930 resulted in a military operation against some tribes in the Pülümür region (Gezik,2020). In 1930 and 1931, Öngören and Çakmak gave their second reports about the region; Çakmak proposed to consider Dersim as a "colony" (Gezik, p.111). Halis Pasha, who led the Pülümür operation, stated again that the real target was seyyids and the aghas who caused the events: "If it can be saved from the very cruel invasion and rape of the seyids and aghas, the most obedient and hard-working people will be gained." (Halis Paşa, cited in Gezik, 2020, p.112).

In 1931, Deputy of Internal Affairs Şükrü Kaya, together with Gendarmerie General Commander Kazım Orbay, examined the eastern provinces, including Dersim, and stated that in order to save Dersim: The state should take full precautions, the tribal system and tradition should be destroyed, the aghas and seyyids should be removed from, and land should be given to the landless villagers (Uluğ,1939).

To save Dersim, the state must take full measures, the tribal system and tradition must be destroyed. The danger of this system is that the tribes are armed. Dersim aghas and seyyids should be removed from here, the criminals should be caught,

and land should be given to the villagers who are landless or captive in the hands of the landowners, either on the spot or in fertile places to which they will be transferred. In this way, the Republic should embrace the Dersim Turks. Measures should be taken to prevent the creation of ağas and chiefs again, and weapons should not be allowed into Dersim again. ... Dersim should be redeveloped and civilized. The state should gradually settle in Dersim within a program and this program should be implemented with great insistence.

The last and most comprehensive of the reports was given by Kaya after his visit to the region in 1931; In these reports, Kaya systematized the reports written before him and emphasized that all the problems in the region stemmed from the armed tribal structure in Dersim (Gezik, p.112). Therefore, according to Kaya (cited in Gezik), a military operation was essential: "If Dersim was not to cause discomfort again, the social structure prevailing here had to be completely dissolved. This could not be achieved without a military operation" (p.112).

Kaya also emphasized that in addition to a "three-year" military "implementation", administrative, economic, and social measures should also be put into effect in the region, because only such an initiative could prevent Dersim from causing problems (p.112). On the other hand, Sılan described the Eastern or Kurdish problem as a "public order problem" beyond ethnic concerns and suggested that the first phase of the intervention in the region should aim to eliminate the security problem accordingly (Toprak, 2012, p. 564). The reports of the Gendarmerie General Command (1932) also detailed the new measures designed for the region:

Construction of main roads; the collection of weapons; the transfer of chiefs, aghas and seyyids to Western Anatolia; after the chiefs were sent, the transfer of the most rebellious Dersimlis to the plains far from Dersim and dispersed within the Turkish villages, and the ones who will stay in Dersim will be tied to the land to be reclaimed from the chiefs." (Gendarmerie General Command Report, 1932, p. 241). Having a mountain liva for public order; ...; reorganization and improvement of the administrative organization, the permanent removal of local officials, the appointment of the best officials to Dersim; giving strength to propaganda and indoctrination of Turkishness, taking scientific and administrative measures to replace Kurdish with the Turkish language. (p. 242)

The 1934 "Settlement Law" (*İskan Kanunu*) aimed the dispersion of the 'groups which do not possess the Turkish culture' through Anatolia and their replacement with 'groups which are of the Turkish culture'. The state starts an intense program of construction of modern schools aiming to inculcate the spirit of Turkishness in young Kurds (Beşikçi, 1991, cited Bozarslan, 2019, p.342). The Settlement Law is enacted in order to change the demographic structure in the country on the basis of Turkish

language and ethnicity; this law numbered 2510 divides the people and geography in Turkey into three based on Kemalist's definition of the Turkish nation: those who speak Turkish and are of Turkish ethnicity (1), those who do not speak Turkish but are from Turkish culture (2), those who neither speak Turkish nor belong to Turkish culture (3) (Aydın,2013, p. 99). The third definition includes an ethno-religious emphasis: the regions where the ethnic Turkish group is not the majority, as in Dersim, are problematic. Therefore, Kurds and other Muslim groups could be Turkified by cultural assimilation, and the Turkish population in these areas can become dominant. The expression "... must be evacuated due to material, cultural (cultural), political, military and disciplinary reasons; places where settlement and residence are clearly prohibited" in the Settlement Law defines Dersim (Aydın, 2013).

The final decision for the "Dersim Operation" was taken by the then Prime Minister İsmet İnönü after his visit to the Eastern provinces in 1935 (Gezik, p.113). İsmet İnönü's "savior decision" for Dersim: "reconstruction and civilization": Dersimli should be rescued from the captivity of aghas and seyyids and raised to the level of a "civilized" and "genuine" citizen (Uluğ, 1939). According to İnönü, it was important for the railway to reach Elazığ for the development of the eastern provinces; the advancement of railway construction towards the east is the key to the civilization of Dersimli (cited in Uluğ,1939):

A province will be established in Dersim; the governor will also be the commander of this province. Dersim and its region will be connected to a general inspectorate and this governor and commander will also be the general inspector. Dersim will be redeveloped and civilized.

İnönü was also warning that the Dersim Operation could no longer be postponed, otherwise Turkish settlements such as Erzincan could become Kurdish centers (Gezik, p.113). The report taken from the state archive titled "Eastern Trip Report Section" (Appendix 4), in which Prime Minister İsmet İnönü conveys his observations about Dersim during his trip to the East in 1935, also states that the reform and improvement method planned in Dersim will be based on new principles:

We will embark on the reformation of Dersim within a program. The program will include the stages of preparation, isolation from arms and, if necessary, resettlement. Preparation and disarmament will take place in 3 years. We will form the province of Dersim in a new way... None of the officers of the district will be local... There will be branches of finance, economy, courthouse, culture, and health" (T.C Cumhurbaşkanlığı Devlet Arşivleri Başkanlığı Cumhuriyet Arşivleri Başkanlık Cumhuriyet Arşivi [CCA], 1935: 030-10-0-0/111-743-11).

In his statement to the National Assembly, Prime Minister İnönü said:

The government has been following a special reform program in the Tunceli region for two years. This program contains extensive details of work therein by all means and special provisions to civilize this region. This was not welcomed by some chiefs who had gained strength and pleasure from opposing the law there until now. They did not want to resist and oppose the reform program. This required us to take special military measures. The measures that we consider as the reform program in Tunceli continue without interruption. We are building roads, we are building schools, we are building police stations...I would like the citizens there to hear that the Republican government did not bring the reform program there as a decoration or a whim. Even though it may face difficulties, we will implement this program there in summer and winter. (Uluğ,1939)

In the last booklet named "Gendarmerie" of the "Social Engineering in Eastern Anatolia" published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the section about Dersim indicates:

Another important situation that we consider in terms of the security of the country is Dersim. As the public knows, many attempts were made in this region during the time of different regimes, and Dersimlis were tried to be brought to the road with military actions. However, the expected results were not obtained. Because the military movements have not completed social measures. Therefore, Dersim has not heard of any regime's beneficial help. It is necessary to announce the prosperity spread by the Republic to Dersim, which is a valuable part of the nation, to every corner of the country. The government also linked this to a program. By carrying out a part of this program every year, after a while, when Dersim is mentioned, the insecurity that comes to mind will be gone. While this program is being carried out, measures are also taken to increase the security of the citizens in the provinces surrounding Dersim" (Başvekat Maatbası, 1935, cited in Toprak, 2012)

İnönü's suggestions, such as the establishment of a special administration in the region and the provision of Turkish education, were formalized under the name "Law on the Administration of Tunceli Province". The 1935 Tunceli Law (*Tunceli Kanunları*), enacted after the resettlement law, is another precaution against Dersim (Aydın, 2013, p.99). The National Assembly passed three laws: Law No. 2884 on the administration of the Tunceli province, Law No. 2885 on the establishment of some administrative organizations, and Law No. 2887 on the amnesty of the people of the Tunceli province who were punished according to the population and military service laws, and on civil registration and military service (Uluğ,1939). The law, came into force on January 2, 1939, remained valid until January 1, 1940, and Dersim, now known as Tunceli, were included in the 4th General Inspectorate Region (including Bingöl, Erzincan and Elazığ) established on January 6, 1936, and General Abdullah Alpdoğan was appointed as its head (Gezik, p. 113-114). Alpdoğan became the governor,

commander, and inspector of Tunceli. It was decided that a total of 4.000.000 million liras would be used in the construction of Dersim in three years, with an annual expenditure of 1,300,000 liras. While all these developments were taking place, Uluğ states that the aghas and seyyids in the region were greatly worried. The General Inspector was telling Dersimlis about the Republic and barracks, police stations, schools, roads, and bridges over the Pertek and Singeç were being built in Dersim (Uluğ,1939).

The practices required by the Tunceli Law, Gezik claims, began to be implemented rapidly; during 1936, under the “military blockade” (Gezik, p.114), activities such as weapon collection, determination of tribal populations, recruiting and taxation were started, as well as the construction of roads and police stations that would facilitate the control of the region (Uluğ, 1939; Gezik, 2020). However, control of the mountainous areas where state authority was least effective and armed tribes were most concentrated was “postponed” until 1937 (Gezik, p.114). The target tribes and their leaders launched protests in 1936 against this “cleansing movement” (Gezik, p.114) targeting their “ethnic and social existence”, and these efforts, led by Seyit Rıza, the head of the “Yukarı Abbasan” tribe, aimed to create a broad alliance between the tribes and, if necessary, to initiate an armed resistance (p.114). However, disagreements between the tribes made the coalition of the tribes impossible; for example, in Dersim, where more than sixty tribes lived, Seyit Rıza and his supporters were able to establish a resistance front only in inner Dersim, with the Haydaran, Demenan and Bahtiyaran tribes (p.114). When the army units resumed their operations in the spring of 1937, members of the Demenlis and Haydaran tribes, on the evening of 20-21 March destroyed the Harçık bridge and the telephone lines, which provided access to their region (Hallı, 1972). The first action against military targets began with the destruction of a police station in Sin sub-district on April 26, 1937 (Gezik, p.115). The situation is explained by Uluğ (1939) as follows:

... As the government's influence increased in the region, the aghas realized that the banditry in Dersim was coming to an end and provoked the people against the police stations and bridges... Following the instigation of the aghas, Demenlis burned the Kahmut bridge on the night of 22-23 March 1937 and tried to destroy the Shin police station.

On the night of 20-21 March, after Demenlis burned the Kahmut Bridge and Seyit Rıza raided the Shin Police Station, the 1937 Operation was deemed necessary by İnönü;

İnönü states that this operation was "against those who actually disobeyed the state, the bandits" (Uluğ, 1939). In the report written by Alpdoğan to the Ministry of Internal Affairs and Chief of General Staff on April 28, 1937, news of the demolition of Mazgirt and Pertek bridges and the capture of small outposts by the people of Dersim is received and for this reason, the opinion was expressed that "the arrangements that were thought and prepared in time for the Dersim" should be started now ([CCA], 1937: 030-10-0-0/111-744-2) (Appendix 18). With the decision of the Council of Ministers on May 4, 1937, the decision to transfer the people in the places considered as forbidden zones in Dersim to the west and to destroy the villages to prevent the return of those who were sent was put into practice. The intelligence report prepared by the 4th General Inspector Alpdoğan on 12 May 1937 provides information about the situation of the tribes in the region; The striking point here is the details given by the army about the cooperation with Seyit Rıza to attack Demenans (Appendix 19).

Abdullah Alpdoğan, the 4th General Inspector and the Governor of Tunceli in accordance with the Tunceli law in 1936, organized the 1st military operation in the spring of 1937, on June 22, 1937 (Gezik, 2020). The operations carried out in 1937 aimed at catching the four tribes that carried out the attacks and those responsible for them. The forces on the Kahmut side were taken to Mazgirt, and the forces on the Shin side were taken to Beyazdağ, and criminals and weapons were collected (Uluğ, 1939). It was declared that the 1937 Operation was against bandits and those who disobeyed the state; and the region of Demen and Abbas servants was cleared of bandits; weapons and criminals were also collected in the Laçın region, where Seyit Rıza was hiding (Uluğ, 1939). The operations lasted until September 10, when Seyit Rıza was captured; the armed forces and leaders of the "resistance tribes" in the region were significantly neutralized (Gezik, p.115). Large-scale operations were replaced by routine screening at the local level; however, in January 1938, unexpected attacks by members of the Kalan Tribe in Ovacık's Mansur Village, resulting in the death of 9 soldiers, led to a "new operation".

The Morning Post and *Daily Herald* dated 17 June 1937, *Alifba* "published in Syria and French *Le Temps* dated 18 June 1937 contain news about the operation.

With the headline "*Revolt of Kurdish tribes*", it is written in *Le Temps* that (Appendix 5):

According to a report from the province of Dersim, the ongoing rebellion of the Kurdish tribes for a while is much more serious than what is said. In fact, in the last three months, the Kurds have given more than 3000 wounded and dead during their struggle against the government troops, the amount of which is about 25000. ... The reason for the rebellion was the Turkish government's decision to militarize a part of the Dersim province and the resistance of the Kurds to some lifestyle reforms. ([CCA], 1937: 030-10-0-0/111-745-6).

In the news of the *Daily Herald* on 17 June 1937 (Appendix 6):

5000 people died in a war that no one had heard of. This is the secret of the world's most secret war, 50000 people died. An army of 25000 people acted. This news started to leak from Turkey yesterday. ([CCA], 1937: 030-10-0-0/111-745-7).

The Morning Post dated June 17, 1937, gave the news with the headline "*The rebels suffered five thousand casualties in Turkey*" (Appendix 6):

As it is officially reported today, the number of people killed and injured in the rebellion movement in Turkey's Dersim region, which has been going on for three months, has reached 5000. According to the information received, the leaders of the Kurds gave an ultimatum to the government, objecting to the government's actions such as garrison establishment, bridge construction and the isolation of the Kurdish tribes from weapons in this area, and they also refrained from paying taxes. Following this, they started a rebellion and attacked military positions. ([CCA], 1937: 030-10-0-0/111-745-7).

The news about Dersim in Greek newspapers published in Athens is also in the state archives, *Etniki* newspaper dated 20 June 1937 (Appendix 7):

The Kurdish rebellion, which was essentially devoid of importance, was suppressed immediately thanks to the rapid measures taken by the Ankara government. According to Ankara's communiqué, the Kurds gave 5000 people compensation and the remaining 1500 rebels fled to Sultanbaba Mountain. In this way, the issue can be viewed as finished. This small number of people living in the Eastern provinces of Turkey and especially in Sivas, Erzurum, Van, Elaziz and Bitlis districts, but the headstrong element often rises up. After the Sheikh Said rebellion, the Turkish government transferred some of them to the west. He had transferred the provinces/and especially to Izmir. The reason for the Kurdish uprisings is to avoid paying taxes and is reactionary.

Alifba newspaper dated June 17, 1937, also states that the Kurds are in a war against the Turks due to the force and pressure they are suffering under Turkish domination (Appendix 8).

As of September 12, 1937, it is decided to stop the central operation, withdraw the reinforced troops, and leave them to the regional governorship (Gezik, p.116). The 1937 operation, Uluğ claims, ended successfully for the state. Large-scale operations were replaced by routine scanning at the local level. Following the operation, in accordance with the decision of the Council of Ministers of May 4, 1937, the decision

to "transport the people in the places considered forbidden areas in Dersim to the west" and "destroy the villages" to prevent their return was put into practice (Aydın, p.99-100).

In 1938, Dersimlis has started to ignore the aghas; however, when the aghas attacked the Diztaş police station in Kalan and began to provoke the people of Kalan, the operation was launched again on the night of June 19, 1938: "The planes taking off from Elazığ's Vertetil Airport were flying over the Amutka police station and was hunting the bandits with machine guns" The Parliament was determined to resolve the Dersim issue before the 1938 summer recess (Uluğ,1939).The first goal of the operation was to clean the tribes of the Kalan region that had just joined the rebellion, as well as the remnants of the Haydaran and Demenan tribes (Hallı, 1972). The operation started with intense plane attacks and village burnings. Yet, the fact that the tribes did not surrender for fear of slaughter and leave the valleys where they hid, and responded to military attacks prevented the desired "cleaning" in the region (Gezik, p.116). Thereupon, on June 30, Prime Minister Celal Bayar informs the parliament that that the army would be tasked with solving the Dersim issue once and for all (Hallı, 1972, p.431). On July 14, after the General Inspectorate requested the "destruction of Demenan and Kalan bandits", the first mass murders began (Hallı,1972). On 23 July 1938, Alpdoğan gave information about the operation; Stating that eight bandits were destroyed, Alpdoğan also explains that three families consisting of twenty-two inhabitants in the Laç stream were also destroyed (Appendix 20). The Chief of General Staff decided to carry out two more operations to cover the entire Tunceli region on 27 July 1938; the operations, planned to be carried out between 10-17 August and 6-16 September, were requested to start simultaneously in the entire Tunceli province to prevent escapes to external regions. It was also decided that five to seven thousand people in the operation area, especially the families of the agas and seyyids, would be deported to the west (Hallı, 1972). The report dated 11 August 1938 gives detailed explanations of the operation, stating that the 7th and 8th corps continued to comb the Demenans (Appendix 21).

During the 17-day operations, the region witnesses "a great massacre" (Gezik,2020):

Groups of people detected in areas declared as forbidden zones were almost destroyed. Families harboring or hiding the targeted tribes also suffered the same fate. Apart from that, in the regions that were not involved in the events,

unexpectedly, the prominent seyyid and agha families of the region were destroyed. (p.117)

In a declaration published by the General Staff on September 19 in 1938, it is declared the last two operations had ended successfully, and that there was no family, person and such courage left to organize a general revolt in the entire Tunceli region” (Gezik,2020, p.117). Gezik claims that there is no reliable source about the number of people killed and exiled after the military operation (p.117-118). According to the official statements, the military campaign targeted bandits and reactionary tribal and religious leaders who misled innocent people. On a secret level, however, right from the beginning with the decision of the Council of Ministers of 4 May 1937, parts of the Dersim people were targeted, at least for relocation pursuant to the 1934 Law of Settlement (Hans-Lukas, 2011). “Thousands of bandits” were annihilated in the first week of cleansing alone, from 10-17 August 1938 (Halli 1972, p. 463). Halli, who amply cites military documents, scarcely uses the word imha (annihilation) for this period. This changed with the campaign of summer 1938, which employed massive violence against the whole population, even beyond the parts of Dersim that did not surrender and that had been declared prohibited zones under the Law of Settlement. The Council of Ministers decided on 6 August 1938 that 5,000-7,000 Dersimlis had to be removed from the prohibited zones to the west. “Thousands of persons, whose names the 4th General Inspectorate had listed, were arrested and sent in convoys to the regions where they were ordered to go” (Halli 1972, p. 463).

According to the list jointly created by the Ministries of Internal Affairs and Health, those to be sent to the west would be distributed to the Thrace, Aegean, Central Anatolia, and Mediterranean regions, and some of those subject to forced migration would be sent to places such as Zonguldak, Izmit and Fethiye Divriği, where mining and industrial centers are located.

Uluğ (1939) talks about the reconstruction and civilization works after the operation and says that he can now use the name Tunceli instead of the newly born Dersim: Tunceli is now a part of Turkey full of prosperity hopes and on the eve of happiness. Moreover, from Uluğ's writings, it is understood that the civilizing feature of the Republic started from Elazığ. Girls brought from “the dark corners of Tunceli” are placed in the institute in Elazığ. 28 girls aged 12-15 are brought to the institute: "These

girls were cleaned, dressed and learned to clean, sew, read and write Turkish in the hands of the compassionate teachers at the institute." (p.208).

Uluğ mentions that these girls wanted to be sent to their villages as female educators:

It was necessary to raise the future mother of Dersim here with the most beautiful dialect of our Turkish. It was appropriate that they were chosen among 13-14-year-old children. Younger children would forget what they had learned, and all their efforts would be wasted. (p.209)

Reports written in December 1938 state that there was peace in the region and that the people of the Koç Uşağı tribe, one of the people of the forbidden region, were brought to Elazığ (Appendix 22).

3.1.1. A look at the “*Tedip and Tenkil Operation*”

It is clear that a detailed study was carried out on Dersim from the first report on Dersim in 1925 to the decision of Dersim Operation in 1935 by the Prime Minister İnönü. The common message of the reports on Dersim is that the Republic face the most intense resistance in the East, especially in Dersim due to the dominant tribal structure in Dersim (Uluğ 1939; Toprak, 2012); and the necessity of implementing a uniformization policy: political, ideological, ethnic, belief (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019).

Toprak (2012) states that Ankara is determined to take the region under control, but the state-citizen relationship, which requires a set of rights and responsibilities, cannot be established in Dersim; Citizens cannot fulfill their responsibilities towards the state, such as paying taxes and military service (p.568). The scattered settlement prevents the government from controlling the region and the failure to switch to settled agriculture is also driving the people of Dersim away from productivity. The necessity of a military operation is insistently emphasized in almost every report: “military action against the tribes was mandatory” (Toprak, 2012, p.569). The road construction, education and health services planned together with the operation in the region will civilize and tame Dersim (p. 569). The Turkish language would become effective in Dersim through schools, and idealist teachers would be appointed to these schools (p. 569). The main reason for the continued postponement of the operation against Dersim is Ankara's prioritization of the Kurdish regions outside Dersim, which pose a threat (Gezik, p.112).

Dersim 38, referred to as a “military operation” in official sources, is discussed in Dersim circles on the axis of massacre, ethnic cleansing, and genocide. On the contrary, the operation, Uluğ argues, is a civilizing project within the scope of the nation-state ideology, and the problem is the feudal structure, that is, the tribal system prevalent in the region. Similarly, for Toprak, “Dersim Operation” is the last ring of the Republican government's "civilizing mission"; the main expectation of the Republic is to break the ties of the individual with the tribe, the aghas, and the seyyids; and to establish the individual's direct ties with the state (p. 578-579). It is impossible to understand the process of building a homogeneous society of the Republican regime outside of the historical context of those years, homogeneity is the destiny of all nation-states. In the process of creating its own citizen identity, Turkey aims to create a uniform “new person” in which the differences are eroded. It was necessary to deal with tribal chiefs who filled power vacuums; the operation is a civilizing mission, in which the state seeks a solution by force of arms (p.579) at a time when the state is exalted in the political context and the nation-building process considered any method permissible. According to Toprak, ethnic concerns remain in the background largely in the Dersim Operation, and the whole problem is focused on public order. The measures outweighed the efforts to put an end to the tribal order, to prevent banditry, looting and looting. Although the word race confuses people during the One-Party period, according to Toprak, the word race does not have an ethnic dimension at that time (p.580). The book Dersim, drew the state-individual relations and included the views of the single-party regime on citizenship. Equal citizenship was emphasized, and these regions were expected to obey the laws of the Republic: "The government would not forgive those who violated the peace, those who had bad intentions, those who did not obey the government's orders, and those who opposed the government forces, and would severely punish them" (p.572). The aim of the Dersim Operation was to put an end to feudal exploitation (p.572). The "civilization task" undertaken by the state in the east, especially in Dersim, was stated in the books and reports written at that time (p.563). With the Republic, Ankara's main concern becomes a “unitary country” (*Tevhid*) where the whole country similar; the dream of a unitary country, consequently, excludes pluralism and brings with it the “civilizing task” (Toprak, 2012, p.539). The goals of Republican government for the 1937-38 Operation, as the “civilization project”, is determined in the book Dersim (Toprak, 2012, p.572). For the Republic, which has difficulty in dominating these regions, the cause of the turmoil

and banditry is the tribal chiefs and the discipline of these tribal chiefs, which can even lead to deportation, is required. (p. 566). Tribal chiefs, their families and relatives had to be removed from Dersim; otherwise, new tribes could arise in Dersim (p.566-567). Districts such as Ovacık and Nazimiye, located in a steep geography, are famous for their stance against the government, and it is appropriate for the people of Ovacık and Nazimiye, with a total population of 12 thousand, to migrate to the western provinces (Dersim book, Toprak, 2012, p. 568).

However, for many writers and researchers from Dersim, the Tedip and Tenkil Operation, having military, political, social, and cultural dimensions, is the product of a policy aimed at Turkification, Sunnization, and ethnic cleansing (N. Gündoğan, 2019, p.23). According to Okaygün, the process that came to 1938 started in 1932. The people of Tunceli were forced to revolt. After 1932, the oppressive attitude of the gendarmerie and public officials increased, and even neighboring provinces, which gained strength from this, started approaches that characterized Dersimlis as bandits. A great massacre, stated by N. Gündoğan & K. Gündoğan (2012), takes place in the region on the grounds of “suppressing the rebellion” (Kürkçügil, 2009, cited by Gündoğan, N. & Gündoğan, K., 2019). Although the exact number of those killed and exiled is not known, it is stated that 13,160 people were killed and 11,818 people were exiled to the western provinces (Hallı,1972). Contrary to official figures, Saltık (2023) claims, the number of people murdered in Dersim was more than 70 thousand, and that the incident was a "massacre". The Republican State, secured its borders with the 1923 Treaty of Lausanne (*Lozan Antlaşması*), seeks ideological foundations and ethnic element to build and dominate its power: the legal framework of the nation-state is determined by the 1924 Constitution; and the social and political goals are determined by the 1925 Eastern Reform Plan (*Şark Islahat Planı*) (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019). This understanding is expressed by İsmet İnönü with the following words (N. Gündoğan & K. Gündoğan, 2019):

We will make everyone living on the homeland Turkish and Turkist. We will systematically cut out those who do not accept Turk and Turkism.” (İsmet İnönü, Vakıf Newspaper, April 27, 1925, p.15)

The language of the new state is determined as Turkish, its race is Turk, and its religion is Islam; this is the construction of a nation-state based on “one language, one religion, one nation” (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019, p.15). In the 1930s, in parallel with the political conjuncture prevailing in Europe, the rising nationalist policies of the

Republic highlighted the idea of "suppression and cleansing" of the region and therefore, Dersim became one of the target regions of the "Turkification" policies that the Republican method began to implement since the 1930s (Aydın, 2013, p.98). Dersim, not in line with the idealized image of the nation-state, is called "the biggest problem within national borders", an "outsider" in the discourse of the state (Göner, 2017, p. 1) and "source of trouble that needs to be civilized urgently" (Hallı, 1972). Almost in all reports prepared for the Republic, Dersim is described as a region that needs to be "chastised, Sunnification, subdued", captured" and even colonized" (Tosun & Bal, 2013, p. 131). The minor Turkish population in Dersim makes the region "unacceptable and marginalized" for the young Turkish Republic (N. Gündoğan & K. Gündoğan, 2019, p. 27). Dersim is a kind of "Pandora's box" which needs to be "tamed, disciplined and kept under control" (Orhan, 2013, p. 263).

Bora, interested in how Dersim looks from the point of view of Turkish nationalism in the nation-state building process of the Republic of Turkey, analyzes the book "*Sociological Studies on Zazas*" of Hasan Reşit Tankut, one of the authors of the Turkish history thesis. The depiction of landscape of "backwardness" and "barbarism" of Dersim forms the basis for the Republic and Turkishness to emphasize the "advanced" and "civilized" qualities (Bora, 2013, p.78). The legitimacy of the intervention in Dersim, Bora (2013) claims is based on its civilizing mission as much as its justification for public order. The Tunceli Law was justified by "the need to bring under closer tutelage these poor people who were vulnerable to exploitation due to their ignorance", and the law was published in the Ulus newspaper in 1938 with the title "*Dersim is opening to civilization*" (Bora, 2013). The process of nationalization makes regional, linguistic, ethnic, belief and cultural affiliations "invisible", and new national categories drawn in parallel with this process also obscure the unique cultural areas of Anatolian geography (Zırh & Akçınar, 2013, p.64). As a result of continuous discourse and policy of the state, the geography of Dersim and its people have been exposed to many "military operations, martial law, military administration, exile, embargo and massacre" (Tosun & Bal, 2013, p.131).

After their oral history studies on the founding ideology of the Republic State and the policies implemented during Dersim 1937-38, and examining the Dersim archives opened 74 years later, Nezahat and Kazım Gündoğan (2019) claim that the Republic State distorted the facts of the history of Dersim; the official history thesis of the

Republic about Dersim has also been adopted as an indisputable ideology (p. 13). According to Gündoğan and Gündoğan, the operation, considered a rebellion in the official history thesis, is not a rebellion but a “planned massacre” (p.14). After the interviews with the witnesses of Dersim 38, Nezakat and Kazım Gündoğan (2019) concluded that Dersim 38 is the black box of the Republic:

This operation was the product of a policy with military, political, social, and cultural dimensions aimed at Turkification, Sunnization, and even ethnic cleansing. There was a great massacre in the region on the grounds of suppressing the rebellion. Many families were exiled to other parts of Anatolia.... One of the unknown issues until now is the distribution of girls from Dersim to families in military and civil bureaucracy as adoption. In this way, the government assimilated many Alevi Kurdish and Zaza children with Turkish-Sunni culture. (p. 23-24)

According to Gezik (2020), Republican Turkey not only imposed an identity, but also established very active institutions in dealing with and changing (or creating) local legends, stories, and mythology about Dersim 38 where it is necessary (Gezik,2020). According to Saltık (2023), the Alevi/Kızılbaş people, who came with resistance and rebellion until the Republic period and supported the establishment of the Republic, cannot face a secular Republic that accepts differences. The view of the Republic towards not only Alevis, but also other minorities, Armenians, and Kurds, has been reshaped during the transition period from the Empire to the Republic; the differences, similarities and transitions between various communities remained "invisible" in a “national mirror” of the new Turkish Republic defined itself as "racially Turkish, language Turkish and religion Sunni-Muslim" (Zırh, 2020, p.358). In the ideal of Turkish-Islamic sovereignty, Dersimli Kizilbaş people fell into the "enemy" category in two respects, as they were both Kizilbaş and Kurdish. These categories were characterized as an "anomaly manifestation", a "disease" in the "healthy national body", according to the Turkish nationalist perspective (Gürtaş, 2020): “Within the framework of this understanding, even if the Dersim Kizilbaş people could not be expelled from the body by being subjected to a brutal massacre, they would at least be harmonized with the "national organic society" (p.318).

Another issue about Dersim 38 is “the use of poisonous gas”; the document, a letter sent by the Deputy of Internal Affairs Şükrü Kaya to the Commander Abdullah Alpdoğan, says the order for poisonous gas came from the President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk and the Prime Minister İsmet İnönü (Akçam, 2023):

Mr. Dear valued Abdullah Alpdoğan Pasha, ...

You requested corrosive and suffocating gas from the Aircraft Regiment Command. Some self-conscious people in the government are working to prevent their demands from being met. As a matter of fact, they were not successful.

Our President and Prime Minister have ordered that their demands must be met urgently and delivered immediately. In fact, I have no doubt that in the end, the demands will be met and used as necessary. Bury all the shaki (*Şaki*) (meaning bandits) in those caves so that they will never come back to life again.

I greet you with respect and wish you continued success” (Dersim Katliamı’nda zehirli gaz kullanma emri Mustafa Kemal ve İsmet İnönü’dan, 2023).

Nuri Dersimi (2014) was the first to write about the use of poisonous gas in Dersim; later, İhsan Sabri Çağlayangil, served as Minister of Foreign Affairs for many years, stated in his statement to Kemal Kılıçdaroğlu that the army used poisonous gas: “The army used poisonous gas. It poisoned them like mice from inside the cave doors. And they slaughtered those Dersim Kurds from seven to seventy. It was a bloody operation” (Dersim Gazetesi, 2019). In their newspaper article, Hüsni Gürbey and Mahsuni Gül also gave information about the use of gas in Dersim operation: “Poisonous Gases used in Dersim were purchased from Nazi Germany” (Gürbey & Gül, 2020). The government had decided to purchase poisonous gas from Germany (Yavuz, 2019); the document (Appendix 9) was used in a program about Dersim produced by Thorsten Mack and Karaman Yavuz on the German ARD channel, and caused great controversy (Yavuz, 2019). In another document dated 19.02.1942 taken from Hasan Saltık's archive, the telegraph written by Prime Minister İbrahim Refik Saydam to the then Prime Minister of the General Staff, Marshal Fevzi Çakmak, Saydam emphasizing that he feels ashamed says that "It is seen that these gases used on its own people caused mass civilian deaths. "I am against its use even against the enemy" (Dersim Gazetesi, 2019). Gürbey and Gül also argue that it was Atatürk's adopted daughter, Sabiha Gökçen, who bombed Dersim with the purchased planes and bombs; in an interview she gave to Milliyet newspaper in 1956, Gökçen said; “We had the order to shoot anything we see that is alive. We were even burning goats, which were the food of the rebels” (Gürbey & Gül, 2020).

Saltık also states that the press of the period was censored so that the massacres in Dersim would not be heard by the outside world; instead of talking about the massacre, it is seen that the operation is justified by bringing civilization to these "poor, ignorant and vulgar" people (Saltık,2023). On October 29, 1938, in the 15th year of the Republic, *Ulus Newspaper* gave the news that the newspaper would start a new section

with the title "Tunceli is Opening to Civilization" (*Tunceli Medeniyete Açılıyor*) (Appendix 10).

3.2. Remembering Dersim 38 Collectively

"I opened my eyes in a freight car,
They loaded us into the truck under the supervision of two privates with rifles,
Then they loaded us into the freight car with those two soldiers,
After days of traveling, they threw us into a village,
Prehistoric dogs were barking.
I'll never forget that ride, that bark, the cops
Maybe my sensitivity is fed by those childhood impressions.
My mother died in exile; my father died in exile." (Süreyya, 1990)

Poet Cemal Süreyya¹⁸, whose name was on the exile list from Dersim in 1938 along with his family, describes his exile from Pülümür with this poem (Karabağlı, 2012). Süreyya, the "prince" of a wealthy family in Erzincan in 1931, was subjected to an exile, when he was six years old, due to the Dersim 38 along with hundreds of other families (Şahin, 2021).

"We were probably dead
The city was blood apocalypse on our feet
We folded the sky and put it in a corner
All the stars were spilled on the pavements
....
...
The living had forgotten us
We were left dead." (Süreyya, 1990)

While trying to get used to a new place, distant lands and their new life, the death of Süreyya's pregnant mother, saying "that was the bird of my heart" in the sixth month of exile affects the entire life of him (Şahin, 2021).

Dersim 38 is named as a serious trauma including a systematic and conscious operation carried out with the aim of "reforming" and "civilizing" Dersimlis; a serious policy of

¹⁸ The verses of Turkish the poet Cemal Süreyya, who was born in Dersim Pülümür in 1931 and was exiled to Bilecik with his family after Dersim 38.

violence is implemented to assimilate the culture, language, and religion of Dersimlis (Aydın, 2013, p. 107). The practice of compulsory resettlement, Aydın claims, even reminds the practices of fascism that flourished in Germany (p. 107). *Tertele*, aiming cultural destruction, also constitutes the key concept of Dersim literature (Aslan, cited in Yağan, 2019). Dersim 38 narratives are full of stories of pain, devastation, lost lives, desolation, rootlessness, years of silence and those who were massacred and had to kill their children (Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019; Yağan, 2019). Stating that the state archives on “Dersim Massacre” are still closed and official information and documents are almost non-existent, Akar (2019) claims that the only source regarding Dersim 38 is oral history that has not been adequately studied (p.11). Hayri Koç, the witness of Dersim 38, describes his experiences in the oral history study conducted by Gündoğans (2019) as follows:

Before 38, I was going to school in Dersim, and was in the 3rd grade. My grandfather Koç Ağa was the chief of the Karaballı Tribe. In 1938, my grandfather was ill, he was receiving treatment in the district. General Kazım Orbay sent a message to my grandfather: "Gather together, we will talk to you." My grandfather came to the village. Kazım Orbay came to our house with three hundred cavalymen. They said to our tribe, "Give me your guns, we will not touch you. I guarantee this". After the soldiers left, my father said, "They will clean us." 10 days later, 15 gendarmes came with a list in their hands. Kazım Orbay called those whose names were on the list. My father and uncles were going to take 6 people in total to Hozat. One kilometer from Hozat, they killed my father and his companions in a poplar forest. Thus, the operation began. First, they killed the notables of the tribe. Then they started killing people. While we were sitting at home, soldiers appeared from the opposite side. "Go hide," said my mother. I went and hid in the creek. They put 21 people in this room and killed them by firing a bomb at them from the window. (p.94)

Dersim 38, named as one of the most terrible incidents in the history of the Republic of Turkey (Atay, 2013) includes forced resettlement policies against the Dersimlis following the massacre and is a milestone in the history of Dersim (Aygün, 2009). The operation is characterized by Bayrak (2013) as “7T” that can be considered highly traumatic for a community: “*Tedip*” (Discipline), “*Tenkil*” (Removing), “*Taktil*” (Slaughter), “*Techir*” (Emigration), “*Temsil*” (Assimilation), “*Temdin*” (Civilization) and “*Tasfiye*” (Depuration) (cited in Atay, 2013, p.356). 38's witness Huriye Aslan describes her experiences in the oral history of by Gündoğans (2019) as follows:

I used to live in the village of Rızrak, Ovacık. I was 8-9 years old in 1938. I had my grandmother; I was living with her. In 38, I don't know, was my grandmother shot, died, stayed, or threw herself into the water. I lost her and stayed with my uncle... There was no bread... It was famine, war... When the soldiers sensed these

(*Dersimlis*), they immediately fired cannons, rifles and bullets. They (*Dersimlis*) were running, so I got up and ran with them. But I had no strength, I was a child. Finally, the soldiers raided that place. Now I don't know who died and who remained... The corpse was such that the stones, the forests... the corpse was like that. They were stepping on those corpses and running away... We came back, so I don't know, the corpse is such that..., under those walnuts, those forests, those roads are full of corpses. Dogs ate...a head, a piece. Everybody gathered they dug up those corpses, they threw the corpses into it... They put the earth on top of it... But what can they do... Of course, the soldiers do not stop, they are looking for them (*Dersimlis*). It is war, they will either die or surrender... The soldiers are not foreigners, namely Muslim Turks... We stay in the forest; we hide from the soldiers... (p.54-55)

Hallı (1972) does not provide a comprehensive number for casualties for the entire military campaign; however, based on his detailed account, it is understood that "large numbers" of people killed in dozens of incidents, the total of deaths was probably well over 10,000. An unpublished report by Alpdoğan's Inspectorate mentions 13,160 civilians dead and 11,818 deportees (*Radikal* 20 November 2009). The high number of deaths and ample evidence prove that the killings were not limited to the insurgent tribes; a comparison of the censuses of 1935 and 1940 shows that the district of Hozat, with a loss of more than 10,000 people, was the most seriously impacted (Aslan, 2018, p. 411). Similarly, Yağan (2004) states:

According to some sources, up to a hundred thousand children, young and old, lost their lives in this massive massacre that would last until the end of 1938 and gradually turn into a genocide. The massacre of a few armed tribes, such as the Bahtiyars, Demenans and Haydarans, who retreated to their mountains with their families, continued over the following years. Until 1943, the heads of *Dersimlis* captured in the mountains were valued at 25 *kuruş* and transported to military garrisons, as a continuation of the 38 massacres. (Yağan, *Özgür Politika Gazetesi*, 2004)

According to the official data of 1938, 13,806 people, according to the finger accounts of those who witnessed the period, more than this number of people were shot in convoys, bayoneted, and slaughtered one by one as sheep” (Yağan, 2019, p.18-19). Saltık (2023) claims, more than 70 thousand people were murdered and 14 thousand were exiled; he also says that 102 people from the Sarısaltık dynasty, to which he was a member, died. Unpredictable blood was shed in the towns of Hozat, Ovacık, Nazimiye, Pülümür, Mazgirt, Pertek, Çemişgezek, in the town centers and villages of these towns, and in all the towns where Kizilbash-Kırmanç lived within the borders of Kigi, Karakoçan, Erzincan, Sivas Koçgiri and Elazığ (Yağan, 2019) : “That year, scavenger crow, kestrel, blackbird, raven, kite, jackal, hyena, snake, centipede

scavenger creatures were fed with human flesh.” (p.19). The years before 1938 were referred to as the "Kırmancıye Era" in the region (Yağan, 2019, p.45). In "*Beyaz Dağ'da Bir Gün*", Yağan focuses on a day, 15 August 1938, of the *Tertele*. He (2019) talks with the witness of 38, Najni:

It is spring, we are on the plateau in Kırmızı Mountain, the feast of fertility. We went to visit Gurgur Baba Hill in the morning hours of that day. We prayed at the visitation fountain, sacrificed, and distributed our lokma¹⁹. We returned to our home on the plateau. In the evening hours, the disaster gave its first sign: Yekten Gurgur Baba roared! With a roar, together, a fireball emptied from the visiting cell, swung, and hit the thuja tree on the opposite slope. The centuries-old thuja was destroyed, the fountain dried up. We understood that our mihnet is not accepted; visits have turned their backs on us, our prayers, sacrifices, and supplications are no longer valid in the sight of the great. (p.43)

The newspaper, *Tunceli Sesi*, started publishing in 1957, is also considered an important resource in terms of understanding 38 (Hepkon, 2013) as it included both the periods before and after 1938. In the series of articles titled "*Before and After 1938*", Niyazi Okaygün, the lead author of the newspaper, defines 38 as a “terrible taboo that has descended on the earth as a curse of God” (p.305); the 1938 operation passed over the people of Tunceli like a "heavy cylinder" (cited in Hepkon, 2013):

I am observing as a bitter truth that while 1938 was trampling over the Tunceli region like a heavy cylinder, it did not consider its manifestation years later...Depression that has occurred in individuals since that day still continues.... The 1938 Operation was a great disaster for the people of Tunceli because of the loss of life and property, the exiles, and the adopted daughters. The people of Tunceli were forced to revolt in the events of 1938 and left great traces on the people of Tunceli. The understanding of "scavengers, bandits" towards the people of Tunceli still continues. (p.306)

Hayri Koç (cited in Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019), one of the 38's witness, emphasizes there is no such thing as an alleged "riot" in the region to justify the operation:

Everybody was poor. If there was a rebellion, people would have their weapons ready. First, they gathered the landlords and said to the people, "We will save you from the landlords. First, they killed the landlords, ten days later they started killing the people... It was an extermination, a massacre. (p.100-101)

Göner (2019) notes, Turkish state in 1938 “massacres” thousands of people in Dersim and forced thousands to move out of the city; the “massacres” were part of “a genocidal project” to exterminate any potential opposition from the Alevi, Kurdish, and

¹⁹ Traditional Turkish dessert served sweetened with sherbet.

Armenian residents of Dersim and to impose Sunni-Turkish identity on these groups. For Aydın (2020), the “horror” caused by the Dersim 1938 Operation is the most important factor that “created” the “Dersim identity” ; and Dersim Alevis were also directly confronted with their own "other" and equipped the Dersim identity with a different meaning within Alevi affiliations (p.28). Dersim identity has become “politicized” under the influence of direct state intervention and this intervention, *Tertele*, accelerated the separation of Dersimli Alevis from the "Kizilbash" umbrella, which has been around since the 16th century, into a separate identity (Aydın, p.28). According to Gürtaş, the collective narrative of the “38” turns into an “internalized reality” after being objectified as the "founding story" in shaping the Dersim identity:

This phenomenon can be observed most obviously on social media. On May 4, which is accepted as the starting date of the 38 *Tertele*, all generations of Dersimlis blackened their Facebook profile pictures or placed a black ribbon, and on the day Seyid Rıza was executed, they replaced their profile pictures with pictures of Seyid Rıza, or it is quite interesting that ethno-music originating from Dersim has found a widespread audience among Dersimlis living in modern metropolises. (p.321)

Analyzing the identity construction in Dersim through its relationship with trauma, Gürtaş claims, the collective memory of Dersim Alevis is different from the memories of other Alevis (Gürtaş, p.310). Gürtaş also claims:

38 Tertelesi represents a major break in terms of Dersim history and identity. One of the most important consequences of *Tertele* 38, which is generally discussed in the axis of rebellion and genocide, is the destruction of the so-called "ritual koharenz" (Assman,2007) of the cultural tradition of Dersim. (p.319)

According to Gürtaş, whether Dersim 38 is explained with the concepts of ethnocide, genocide, or rebellion, the Dersim Kızılbaş people, due to their unique cultural and social characteristics, have ultimately been collectively exposed to the “systematic destructive violence” of another collective group (p.320). Dersim 38 greatly affected the *Pirlik/Ocak* and Tribe organizations, the two pillars of Dersim identity, in this process; this kind of destruction also caused the communication and interaction structures of the social group to be irreparably shaken" (p. 320). Gürtaş calls *Tertele* “organized political violence" (p.320) within the concept of collective trauma. Therefore, for Gürtaş, it seems more appropriate to use Volkan's concept of “*chosen trauma*” to distinguish 38 from a trauma experienced directly by generations that have not experienced it in any way (Gürtaş, p.320-321). According to Gürtaş, trauma of 38 turns into a restorative ideological material to restore a damaged identity; in this way,

38 is not only the history of a tragic event, but also an important building material for the restoration of the destroyed cultural memory in a post-traumatic society in line with new needs (Gürtaş):

In societies with a tradition of oral transmission, such as Dersim, the preservation, storage, and transfer of culturally produced collective knowledge is possible by regularly performing and repeating rituals. With the Dersim 38 Massacre, this cyclical structure based on repetition was destroyed along with the cultural carrier and transmitter generations. (p.319-320)

The “Dersim 38 Massacre”, Çelik (2013) claims, not only resulted in not just tens of thousands of deaths and thousands of people internally displaced by government forces, but also in a lost generation of children. Çelik investigates the intergenerational transmission of trauma among second and third generations of Dersim 38 and finds that both second and third generations often expressed feelings and circumstances associated with *Tertele*: “feeling angry, not knowing how to deal with the anger inside them and not being able to sleep because of the nightmares associated with the “massacre” (Çelik, 2013). Dersimlis establish a relationship between the “massacre” and their lives “today” and express “distrust” in the authorities and security forces; and a desire to state their identity as “*Dersimli*”. Çelik (2013) also has found adults talk about Dersim 38 amongst themselves in front of their children; but never “directly” to them and “the Massacre” had never been heard about until participants become teenagers or adults ; both second and third generations are affected by the trauma of the 38 through “overexposure to the traumatic past” and/or “deliberate or non-deliberate attempts of keeping the silence” of their families because they were unable to share the sheer magnitude of the trauma with later generations and/or felt compelled in order to protect later generations from harm that could come from demanding the historical truth (Çelik, 2013). Arslan (2016), after his interviews with Dersim 38 witnesses and analysis of documents from the period, asserts events such as physical and sexual violence, exile, and forced adoption/forced education took place in the region during and/or after 38: children, women and family relatives of the rebels were treated like rebels and subjected to the wrath of military violence; girls were taken from their families and given to officers to raise them according to Turkish and Sunni culture. Saltık (2023) states that women and children have their hair cut in the camps; the people were taken to the Kesrik Düzü concentration camp in Elazığ.

Dersim 38 leaves behind a generation with a fragmented family tree that must heal on its own (Arslan, 2022) and significant psychological traumas, particularly the sense of rootlessness and posttraumatic dreams especially in second generation of 38; the later experiences, 1994, also serve as a reminder of 38 in the form of “re-traumatization” for the subsequent generations (Karatay et al., 2017, p.82). Çelik (2013) also found the second generation of 38 have the feeling of sadness, fear, disappointment, anger and insecurity and some participants from second generation also say that their parents have a sad life, and they have strict personalities, so they cannot communicate with them easily. When participants are asked the situation/s they remember Dersim 38, streams and valleys are shown as physical places that remind both second and third generations the Dersim 37-38 and both second and third generations have been found to have spatial images, but the second generation has detailed memory, while the third generation has more general images (Çelik, 2013). Fathers, grandparents and the olds, Çelik (2013) finds, are perceived as “social reminders” of 38 that remind both generations 38 who live with the victims of 38. When participants are asked how they cope with the trauma of Dersim 38, the emotion- focused coping method is seen in both generations and it is observed that participants have some symptoms like post-traumatic disorders even after years; however, some participants from second generation have also used solution-oriented coping (Karatay et al., 2017). Third generation states that solidarity and facedown make easier to coping and also, most of second generation and some of third generation mention facedown, revealing the truths, archive research, making cenotaphs and other concrete steps are necessary for coping (Karatay, et al., 2017). The negative experiences which were directly suffered by the first generation of Dersim 38, Kizilhan et al., argue (2021), have had a continuing, significant, and negative impact on the subsequent second and third generations. Although the “massacre” is not openly discussed in the survivors’ families and sometimes the survivor generation is silent, they do communicate through music, stories, and various repetitive events and rituals (Kizilhan, et al.,2021). Kizilhan et al., (2021) have founded individual and collective trauma have been handed down across three generations in an Alevi Kurd community and they also have explored the links between historical factors with present factors in Kurdish Alevis as ethnic group. The first generation is defined as the generation which directly suffered the “genocidal actions”; the second generation consists of children of those parents who survived the genocidal actions and suffered forced displacement together with their family and the

members of the third generation were born and grew up in the diaspora (Kizilhan, et al.,2021). They have concluded that participants reported traumatic memories and Dersim 38 has been the most severe memory that transmitted across three generations. The negative experiences that directly suffered by the first generation have had a continuing and a significant negative impact on the subsequent second and third generation (p.11). High rates of distress were indicated in all generations. The communication style of the first generation about Dersim 38 was found less open compared to the second generation. The first generation largely preferred the mode of indirect communication; an overwhelming majority considered avoidance, tabooing, or silence as most appropriate ways of approaching the Dersim 38 (Kizilhan et al, 2021, p.9):

The constant remembrance of trauma and its visualization were the most frequent among the first generation. Experience of guilt, victimization and subjugation were reported by 62.5% of the first generation, 70% of the second and somewhat surprisingly, by 33.3% of the third generation. (p. 10)

The Dersim Massacre is not over. After that, the government and radical Sunnis continued. They attacked and killed hundreds of Alevis in their homes in the city of Maraş in 1978... I will never forget the scenes on TV when radical Sunnis, with the help of the government, set fire to a hotel where Alevi artists and academic were holding a conference in 1993. We must always be on guard that nothing happens to us. I do not trust myself to say everywhere that I am an Alevi. (p. 10)

Stating that her father survived the "Dersim Massacre", Akar (2019) says she always felt the difficulty of being from Dersim:

When he was only five years old, 54 of his relatives were burned alive in front of his eyes. My father did not talk much and did not tell what happened to him. But in my daily life, I always felt the unbearable weight of being from Dersim. (p.11)

Karatay and Günderci (2023) evaluate the long-term effects of Dersim 38 on the psychosocial dimension from the perspective of a second-generation trauma victim.:

There I am now in the village where my family lived the Tertele. I feel like I am living the things that were told to me in my childhood. From what I was told, I know who was shot on which mountain, I feel as if I am alive. For example, what happened in the Ahpanos valley comes alive in my imagination. We experienced the second 38 in 94, and now too. We live... unfortunately, the places where we were born and raised are full of painful memories. We cannot escape this spiral.

Necati Turan (cited in Gündoğan & Gündoğan, 2019), whose father was a sergeant in Dersim 38, also reveals the aspect of trauma transmitted within the family:

We are originally from Elazığ. Since my father was a sergeant, we traveled around provinces such as Ankara, Istanbul, and Erzurum. Dersim 38 dominated our whole lives because my father has always lived with its bad effects and unfortunately, he made us experience it, albeit unintentionally. So, I can say that we carried those bad memories throughout our lives. Although it is not mentioned much. Later on, I understand why my father was so angry and irritable.... Although it was very rare, sometimes he could not stop and talk about it and end up with sobs. I think he was afraid for us too. Maybe he didn't want us to know too much about him. There was a situation where an operation that started against the rebels turned towards the people and the civilians...It made him very upset. But since he was a small soldier, he could not prevent it. Before my father went to Dersim, he was not aware Dersim was covered with blood. While thinking about being close to his village Elazığ, he suddenly finds himself in blood and war. The fact that my grandmother is also from Dersim is a handicap for him. Instead of fighting there, he sees some things, negativities... He told me that he only went to the machine gun once, only once during the war. I apologize to all Dersimlis. There is an injustice done there. No matter how much he does not get involved, my father is also involved in such a thing... Of course, I will apologize to all Dersimlis. It is a disgrace for me to even be related to such cruelty, even if it is unintentional. Do not think that only the children/grandchildren of the murdered suffer this trauma. As the children of the murderers, we also experience that trauma. (p.105-112)

Göner (2017) explores the objective and subjective constructions of “outsiderness” through Dersim 38; she specifically highlights three episodes of state violence in Dersim through the life narratives of three generations of Dersim people: witnesses whose narratives were formed by 38; children, who grew up in the Leftist movements in the 1960s and 1970s; and grandchildren who interpret their own identity based on state terror in the 1990s. Göner differentiates the witnesses of 1938, children, and grandchildren as different generations not because they were born at different times, but because different historical processes which they shared with their contemporaries, form the “formative” years of their lives. Looking at the life narratives of three generations, she argues, episodes of state violence are transferred to next generations through different means of “historicity”, a consciousness of history, which shape “identity in the absence of a collective memory”. Despite transformations in state discourse, Göner claims, the state is perceived as “the same unified repressive body” by all three generations (Göner, 2017).

Neyzi (2002), studying on the music group Metin-Kemal Kahraman who interprets traditional folk songs from the elders of Dersim, investigates the relationships between the role of music and cultural identity in the process of rediscovering the Alevi identity. Metin and Kemal Kahraman (cited in Neyzi, 2002) states their parents are the children of “a defeated generation destroyed by the events of 38”:

My father used himself as a shield to protect us. This is a Dersimli reflex. They are a generation. They were forced to make a choice and they spoke Turkish. I think my father did not want us to speak Zazaki because he did not want to see the resurrection of what he destroyed.

All these studies show us that 86 years later, Dersim 38 is remembered as a collective pain and has the power to influence subsequent generations. Dersim, the region where concepts such as race, origin, language, and religion cannot be reduced to a single dimension, on the contrary, all these elements are intertwined (Aydın, 2020), has been exposed to violence (Kalman, 1995 as cited in Neyzi, 2002). Dersim, because of its religiously and ethnically heterogeneous structure includes identity processes such as Alevism and Kurdishness (Tosun & Bal, 2013) has been exposed to violence and therefore trauma from the Ottoman Empire to the Republic (Gezik, 2020, p. 64). In the light of all this information, this study investigates the trauma, memory of Dersim 38 and its reflection on both politics and Dersim identity, the main axis of which are Alevism and Kurdism (Neyzi, 2002).



4. METHODOLOGY

The present dissertation, using a mixed method approach by combining qualitative interviews with standardized tools (Event Checklist, Collective Self-Esteem Scale and Memory Characteristic Questionnaire), was conducted with participants from Tunceli regardless of age, gender and generation who agreed to participate in the study through the Informed Consent Form (Appendix 11). Ethics Committee Approval (Appendix 12) of the study was given by Yıldız Technical University Social and Humanities Research Ethics Committee on March 30, 2022. The research was conducted between 17 June 2022 and 22 August 2023 and designed with in a way that open-ended questions followed standard standardized tools. It was mostly conducted using an online survey software, Google Forms. The same study design was conducted face-to-face in Istanbul with 3 participants and their responses of these participants were added to Google Forms to make import the responses into SPSS easier. In the online interviews, Zoom, Skype or Google Meet programs were used, depending on the participants' preference. The online form prepared in Google Forms, with a text explaining the general purpose of the study, was sent to different local and international Dersim and Alevi associations and social media accounts : Dersim Araştırmaları Merkezi (*Dersim Research Center*), Dersim Sosyal Bilimler Akademi (*Dersim Social Sciences Academy*), Dersim Kültür Merkezi (Dersim Cultural Center), Zazaki De, Zaza Dil ve Kültür Derneği (*Zaza Language and Culture Association*) : Zaza.Der, Fam Yayınları (Fam Publications), Dersim Ekspresi (Dersim Express), Mersin Dersimliler Derneği (Mersin Dersimlis Association), Ankara Dersimliler Derneği (Ankara Dersimlis Association), Menemen Dersimliler Derneği (Menemen Dersimlis Association), Özgür Dersim Gazetesi (Free Dersim Newspaper), Yeni Dersim Gazetesi (New Dersim Association), Instagram Account : *Dersimgram*, Radyo Dersim (*Radio Dersim*), Swedish Alevi Federation-, Alevitiska Riksförbundet, Instagram Account : “Instaleviler_”. The online form was also sent to the social media accounts and institutional email addresses of Tunceli district municipalities: Hozat, Pertek, Ovacık and Pülümür. Some social media accounts that I sent the form shared

the form on their own pages such as Menemen and Ankara Dersimlis Associations (Appendix 13, 14) or stated that they would forward it to their participants.

At this point, if I had to summarize my personal experiences regarding the participant recruitment process and communication with the participants, I can say that I sometimes had difficulty because I did not have identities such as Alevism, Kurdishness, Zazanness or Armenianness, which are associated with Dersim. As someone who is very likely to be seen as an 'outsider', it was not easy to explain to the participants the sincerity of my curiosity about the 'inside' and the answers that come from there. I reached many participants by sharing the form on my own social media accounts and the participants I met face to face were the participants I reached through my own friends. But I also received a lot of negative reactions; one person criticized me for using the name Dersim instead of Tunceli; I also received an email with serious accusations about my describing Dersim 38 as 'an incident' in questions that started with "During the Dersim incidents". Many social media accounts and associations stated that they did not know me and stated that they could not make such a post. I could understand that the issue of 'getting to know' me here was related to the fact that they did not know my ethnic identity and political views. Even though these reactions were sometimes polite and sometimes rude, I could understand the underlying desire and curiosity; because what I was asking on was an issue that could be difficult to talk about and required a relationship of trust. But on the other hand, I received thanks from many participants because I was not from Dersim but was studying on Dersim and Dersim 38.

The quantitative scales, Event Checklist, Collective Self-Esteem Scale and Memory Characteristic Questionnaire, used in the study will be explained in detail on the next page; in qualitative, open-ended interviews, participants were asked (a) how and from whom they first learned about Dersim 38, (b) their feelings when they remembered Dersim 38, and (c) what reminded them of Dersim 38 recently or what they felt like Dersim 38 was. The event/events that made you feel like you were living again were asked. During the face-to-face interviews, the existence of individual traumatic stories related to 38 people was revealed, and the participants delved very deeply with these questions.

4.1. Participants

The research is conducted with a total of 67 Tunceli-Dersimlis (34 males, 33 females) who ranged in age between 21 and 70 ($M = 38.46$, $SD = 11.45$). 59.7 percent of sample ($N=40$) were born in Dersim/Tunceli while 40.3 percent ($N=27$) were born in a province other than Tunceli in Turkey. When the participants are grouped according to their current place of residence, it is reported that 46 of them reside in a province other than Tunceli in Turkey (68.7 percent) such as Istanbul, Ankara, Mersin and 13 of them reside abroad, Austria, Germany, Netherlands (19.4 percent) and remaining 8 participants (11.9 percent) reside in Dersim/Tunceli.

4.2. Materials

4.2.1. The War Event Checklist

Participants were asked to complete a 10-item Events Checklist (Appendix 15) adapted from the Croatian Version of War Event Checklist (Svob e. al., 2016) which were also adapted from the major categories of Karam et al.'s (1999) War Events Questionnaire. The event checklist is modified to the context of Dersim 38-related events, translated into Turkish. The respondents indicate Yes, No, or Unsure to the 10 questions : Did your parent (grandparents for the third generation for the following questions) experience any form of displacement (e.g., forced to change home, school, city, etc.); Did your parent emigrate (leave Dersim) because of Dersim 1938; Did your parent experience separation from their loved ones during Dersim 1938; Did your parent experience bereavement because of Dersim 1938? ; Did your parent witness any violent acts (e.g., intimidation, torture, killing) during Dersim 1938; Was your parent exposed to shelling, bombing, or combat during Dersim 1938; Was your parent a victim of any violent act(s) during Dersim 1938? ; Did your parent suffer any physical injury during Dersim 1938? ; Was your parent involved in the hostilities (e.g., fought in the army, carried weapons, etc.) of Dersim 1938; Did your parent experience extreme deprivation (e.g., of food, water, shelter) during Dersim 1938? The Event Checklist was used primarily as a validity measure to detect the signs of trauma and identify the trauma experience of family members.

4.2.2. The Collective Self-Esteem Scale

The Collective Self Esteem Scale (Appendix 16) is design to measure four types of positivity of self-esteem associated with one's group: membership esteem, private collective self-esteem, public collective self-esteem, and importance to identity (Luhtanen & Crocker, 1992). All items are answered on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 7 (Strongly Agree). The scale is used to measure the level of positive group identification of Dersimlis : I am a worthy member of the social groups I belong to ; I often regret that I belong to some of the social groups I do ; Overall, my social groups are considered good by others ; Overall, my group memberships have very little to do with how I feel about myself ; I feel I don't have much to offer to the social groups I belong to ; In general, I'm glad to be a member of the social groups I belong to; Most people consider my social groups, on the average, to be more ineffective than other social groups ; The social groups I belong to are an important reflection of who I am ; I am a cooperative participant in the social groups I belong to; Overall, I often feel that the social groups of which I am a member are not worthwhile; In general, others respect the social groups that I am a member of; The social groups I belong to are unimportant to my sense of what kind of a person I am; I often feel I'm a useless member of my social groups ; I feel good about the social groups I belong to ; In general, others think that the social groups I am a member of are unworthy; In general, belonging to social groups is an important part of my self-image.

4.2.3. The Memory Characteristics Questionnaire

The participants, here, completed a modified version of the Memory Characteristic Questionnaire (Appendix 17) (MCQ; Johnson et al.,1988) for Dersim 38-related memory. The questionnaire, frequently used in Turkish (Öner and Gülgöz, 2015), includes 12, twelve 5-point likert-type scale items through which participants rate event characteristics (emotional intensity of the event, importance, consequentiality, self-definition, and valence), rehearsal characteristics (talking, voluntary thinking and involuntary thinking), and phenomenological characteristics (current intensity at retrieval, relieving, auditory imagery, and visual imagery) of Dersim 38-related memory, as revealed Figure 3. It should be emphasized here that the MCQ measures

the autobiographical features of an event; in other words, what is measured here is how each participant individually remembers Dersim 38.

Figure 3. MCQ Items

Items	
Event Characteristics	
1. Event intensity	I felt intense emotions at the time of the event
2. Importance	It is an important event in my life.
3. Consequentiality	This memory has consequences for my life because it influenced my behaviour, thoughts or feelings in noticeable ways.
4. Self-definition	It is one of the events that tells much about who I am
5. Valence*	As I recall them now, I would you rate the emotions I experienced during the event as... (to very negative to very positive) I very negative to very positive
Rehearsal Characteristics	
1. Talking	Since it happened, I have talked about this event.
2. Voluntary thinking	Since it happened, I have thought about this event.
3. Involuntary thinking	Since it happened, the event has come to my mind unintentionally
Phenomenological Characteristics	
1. Current intensity	I can feel now the emotions that I felt then
2. Reliving	As I remember the event, I feel as though I am reliving the original event.
3. Auditory imagery	As I remember the event, I can hear it in my mind.
4. Visual imagery	As I remember the event, I can see it in my mind.

*This item was not included in the model, but was used to check for the valence of the reported memory.

4.3. Procedure

After providing the Informed Consent Form, the experiment comprised four phases. In Phase 1, participants were asked to write down the most important social events that happened in their parent's life and then rank them in order of importance. In Phase 2, participants rated (on a 5-point scale) the extent to which they perceived that the event they considered most important affected their parent's life. The items cover “the belief that the event changed their parents’ external material circumstances (1= completely disagree; 5 = completely agree), that the event impacted their parents psychologically, (1= completely disagree; 5 = completely agree), the degree to which the parent talked about each event with the participant (1= never; 5 = frequently), and the valence of each event (1= extremely negative; 5 = extremely negative). Finally, the participant rated the degree to which each event was related to the Dersim 1938 (1=not at all; 5= completely). Phase 3 required responses to the modified Dersim 38-related Event Checklist, Collective Self-Esteem Scale and MCQ. And, in Phase 4, participants were asked open-ended questions: (a) how and from whom they first learned about Dersim 38, (b) their feelings when they remembered Dersim 38, and (c) they were asked about

the recent event(s) that reminded them of Dersim 38 or made them feel as if they were reliving Dersim 38.



5. RESULTS

5.1. The Remembered Past: Analyzing Dersim 38 from the Perspective of Collective Trauma and Memory

When participants are asked to indicate ‘the most important social events that have occurred in their family's life’, 28 of the participants (41.8 percent) remembered ‘Dersim 38’ as one of the most important social events that happened in their parent’s lives. Moreover, 19 of them (28.4 percent) identified Dersim 38 as ‘the most important’ social event in their parent’s lives. The average Dersim 38-related trauma score of participants’ family member has been 5,35 with a standard deviation of about 3,07 as revealed in Table 1. Among other specific events that participants remembered as the most important social events were “the Village Evacuations of 1994”, “the 1980 Coup”, and “the Sivas and Gazi Massacres”. In general, participants tended to summarize “massacre, exile, and assimilation” as the three most important events that occurred in their families' lives. “Sectarian discrimination”, “exclusion based on identity perception”, and “inability to adapt to the environment due to internal migration” were among the answers given.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare trauma score between the group remembering Dersim 38 as the most important social event (1) and the group that does not remember it as the most important (2). There was a significant difference in the scores for group 1 ($M=7.10$, $SD=2.76$) and group 2 ($M=4.66$, $SD=2.93$); $t(65) = -3.11$, $p = 0.003$. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare trauma score between the group remembering Dersim 38 as one of most important social events (1) and the group that does not remember it as one of the most important (2). There was a significant difference in the scores for group 1 ($M=6.25$, $SD=2.90$) and group 2 ($M=4.71$, $SD=3.06$); $t(65) = -2.06$, $p = 0.043$.

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Total Trauma Score

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Total Trauma Score	67	,00	10,00	5,35	3,07

Participants defined Dersim 38 in the following ways:

“I consider what happened as a massacre. A massacre in which approximately 40 members of our family were murdered and continued to affect the lives of our family and all of us.”

“What happened is a massacre. “It is a genocide.”

“Dersim is a huge scream for me. "A great pain that will never subside and whose roar I will always hear."

On Dersim 38, participants state:

“When I first heard it, I couldn't fully understand it, but over time, everything became clearer, and now the pain experienced by people in the past seems very painful.”

“When I first learned about it, there was curiosity and fear. I still have the same feelings, but now I have gotten rid of that first moment of surprise and started to research more towards understanding. Perhaps the prevailing emotion today is anger rather than curiosity and fear. "The anger of man's cruelty to man..."

“I grew up knowing that there were such terrible massacres in the history of many peoples around the world. We were not unique, I know we are not, but this massacre, which was inflicted on the very poor, very innocent, very poor people of Dersim, in vain, has always hurt me so much. I read a lot, listened a lot, asked a lot, looked for a lot of answers, wondering "Why?"

“The more I researched, the more I became confused. I couldn't believe it at first because I grew up in an environment where only my nuclear family existed, but as I researched and asked the elders of the family, a great hatred arose inside me... As a member of a people who have been left alone for the moment and whose beliefs and language have been irreversibly destroyed, I have mixed feelings. We have

never experienced the feeling of belonging to this country. A constant state of anxiety..."

"When I first learned it, I saw it as a struggle between feudal cliques and the state to defend their own interests and maintain the hegemony they established over the peasants. A modern-day state was being built and there were certain tribes who could not understand the revolutions made by the state and only thought about their own interests. Therefore, for me there was no massacre and what happened had nothing to do with my family. For example, I read a book by Rıza Zelyut, where it was written exactly like this and much more terrible and biased things. Later readings, oral history narratives, etc. At the end of the process, I learned how 38 was a systematic social massacre, how my direct family and their families got their share of this torture, how thousands of people were subjected to exile, dozens of missing children, and how those who competed to cover up an inhumane treatment distorted the event. A blood-curdling massacre that has become a state policy that continues in these lands (Maraş, Sivas, etc.). On the one hand, it is a burden that makes you feel responsible, reminds you of the struggle to always dominate what is better, more righteous, more just, and makes you feel on your shoulders, too. Frankly, I even write these lines with my nose aching..."

"When I heard expressions such as "In 38, soldiers are gathering the people in that village...", I was picturing the "soldier" of 38 in my mind through the soldiers of the 90's that I saw personally, since there was already a conflict and war situation. Therefore, I felt that I was at the end of the 37-38 and 90s, not as two separate processes, but as an ongoing process."

On the Event Checklist, 71.6 percent of the participants reported that their family members had experienced bereavement (death of a loved one), 70.1 percent had displacement, 64.2 percent had extreme deprivation (e.g., food, water, shelter), 62.7 percent had experienced separation from their loved ones and 61.2 percent had emigrated from Dersim during/after Dersim 38, 58.2 percent had witnessed violent acts. The mean scores of the Dersim 38-related trauma experiences indicate that bereavement has the highest trauma experience among participants' family members during/after Dersim 38 ($M=.71$, $SD=.45$), followed by displacement ($M=.70$, $SD=.46$), extreme deprivation ($M=.64$, $SD=.48$), separation from loved ones ($M=.62$, $SD=.842$), emigrating ($M=.61$, $SD=.49$) and witnessing violent acts ($M=.58$, $SD=.49$) as shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Frequencies of Trauma Experiences during/after Dersim 38

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Bereavement	67	0	1	,71	,45
Displacement	67	0	1	,70	,46
Extreme Deprivation	67	0	1	,64	,48
Separation from loved ones	67	0	1	,62	,48
Emigrating	67	0	1	,61	,49
Witnessing Violent Acts	67	0	1	,58	,49
Being victim of any Violent Acts	67	0	1	,58	,50
Exposing to Shelling/Bombing	67	0	1	,46	,50
Suffering Physical Injury	67	0	1	,44	,49
Involving in Dersim 38	67	0	1	,16	,37

5.2. Intergenerational Transmission of Dersim 38

When participants were asked from whom they learned about Dersim 38, 65.7 percent of the participants reported that they learned from their family members (grandmother, grandfather, father, mother, and relatives), 20.9 percent learned from someone outside the family: friends and 38 witnesses and lastly 11.9 percent learned via documentaries, books, *ağıt*²⁰, and movies about Dersim 38. Details of the transmission of Dersim 38 can be seen in the Appendices section, taken from the interviews with the participants: Appendix 23,24,25.

"I learned Dersim 38 from my grandfather in 1988-1990. As someone who participated in the events and went into exile to Adana, he would talk about his personal experiences."

"I learned Dersim 38 from my father. When I was 5 or 6 years old, I asked my father why I didn't have my grandfather and grandmother, and I learned that they were killed by the state."

²⁰ A melodic poem that expresses the pain felt due to the death of a deceased person.

"I learned it when I was going to primary school. When I started school, my grandmother said, don't tell anyone you are Alevi, so I said why. My grandmother told me something vaguely. Then I learned everything."

"My grandfather always told me."

"I learned it from my family. I am a member of a Kurdish Alevi family from Dersim. Such issues are constantly discussed to raise awareness."

"From my grandmother who had to emigrate from there"

"From our Pir and my uncle's wife: my aunt/foster mother"

"I learned from *ağit* when I was little."

"From the witness of the massacre in Sweden in 1995"

"During my high school years, from a relative of mine with a political background
"

"Çayan Demirel's Dersim 38 Documentary"

"That must have been 1985, from a friend of mine."

"I learned Dersim 38 from the books I acquired through my own efforts when I was 15-16 years old, without any guidance, even though they were conveyed in a biased way (typical Turkish statist understanding). However, at the ages of 19-20 and later, I learned about the massacre through more accurate/realistic transmissions, through family conversations and through the stories told by relatives and my own family through their families."

"What I heard in daily conversation began to make sense over time. I can't say that I learned Dersim 38 just today or that someone told me about it that day. However, what I gathered in my mind were fragments of daily conversations that pervade all areas of life... Documentaries, books, topics talked about at home and on the street were seeking answers to the question of who I am... Well...I cannot give an exact date or person name at this point."

"I have no idea about this. In 1979, the leftist movement was very common. In Dersim, the commando soldiers set up a stronghold and gathered all the villagers in

an empty area. They made people lie on the ground and walked on them with boats. I learned from the elders that he was a sergeant. He told the villager that he was rehearsing 1938. After that, I read and compared many sources, both state and independent, and then got information from living people. "I realized that the official history of the state is a lie."

5.3. The Memory Characteristics of Dersim 38

The Memory Characteristics Questionnaire has revealed the factor Event Characteristics of Dersim 38 were the highest among the memory characteristics of Dersim 38 ($M=12,67$ $SD=3,71$) followed by Phenomenology Characteristic ($M=11,86$, $SD=3,66$) and the Rehearsal Characteristics ($M=8,56$, $SD=2,89$ as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations of Memory Characteristics

Variables	N	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation
Event Characteristics	67	,00	16,00	12,67	3,71
Phenomenological Characteristics	67	4,00	16,00	11,86	3,66
Rehearsal Characteristics	67	,00	12,00	8,56	2,89

Table 3 shows the means and standard deviation of memory characteristics in details, Event Intensity (EC) (*Dersim 38 is an event I feel intense emotions*) was rated highest ($M=3,38$, $SD=1,04$) followed by Importance (EC) (*Dersim 38 is an important event in my life*) ($M=3,26$, $SD=.97$) ; Self-definition (EC) (*Dersim 38 is one of the events that tells much about who I am*) ($M=3,17$, $SD=.99$) ; Voluntary Thinking (RC) (*Since it happened, I have thought about Dersim 38*) ($M=3,10$, $SD=.95$) ; Visual Imagery (PC) ($M=3,07$, $SD=1,00$) and Current Intensity (PC) (*I can feel now the emotions that I felt when I first learned Dersim 38*) ($M=3,18$, $SD=1,07$) ; as revealed in Table 4.

Table 4. Means and standard deviations of memory characteristics with sub scales

Variables	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Event Intensity (EC)	67	0	4	3,38	1,04
Importance (EC)	67	0	4	3,26	,97
Self-Definition (EC)	67	0	4	3,17	,99
Voluntary Thinking (RC)	67	0	4	3,10	,95
Visual Imagery (PC)	67	0	4	3,07	1,00
Current Intensity (PC)	67	0	4	3,07	1,09
Auditory Imagery (PC)	67	0	4	2,98	1,03
Consequentiality (EC)	67	0	4	2,83	1,18
Talking (RC)	67	0	4	2,80	1,10
Relieving (PC)	67	0	4	2,73	1,14
Involuntary Thinking (RC)	67	0	4	2,65	1,13

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is computed to assess the relationship between among the MCQ subscales. Specifically, the Event Characteristics of Dersim 38 appeared to be associated with the Phenomenological Characteristics of 38 : ($r=.871$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) and Rehearsal Characteristics ($r=.820$ $n=67$, $p=.005$). The Rehearsal Characteristics also appeared to be associated with the Phenomenological Characteristics of 38 : ($r=.737$, $n=67$, $p=.005$). Table 5 shows the correlations among MCQ's sub scales.

Table 5. Correlations among MCQ Sub-Scales

	1	2	3
1. Event Characteristics	1	.82**	.87**
3. Rehearsal Characteristics		1	.73**
4. Phenomenological Characteristics			1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is computed to assess the relationship between the total trauma score and the MCQ subscales. Specifically, the total trauma score appeared to be associated with the Event characteristics of Dersim 38 ($r=.494$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), Phenomenological Characteristics ($r=.477$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) and Rehearsal Frequencies ($r=.388$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) as revealed in Table 6. Table 6 shows the correlations of MCQ's sub scales with total trauma score.

Table 6. Correlation of Memory Characteristics with Trauma Scores

	1	2	3	4
1. Total Trauma Score	1	,49**	,38**	,47**
2. Event Characteristics		1	,82**	,87**
3. Rehearsal Characteristics			1	,73**
4. Phenomenological Characteristics				1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is computed to assess the relationship between the MCQ subscales and the trauma experiences of bereavement and separation from loved ones. Specifically, the bereavement appeared to be associated with the Event characteristics of Dersim 38 ($r=.437$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), Phenomenological Characteristics ($r=.404$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) and Rehearsal Frequencies ($r=.400$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) and separation from loved one appeared to be associated with the Event characteristics of Dersim 38 ($r=.466$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), Phenomenological Characteristics ($r=.412$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) and Rehearsal Frequencies ($r=.388$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) as revealed in Table 7. Table 7 shows the correlations of MCQ's sub scales with bereavement and separation from loved as the trauma experiences related to Dersim 38.

Table 7. Correlation of Memory Characteristics with Trauma Experiences

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Bereavement	1		,43**	,40**	,40**
2. Separation from Loved Ones		1	,46**	,38**	,41**
3. Being Victim of Violent Acts			,40**	,34**	,37**
3. Event Characteristics			1		
4. Rehearsal Characteristics				1	
5. Phenomenological Characteristics					1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is computed to assess the relationship between the total trauma score and the MCQ subscales. Specifically, the total trauma score appeared to be associated with the self-definition ($r=.482$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), relieving ($r=.474$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), importance ($r=.456$, $n=67$, $p=.005$),

auditory imagery ($r=.430$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), and consequentiality ($r=.427$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), as revealed in Table 8. Table 8 shows the correlations of MCQ's sub scales with total trauma score.

Table 8. Correlations of Memory Characteristics Sub-scales with Total Trauma Score

	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Total Trauma Score	1	,48**	,47**	,45**	,43**	,42**
2. Self-Definition (EC)		1				
3. Relieving (PC)			1			
4. Importance (EC)				1		
5. Auditory Imagery (PC)					1	
6. Consequentiality (EC)						1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

5.4. Dersim 38 and Collective Self-Esteem

The mean of positive collective self-esteem of participants has been 56,11 with a standard deviation of about 10,63 as revealed in Table 9. A two-sample t-test was performed to compare positive collective self-esteem score between women and men. There was a significant difference in positive collective self-esteem between women and men: Women had higher positive collective self-esteem scores ($M = 59.03$, $SD = 10.47$) than men ($M = 53.29$, $SD = 10.15$); $t(65) = -2.276$, $p = .026$.

Table 9. Mean Positive Collective Self Esteem

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	St.
Deviation					
Collective Self Esteem	67	26 ,00	74,00	56,11	
10,63					

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is computed to assess the relationship between the MCQ and positive collective self-esteem. Specifically, the collective self-esteem is positively associated with the phenomenological

characteristics ($r=.453$, $n=67$, $p=.005$), event characteristics of Dersim 38 ($r=.385$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) and lastly rehearsal characteristics ($r=.334$, $n=67$, $p=.005$) as shown in Table 10.

Table 10. Correlation Between Positive Collective Self Esteem and MCQ Subscales

Measure	1	2	3	4
1. Collective Self Esteem	1	.453**	.385**	.334**
2. Phenomenological Characteristics				
3. Event Characteristics				
4. Rehearsal Characteristics				

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$.

5.5. Remembering Dersim 38 today: Past in Present

The participants are asked about ‘the social events’ that reminded them of Dersim 38 or made them feel as if they were experiencing Dersim 38 again, and the responses were divided into six different categories at the end of the study: The answers directly related to ‘Dersim, Dersim 38 and/or Dersim Alevism’ (1) such as : “*Cemevi attacks*”, “*Restoration in Ovacık – Gözeler*”, *The evacuation of Dersim villages in 1994, Anniversaries of Dersim 38, Documentaries/ Films / Books about Dersim 38 and the testimonies of Dersim 38 witnesses* ; ‘Specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based²¹ marginalization’ (2) ; ‘Violent Acts targeting Alevis’ (3) : *Maraş, Çorum Sivas, “Gazi Mahallesi Massacre* ; ‘Violent Acts that not only targeting Alevis’ (4): “*Attacks against Kılıçdaroğlu in Çubuk/Ankara (2019)*”, *Aysel Doğan's funeral (2022)*”, “*Roboski (2011) and Suruç (2015) Massacres*” ; Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory characterizing inability to retrieve specific memories from one's autobiographical memory (Williams & Broadbent, 1986) (5) and lastly the answers that are thought to be irrelevant to the question, left blank and/or the answers such as “no” (6), Table 11 details this categorization with the some of the participants’ responses.

²¹ Since the participants used the phrase “because of my identity...” in some responses, it is sometimes not entirely clear whether this identity is only Alevi or Kurdish-Alevi.

Table 11. Categories of the events reminding 38

Categories	Example quote
1. Dersim, Dersim 38 and/or Dersim Alevism	“Forest burning, controls at checkpoints, behavior, and number of law enforcement officers in the region, dam construction, appointment of officers to Cemevi, increase in murders in the province” “1994 village evacuation incidents” “Restoration in Ovacık-Gözüler” “Deliberate burning of our forests and frequent banning of some settlements” “Especially the interventions on Alevism, faith centers and sacred creatures in Dersim, the new generations staying away from Alevism and cultural degeneration” “Books and short films about Dersim 38 events that I read frequently” “The anniversaries of Dersim 38 Massacre” “Chemical gas documents. My grandfather told me that they saw many dead birds on the banks of the stream”
2. Specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization	“Unfortunately, we are exposed to marginalization at every moment of our lives, social events and massacres remind us even if times change...” “We are still being made to pay the price for the suffering my family went through” “We are always under this pressure” “The main thing that reminded me of the Dersim massacre was the difficulties in finding a job due to my origin; The fact that no one from my family is accommodated, especially in state institutions, is due to my ethnic

	identity. This situation reminds me of the Dersim massacre”
3. Violent Acts targeting Alevis	“All Alevi massacres since 38, house markings, people who disappeared and murdered in Dersim” “Even if not personally, the Sivas massacre and the Maraş massacre made us feel that these events could happen in this country again” “Maraş and Çorum massacres, Gazi District massacre” “Madımak events”
4. Violent Acts that not only targeting Alevis	“Events at Aysel Doğan funeral” “Syria war. Massacres of Arab Alevis by jihadists in Ikremede, Zehra-Nubbul, and Latakia mountains. What was done to the Yazidis” “Sivas massacre, Roboski massacre, all kinds of racist developments” “Roboski, Suruç, Ankara Station Massacres...” “Sivas Çorum Maraş Suruç Srebrenica Massacre Karabakh Cyprus etc.” “Every massacre, every war, women, and children die” “Yazidi Genocide, rape of women” “September 12, Ankara Massacre, Suruç, many other events...” “Events between 7 June and 1 November.” “Sivas Madımak hotel, Gezi events, ISIS suicide bombers” “Soma disaster, train accident, constructions that were not carried out according to the procedure turned into graves for people during the earthquake...” “Syria right next to us” “The door markings, Kılıçdaroğlu's experiences in Çubuk, even though they are on a completely different political track, the fights we had with the idealists

	in the political struggle during my student years, the systematic attacks (physical or verbal) faced by the artists, politicians, and politicians” “Attacking Cemevi, not allowing Kurds to engage in politics in the person of HDP, killing an innocent Kurd almost every day by the hands of soldiers in Rojava.”
5. Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory	“Dersim 38 is on my mind every day, every minute, we have never forgotten, we will never forget.” “It is such a syndrome that every negative event reminds 38...”
6. “No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses	“No, it did not happen” “Insisting on Dersim instead of Tunceli. If Atatürk said Tunceli, the rest is empty” “Let’s join the commemorations of the Tunceli events and condemn violence”

It has been founded that Dersim 38 is most remembered among Dersimlis through both ‘the events related to Dersim, Dersim 38 and Dersim Alevism’ (26.9 percent) and ‘Violent Acts that not only targeting Alevis (26.9 percent). 22.4 percent of the participants did not report any specific event or report irrelevant events that reminds Dersim 38, and 10.4 percent of participants remember Dersim 38 via specific or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization and other 10.4 percent of participants remember via the violent acts targeting Alevis”; and lastly 3 percent of participants’ report examples of Overgeneral Autobiographical Remembering. Table 12 shows the frequencies of the events that remind participants Dersim 38.

Table 12. Frequencies of the events reminding Dersim 38

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Dersim/Dersim 38/Dersim Alevism	18	26,9
	Violents Acts that not only targetting Alevis	18	26,9
	“No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses	15	22,4
	Individual/Group Marginalization	7	10,4
	Violent Acts targetting Alevis	7	10,4
	Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory	2	3,0
	Total	67	100,0

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the effect of Dersim-38 related total trauma score of their parents on the way Dersim 38 is remembered through. The results revealed a significant effect of trauma score on the way Dersim 38 is remembered, [$F(5,61) = 2.47, p = 0.042$]. Results indicated that the average number of trauma was significantly higher in the group remembering Dersim 38 with specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization ($M = 6.42, SD = 2.87$) than were those remembering through Dersim/Dersim 38/ Dersim Alevism related events ($M = 6.38, SD = 2.25$), and Violents Acts that are not only targeting Alevis ($M = 6.11, SD = 3.00$), and Violent Acts targetting Alevis ($M = 4.14, SD = 3.84$), and Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory ($M = 4.00, SD = 2.82$), and “No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses ($M = 3.46, SD = 3.06$).

Table 13. Means and Standard Deviations of Total Trauma Score and Remembering Dersim 38

Measure	Total Trauma Score	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Remembering Dersim 38 Through		
Identity-based marginalization	6.42	2.87
Dersim/Dersim 38/ Dersim Alevism	6.38	2.25
Violent Acts not only targeting Alevis	6.11	3.00
Violent Acts targeting Alevis	4.14	3.84
Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory	4.00	2.82
No/Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses	3.46	3.06

 $p < .001$.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was conducted to compare the Event Characteristics of Dersim 38 on the way Dersim 38 is remembered through. The results revealed a significant effect of the Event Characteristics of Dersim 38 on the way Dersim 38 is remembered among participants, $[F(5,61) = 3.47, p = 0.008]$. Results indicated that the average number of Event Characteristics was significantly higher in the group that remember Dersim 38 through specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization ($M = 14.85, SD = 2.26$) than were those remembering through Violent Acts that not only targeting Alevis ($M = 13.66, SD = 2.63$), and through Dersim/Dersim 38/Dersim Alevism ($M = 13.38, SD = 2.40$), and Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory ($M = 13.00, SD = 4.24$), and Violent Acts targeting Alevis and ($M = 12.57, SD = 3.30$), and “No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses ($M = 9.60, SD = 5.20$). Games-Howell post hoc test showed the group that remember Dersim 38 through specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization had significantly higher Event Characteristics score than the group with “No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses.

A one-way between subjects ANOVA was also conducted to compare the Rehearsal Characteristic of Dersim 38 on the way Dersim 38 is remembered through. The results revealed a significant effect of the Rehearsal Characteristics of Dersim 38 on the way Dersim 38 is remembered, $[F(5,61) = 3.11, p = 0.014]$. Results indicated that the average number of Rehearsal Characteristics was significantly higher in the group

remembering Dersim 38 through specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization ($M = 10.14$, $SD = 1.67$) than were those remembering through violent acts that not only targetting Alevis ($M = 9.38$, $SD = 2.32$), and Dersim/Dersim Alevis/Dersim 38 ($M = 9.00$, $SD = 2.44$), and through Overgeneral Autobiographical Memory ($M = 9.00$, $SD = 4.24$), and Violent Acts targetting Alevis and ($M = 8.57$, $SD = 1.98$), and “No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses ($M = 6.26$, $SD = 3.67$). Games-Howell post hoc test showed the group that remember Dersim 38 through specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization had significantly higher Rehearsal Characteristics score than the group with “No”/ Unspecified/Irrelevant Responses. A one-way analysis of variance showed that the effect of Phenomenological Characteristic was not significant, $F(5,61) = 1.263$, $p = .291$.

6. CONCLUSION

While the twentieth century witnessed “the most barbaric periods of collective violence” (Robben and Suarez-Orozco, 2000); the 21st century has not been able to save itself from various collective violence and therefore trauma; the war that started between Russia and Ukraine in 2022 or ‘the attacks’ that broke out between Israel and Hamas in October 2023 can be classified the latest examples that we watched these acts of mass violence in 'HD quality'. However, while violence and trauma are so widespread and its literature is getting richer day by day with the contribution of different approaches, Dersim 38 has not been able to find a place for itself not only in the international violence/trauma literature but also in the national literature 'for various reasons and justifications'. Studies on Dersim 38, especially oral history studies, started very late; and it was carried out locally and/or in the diaspora with local researchers for a long time. As the ‘Dersim 38 taboo’, for which the state archives were closed for a long time, was ‘uncovered’, different disciplines were added to the studies; this dissertation aimed to discuss the role of Dersim 38 as a traumatic experience in shaping both the memory and identity construction of Dersimlis from a socio-psychological and cultural perspective.

The Dersim-centered debates, shaped according to the needs of the times, that came to the fore with discussions such as CHP MP Onur Öymen's speech in the Turkish Grand National Assembly and then Prime Minister Erdoğan's "Dersim apology", have recently started to be discussed with Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy. In this process, the explicit or implicit remembrance of Dersim 38 points out that it is not just a historical case, and its dynamic role in memory, identity and politics can be examined in the light of scientific theoretical frameworks.

How does the remembered past, and within it the so-called ‘collective traumas’, shape the present, but especially the political atmosphere that identities are constantly within? This dissertation, trying to find an answer to this question, is primarily aware of the conceptual difficulty of collective trauma and memory; because, as can be seen from the theoretical framework, neither collective trauma is the plural of individual trauma nor collective memory is independent of individual remembering.

Additionally, neither collective trauma nor collective memory have direct measurements like individual trauma and memory. The War Event Checklist used in this study, for instance, does not reflect collective trauma; rather, it measures participants' family members' Dersim-38 related trauma experiences. In other words, the trauma score here is not a collective trauma score; it was used to provide information on interpreting and analyzing collective trauma. Or the Memory Characteristics Questionnaire used in this thesis is not a tool that directly measures collective memory; rather assesses the Event, Phenomenological and Rehearsal Characteristics of Dersim 38 as an autobiographical memory. The all-quantitative measures used here were used to enrich the interpretation of the quantitative findings. Therefore, the dissertation's mixed methods research, which positions it as a complementary research method in principle to traditional quantitative and qualitative research approaches, is both a contribution of the thesis to this field in this sense, but on the other hand, it is methodologically open to criticism because it is a collective interpretation of measurements used in the individual field.

When participants were asked to list the most important social event that happened in their family's life, 41.8 percent remembered Dersim 38 as one of the most important social events, while 28.4 percent remembered it as the most important social event. Additionally, the research participants note that the other social events they remember are not independent of Dersim 38. When participants were directly asked how they defined Dersim 38, it is clear that they defined Dersim 38 as a traumatic event: “a massacre”, “a genocide”, “a huge scream”, “a great pain”, “the man's cruelty to man”, “a systematic social massacre”, “a blood-curdling massacre that has become a state policy that continues in these lands”. In addition, the frequency/intensity of the participants' family members' traumatic experiences such as bereavement, displacement, extreme deprivation, separation from loved ones, emigrating, witnessing violent acts, being victim of any violent acts, exposing to shelling/bombing, suffering physical injury during/after Dersim 38 were also observed through the War Event Checklist. When these findings are evaluated together, it can be seen that Dersim 38 is primarily remembered by Dersimlis as a tragic traumatic event that affected the lives of both their parents and them; however, it seems that these findings are not sufficient for Dersim 38 to be referred to as 'collective trauma'. Evaluating Dersim 38

as a collective trauma will be possible with a multifaceted analysis of the literature in this field, which is what collective trauma requires by its nature.

We know from Janoff-Bulman (1992) that people assume the world is a safe, predictable, and meaningful place; but 'trauma' causes these basic assumptions to collapse. Based on Janoff-Bulman's definition, it can be said that Dersim 38, defined by Dersimlis as "massacre", "genocide" and "a great scream", may have destroyed the positive assumptions of Dersimlis about the world. Based on the cultural trauma model of Alexander (2004), stating that collectives began to emphasize the state of "being traumatized" "due to an event" in the 20th century, we can assume that Dersimlis have experienced this "state of traumatization" with Dersim 38. Hence the word *Tertele*, used to express Dersim 38 meaning 'massacre' in the local language of Dersimlis, may be related to the "language of trauma" described by Alexander (2004). In other words, *Tertele*, as a cultural trauma, is so specific to Dersimlis that no other word can describe this trauma so effectively. Dersim 38, as emphasized by Levine (2017), showed that not only individuals but also the whole society can face traumatic events.

I also mentioned that the following names are used in the scientific literature to describe the difference between collective trauma and individual trauma: "collective trauma" and "symbol-mediated collective trauma" (Kühner, 2007 as cited in Gürtaş, p. 320), "chosen trauma" (Volkan, 1988, 1999, 2004, 2006), and "political trauma" (Kristeva, 1989). Despite their differences, these terms, which actually emphasize the power of trauma to affect collectives, can be used to name Dersim 38 as collective, political, chosen and symbol-mediated, depending on the point of discussion.

It has been argued that one of the necessary elements to discuss any event within the framework of collective trauma is the "intergenerational transmission of trauma". Participants stated that they learned about Dersim 38 through family members, friends, Dersim 38 witnesses or various documentaries, movies and *ağıt*. When asked in more detail, it was seen that *Tertele* was transmitted in various ways: directly from the personal experiences of a grandfather or grandmother who went into exile after Dersim 38, or from elders' warnings about why Alevi identity should be hidden, or sometimes through conversations about being a Kurdish Alevi. In addition, the fact that some participants found the meaning of Dersim 38 over time showed that the transmission of Dersim 38 to the next generations could be both direct and indirect. Transmission of Dersim 38 begins in families through what is being communicated as well as "what

is not directly communicated” (Bezo & Maggi, 2015, cited in Buljubasic & Hola, p.10). When Dersim 38 is viewed from this framework, that is, focusing on its effects that go beyond individuals, it seems that Hirschberger's (2018) definition of collective trauma may be valid for Dersim 38; Dersim 38, like other collective traumas, can be defined as a disaster that shattered the basic fabric of society, affecting not only those who experienced it but also subsequent generations. Or, as Saul (2013) puts it, Dersim 38 may refer to "shared injuries" among Dersimlis. The "some degree of sameness in the subjectivity of the experience" that Koh (2021) uses to describe the traumatic experience may also apply to Dersim 38. Even though each Dersimli may experience Dersim 38 individually "differently", there is a "sameness" that unites all these experiences, and this is where the common experience turns into collective trauma. Additionally, where Erikson (1976) distinguished collective trauma from individual trauma was in the “blows” that collective trauma inflicted on the basic tissues of social life; both the traumatic experiences of the participants' families regarding the Dersim 38 and the way they define the 38 seem to remind us of "these blows". We can see that Dersim 38 may be devastating for groups as well as individuals and can have an impact that affects not only the direct victims but also the entire society. When Dersim 38 is considered with Alexander's (2004) “cultural trauma theory” model, it can also be considered as a cultural trauma due to its traces in group consciousness. Another important point I want to emphasize is Alexander (2004) formulation that events are not inherently traumatic and do not create collective trauma themselves; instead, they are “socially mediated attribution”. According to Alexander's definition, Dersim 38 was just an event, what turned it into a cultural crisis was the intense discomfort that seeped into the core of Dersimlis' own sense of identity and the collective actors' decision to represent social pain as a fundamental threat to who they were, where they came from, and where they came from (Alexander, 2004).

Considering the psychoanalytic approach, “repressing the experience of trauma” (Alexander, 2004), repressing the experience of 38 in this case, can be analyzed in terms of the psychoanalytical version of trauma theory placing the “model of unconscious emotional fears and cognitively distorting mechanisms of psychological defense between the external shattering event”, *Dersim 38*, and the actor's internal traumatic response, *the internal traumatic responses of Dersimlis to the Dersim 38*. Dersim 38 might have infiltrated gradually and even insidiously into the awareness of

Dersimlis suffering from it (Erikson, 1976 as cited in Alexander etc., 2004, p.4). Rather than activating direct cognition and rational understanding, the traumatizing event, Dersim 38, can become “distorted” in Dersimlis’ memory and the truth about Dersim 38 is only unconsciously perceived as formulated for cultural traumas by Alexander (2004). Traumatic feelings of Dersim 38 then, might come not only from the originating event but from the anxiety of keeping it repressed (Alexander, 2004) in the form of “post traumatic loss (Prager, 2009) and/or “narcissistic injuries” (Volkan, 1997).

Dersim 38 also might shatter expectations and preconceptions of Dersimlis on how the world functions. Freud’s term ‘the uncanny’, qualities of feeling that arouse dread and horror and as a return of what has been repressed (Orozco & Suarez, 2000, p.50) can be used to analyze the case of Dersim 38. Dersimlis that experienced social violence such as *Tertele* might be faced with an “unbelievable and unreal reality that is incompatible with anything they knew previously” and as a result, Dersimlis can no longer fully believe what they see with their own eyes; they have difficulty in distinguishing between the unreal reality they have survived and the fears that spring from their own imagination (cited in Orozco & Suarez, 2000, p. 50).

When Dersim 38 is evaluated according to Volkan's concept of chosen trauma, analyzing traumas from a psycho-political framework, Dersim 38 might be also “the shared mental representation” in Dersimlis’ history in which Dersimlis suffered catastrophic loss or experienced helplessness, humiliation, dehumanization, helplessness, inability of mourning, vengeance, and hatred” (Volkan, 1997). The term “chosen” refers to the “unconscious” choice of Dersimlis to carry the mental representation of the past generation into its own identity, as a large group would not consciously choose to be victimized or humiliated, as claimed by Volkan. According to this approach, Dersimlis may have struggled with many traumatic events in their past, but Dersim 38 as the “chosen one”, may have preserved its vitality among generations over the years keeping Dersimlis together since it is connected to the past Dersim generation’s “failure to mourn losses after experiencing a shared traumatic event” (Volkan, 1997). Dersim 38 can be also analyzed as collective trauma through its relationship with ontological security of Innes and Steele (2012): “seeking of consistent self through time and space; and desire to have that self-recognized and affirmed by other” (p.15). Insecurity develops in the ontological security-seeking

process in several ways, and Dersim 38 may have generated an extreme form of that insecurity (Ines & Steele, 2012) where Dersimlis might have constructed “a sense of self” against, with and amongst others through “security seeking process”.

It is seen that Dersim 38 extends beyond the scope of victims and survivors and affects the subsequent generations, forming in Jelin’s (2003) terms, a “culture of memory” (cited in Resende & Budryte, 2014, p. 60). Dersim 38 as the traumatic event changes the course of Dersim history and leaves a legacy that persists not only in the lives of individuals, but also in their descendants. Gampel’s (2000) concept of “radioactivity” describes how traumatic experiences can continue as emotional damage to future generations. Considering Dersim 38 case, a “radioactive leakage” occurs when Dersimlis parents’ debilitating traumatic memories affect their children who often internalize incomprehensible fears and anxieties that undermine a healthy separation of inner and outer reality (Gampel, 2000). Also, the mental representations of the tragedies of Dersim 38 experienced by the group might be shared among members of the Dersimlis and the damaged self-images associated with the mental representations of the *Tertele* might be “deposited into the developing self-representation of children in the next generation as if these children will be able to mourn the loss or reverse the humiliation” (Volkan, 1997, p.46). Such depositing result in the intergenerational transmission of trauma as formulated by Volkan, but its function changes when the chosen trauma is transmitted between generations the facts about the past are no longer important for the group, but the important point is the bonding of group members through the sharing of the chosen trauma. In other words, the chosen trauma becomes an indistinguishable part of the group's identity (Volkan, 1997). In this context, the legacy of the Dersim 38 may persist across generations and include psychological and social reactions. Post-Dersim 38 generations may be able to transmit the burdens and effects of Dersim 38, which they have not directly experienced, to the generations after them. Such a collective traumatic event, Dersim 38, can persist for generations. This may be why generations who cannot directly experience Dersim 38 report many problems such as the feeling of emptiness, the consequences of silencing the past, questions about the untold or hidden past. Additionally, the most important social events that took place in the lives of the participants' families may remind us of Göner's (2017) discussion, assuming that these people are from different generations. That is, although different Dersim generations indicate the most important social events as

different events; What is common is that these events are related to state violence. This may lead us to the interpretation that Dersim generations with different experiences throughout history experienced state violence, albeit under different names, and that exposure to this violence was somehow transferred between generations. According to Göner's definition, the state can be defined as “the same unified repressive body” for different Dersim generations.

Despite this devastating impact of trauma and its lifelong psychological losses, Hirschberger (2018) argues that trauma can also contribute to a sense of identity and ostensibly serve to preserve the safety and well-being of the group. According to him, collective trauma can enable the creation of many dimensions of meaning and social identity, such as purpose, values, competence, and collective value (Hirschberger, 2008). Similarly, Alexander says that in the enlightenment version of trauma, opportunities for innovation and change emerge by emphasizing the transformative power of a devastating event. Is it possible to look at Dersim 38 from this perspective? So, despite all these destructive effects of Dersim 38, how could it be changing Dersimlis in a 'positive' sense? The point we will focus on at this point is the sense of identity. One of the findings of this dissertation is that Dersimlis have high positive attitudes about their identities measured via the Collective Self-Esteem Scale.

The Memory Characteristics Questionnaire, measuring the Event, Phenomenology and Rehearsal characteristics of Dersim 38 as an autobiographical memory, has shown that for participants, Dersim 38 is an event where intense emotions are felt, an important event in their lives and also an event that defines who the participants are. Dersim 38 has been also found as an autobiographical memory that is considered with voluntary thinking, visual imagery, and current density. Since there is no tool that directly measures Collective Memory, the issue here is the difficulties in using the scales used to measure autobiographical memories to interpret and analyze collective memory. It is clear that the available data do not measure Dersim 38 as a collective memory; but it can give us ideas about how to interpret it as a collective memory. We know from the collective memory literature that collective memories may not always behave according to the rules that govern individual memory. The sociology of memory importantly emphasizes that the collective memory of group is quite different from the sum total of the personal recollections of its various individual members, rather it includes only those that are commonly “shared by all of them” (Zerubavel, 1997, cited

in Misztal, 2003, p. 11). Collective memory is “not as a collection of individual memories, but rather as a socially articulated and socially maintained “realities of past” (Irwin-Zarecka, 1994).

The intensity of traumatic experiences during/after Dersim 38, the memory characteristics of Dersim 38 and the intergenerational transmission of it all may show that Dersim 38 may not be not only an individual autobiographical memory, but also classified as “collective memory” shared among Dersimlis as reality of past. Highly traumatic Dersim 38-related experiences such as bereavement, displacement, extreme deprivation, and separation from the family may show that autobiographical and collective memory of Dersim 38 may be intertwined and can be analyzed within the scope of both autobiographical and collective memory called by Maswood et al., (2019) as “collaborative remembering of emotional autobiographical memory”. In other words, Dersim 38 as autobiographical memory occur in Dersimlis’ personal past and as collective memory remembered by Dersimlis as a shared real-life event together called a “collaborative autobiographical memory”. Remembering 38 becomes more than just a personal and “social” at the end since 38-related memories exist through its relationship with what has been shared with others: language, symbols, events, and social and cultural contexts as suggested by Mistzal (2003). The “collective” nature of memory of Dersim 38 then turns into a societal remembrance (Halbwachs, 1992): a memory of the past that is shared by people who belong to the same social group (Svob et al., 2016). In this manner, Dersim 38 can be evaluated both as autobiographical memory that retrieve the past into the present by summoning the past as past and collective or social memory consisting of social constraints and influences (Mistzal, 2003, p.10). From Halbwachs’s perspective, all individual memory is formed within social structures and understood only through a group context. In this manner, Dersimlis might have acquired their Dersim 38-related memories in society and in society they might have recalled, recognized, and localize these memories. As also suggested by Misztal, Dersimlis might have socially divided past into “memorable” and “forgettable” that Dersim 38-related memories turn into “memorable”.

Dersim 38, as a cataclysmic event, seems not merely as a historical fact or the recollection of a terrible event that happened to Dersimlis, but also an ongoing reconstruction to make sense of it as claimed by Hirschberger (2018). When participants were asked about the events that remind them of Dersim 38 today or make

them relive it, participants stated that they remembered Dersim 38 through various events : the revents related to ‘Dersim, Dersim 38 and/or Dersim Alevism’ such as : “Cemevi attacks in Dersim”, “Restoration in Ovacık – Gözeler”, The evacuation of Dersim villages in 1994, Anniversaries of Dersim 38, Documentaries/ Films / Books about Dersim 38 and the testimonies of Dersim 38 witnesses ; ‘specific and/or generalized examples of identity-based marginalization’ ; ‘Violent Acts targeting Alevis’: Maraş, Çorum Sivas, “Gazi Mahallesi Massacre ; ‘Violent Acts that not only targeting Alevis’: “Attacks against Kılıçdaroğlu in Çubuk/Ankara (2019)”, Aysel Doğan's funeral (2022)”, “Roboski (2011) and Suruç (2015) Massacres”. So, although Dersim 38 is a historical event, as Koh (2021) emphasizes, it can be indeed timeless psychologically called “timelessness of trauma”. A sense of timelessness of trauma (Koh, 2021) may apply well to the case of Dersim 38. Even though it seems like an event that happened in the past, it has an ongoing impact that constantly remembered and reminded and brought to the agenda at different times in the political atmosphere. After reinterpreting the past according to cultural sensibilities and the political demands of the present, Dersim 38 memories might have turned into collective memory of Dersimlis. It also seems collective memory of Dersimlis not only reflects the past but also may shape present reality by providing Dersimlis with understanding and symbolic frameworks that enable them to make sense of what happening around them.

Diverse events such as “the lynching attempt against Kılıçdaroğlu in Çubuk in 2019, the prevention of the Kurds from doing politics, political interventions in Alevism, the attacks on Cemevis , Dam projects and forest fires affecting sacred sites in Dersim, the anniversaries of Dersim 38, massacres directly targeting Alevis, such as Maraş and Sivas, and other forms of mass violence, such as the Syrian war”, may become a signifier and a reminder of Dersim 38 and consequently lead to re-traumatization (Karatay, et al., 2017). In another aspect, these events seem to create a space where Dersimlis may express their anxieties and current concerns through Dersim 38 and thus, collective memory of Dersim 38 is reshaped by present problems and perceptions as an ongoing reconstructive process.

The ways in which Dersim 38 is remembered seems to create social and political implications in Turkish politics; Dersimlis may be trying to make sense of the present issues and perceptions through the remembered past. From Volkan’s perspective, it is

a characteristic of chosen traumas that have a strong role on current political conflicts which intensify collectives' sense of belonging (Volkan, 1998). Dersim 38 memories may become a source of understanding today for Dersimlis that the trauma of the past can turn into an event experienced in the present. This goes beyond the destructive dimension of trauma and creates a space where trauma can be given meaning and transformed into a "constitutive, relational, and purposive content" (Wang, 2018). The dissertation reveals that Dersimlis, for the most part, have a positive attitude about their collective identity and believe that it is peerless to be a member of this ethno-religious group of which they are a part. Most of Dersimlis may never meet with others belonging to the same large group, however, a sense of belongingness is shared among members of the large group. As in the Eyerman (2001) exploration of the notion of cultural trauma around slavery and the formation of African American identity, Dersim 38 may ground the identity formation of all Dersimlis as a form of remembrance. As cultural process, trauma of Dersim 38 might have linked to the formation of collective identity of Dersimlis and the construction of collective memory. Dersim 38 may mean a process of "we" formation for Dersimlis. The traumatic experience of 38 may not be something directly experienced by all Dersimlis, however "come to be central to forge a collective identity out of its remembrance". Dersim 38 may unite all Dersimlis, in Dersim or in diaspora, whether they had themselves experienced 38. Whether or not all Dersimlis directly experience 38, all Dersimlis at some points are identified themselves with *Tertele*. Most of the Dersimlis may never meet with others belonging to the same ethno-religious group, yet "a sense of belongingness" is "shared" among Dersimlis as the members of the large group. In situations of common stress, political change, or general elections as in the recent election happened in Turkey, group identity, being from Dersim, becomes much more important than the identity of individual members of the group. Being from Dersim connects Dersimlis in sentimental ways regardless of where they live, and large-group psychology primarily is related with a shared need to repair, protect, and maintain large-group identity. The trauma of 38 has been collectivized by dissolving it from the contexts of time, space, and sacrifice, as a transgenerational phenomenon that has become a collective experience (Gürtaş, p.321). In this respect, Dersim Tertelesi, in the memory of new generations, presents the past common experience which is necessary for the reconstructed Dersim identity (p.321).

One of the results of the study that should be emphasized is Dersimlis remember Dersim 38 through the violent acts, occurring locally (“Ankara Train Station Massacre, Suruç Massacre or Soma Mine Disaster”, “Attacks against Kılıçdaroğlu in Çubuk/Ankara) or anywhere in the world (Syria War, Srebrenica Massacre), showing that 38-related memory is stored and recalled in collective violence memory networks. Additionally, violence/massacres directly against Alevis can be a reminder of Dersim 38 for Dersimlis; in other words, even if any act of violence is not directed directly against Kurdish Alevis but only against Alevis, this can be a strong reminder for the Dersimlis; this can show us to what extent they have adopted the Alevism as identity. Interventions in the nature of Dersim can be also a reminder of Dersim 38 for Dersimlis; "the restoration in Munzur Gözeleri, the burning of Dersim forests, or the interventions against the sacred creatures of Dersim", in my opinion, can be interpreted within the framework of the authority's intervention in Dersim continuing through 'ecology'. This study, which mentioned in detail that the geography of Dersim has been politicized since ancient times, shows that Dersimlis perceive that they continue to be exposed to ‘oppression’ through their geography. In my opinion, another important finding of the research is the part related to "Kurdishness". In the introduction part of the study, I mentioned various studies that showed that Dersimlis, the Kurdish Alevis, have been perceived by the authorities in “a dual enemy category” because they are both Kurds and Alevis. Of course, we do not know which ‘enemy’ identity is seen as more hostile, but we can interpret through the events that remind Dersimlis of Dersim 38 that Dersimlis adopt their Kurdish identity; Dersimlis embrace their Kurdish identity through events that concern Kurds in general: “not allowing Kurds to engage in politics” or “what happened at Aysel Doğan's funeral”, “The killing of an innocent Kurd occurs almost every day in Rojava” , “7 June - 1 November 2015 period”, “Roboski massacre” as Dersimlis exactly stated.

Another finding that should be discussed was that the family members of the participants who remembered Dersim 38 through marginalization had the highest trauma score. Is it because these participants give meaning to Dersim 38 through marginalization, that any marginalization today can be a very strong reminder and trigger of Dersim 38? If we try to explain by memory networks, yes. We can say that memory networks of marginalization eventually come together and can trigger each other. We might then expect this to be true for other memory networks as well. In other

words, whatever Dersim 38 is associated with, the likelihood of the thing it is associated with being a trigger increases. The small number of participants made it difficult to conduct additional statistical analyses; for example, the impact and connection of important details such as gender or generation gap on the process of shaping memory and identity have not been examined. Conducting future studies on the subject with more participants will both provide statistical power and diversify the interpretation of the multifaceted relationships between trauma, memory, and identity. I should also point out that I expected Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy in the last presidential election to remind Dersim 38 to at least one of the participants; but there was nothing like this in any of the responses. Perhaps I was the only person to whom Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy reminded me of Dersim 38, and that's why I started the introduction of this study with Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy. The response regarding Kılıçdaroğlu was the violent incident experienced by Kılıçdaroğlu in Çubuk, Ankara. So, it seems that any violent incident is more likely to remind us of another violent incident. I remembered Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy from a more positive perspective, hoping that the devastating traumatic memory of Dersim 38 would change in a direction that accepted differences in the political field.

This dissertation that begins with Kılıçdaroğlu's candidacy process and later evolving into Alevism, shows that although it cannot prove that Dersim 38 is a direct collective trauma for Dersimlis, it is remembered and named as a collective traumatic experience. Dersim 38 can be remembered by generations who never experienced it, and as the remembered past, it shapes current political discourses and debates, about Alevism, but especially Kurdish Alevism.

The dissertation, measuring the autobiographical memory of the participants of Dersim 38 and interpreting the results through collective remembrance, has once again shown us the path from individual remembrance to collective remembrance. Dersim 38, which finds its place in current politics in different ways and in different discussions, shows that the collective past and the political discourse built on it can be revived at any time according to current political needs. 'Disagreements' from the past can be remembered and become the basis for new disagreements in current politics or can be portrayed as such. This dissertation, which is intended to shed light on future studies

on remembering Dersim 38, has shown the remembrance of collective traumas and the identity-related aspect of political discussions in the shadow of these traumas.



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APPENDICES

Appendix 1., “Law on the administration of Tunceli province”

— 112 —

Tunceli vilâyetinin idaresi hakkında kanun

(Resmî Gazete ile neşir ve ilân : 2/1/1936 - Sayı : 3195)

No.
2884

Kabul tarihi
25 - XII - 1935

İDARİ KISIM

BİRİNCİ MADDE — Tunceli vilâyetine ordu ile irtibatı baki kalmak ve rütbesinin salâhiyetini haiz bulunmak üzere korkomutan rütbesinde bir zat vali ve kumandan seçilir.

Vali ve kumandan usulî veçhile Millî Müdafaa vekâletinin muvafakati alınmak şartile Dahiliye vekilinin inhası ve İera Vekilleri Heyetinin kararile tayin olunur.

Bu vali ve kumandan teşkil edilen Dördüncü umumî müfettişliğin de umumî müfettişidir.

İKİNCİ MADDE — Vali ve kumandan vilâyet umur ve muamelâtında ve vilâyet memurları hakkında, vekillerin kanunen haiz oldukları bütün salâhiyetleri haizdir.

Vali ve kumandan lüzum gördüğü takdirde vilâyeti teşkil eden kaza ve nahiye-lerin hudud ve merkezlerini değiştirir ve keyfiyeti Dahiliye vekâletine bildirir.

ÜÇÜNCÜ MADDE — Bu vilâyetin kaza kaymakamları ve nahiye müdürleri usulî dairesinde Millî Müdafaa vekâletinin muvafakati alındıktan sonra vali ve kumandanın inhası ve Dahiliye vekilinin tasvibi üzerine kararname ile ve orduya irtibatları baki kalmak şartile muvazzafsubaylardan dahi tayin olunabilir.

Bunların ve vilâyet kadrosunda iş gören subayların hak ve kıdemleri mahfuzdur. Buradaki hizmetleri askerî hizmetten sayılır ve maaşları rütbelerine göre Millî Müdafaa vekillliği bütçesinden verilir.

DÖRDÜNCÜ MADDE — Tayini valîve kumandana aid memurların ve müs-tahdemlerin harcırahları geldikleri yerden memur oldukları mahalle kadar verilir.

BEŞİNCİ MADDE — Vali ve kumandan vilâyette kullanılan asker memurları hakkında inzibatî bakımdan askerî kanunların kendisine verdiği disiplin salâhiyetini kullanır.

Diğer memurlar hakkında da ihtar vetevbih cezalarından başka kanunların inzibat komisyonlarına verdiği maaş katı, kudem tenzili salâhiyetlerini de resen kullanır ve bu cezalar sicile geçer. Sımf tenzili ve memuriyetten ibrac cezaları inzibat komisyonu kararile tatbik edilir.

Hâkimler kanunu hükümleri mahfuzdur. Ancak vali ve kumandan adliye me-mur ve kâtibleri hakkında hâkimler kanunu hükümlerine göre bunların âmirler tarafından verilebilecek cezaları dahi tatbika salâhiyetlidir.

ALTINCI MADDE — Bu vilâyette umumî meclis vazifesini valinin veya tev-kil edeceği zatın riyaseti altında vilâyet idare heyeti azalarile kaza kaymakam-larından mürekkebe bir heyet görür. Daimî encümen işini valinin veya tevki edeceği zatın riyaseti altında defterdar, maarif müdürü, Nafia başmühendis veya bunların vazifelerini görenlerden mürekkebe bir heyet görür. İdarîye hususîye vilâyet kanununun diğer hükümleri meridir.

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Appendix 3., "Kezelbash Kurds"



KEZELBASH KURDS. AGHA'S WIFE AND SERVANT.

Appendix 4., Dersim Section of Former Prime Minister İsmet İnönü's 1935 Eastern Trip Report (1935)

T. C.
BAŞVEKÂLET
Yazı İşleri Dairesi
Müdürlüğü
Sayı: _____

T. C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ
Suret

96A
61

Sabıke Raynekil İsmet İnönü'nün 1935 yılı
Şark seyahat raporunun Dersim'e ait kısmı.
II - Dersim

Dersim ıslahına bir program halinde tevessül edeceğiz.
Program; hazırlık, silâhtan tecrid ve icabederse iskân safhalarını
ihtiva edecektir.

Hazırlık ve silâhsızlama 3 senede olacaktır.

Dersim Vilâyetini yeni usulde teşkil edeceğiz. Muvazzaf
bir kolordu kumandanı Vali ve Uniformalı muvazzaf zabıtlar kaza
kaymakamları olacaktır. Kaza memurlarından hiç biri yerli olmayacak
ve bulundukça mütekait zabıtlar talî memuriyetlere tayin olunacak-
tır.

İlbaylık, dairesi, bir K.O. karargâhı gibi fakat maksada-
elverişli olarak teşkil olunacaktır. Asayiş, yol, maliye, ekonomi,
adliye, kültür, sağlık şubeleri olacaktır.

İdama kadar infaz, ilbaylıkta bitecektir. Adliye usulü
basit, hususî ve kesin olacaktır.

İlbaylığın muhakeme etmek üzere Dersim haricinden iste-
diği yerli alâkalılar veya yatakları ilbaylığa göndermeğe Devlet
teşkilâtı mecburdur. Kazaların teşkilâtı ihtiyaca ve bu esasa
göre yapılacaktır.

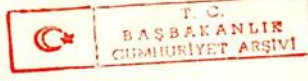
İlbaylığın emrinde asgarî 7 seyyar Jandarma taburu bu-
lunacaktır. Sabit Jandarması ayrıdır. İlbaylığa yardım etmek Genel
İspekterlerin vazifesidir. İlbaylık bu teşkilât ile idareyi alacak-
tır.

./.

030	10			111	743	11
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- 2 -

96A
161



1935 ve 1936 da yolları, karakolları yaptıracaktır. 1937 ilkbaharına kadar hazır olursa mürettep ve seferber 2 F. kuvvet ilbaylığın emrine 1937 ilkbaharında verilecektir. Sür'atle bütün Dersim silâhtan tecrid olunacak , ilbaylığın o zamana kadar tedkiki neticesinde kuvvetle yapılmasını tasavvur ettiği , Hükûmete bildirdiği icraat da yapılacaktır.

Bundan sonra Dersim'e verilecek şeklin safhası başlayacaktır. Bütün bu tasavvurlar gizlidir.

İlbaylık yol, orman işletme, çabuk ve kesin adalet, gibi kuvvetli bir idare ile işe başlayacaktır.

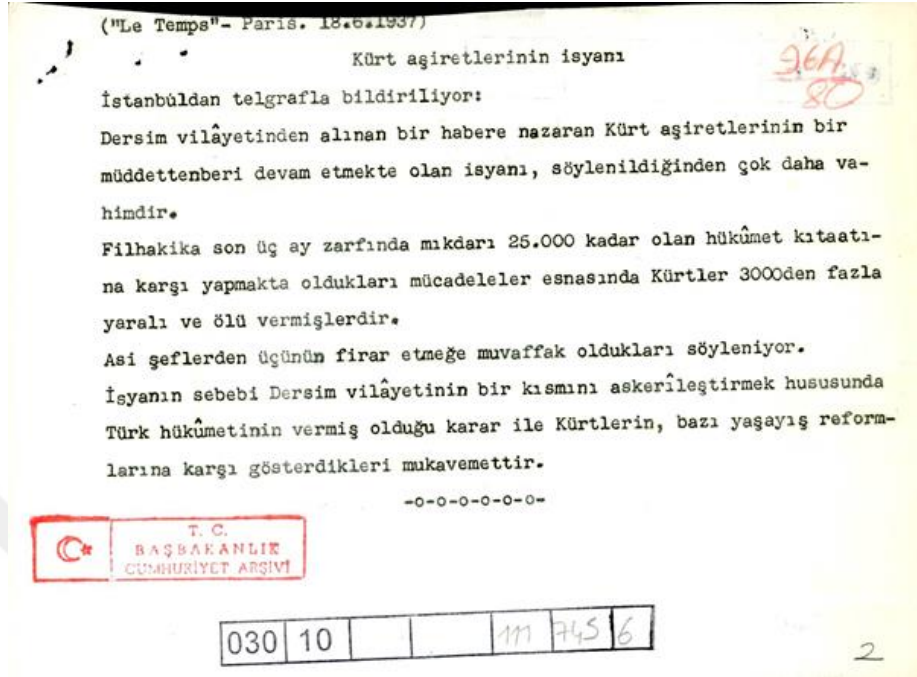
İlbaylığın lazım göstereceği diğer ihtiyaçları temin etmek ve eğer Dersimliler bizim düşündüğümüz zamandan evvel harekete kalkarlarsa programı tacilen tatbik etmek zaruridir.

Bu tasavvurları İcra Vekilleri ve Genelkurmay Başkanı ile Kamutay Başkanından başka yalnız İlbay ve iki Genel İspekter ve 3 Ordu Mufettişi şahsen bileceklerdir. Maiyet memurları bilmiyeceklerdir.

Aslı gibidir.

030	10			111	743	11
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Appendix 5., Article published in *Le Temps* in France regarding the Dersim Events



Appendix 6., Article published in *Morning Post* and *Daily Herald* regarding Dersim Events

96A
81

T.C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
CUMHURİYET ARŞIVI

Daily Herald 17 Haziran 1937

Kimsenin duymadığı bir harpte 5000 kişi öldü.
Dünyanın en gizli harbinin tafsilâtı budur, 5000 kişi ölmüştür.
25000 kişilik bir ordu harekete geçmiştir. Bu haberler dün Türkiyeden sızmaya başlamıştır. Diktatör Atatürk tarafından vaz edilen vergilere karşı isyan hareketine geçen kürt kabileleriyle Türkiyenin askerî kuvvetleri arasında bağliyan bu muharebe bir kısmı Avrupada bulunan bu medenî memlekette üç aydanberi devam etmektedir.
Buna rağmen bu hafta^{ya} gelinceye kadar bütün dünyanın haberi olmamıştır. Çünkü, diktatör, Atatürk bu meseleye aid bütün haberlerin susturulması için sansürlere emir vermiştir.
Bugün iddia edildiğine göre harp nihayet bulmuş ve asi rüesa henüz ele geçirilmemişlerse de kürdistan dağlarındaki gizli melcelerine sürülmüştür. Royter ajansının resmî beyanattan iktibas ettiği malûmata göre hava kuvvetleri asileri sıkıştırmak hususunda mühim bir rol oynamıştır.

Türkiyede asiler beşbin zayıat verdiler

(17 Haziran 1937 tarihli Morning Post gazetesine 16 Haziran tarihi ile İstanbuldan bildiriyor.)

Bugün resmen bildirildiğine göre Türkiyenin Dersim havalisinde üç aydanberi devam eden isyan hareketinde asi kürtlerden öldürülen ve yaralananların sayısı 5000 i bulmuştur.

Hükûmet bu havalide her türlü silâhla mücehhez 25000 kişilik bir kuvvet sevk etmiş ve son zamanlarda vaziyete tamamen hakim olmuştur.

Asilerin reislerinden olan Habip Kijo ile oğlu ağır surette yaralanmışlar fakat ele geçirilememişlerdir. Alınan malûmata göre kürtlerin reisleri hükûmetin bu havalide garnizon tesisi, köprü inşası ve kürt kabile-

030	10			11	745	7
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1
2



96A

- 2 -

lerinin silâhtan tecridi gibi hareketlerine itirazen hükûmete bir ulti-
matom vermişler ve ayrıca vergi vermekten istinkâf etmişlerdir. Bunu
müteakip isyan hareketine geçmişler ve askerî mevkilere hücum etmişler
ve köprüleri atmışlardır.

Başvekil General İsmet İnönü bu havalide garp reformlarının tatbikine
nezaret etmek üzere bu akşam Dersime hareket edecektir.

Royter

- - - - -

030	10			111	745	7
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3

Appendix 7., Article published in *Etniki* in Greece regarding Dersim Events

ETNİKİ:

20 Haziran 1937

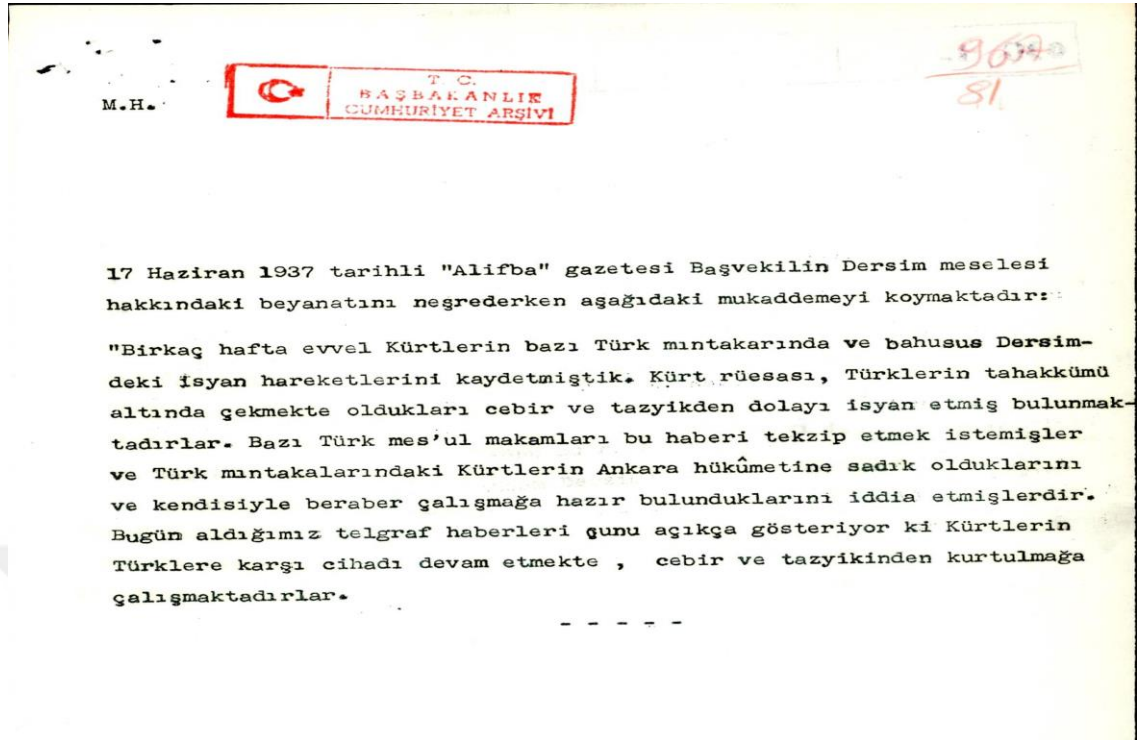
Esasen ehemmiyetten ari olan Kürt kıyâmı, Ankara hükûmetinin aldığı seri tedbirler sayesinde derhal bastırılmıştır. Ankaranın tebliğine göre, kürtler 5,000 kişi telefât vermişler ve mütebaki 1500 asi Sultanbaba dağına kaçmışlardır. Bu suretle meseleye bitmiş nazarı ile bakılabilir.

Türkiyenin şark vilâyetlerinde ve bilhassa Sivas, Erzurum, Van, Elâziz ve Bitlis havalisinde yaşamakta olan bu sayısı az fakat, dikbaş unsur, sık sık başkaldırmaktadır. Şeyh Sait isyanından sonra, Türkiye hükûmeti bunların bir kısmını batı vilâyetleri^{ne} ve bilhassa İzmir taraflarına nakletmişti.

Kürt kıyıamlarının sebebi vergi vermekten kaçınmak ve irticadır. Türk inkilâbı gibi büyük islâhat karşısında, birkaç mürtecinin ayaklanması pek tabii olduğu gibi, zamanın bunları ortadan kaldıracağı da muhakkaktır.

Büyük önder Atatürk ile nurlu arkadaşlarının idaresinde bulunan dost ve müttefik Türkiye, tarihî yoluna devam ederken, bu gibi ehemmiyetsiz hadiselerden müteessir olamaz. Yunan efkârı umumiyesi, sür'atle intizam ve asayişin iadesinden dolayı sevinç duymaktadır.

Appendix 8., Article published in *Alifba* in Syria regarding Dersim Events



Appendix 9., "Decision to purchase poisonous gas from Germany"

T. C. BAŞVEKÂLET KARARLAR MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ Karar sayı 2	Kararname	T. C. BAŞBAKANLIK CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ
4208		
Hava Silâhlama programının tahakkukunu temin maksadile muhtelif cins Tayyare bombaları için muhtelif evsattaki - Chlora-cetophenon, İperit ve saire gibi - gaslardan yirmi tonunun ve bunları bombalara koymağa mahsus Komple otomatik doldurma tesisatının Berlin Büyük Elçiliğimizin emrinde Vekâlet Gaz Mütahassısı ile Ateş-militer veya hava ateşemis tarafından yapılacak inceleme üzerine verilecek kararla tayin edilecek Almanyadaki firmalarından, tahmini tutarları olan 150,000 lirayı geçmemek üzere Almanya ile aramızda mevcut kliring mukavelesi hükmine göre kliring yolile tediye edilmek şartile ve mahremiyet ve hususiyetine binaen 2490 sayılı Artırma, eksiltme ve ihale kanununun 46 ncı maddesinin (K) fıkrası mucibince gizli pazarlıkla satın alınmasına izin verilmesi; Milli Müdâfâa Vekilliğinin 26/7/937 tarih ve 87I sayılı tezkeresile yapılan teklif ve Maliye Vekilliğinin 5/8/937 tarih ve 3930 sayılı mutalâanamesi üzerine İcra Vekilleri Heyetince 7/8/937 de onanmıştır.		
7/8/937		
REİSİCUMHUR		

**Appendix 10., The newspaper with the title "Tunceli is Opening to Civilization"
(Tunceli Medeniyete Açılıyor)**



Appendix 11., Informed Consent Form

Bilgilendirilmiş Onam Formu

Sayın Katılımcı,

Bu çalışma Yıldız Teknik Üniversitesi İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Bölümü - Kültürel Çalışmalar Doktora Programı kapsamında yürüttüğüm doktora tez araştırmamdır. Bu form sizi çalışma hakkında bilgilendirmek için hazırlanmıştır.

Bu çalışmanın amacı; hafıza ve kimlik arasındaki ilişkiyi Dersim özelinde değerlendirmektir. Çalışmaya katılım gönüllük esasına dayalıdır. Eğer katılmayı kabul ederseniz, sizden konuyla ilgili bazı soruları cevaplandırmanız istenecektir. İçtenlikle vereceğiniz cevaplar çalışma açısından oldukça önemlidir. Vereceğiniz cevaplar sadece araştırmanın amacına uygun olarak bilimsel açıdan kullanılacak ve gizli tutulacaktır.

Bu çalışmaya katılmayı kabul edebilir, reddedebilir ya da çalışmanın herhangi bir yerinde çalışmadan çekilebilirsiniz. Çalışmayı kabul etmeniz durumunda, formları sonuna kadar ve eksiksiz doldurmanız, araştırma için gerekli verilerin toplanması açısından önem taşımaktadır.

Araştırma ile ilgili ek sorularınız için e-posta aracılığı ile benimle iletişime geçebilirsiniz.

Çalışma hakkında bilgilendirildim ve araştırmaya katılmayı kabul ediyorum.

Appendix 12., Ethics Committee Approval



YILDIZ TEKNİK ÜNİVERSİTESİ
Sosyal ve Beşeri Bilimler Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu

Toplantı Tarihi: 30.03.2022

Toplantı No: 2022.03

SOSYAL VE BEŞERİ BİLİMLER ARAŞTIRMALARI ETİK KURULU TOPLANTI KARARI

Yürütücülüğünü Üniversitemiz Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü öğretim üyelerinden Doç.Dr. Kerem KARAOSMANOĞLU danışmanlığında lisansüstü öğrencisi GÖKÇE ERGİN CEMEL tarafından yapılacak olan "Collective Memory And Collective Identity The Dersim 1937 38 Case From A Psycho Political Perspective" adlı çalışma ve bu çalışmada kullanılacak veri toplama araçları ve yöntemlerine ilişkin bilgilerde etiğe aykırı herhangi bir bulguya rastlanmamıştır.

Appendix 13., Screenshot of the Menemen Dersimliler Association Post



Appendix 14., Screenshot of the Ankara Dersimliler Association Post



Appendix 15., War Event Checklist

Dersim 1938 olaylarında...

1. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi herhangi bir şekilde yerinden edildi mi? (örneğin, evi, şehri, vb. değiştirmek zorunda kaldı mı)?
2. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi Dersim 1938 olayları nedeniyle göç etti mi (Dersim'den ayrıldı mı)?
3. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olay sırasında sevdiklerinden ayrıldı mı?
4. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olay nedeniyle yas yaşadı mı?
5. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olay sırasında herhangi bir şiddet eylemine (örn., işkence ve öldürme) tanık oldu mu?
6. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olay sırasında bombardımana, bombalamaya veya çatışmaya maruz kaldı mı?
7. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olay sırasında herhangi bir şiddet eyleminin kurbanı mıydı?
8. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olay sırasında herhangi bir fiziksel yaralanma yaşadı mı?
9. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi olayın düşmanlarına karıştı mı (örneğin, orduda savaştı, silah taşıdı, vb.)?
10. Ebeveynleriniz ya da ailenizin bir üyesi savaş sırasında aşırı derecede yoksunluk (örneğin yiyecek, su, barınak) yaşadı mı?

Appendix 16., Collective Self-Esteem Scale

Kollektif Benlik Saygısı Ölçeği

Bu bölümde sizden etnik kimliğiniz hakkında bir takım ifadeleri değerlendirmeniz istenmektedir. İfadelerin doğru veya yanlış cevabı yoktur. Etnik kimliğinizi düşünerek size en uygun rakamı işaretleyiniz. Lütfen ölçekte bulunan tüm ifadeleri değerlendiriniz.

1 Kesinlikle katılmıyorum 2 Katılmıyorum 3 Kısmen 4 Katılmıyorum 5 Kararsızım 6 Kısmen Katılıyorum 7 Katılıyorum 8 Kesinlikle Katılıyorum

1. Kendimi etnik grubumun tipik bir örneği olarak görürüm.
2. Etnik kimliğimden gurur duyarım.
3. Etnik kimliğim kim olduğumun önemli bir parçasıdır.
4. Eğer birisi etnik grubum hakkında kötü bir söz söylese benim hakkımda kötü söz söylemiş demektir.
5. Genelde etnik kimliğimden memnunum.
6. Etnik grubum hakkında kendimi iyi hissediyorum.
7. Genelde etnik kimliğim diğer insanlar tarafından iyi/olumlu görülür.
8. Genelde etnik grubumdan olmayanlar etnik grubuma saygı gösterir.
9. Bazen etnik kimliğimden hoşlanmıyorum.
10. Etnik kimliğimden rahatsızlık duyduğum zamanlar olur.
11. Bazen bu etnik kimliğe sahip olmanın faydalı olmadığını düşünüyorum.
12. Diğer insanlar, etnik kimliğime sahip insanların kötü olduğunu düşünür.
13. Çoğu insan, etnik grubumdaki insanların genelde diğer gruplardan daha az başarılı olduğunu düşünür.

Appendix 17., Memory Questionnaire Questionnaire (MCQ) – Dersim 38 Version

1. Dersim 38 yoğun duygular hissettiğim bir olaydır.
2. Dersim 38'i öğrendiğimden beri Dersim 38 hakkında konuşurum.
3. Dersim 38'i ilk öğrendiğimde hissettiğim duyguları şimdi hissedebiliyorum.
4. Dersim 38, hayatımda önemli bir olaydır.
5. Dersim 38'i öğrendiğimden beri Dersim 38 hakkında düşünürüm.
6. Dersim 38'i hatırladıkça sanki onu yeniden yaşıyormuşum gibi olurum.
7. Dersim 38, davranışlarımı, düşüncelerimi, duygularımı fark edilir şekilde etkilediği için hayatımda sonuçları olan bir olaydır.
8. Dersim 38'i öğrendiğimden beri, Dersim 38 istemsizce aklıma gelir.
9. Dersim 38'i hatırlayınca, olayı zihnimde duyabiliyorum.
10. Dersim 38, kim olduğum hakkında çok şey anlatan olaylardan biridir.
11. Dersim 38'i hatırlayınca olayı zihnimde görebiliyorum.
12. Dersim 38'i ilk öğrendiğimdeki duygum...

Appendix 18. Report on Dersim Events (28.04.1937)



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T. C.
Dahiliye Vekâleti
2728

Geldiği yer	Tig. No.	Tarhi	Şifre Numarası	Guruba	Açama adı
Elâsis	1800	28.4.937	1178	475	Emîn
Telgrafhaneye verildiği	Tarih	Sa. Da.	Telgrafhaneye alındığı	Tarih	Sa. Da.
	28.4.937	11 45		28.4.937	12 50
Naklene geldiği	Tarih	Sa. Da.	Kalemde açıldığı	Tarih	Sa. Da.
	28.4.937	13 20		28.4.937	13 10

Dahiliye Vekâletine

H a y a t .

1- Dersim'lilerce Kahmut ve Sin hadiselerinin -
umumiileştirilmesine gâlibgâldığı, Masgirt ve Pertek köp-
rülerinin yıkılması ve küçük Karakolların düşürülmesinin
düşünüldüğü haber alınmıştır. Bu düşüncelerin tahakkukuna
önlemek için dün akşam ileri sürülmesi ricasında bulundu-
ğum 17. inci Tümen'den bir Piyade Taburu ile bir dağ Bata-
riyesinin pek çabuk Masgirt'e ve diğer bir taburda bir -
(Z.K.R.L.R.Y.A.N.I.N.) Pertek'e nakillerine yüksek izinle-
rini ve bu Tümen Alaylarının ilk olarak harekete sür'at-
le ihzarını ve Dersim için vaktiyle düşünülmüş ve hazır-
lanmış tertiplerin alınmasına gımdiden bağlanmasının da
muvafık olacağını arz ederim.

2- Dahiliye Vekâletine, Genelkurmay Başkanlığına,
Yüksek Başvekâlete, Millî Müdafaa Vekâletine, Diyarbakır
Korhamutanlığına arz edilmiştir.

Dördüncü Umumi Mf.
H. Alpdoğan

H. Alpdoğan

Appendix 19., Report prepared by the 4th General Inspectorate on the Situation of the Tribes in Dersim and their attitude towards the Government (12 May 1937)

 96A
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Elaâziz: 12-Mayıs-37
Özü: istihbarat raporu H.

- suret -

6-Mayıstan 12 mayısa kadar alınan haberlerle yapılan tedbirler aşağıdaki maddelerde arz edilmiştir.

1- Havdaranlılar Pölümür bölgesine propagandacılar göndererek asilere yardımcı temin etmek maksadıyla aleyhimizde mübalagalı haberler yaymakta ve hareketin Pölümür aşiretlerini de istihdaf ettiğinden bahsile bu aşiretleri lehlerinde kazanmağa çalışmakta oldukları öğrenilmiş ve mukabil propaganda tedbiri alınmıştır.

2- Harçık (Darboğaz) dersi şarkındaki halk şimdilik hükümet lehindedirler. Bunlardan Nazımiye bölgesindeki Kureyşan, aşağı Arilli ve Karsanlılarla Mazgirt bölgesindeki Hiranlılar, asiler tarafından vaki olacak taarruzları, müdafaa-yı nefsin meşru olacağı hakkındaki muvafakatımız üzerine tard etmek için kendi köylerini müdafaaaya karar vermiş ve tertiplenmişlerdir.

3- Ovacık bölgesinde; Pölür'deki Tabura 9/10 gecesi ateş edenlerin hüviyetleri henüz tesbit edilmemekle beraber iz takibinden bunların Balıkan dağı istikametinden gelmiş bir kol olduğu şüphesi hasıl olmuş ise de bu kolun hangi aşiretten olduğu ve tekmil aşiretlerin birbirlerine bu suçu atfetmekte bulunduklarından henüz kat'i olarak tesbit edilememiştir. Bu hadiseden dolayı Ovacık halkı Hükümete gelerek teessürlerini bildirmiş de leh ve aleyhinde hareket etmek hususunda mütereddit ve endişeli durumlarını muhafaza etmektedirler.

4- Havdaran'ın şimal grubunun reisi Tacın oğlu Hıdır Nazımiye'ye gelmiş ve asilerle hiç bir suretle alakası olmadığını söyleyerek sadakatını tevit etmiş ve köyüne dönmüştür.

Demenan'ın ileri gelenlerinden olup asilere iştirak etmemiş bulunan Hözmerik'li Hasan Mazgirt'e gelerek yerleştirilmesini istemiştir. Buna yardım edilmektedir. Ailesini getirecektir.

5- Demenan ve Yusufanlılardan bir kaç kişinin Pah garbindaki Sinan tepe ile Gizke'de bir kısım kuvvetin Karçık köylerinde ve dört yüz

030	10			111	745	2
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2



kişilik bir kuvvetin de Munzur suyu garbına geçerek Halvori köyü min-takasında toplandığı işildirdi. Tavyarelerimiz bu kuvveti göremediler.

6- Kureyşan aşiretinin Şeyhan gurubunun reisi olup Kalbo-san köyünde oturan ve Seyit Rıza ile sıkı münasebette bulunan Hüsoo seydi, Demenan'lılarla Yusufanlıların Mazgird önünden çekilmelerini ve köylerine dönmelerini tebliğ etmek talimatını Seyit Rıza'dan aldığı hab-ber alınmıştır. Hüsoo seydi, Mazgirt'e gelmiş sadakatından bahsetmiş ve bana gönderdiği bir mektupda asilerin hareketlerini tel'in ve bu hare-ketten dolayı müteessir olduğunu bildirmiştir. Bununla beraber bu ada-min 10-Mavis-937 günü Halvori'de asiler tarafından yapılan toplantıya iştirak etmiş olduğu da duyulmuştur.

7- Halvori'deki toplantıya Seyit Rıza'nın da iştirak et-miş olduğu ve bu toplantıda, yapılacağını bekledikleri askerî harekete karşı hareket tarzlarını tesbit ve ittifaklarını teyit için komıştuk-ları öğrenilmiştir.

8- 7-Mavis-937 gün ve () sayılı raporun birinci mad-desinde arz edildiği vechile son vak'aların hiç birinde alakası olmadı-gını ve Hükümetçe suç sayılmadığı takdirde Demenanlılarla taarruz etme-i suretiyle Devlete hizmet edeceğini Karaoglan nahiye müdürüne söyleyen Seyit Rıza'nın iç yüzünü anlamak ve kit'alarımızın Demenana doğru ile-ri hareketine karşı durumunu yakından tesbit etmek, bu adamı diğerlerin-den ayırmak maksadıyla bu nahiye müdürü Seyit Rıza'nın yanına gönderil-miş ve kendisine hizmet etmek zamanının geldiği ve adamları ile kit'a-larımızın önünde Munzur suyunu geçerek Demenan'a taarruz etmesinin bek-lendiği şayet kendisi gidemezse kit'alarımızın arkasında bir mahalle gitmesi lazım geldiği haberi bu gün gönderilmiştir.

9- Sin'deki kit'alarımızın beyaz dağa alınmasını mütea-kip Seyit Rıza'nın tesiri altında kalan Kırkanlılar, Seyit Rıza'ya deha-lat ederek himayesini talep ve vardım vaaad ettikleri öğrenilmiştir.

10- Bahtiyar, Laçın ve Koç'ların durumlarında değişiklik sezilmemiştir.

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II- Münzur suyunun şarkındaki aşiretlerden Sevit Rıza'nın yardım istediği, onlar da Şeyh hükümet kendi üzerlerine gelmezse bu yardım vabacaklarını aksi takdirde herkesin kendini müdafaa için yerlerinde kalmasının zarurî olduğuna karar vermiş oldukları işidilmiştir.

I2- Bu günkü durumları yukarıda arz edilen aşiretlerden Havdaranın Hosnak gurubu, Demenan, Yusufan ve Abbasların tamamen mütefik oldukları, Kurevganın Şevhan gurubunun asilere mütemayil olduğu diğerlerinin ise mütereddit ve hareketimizin neticesine göre hakiki düşüncelerini meydana çıkaracaklarının tabii görüldüğünü arz ederim.

I3- I2-Mevia-937 tarih ve I443 sayı ile dahiliye vekâletine ve Genelkurmay Başkanlığına arz edilmiştir.

4.Umumi Müfettiş
H.A.Alptogan

Aslının aynıdır. I8-May.-937

J.Gn.K.lığı
III.Ş.Md.Y.

030 10 111 745 2

Appendix 20., Report dated 23 July 1938 on the Military Operation in Dersim

96A

T. C.
BAŞVEKÂLET
HUSUSİ KALEM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
Sayı :

Açık Tel
Elazığ: 23/7/938 s-
10.30
" 12.30

T. C.
BAŞBAKANLIK
CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ

Makina başında
Başvekil Celâl Bayar

1- Bütün bölgelerde gece sükûnetle geçmiştir .
2 - Dün Munzur suyu ormanlı bölgede tarama yapan kît'alarımız sekiz haydut imha etmişlerdir .
3- Büyük mağara içinde dün yapılan aramada bir çadır içinde sarılı on tüfenkle beş hafif makineli tüfek şarjörü ve yüzelli kadar fişek bulmuştur .
4- Laç deresi mintakasında yirmi iki nüfustan ibaret üç aile dehalet etmiştir .
5- 23.7.938 t. ve harekâ 1436 / 3105 sayılı sabah raporu mutat makamlara arz edilmiştir .

4.U. Müfettiş ve Tunceli
Vali ve Komutanı
Alpdoğan

B. A.

Appendix 21., Evening Report dated 11 August 1938 regarding the Military Operation in Dersim

T. C.
BAŞVEKÂLET
HUSUSİ KALEM MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
Sayı :

ACIK TEL 969
1161
Hizmet :
11.8.1938

BAŞBAKANLIK
CUMHURİYET ARŞİVİ

Makina başında
Başvekil Celâl Bayar
İstanbul

29

1 - Kolordular tarama hareketine devam ediyor .

2 - 7. Kor :

a - 41. Tümenin 93. Alayı bugün Misirban Huvit mezrası hattının güneyinde Darbuğazla Kutu dereesi arasındaki bölgeyi taramıştır . Kırmızı dağın Doğu kısmı Dar boğaz arasındaki Demenanlıları toplamak üzere 25. Alay tarafından tertibat alınmıştır . Toplama yarın erkenden başlayacaktır .

b - Pah mntakasına gönderilen müfreze haydutları bulamamışsa da bunlara yataklık eden 40 kişiyi imha etmiştir .

c - Suvari tümeni bölgesinden 20 tüfek toplanmıştır .

d - Değte bulunan 19. piyade alayından bir tabur bu bölgede tarama için 7. Kor emrine verilmiştir .

3 - 8. Kor :

a - 12. Tümen karargâhı Mutkada 34. Alay Tagardan itibaren Bozan sırtlarına doğru olan Ağvıran deresine hakim sırtları tutmuştur . Seyyar Jandarma Alayı Bozan dereesi Batı Kuzeyindeki tepede olup bir taburu ile Avgolu Batı Güneyindeki tepayı işgal etmiştir . Seyyar Jandarma Alayı haydutların Ali boğazı yakısının Ali kelimesi Kuzeyindeki sırtlarda tahkimat yaptığını görmüştür .

030	10			111	748	14
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3 - 4

**Appendix 22., Daily report on military operations in Dersim and its surroundings
for December 1938**

T. C. Dahiliye Vekâleti Husul Kalem Müdürlüğü 11944		Geldiği yer ELAZIĞ		Telgraf Merkezi 232	
Sıfresin tarihi 5.12.938		Kaleme geldiği tarih 5.12.938		013	
N2337/4852		Aksolun tarihi 5.12.938			
Dahiliye Vekâletine					
T. C. SASAKANLIE CUMHURİYET ARŞIVI					
<u>A c e l e</u>					
1- Bölgede sükûnet vardır. 2- Yasak bölge halkından ve Koç uşağı aşiretinden yeniden toplanan Koçluların (46) nüfusu Hozat'tan ve (51) nüfusu da Çemişkezek'ten Elazığ'a getirilmişlerdir. 3- Ovacık'tan Karataş köyünden 1 silâh alınmıştır. 4- 5/12/938 gün ve 2337/4852 - sayılı hareket raporu Mütat makamlara arz edilmiştir. Dördüncü Umumi Müf. Alpdoğan					
12					

030	10			111	751	31
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Appendix 23., A section from the semi-structured interview with the participants

This meeting was held via Zoom on July 22, 2023.

Me: *First of all, thank you very much for participating in this study. Can I ask you to tell us briefly about yourself?*

Participant: *I was born in Tunceli Ovacık in 1978. I currently live in Tunceli Merkez and spent most of my life here.*

Me: *Now I would like you to tell me about the most important social events that occurred in your family's life.*

Participant: *Of course, let me think... It could be the Events of 1938. Another one is the Village Evacuation in 1994 and the discrimination against Alevis and those born in Tunceli.*

Me: *Well... what if you rank them according to the degree to which they affect their lives?*

Participant: *So, actually, they are all important...and they affected. But if I had to list them in order... I would say the 1994 Village Evacuations, the 1938 Events and the discrimination they suffered because they were Alevis.*

...

Me: *What did Dersim 38 mean to you when you first learned about it? What does it mean to you right now?*

Participant: *It seemed interesting. The events and stories told in the war environment seem interesting and beautiful when they are intertwined with the environment you live in. When you fully understand the dramas, it becomes painful. Now, considering the time that has passed and the change of generations, it is starting to be remembered as a painful historical event.*

Me: *From whom and how did you learn about what happened in Dersim in 1937-38?*

Participant: *From my grandfather, in 1988-1990, as someone who participated in the events and was exiled to Adana, he would tell about his personal experiences.*

Me: *What is your most intense feeling when you remember Dersim 38?*

Participant: *The painful narratives of children who were bayoneted in the womb and my grandfather losing his wife in the conflict without knowing whether she was dead or not.*

Me: *Well, has there been an event or events lately that reminded you of Dersim 38 or made you feel like you were experiencing it?*

Participant: *The 1994 village evacuation events were very effective on the new generation and the villagers and were perceived as a new 38 incidents and were really bad. Even though nearly 30 years have passed, people still could not return to their villages.*

Appendix 24., A section from the semi-structured interview with the participants

The meeting was held face to face on May 4, 2023.

Me: *First of all, thank you very much for participating in this study. Can I ask you to tell us briefly about yourself?*

Participant: *I was born in Ovacık Dersim in 1974. I live in Istanbul.*

Me: *Now I would like you to tell me about the most important social events that occurred in your family's life.*

Participant: *1938 Dersim genocide, September 12 coup and OHAL (State of Emergency Rule)*

Me: *Well... what if you rank them according to the degree to which they affect their lives?*

Participant: *My ranking is the same as above.*

...

Me: *What did Dersim 38 mean to you when you first learned about it? What does it mean to you right now?*

Participant: *Bad. and Bad...*

Me: *From whom and how did you learn about what happened in Dersim in 1937-38?*

Participant: *I learned it when I was a child. From my mother, grandmother, and neighbors.*

Me: *What is your most intense feeling when you remember Dersim 38?*

Participant: *Sadness and resilience.*

Me: *Well, has there been an event or events lately that reminded you of Dersim 38 or made you feel like you were experiencing it?*

Participant: *The 1994 Village Evacuations.*

Appendix 25., A section from the semi-structured interview with the participants

The meeting was held face to face on June 21, 2023.

***Me:** First of all, thank you very much for participating in this study. Can I ask you to tell us briefly about yourself?*

***Participant:** I was born in Hozat in 1980. I live in Istanbul.*

***Me:** Now I would like you to tell me about the most important social events that occurred in your family's life.*

***Participant:** Dersim, Çorum and Maraş massacre*

***Me:** Well... what if you rank them according to the degree to which they affect their lives?*

***Participant:** As a starting point, I can say that Dersim was the most effective.*

...

...

***Me:** What did Dersim 38 mean to you when you first learned about it? What does it mean to you right now?*

***Participant:** Great pain and sadness. I still have the same thought from time to time.*

***Me:** From whom and how did you learn about what happened in Dersim in 1937-38?*

***Participant:** I learned it when I was a child. From my grandfather and grandmother*

***Me:** What is your most intense feeling when you remember Dersim 38?*

***Participant:** Sadness....*

***Me:** Well, has there been an event or events lately that reminded you of Dersim 38 or made you feel like you were experiencing it?*

***Participant:** Children killed in war...*