THE POLITICS OF MEMORY: AN INTRODUCTION

Zehra AZİZBEYLİ[*]

ABSTRACT

This research concerns the processes of politics of memory throughout the centuries and introduces the concept of memory through the complexity of the process of remembering, or re-capturing the past, a concept that has also triggered research on politics of memory and commemoration in the world. Even though the various cultural and political dimensions of memory, and the forms and practices of commemoration are seen after the two World Wars, there is an increase in the memorialization processes caused by post-war ethics, multiple acts of violence motivated by ethnic conflicts and hatred, group suffering traumatic memory and the increased appropriation of commemorative practices marking the beginning and end of conflicts. There are many scholars from a variety of disciplines working on "memory" as an epistemological theme. The main theme of this paper is to introduce politics of memory as a new theme in political science and to identify its relationship between nationalism and identity construction. This research is a contribution to the academic debate and to the growing body of work that examines the social and political effects of memory practices and memory-making processes to understand different cases of ethnic/political divisions around the globe.

Keywords: *politics of memory, commemoration, memory-making, ethnic-politics, nationalism, identity.*

ÖZET
BELLEK POLİTİKALARINA BİR GİRİŞ

Bu araştırma, yüzyıllar boyunca bellek üzerinden yapılan siyasetlerin süreçleri ile ilgili olup bellek politikalarının karmaşıklığıyla ya da geçmişin yeniden ele geçirilmesiyle birlikte bellek kavramını ortaya çıkarır. Bu kavram, bellek politikaları ve dünyadaki anma törenleri üzerine yapılan araştırmaları da tetikleyen bir kavramdır. Hafızanın çeşitli kültürel ve politik boyutları ile anma biçimleri üzerindeki uygulamaları iki Dünya Savaşından sonra görülmesine rağmen, savaş sonrası oluşan etik kuramlar çerçevesindeki hatıralaştırma süreçlerinde, etnik çatışmalar ve nefretle harekete geçirilen çok sayıda şiddet eyleminin ve travmatik hatıraların çatışmaların başlangıcında ve sonunda görülen hatıralaştırılma süreçlerinde bir artış olduğu görülür. Epistemolojik bir tema olarak "bellek" üzerinde çalışan çeşitli disiplinlerden birçok araştırmacı vardır. Bu yazının ana teması bellek politikalarını yeni bir tema olarak siyaset bilimine tanıtmak ve bellek politikalarının milliyetçilikle kimlik inşası arasındaki ilişkisini tanımlamaktır. Bu araştırma, akademik tartışmalara ve dünyadaki farklı etnik / politik bölünme olaylarını anlamak için bellek politikalarını ve hafıza oluşturma süreçlerinin sosyo-politik etkilerini inceleyen büyüyen çalışma yapısına bir katkı sağlar.

I had recognized the taste of the crumb of Madeleine soaked in her concoction of lime-flowers which my Aunt used to give me… immediately the old gray house upon the street, where her room was, rose up like the scenery of a theatre to attach itself to the little pavilion, opening on to the garden, which had been built out behind it for my parents… and with the house the town, from morning to night and in all weathers, the square where I was sent before luncheon, the streets along which I used to run errands, the country roads we took when it was fine (Proust M., [1922] 2006:63, cited in Azizbeyli, 2014)[1].

Much has been said of the text above, Marcel Proust's famous work *In Search of Lost Time* (Proust [1922] 2006); it illustrates perfectly the example of complexity of the process of remembering, or re-capturing the past, a concept that has also triggered research on politics of memory and commemoration in the world. It is only during the last two centuries that there has been an increase in the public and academic interest on the various cultural and political dimensions of memory, and the forms and practices of commemoration. Factors such as the effects of two World Wars, the public exposure of the Holocaust, increase in the memorialization caused by post-war ethics, multiple acts of violence motivated by ethnic conflicts and hatred, group suffering traumatic memory and the increased appropriation of commemorative practices marking the beginning and end of conflicts have made such interest important and relevant. Similarly, while commemorative practices have been expanding for nearly two centuries, the academic literature on commemoration has only taken off in the past twenty years. Now, many scholars from a variety of disciplines have worked on "memory" as an epistemological theme. The main theme of this paper is to introduce politics of memory as a new theme in political science and to identify its relationship between nationalism and identity construction.

Memory and Collective Memory: A Short History

Memory, of course, has been a major concern since early Greek philosophy but the usage of the concept has changed within years. Mnemosyne was one of the Titans of Greek mythology, she was the Goddess of Memory and the inventor of

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[1] The material that is used in this paper comprises of the parts of my own unpublished PhD thesis that I conducted at Keele University, 2014.

words, a powerful figure. After all, memory has been recognised as an art or craft and even suggested as a "gift" that distinguishes humans from other creatures (Richards 2007). It is memory that allows us to reason, to predict and anticipate outcomes, and can be said to be the very foundation for civilization (Encylopedia Brittannica Online, 2007). It is fascinating that the Greek mythology also uses memory as Mnemosyne (memory), the name for a river in Hades (the underworld), counterpart to the river Lethe, "Forgetfulness". Lethe is the River of Oblivion that flows through the underworld Hades. The ancient Greeks believed that those who wish to be re-embodied in the world should drink from Lethe to forget their past life (Greek burial 2008). When they died, the dead souls were urged to drink from the river Mnemosyne, to remember their pasts. Plato described Lethe as the Forgetful River in "The Myth of Er" that appears at the end of Plato's *Republic* (Plato 2003). It is about a dead soldier's adventures in the underworld and introducing the concept that moral people should be rewarded, and immoral people punished, after death. Er watches souls drinking from the River Lethe, and as they drink, they forget everything. Er is not allowed to drink from Lethe, he then returns to his body, opening his eyes to find himself lying on the funeral pyre, and able to recall his journey through the afterlife. (Plato, 2003:368, cited in Azizbeyli, 2014). Historically speaking, this expression of memory by Plato as a reward for moral behaviour is important. Also, in Plato's *Phaedrus* (1973), the relationship between rhetoric and dialectic is explored through a myth in which a god named Theuth boasts to the Egyptian King Thamus of having invented the art of writing, and he proclaims that it is "a branch of learning that will make the people of Egypt wiser and improve their memories". However, King Thamus refuses and says "if men learn this, it will implant forgetfulness in their souls: they will cease to exercise memory because they rely on that which written" (Plato 1973:275a, cited in Azizbeyli, 2014). In Aristotle's *On Memory and Recollection* he centres his study on dialectical memory and the observation of how the mind retrieves information. Aristotle discusses "the nature of memory and remembering and what it is in the soul that animals remember with, and what recollecting is, and in what manner it occurs, and through what causes" (Richards, 2007:38).

Another example is Cicero, the Roman orator, where he argued memory was an active process defined by the activities of collection and recollection, or storing and retrieving (Sheffield, 2011). Sheffied (2011) explains that Cicero teaches his students to build up on familiar visualizations that were deeply inscribed in memory, and then transfer the needed data for rhetorical practice on these visual backgrounds both in *De oratore* and *Ad herennium* (Azizbeyli, 2014). In this way, rhetoricians learn to associate memories with objects and images that trigger their mind to

remember longer texts. The other notions of memory and forgetting also exist within Greek epic literature. For instance, in *Odyssey*, when Odysseus and his men travelled to the River Acheron to talk with Tiresias, Odysseus encounters his dead comrade, Elpenor, who begged Odysseus to go back to Aeaea to give him a proper cremation and burial. Odysseus thus promises his soldier to bury him honourably and that *nothing shall be forgotten* (emphasis mine, cited in Azizbeyli, 2014). This promise of Odysseus shows an early form of politicization of collective memory. It is a properly buried soldier on earth that is honoured, therefore not forgotten. Within the Judeo-Christian teaching, a similar notion of forgetting is also identified as a "neglectful, unrighteous condition" (Vivian 2010:22). Forgetting is an ultimate offense against God in the Old Testament (Vivian, 2010). Christian theology has a parallel pattern of understanding with the life and suffering of Jesus, "demonstrating one's faith by not forgetting" (Vivian, 2010:23; Azizbeyli, 2014). Similarly, Jesus takes the bread and gives the pieces to his followers telling them that it is his body and he instructs them to "do this in memory of me" at the Last Supper (Luke 22:19, quoted in Bible Study Tools 2013). Saint Augustine has authored one of the greatest works on memory, where he states memory as a "vast court", "the treasury in the mind" and "a large and boundless chamber". He writes "great is the power of memory" and contends that we are actually our own memories (St. Augustine, 1909; Azizbeyli, 2014). As St. Augustine mentions, memories dictate to us as we respond to them. Humans cannot live without them but it can be painful to live with memories as well. Here, memory is implied to be influential enough to change human conditions and human life entirely.

Mary Carruthers, looks at models for the understanding of memory, especially scholastic and early humanist adaptations of classical mnemo-techniques. She argues that memory systems are some sort of artificial intelligence systems. She deliberates the ethical and literary values that were attached to memory training in medieval culture. In *the Book of Memory: A Study of Memory in Medieval Culture*, she offers examples from the works of, Chaucer, Thomas Aquinas and Dante (Carruthers 1990). She assumes that medieval assumption of human learning is based in memorative processes and studies the ways of the written page was assumed to be a memory device. She discusses the mnemonic techniques that affect literary composition and how reading was accepted to be an activity of the memory (Carruthers 1990). Also, Dame Frances Amelia Yates examines the importance of memory for the orators to deliver accurate and long speeches in her work, *Art of Memory* (1966). Art of memory is a concept first coined by the Greek poet

Simonides[2] is not a theory of natural memory but rather a mnemonic device to be a structure of artificial memory. It was believed to be designed to supplement and extend the powers of natural memory. It turns out to be a hidden tool and a technique to provide divine powers to its practitioners to remember their words (Tiffany, 1995). Mauer (2005) records that Yates defines art of memory as a technique generated to strengthen natural memory as an artificial memory. He adds that it is based on a mnemonic system of places and images. "A locus is a place easily grasped by the memory, such as a house, an intercolumnar space, a corner, an arch, or the like. Images are forms, marks or simulacra of what we wish to remember" (Yates, 1966:6; Azizbeyli, 2014).

Within the period of Enlightenment, memory becomes prominent particularly after the late nineteenth and earlier twentieth centuries. John Locke is an influential writer on memory and identity, where he identifies the importance of memory as an anchor for coherence and individual continuity in his work *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Ferguson 1996). For Locke memories do not really exist as things but they are rather imitations of perceptions that can be revived and repainted each and every time we recall the past (Azizbeyli, 2014). "Memory", then is a dynamic concept. For the other thinkers of the time, memory itself was conceived as more fixed but affected by other forces. For instance, David Hume seeks to distinguish between properties of memory and imagination, where he claimed imagination is like a light impression on the mind, but memory is an actual engraving and they constitute two contesting faculties. Hegel is an important philosopher, who conceptualizes memories as "images" that are retrieved or rescued by imagination to reflect on the past in the present. Unlike Hume, Hegel's theory of memory consists of memory and imagination as complementary faculties, rather than competing ones (Sheffield, 2007; Azizbeyli, 2014).

It should be noted that early modern considerations of memory were individualistic Hugo von Hofmannsthal used the term *collective memory* for the first time in 1902 (Olick & Robbins 1998). The existing academic usages of the term

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[2] It is believed that when the Greek poet Simonides was the only survivor of a disaster, a banquet at which all of the guests were killed because of the collapse of the roof, Moments before the disaster, Simonides was called outside and this resulted in his survival. After the disastrous event, all of the bodies of the dead guests are mutilated beyond recognition and it was impossible to identify them. Being the last person in the room, Simonides was able to identify the bodies by calling the places of the dead. 'From this constellation of dead bodies emerged the art of memory as a system of ordered places, equating remembrance and a deferral of visuality' (Tiffany, 1995:93, recited in Azizbeyli, 2014).

memory are seen after the French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs's *Social Frameworks of Memory* in 1925. Halbwachs has discussed against the philosopher Henri-Louis Bergson and Sigmund Freud that all memory is a social process, shaped by the various groups to which individuals belong (Klein, 2000). Halbwachs has followed a Durkheimian model of sociological memory to explore his ideas, where Durkheim was aware about temporality but he also tackled memory directly in his argument of commemorative rituals as a feature of unsophisticated societies (Olick & Robbins 1998:106,). For to the International Encyclopaedia of the Social & Behavioural Sciences (2001), contemporary usage of the term *collective memory* is largely traceable to Émile Durkheim. Barbara Misztal credits Durkheim for understanding that "…every society displays and requires a sense of continuity with the past and that the past confers identity on individuals and groups allows us to see collective memory as one of the elementary forms of social life" (Misztal 2003:123; also see Azizbeyli, 2014).

In other words, Maurice Halbwachs was the first person to use a Durkheimian model to construct a sense of the past as collective memory (mémoire collective), separating the notion from individual memory.[3] For Halbwachs, collective memory was not a given but a shared, passed on and a socially constructed notion of memory used for and by the society itself. It was essentially "… a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present" (Coser 1992:34). Halbwachs regarded collective memory as an organic part of social life, being reshaped according to society's different needs. Following Maurice Halbwachs's important work, the study of collective memory has had a growing appeal for contemporary scholars from different disciplines of the social sciences and humanities. Even if Halbwachs's work is embedded in sociology, it is because of him that memory studies became an international and transdisciplinary phenomenon since the beginning of the twentieth century. There are scholars from different disciplines and places that are concerned in the intersections between culture and memory: These scholars can be listed as: Sigmund Freud, Henri Bergson, Emile Durkheim, Maurice Halbwachs, Aby Warburg, Arnold Zweig, Karl Mannheim, Frederick Bartlett, and Walter Benjamin" (Erll & Nünning, 2008). Some scholars, for instance found the term *collective memory* problematic (Portelli, 1997:157). For Neiger, Zandberg & Meyers (2011), collective memories are not only in the abstract but their influence

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[3] Wulf Kansteiner (2002) states that there are historians, who remain uncomfortable with Halbwachs's determined anti-individualism, where they reject the notion of individual memory being completely socially determined, thus leaving the individual out in the history of collective memory (Kansteiner 2002).

is seen through their usage. Here, public expressions of memory such as rituals and ceremonial commemorations need to be mentioned as there can be no collective memory without public articulation. In other words, in order to become functional, collective memory must be concretized and materialized through commemorative rituals and monuments (Young, 1993).

There is also an expanding body of research devoted to the social and political dimensions of commemoration with the rising interest in collective memory as a field of study since the early 1980s, particularly within the western world (Olick, & Robbins, 1998; Gillis, 1994) (see Huyssen 1995, Connerton 1989, Edkins 2003, Zehfuss 2003, Bell 2006, Winter 1995, and Ricoeur 2004). Scholarly interest has also extended to the bodily practices of memory. For example, Paul Connerton asserts that the past can be preserved without openly re-presented in words and images. "Our bodies, which in commemorations stylistically re-enact an image of the past, keep the past also in an entirely effective form in their continuing ability to perform certain skilled actions" (Connerton 1989:72, also see Azizbeyli, 2014). Connerton explores the images of the past as well as the recollected knowledge of the past that are expressed and sustained by ritual performances. He concludes that memory becomes "bodily social memory". Here, body is seen as a carrier of memory (Connerton 1989:72). Memory can also be contained in and retrieved from objects that can be stored and recovered in the form of photographs, art forms and memoirs. Susan Stewart (1993) states that this occurs when the actual memories are distant and the person that carries the memory is no longer alive and leaves an object behind through which to be remembered. Stewart explains this as the "process of distancing" (Stewart 1993:133)[4], the memory of the body is replaced by the memory of the object. Like in the example of our souvenirs that authenticate our experiences as a sign or survival.

The distinction between memory and history is crucial in understanding memory studies. In *Les Lieux de la Mémoire* (1989), Pierre Nora discusses that memory and history are two very different occurrences, but his preference is different to that of Halbwachs. Nora distinguishes memory from history, stating, "history is a reconstruction, always problematic and incomplete" (Nora 1989:8; also see Azizbeyli, 2014). This is a conventional distinction and it is useful to understand the macroscopic differences of the concepts of history and memory. Nora's and

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[4] Objects of national memory are popularly used by the state's commemorations, such as the flags, pictures of leaders etc. This notion of memory is best seen in the field of photography. (See Stewart, S. "Objects of Desire: Part 1: The Souvenir", recited in Azizbeyli, 2014)

Halbwach's definitions of memory can be accepted as problematic because of their idealisation of the concept of memory itself. Nora uses the term lieux de mémoire, where history besieges memory, deforms and transforms it into fixed externalized locations. Therefore, it produces merely sites of memory at the expense of milieux de mémoire that is also known as the real environments of memory. Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi develops a similar thesis as Nora that Jewish memory has declined since history emerged as the primary mode of relating to the Jewish past. In *Zakhor*, he discusses the troubling and possibly incompatible rupture between Jewish memory and Jewish historiography (Zakhor 1996:99).

Susan Crane (1997) criticises Halbwachs, Nora and Yerushalmi for assuming the existence of a major split between history and memory. On one hand, all three acknowledge historical memory is continually shaped and reworked in the present but they also illustrate how this is precisely a destructive force to memory. Crane maintains that they cannot have it both ways. In fact, there exist an inconsistency between the explanations of memory-history differentiation presented by the three scholars stated above. Most of the scholars agree that the alteration between collective memory and historical memory marks the split between lived experience and protection of lived experience (Nora, Halbwachs, Crane, Yerushalmi and Winter). However, this distinction between memory and history is developed into an important but unfruitful ongoing debate. Unlike Nora, some scholars identify memory and history as a phenomenon parallel to each other, each equally being an expression of "history culture"[5] (Rüsen 1992:3-26) and to that extent that there is a more "fluid transition" between memory and history (See also Nerone, Thelen, Samuel, Rüsen, Crane).

Mnemohistory is another term that was introduced by Jan Assmann as part of the history of collective memory. Assmann asserted it "concerned not with the past as such but only with the past as it is remembered" (Assmann 1992). Mnemohistory is a theory of cultural transmission that helps the readers to understand history not as simple as the active process of meaning making through time. Assmann believes in the harmony between memory and history, so he has coined sub-concepts to explain how memory and history can coexist. In a similar fashion, Barry Schwartz (1996) lists three intellectual perspectives of 1960s-1970s

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[5] 'History culture', according to Jörn Rüsen, is every "practically effective articulation of historical consciousness in the life of a society" (Rüsen 1994: 5). But Rüsen is quick to point out that history culture is not just relating to 'consciousness'; it also includes other forms of 'historical recollection' (1994: 5–7) History culture comprises all references in society to past times, i.e. all occasions where the past is 'presented' in everyday social life (recited in Azizbeyli, 2014).

that increased an interest in the social construction of the past. First, multiculturalists define historiography as a source of cultural domination and a standard for marginalising minorities. Secondly, postmodernists attack the conceptual support of linear historicity as well as truth and identity, drawing attention to the relations linking history, memory and power. Finally, neo-Marxist or hegemony scholars have a class-based interest in memory, highlighting memory contestation, the status of popular memory, and the instrumentalization of the past by regimes of power (Schwarz 1996:278; Azizbeyli, 2014).

Nietzsche (1997) criticises the persistence of production of the past with a claim that an excess of history can destroy humanity. In "On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life" (in *Untimely Meditations*) Nietzsche uses conventional historiographical approaches, and argues that history is something that is beneficial only if used in the right manner and in the right proportion. If history is misused or used in an excessive way, it becomes counter- productive, and physically dangerous. It is true that the actual separation of history and memory is never complete; Klein explains that "at least some of us have lost interest in maintaining the separation' and states that memory is the 'new critical conjunction of history and theory" (Klein 2000:130). Memory has become the leading term in our new cultural history and in fact the notion of memory is more practiced than theorized as "it has been used to indicate different things for years with a common characteristic in the ways in which people construct a sense of the past" (Confino 1997:79).

Michel Foucault's provides an understanding of counter-memory to offer a critique of the dominant ideologies and narratives. It illuminates the connection between the hegemonic order and historical representation. Barbara Misztal, (2003) claims that Foucault's shift of the focus from memory to counter-memory is to show how commemoration and tradition serve political purposes. Counter-memory is the alternative narrative that challenges dominant discourses but it also has the potential to become the dominant narrative itself as in the examples of the Russian and French Revolutionary ideas becoming the main ideas of the post-revolutionary governments. I argue in this paper that collective memory mediates between historical records and current socio-political agendas and history-memory do not operate in totally detached and opposing directions; they have got a relationship that is accentuated not only by conflict but also by interdependence. As a result of this, the modern society continues to develop shared memories of the past through multiple commemorations of a selection of historical events.

Politicizing Memory

The relationship between memory and politics has got an important role within memory studies. The impact of communal memories in shaping local, regional and global politics is far more than merely academic and has real implications for issues of power. Most of the literature on memory and politics focuses on the construction, reproduction and contestation of national identities (Bell, 2006). There are also transnational and global features of memory and commemoration practices that sometimes challenge or complement national memory construction as also explained in this paper (Bell, 2006). Ben Amos (2003) defines the memory of courageous deeds and heroic sacrifices of the soldiers as one of the main components of national identity in a given nation. This view includes monuments to be important for the national identity as they "make consolation possible and create a continuous life for the community" (Amos 2003:1). Also, the tombs and cenotaphs of unknown soldiers can be seen as the most "arresting emblems of the modern culture of nationalism" (Anderson 1991, Amos 2003, Renan 1990). Renan describes (1994:17) how "past glories" and "past sufferings" enhance the attachment of its members to their national community. Ceremonies such as these can be seen as tools to consolidate the power of the state and validate views of the state through legitimating its past. Hence, the state's role in the organization and manipulation of memory becomes very crucial. Rudy J. Koshar (1994) discusses the notion of the "cult of monuments" using Germany as an example of the strong interest in history and architectural heritage, resulting in memory and national continuity. Considering how the public monuments and public commemorations are inherently political processes, it can be argued that they are subject to complex historical, economic, aesthetic, and political arguments and lobbying. This is also what Andreas Huyssen (1999) defines as the 'memory boom' or 'memory-mania' that Germany has engaged in since the 1980s (Azizbeyli, 2014). James Wertsch (1998) studies the narrative as one of the few different instruments for representing settings, actors and events of the past. Public memory helps to preserve identity of the community as it is emphasized by the national narratives. It enables us to distinguish between "us" and "them". This is the politicising of memory and it involves an ethical dimension, where duties and responsibilities are important features to understand the past. Memory studies literature is involved in an argument on whether there is an ethics of memory or not (Margalit, 2003; Bell, 2006). In other words, do we have a duty or an obligation to remember the past? Are there episodes that we ought to remember as well as episodes that we ought to forget? Under what conditions is an ethics of memory possible? (Margalit 2003) Studies on collective

memory reveal the ways in which perceptions; political identities and policies are shaped by differing understandings of the past. Every individual has an ethical urge - and thus a responsibility - to remember the past and upon which to build a meaningful presence and future. Ethics is related with the analysis and employment of concepts such as right and wrong, good and evil, indifference and responsibility. Duncan Bell (2006) argues that the ethics of memory has several different faces. The first one concerns the link between political legitimacy and the duty to remember so that policies are morally legitimated by the state through the instrumental use of collective memory. Secondly, ethics of memory may refer to the moral and popular urge of people to commemorate their loss, repression or insurrection in a war. Thirdly, it refers to the duty of individuals to remember past wrongs. Here, commemoration may take two forms: mourning (where subjects can confront and effect reconciliation with the past) and melancholia (where grief and anger prevail) (Bell 2006:21; Azizbeyli, 2014). Finally, the ethics of memory can include the highly publicized trials of political criminals, and this is especially seen in cases where there are "crimes against humanity" (Bell 2006:21, also see Gillis 1994, Ashplant, Dawson & Roper 2004, Mosse 1991). Such trials assume different forms, from prosecuting officials for their minor role in the atrocities to leaders accused of encouraging or organizing mass killings. Often done in the name of justice and essential in pursuing reconciliation, these trials are organized with the belief that confronting and punishing political crimes would ease the memory of what had happened.

Avashai Margalit (2003) distinguishes between "thick" and "thin" relations, where an ethics of memory is inherent in our "thick relations". These are the ties constituted by a shared past and collective memory, "our relations to the near and dear" (Margalit 2003:7). "Thin relations" are the more distant and abstract relations backed by the attribute of being human (Margalit 2003:7). They bind us to something so large as all of humanity and they are regulated by morality instead of ethics. He thus distinguishes between "ethics" and "morality", claiming that there is ethics of memory but no morality of memory. However, there are inconsistencies within this distinction between the ethics and morality. Ethics and morality have been closely intertwined in both theory and practice. Therefore, the distinction is made by Margalit, it is conceptually useful but hard to sustain in everyday public and private life.

This paper regards ethics of memory as a concept engaged in war-trauma, specifically to the *ethics of witnessing* or *survivor testimony*. This argument can be based on Giorgio Agamben's work *Remnants of Auschwitz* (1999), where he uses

the term "ethics of witnessing" (Agamben, 1999). He focuses on the responsibility of the survivors and the ethical importance of their testimony. Agamben reconsiders testimony as an ethics of witnessing and it involves the collapse of the notions of human and inhuman. Witness-testimony is very important for the ongoing ethical-political clarification on mass killings and crimes against humanity. T.G. Ashplant explores that survivor testimony has become a form of principal memory practice within the public sphere (Ashplant, Dawson & Roper 2000:52). Today, survivor testimonies may triumph over articulate alternatives to the dominant national narratives as much as they help the second generation without war memory to understand the "nature" of the war. The best example to give here is the poem of Paul Celan, as it shows his challenging work to testify to a horrendous reality that nobody would ever wanted to be familiar with. The historical burden on Celan's shoulders is to write poetry after Auschwitz and it consists in the exceptional challenge of representing an unspeakable event. Celan bears testimony to the catastrophic events and represents his own experiences that register as unresolved, shocking and traumatic (Baer 2000).

The ethical dimension of witnessing is also seen in the works of philosophers like Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas claims that God, or the Infinite, is directly unapproachable, but we can "bear witness" to the Infinite through a certain kind of relationship in the finite, everyday world, namely in the relationship with others (Levinas [1976] (2000):198; Azizbeyli, 2014). Briefly, the witness offers her memory to the public, to be documented for the future. The question, what is the inhuman and the human in this equation of survival. For Agamben, humans live on the border of the human and the inhuman, surviving the inhuman capacity to bear everything that is considered as inhuman in the form of testimony (Agamben 1999).

Another example that can be given to bearing witness is Abraham's response to God's call in Genesis 22:1. It is a response as a speech that involves addressing another in responding to the other's call. Put differently, when a witness stands and offers testimony it becomes an ethical-political response, a response-ability (Levinas 2000:198, Agamben 1999, Stier OB, Landres JS, 2006:38). This paper further seeks to explore what the word *witness* in both Christian and Islamic traditions means and considers the word "martyr", referring to a person bearing witness to faith. In Greek language, the word μάρτυς signifies a witness who testifies to a fact of which he has knowledge from personal observation as well as a martyr who died for the Christian faith. Similarly, in Arabic, the word *shaheed* stands for a martyr and a witness. *Shaheed* is a title that is given to a Muslim after death, when death occurs during the fulfilment of a religious commandment, or during a war for the religion.

Drawing upon the theoretical tradition of memory ethics, the ethics surrounding the Jewish Holocaust should also be mentioned, as there is a immense work done on this issue. Theodor Adorno's most famous saying, "to write poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric" (Adorno 2003: XV) highlights the inconsistency that every writer and artist has faced after the Holocaust. This is "an aporia so extreme that it leaves no space for a meaningful resolution" after the terrors of the Holocaust (Martin 2006:2). It is the moral duty of humans to remember the Holocaust and its victims. This has resulted in countless commemorative rituals and museums around the world that can be expressed as part of the ethics of Holocaust memory. It can be said that the Jewish Holocaust serves as a significant example for our understanding of the construction of collective memory in the 21st century. For Michael Schudson (1992) studies of memory is divided into two: those that examine the Holocaust, and all the remaining others. There are many uses of the Holocaust in media, literature and popular history, where the Holocaust is remembered, taught, memorialized, studied, and incorporated into the politics of memory. Similarly, Andreas Huyssen argues that the Holocaust exemplifies the failure of the project of enlightenment, while also proves "Western civilization's failure to practice anamnesis, to reflect on its constitutive inability to live in peace with difference and otherness and to draw consequences from the insidious relationship among enlightened modernity, racial oppression, and organized violence" (Huyssen, 2003:13; Azizbeyli, 2014). Huyssen argues that following the Holocaust the global memories or transnational memories are produced and circulated in a way that currently dominates the world. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider coined the term cosmopolitan memory, as part of the post-Holocaust memory, where they implied that the shared memories of the Holocaust provide the foundations for a new version of memory that transcends ethnic and national boundaries. The Holocaust is formally part of European memory and becomes a new founding moment for critical European historiography and the idea of European civilization in a post-Cold War order. A day that serves as a reminder for the liberation of Auschwitz, January 27 has become the first official European commemoration of the third millennium (Sznaider & Levy 2002:88), thus reconstructing Europeanness as an identity willing to incorporate the suffering of an internal *other*. Whether global, transnational or cosmopolitan memory, it is clear that there are emerging interdependencies, new sensibilities and moral-political evaluations among the people of Europe and beyond (Sznaider & Levy 2002, Tester 1999). One can also say that the Holocaust, or rather the representations that produce shared memories of it, is a paradigmatic case for the relation of memory and modernity. For Huyssen, tragedy of the Holocaust has paradoxically brought forth a "hypertrophy of memory", and led to a "memory fatigue". This issue is paradigmatically explained by the presence of Holocaust museums, memorials and

monuments all over the world. It connects memory studies and the post-modern memorial culture. Museums, memorials and monuments erected all over the world for the Holocaust are part of a larger cultural phenomenon. Postmodern memorial culture has been marked not by amnesia or forgetting, but by an obsession with the past. Huyssen suggests that the problem for the Holocaust memory is not forgetting, but rather the ubiquitousness and excess of Holocaust imagery in our culture (Huyssen 1995, 2003, Zehfuss 2003).[6] Barbara A. Misztal's (2010) discusses the relationship between forgetting and forgiving, thus actualising the importance of ethics of memory by following the concept of cosmopolitan memory that Sznaider and Levy used above as 'an important step leading to post-nationalist solidaristic political communities' (Misztal 2010:41; Azizbeyli, 2014)).

Nation, State and Memory

Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1991) has followed the Durkheimian question of how does a multitude of human beings comes to think, feel, and act as members of a single moral community. For Anderson, this kind of community is imagined as inherently limited (it has borders) and is sovereign; it is necessarily imagined as such, as "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members" (Anderson 1991:6). The nation-state has a hand in this problem of imagining the national community in terms of rites and symbols, cultural forms or idioms (Anderson 1991, Gellner 2006, Azizbeyli, 2014). The nation-state has the power to use and abuse public memory by constructing and reconstructing the past. Nationalist elites, intellectuals and politicians deploy rites and symbols of nationhood-flags, parades, and rallies as solutions to the perceived problem of integration, of implanting a diverse population with a sense of shared national identity and destiny (Anderson 1991, Gellner 2006). The nation-state's governing of the processes and practices of public memory can take various practises. Imposing and disseminating the official history to the public through designated commemorations serves this purpose. Celebrations of national days through commemorative rituals enhance the splendour of the state. Officials of the state tend to prefer commemoration practices to be in the "ideal language of patriotism rather than the real language of grief and sorrow across ethnic and national borders" (Bodnar, 1992:14; Azizbeyli, 2014). John Bodnar holds that public

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[6] In fact, the recent interest in Germany in previously 'suppressed' memories of the Second World War is regarded with considerable concern. For Maja Zehfuss, it is a deliberate move away from the Holocaust and thereby changes the angle with respect to questions of knowledge and ethics that arise around the problematic of memory. See Zehfuss

memory emerges from the intersection of official and vernacular cultural expressions (Bodnar 1992). In a way, Bodnar's framework that sets official memory against vernacular memory oversimplifies the play of forces that is essential in shaping public memory. In fact, there are multiple official histories as well as multiple vernacular memories that always exist.

Jeffrey K. Olick and Joyce Robbins note that in a detailed study of war literature in Great Britain, Fussell (1975) characterizes this "corpus as comprising a peculiarly modem form of memory" (Olick and Robbins, 1998:119; Azizbeyli, 2014). John R. Gillis (1994) notes that World War One marked a massive democratization of the cult of the dead. He writes about the historicizing memory and identity as a mistreated subject, and memory and identity politics are concerned with the promotion to the public of particular interpretations of the past and the broader process of shaping memory. John R. Gillis argues, "identities and memories are not things we think about, but things we think with" (Gillis, 1994:5). This perception helps us to understand the essential importance of the state in shaping memory and the way its citizens think about social and political affairs. It provides a precise analysis of the relationship between collective memory and national identity. State commemoration is suggested to be a "secular religion" of the state that is practised by using symbols of the nation and nationalism. The flag is the most important symbol of the nation-state but the use of the flag is not limited in the state-commemorations. It serves as a major symbol that develops into a familiar part of the social environment, which helps to harden national identity. The use of history textbooks in schools is another instrument of the nation-state to improve national belonging and collective identity. Countries follow a refined process to legitimate the regime and its institutions with state-produced histories (Canefe, 1998). This process can also be called as the *politics of forgetting*. Josef Hayim Yerushalmi (1996) describes that forgetting occurs when human groups fail, intentionally or unintentionally and transmit their experience of the past to the future generations. He gives examples from the Jewish history to support his definition of forgetting, and claims the priorities of a certain state are clear: only the history relevant to state policy is remembered; the rest is ignored, "forgotten" (Yerushalmi 1996:111). Forgetting can be in the form of selective remembering or collective amnesia. Memories of the events that gave rise to conflicts can be contested. Key to working through these memories is the "dialectical process of remembering and forgetting" (Nora, 1989). Pierre Nora also compares memory and life. Memory and life are in an eternally developing process and they are open for the dialectic of remembering and forgetting. In this process the nation relies heavily on both history and tradition and introduces a highly selective attitude. Alternating between rejection and

acceptance, suppression and elaboration, it has reconstructed a new national memory and tradition (Zerubavel 1997:3). Other scholars also mention the link between remembering and forgetting. For Paul Ricoeur, "man is capable of making memory and of making history" and that "forgetting is necessarily a part of remembering" (Ricoeur 2004:51; Azizbeyli, 2014). This is an important clarification of the link between memory and forgetting. Certain stories of history are articulated on the basis of past experiences but official narratives can also play a significant role in this production of history. Briefly, memory and forgetting are what is used to form these grand narratives; this is not a one-way process, a dominant history can also affect what people remember and forget (Papadakis 1995). Ernest Renan (1990) claims that the essence of a nation is that all the individuals hold many things in common and also that all of them have forgotten many things (also cited in Anderson 1991:15). This formulation of the tension between forgetting, memory and national identity reveals the importance of forgetting as a collective act in the formulation of a shared identity and history. The role of education also serves as a vehicle for this process. Shaping the ideas of young people is an inseparable part of the politics of memory and forgetting.

Another important aspect of the politics of memory of the nation-state is the transition of national memory to global memory. The politics of memory is being articulated on multiple sites, from local remembrance ceremonies and protests to aspects of global geo-politics. Daniel Levy and Natan Sznaider (2006) question whether it is possible to imagine collective memories to transcend national and ethnic boundaries. They argue that the conventional concept of "collective memory" cannot be constricted to the nation-state anymore, due to global processes characterised by de-territorialisation of politics and culture. In other words, it is increasingly argued that memory is beginning to escape the boundaries of national political communities, diffusing across national territories and is helping to restructure regional and global self- understandings. The future of mnemonic politics moves towards a globalization of memory (Bell 2006). Duncan Bell suggests that there may be no global memory but we can still be aware of the globalization of memories. Migrations, demographic shifts and global media affect social and cultural memory in all "modern" societies, making it increasingly transnational. This also takes us to the notion of transnational memory, where the methodological nationalism is challenged and memories are circulated transnationally.

John Gillis (1994) argues that the First World War changed everything with

regard to the memorialization of war. "Efforts to grant the average soldier a decent burial during and after the First World War reflected the need to sustain morale among combatants and on the home front" (Gillis 1994:168; Azizbeyli, 2014). This is a change in the perception of collective memory of wars that continued in the years following the First World War. The Second World War, Vietnam War, Holocaust trauma as well as the other conflicts that affected processes and practices of collective memory, turning the local into global. (It has also been suggested that technological changes and new patterns of consumption, work, and global mobility means that we desire to turn to memory as a way to try and peer into a global future that does not inspire confidence). Milan Kundera makes a point in his novel *Slowness;* "…there is a secret bond between slowness and memory, between speed and forgetting" (1996:39). This is possibly one of the reasons of our obsession with memory. It is perceived in the growth of technology, mass communication and the rapid acceleration of modern living, which is also reflected on the increased rituals of commemoration. Andreas Huyssen articulates the obsession with memory as a sign of the crisis of structure of temporality and it marks the age of modernity (Huyssen, 2003). Larry Ray (2006) expresses this revival of memory studies in the context of relationships between modernity, nationalism and memory.

Another issue that needs to be addressed here is post-conflict memory as a significant issue answering the questions of how to deal with the legacy of the past and how to commemorate the consequences of past conflicts based on re-constructing societal values. When a society moves into a post-conflict situation, political energies often turn to questions of how that violent past may be best remembered in order to allow for societal healing (Pinkerton, 2012). John Bodnar quotes historian Dominick LaCapra's work, and suggests that traumatic events in their extreme form often force the imagination to employ extravagant metaphors (LaCapra, 1998:181). It is in the power of the state to find ways to confront the "unimaginable magnitude" of what took place (Bodnar, 2001). This is how the nation leads the representational narrative of memory on state building, often using education, monumentalization, commemoration and other symbols as a tool in re-constructing post-conflict memory. Post-conflict memory is concerned with personal testimony, memoir, subjectivity and trauma of the past conflict and the "impersonal" nationalist narrative combined with the state commemorations. The traumatic experiences of violent conflict affect not only individuals but also entire communities. Therefore, reconciliatory activities must address and transform community trauma to ensure that violence is over in the society. It should be stressed that the mediation and commemoration of trauma are the most important features of post-conflict memory, specifically the sense of loss produced by deaths,

disappearances, injuries and humiliations. This has produced a growing focus on how to deal with the legacy of the violent past, how to remember it, investigate and deal with its effects on the ground. Memory, as an individual or collective process, is thus relevant to post-conflict/post-crisis reconstruction in a variety of ways, ranging from reparation over retribution to symbolic closure. Sites and spaces are important in this process as well as for narrating the past (Azizbeyli, 2014).

Post-conflict societies can develop ways to deal with the trauma. Brandon Hamber and Richard A. Wilson (2002) argue that countries going through democratic transition have to deal with the human rights crimes that are committed during conflicts. To overcome the post-conflict trauma as well as providing amnesty for perpetrators, truth commissions can be created as standard organisations to record the past. "The aim is to be able to facilitate catharsis, or heal the nation, or allow the nation to work through a violent past" (Hamber & Wilson 2002:35). Gráinne Kelly and Mari Fitzduff (2001) analyses six countries to prepare a report for International Conflict Research.[7] This is a report that addresses government strategies regarding victims in post-conflict societies comprising past atrocities of a conflict, as well as addressing the victims' needs. There are several different mechanisms for dealing with the legacy of the past. One is establishing a Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the second mechanism is investigations into the exact nature of the patterns and scale of the violence that had occurred, thirdly, the setting of trauma centres and community self-help counselling programs. Local conflict resolution processes should also be supported. Another mechanism is the development of *memory sites* such as public monuments, memorials, and parks that commemorate and seek to place into the public record the memory of those whose lives have been lost through the violence. It is also important to set up National holidays to commemorate the victims (Kelly & Fitzduff 2001). The truth commissions are formed as key mechanisms for managing the memory of conflict and victimhood in situations as diverse as South Africa, Guatemala and Argentina. Northern Ireland is another post-conflict country facing post-conflict trauma (Azizbeyli, 2014).

Conclusion

The sight of the "little Madeleine cake" that Proust ([1922] 2006:63) described has been used as a catalyst for this paper, welcoming the power of

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[7] Cambodia, Chile, Guatemala, Mozambique, Rwanda, and South Africa

remembering and understanding the relevance of collective memory, politicization of memory and examination of the role and position of the nation state within the politics of memory. Lineages within Memory and Collective Memory shows how memory has been a major preoccupation from Plato to Halbwachs and Nietzche and to modern scholars of our time. Politicizing Memory involves the relationship between memory and politics as well as the impact of communal memories that shapes the local, regional and global politics as it involves ethical dimensions. Duncan Bell (2006) mentions that we are obliged with to remember the sacrifices of the previous generation (Bell 2006:19). Nonetheless, collective memory is itself a process that should not be perceived exclusively in terms of the psychological and emotional dynamics of individual remembering (Kansteiner 2002). There is an open dialogue between individual and societal memories that frames our representations of the past. Altogether, they create a part in memory studies, as it becomes a new multidisciplinary field, still evolving to combine many intellectual strands and scholarships from different disciplines.

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