





Standing on the Threshold, Forgetting and Remembering: The Case of 6 February Earthquake Survivors Settled in Kayseri KYK Gevher Nesibe Dormitory

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Abstract

This study scrutinizes the process of experiencing the 6 February Earthquake as a social crisis and transferring it to social memory in the case of earthquake survivors who were placed in Kayseri KYK Gevher Nesibe Dormitory after the earthquake. The article analyses the earthquake as a social crisis and transition period, emphasizing that the earthquake operates as a social crisis that involves a three-phase transition for individuals: separation, threshold, and reintegration. Accordingly, the social pain accompanying the earthquake experience leads to the individual's temporary separation from the social structure. This is followed by the threshold/liminal phase, a temporary transitional period in which the daily routines are disrupted and which will ultimately result in reintegration with the social structure. Since the threshold stage of social crises temporarily moves the individual to an in-between state, it creates a process in which forgetting and remembering reflexes are operated and the experience is made meaningful. This study aims to reveal how earthquake survivors residing in KYK GN Dormitory, who temporarily experience a state of being in-between outside the social structure due to the disaster, make sense of their earthquake experiences through remembering and forgetting as a means of reintegrating into social life. In order to achieve this goal, the focus was placed on the experiences and opinions of earthquake survivors. In this framework, the study sought to answer the questions of how earthquake survivors remembered the earthquake and how social solidarity and religion helped them cope with the earthquake experience. A qualitative research method was used in the study. The research field consists of earthquake survivors who were placed in Kayseri KYK GN Dormitory. The sampling technique is purposive sampling. Data collection was conducted through structured in-depth interviews, and data analysis was carried out using descriptive analysis. The findings indicate that earthquake survivors focused on experiencing and remembering the pain associated

with what they experienced and lost. It was also observed that they perceive religion and social solidarity as mechanisms that promote social integration by compensating for the pain.

Keywords

Social Crisis, Social Memory, Disaster, February 6 Earthquake, Remembering-Forgetting.

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Eşikte Durmak, Unutmak ve Hatırlamak: Kayseri KYK Gevher Nesibe Yurduna Yerleştirilen 6 Şubat Depremzedeleri Örneği

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Öz

Bu çalışmanın konusu, 6 Şubat Depremi'nin sosyal bir kriz olarak deneyimlenme ve toplumsal belleğe aktarılma sürecini depremin ardından Kayseri KYK Gevher Nesibe Yurdu'na yerleştirilen depremzedeler örneğinde ele almaktır. Bu makale, depremi, bir sosyal kriz ve geçiş dönemi olarak ele almaktadır. Depremin, bireyler açısından ayrılma, eşik ve yeniden bütünleşme olmak üzere üç evreli bir geçişi kapsayan bir sosyal kriz olarak işlediği vurgulanmaktadır. Buna göre, deprem deneyimine eşlik eden sosyal acı bireyin toplumsal yapıdan geçici bir süreliğine ayrılmasını beraberinde getirmekte, bunu toplumsal yapıyla yeniden bütünleşmeyle sonuçlanacak olan gündelik rutinin işlemediği geçici bir ara dönem olarak eşik/liminal aşama izlemektedir. Sosyal krizlerin eşik aşaması, bireyi geçici bir süreliğine arada bir duruma taşıdığından, unutma ve hatırlama reflekslerinin işletildiği ve deneyimin anlamlandırıldığı bir süreci yaratmaktadır. Bu çalışma, afete bağlı olarak geçici bir süreliğine toplumsal yapının dışında arada bir durumu yaşadıklarının bir göstergesi olmak üzere KYK GN Yurdu'nda ikamet eden depremzedelerin toplumsal yaşamla yeniden bütünleşmek üzere hatırlamak ve unutmak suretiyle deprem deneyimlerini nasıl anlamlandırdıklarını açığa çıkartmak niyetindedir. Bu amaca ulaşmak için depremzedelerin deneyim ve görüşlerine odaklanılmıştır. Bu çerçevede, depremzedelerin depremi nasıl hatırladıkları, toplumsal dayanışma ve dinin deprem deneyimiyle baş etmeyi nasıl sağladığı sorularına cevap aranmıştır. Araştırmada nitel araştırma yöntemi kullanılmıştır. Sahası, Kayseri KYK GN Yurdu'na yerleştirilen depremzedelerdir. Örneklem tekniği amaçlı örneklemidir. Veri toplama tekniği yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşme, veri değerlendirme tekniği betimsel analizdir. Araştırma sonucunda, depremzedelerin yaşadıklarına ve kaybettiklerine dair acıları deneyimlemeye odaklandıkları ve hatırladıkları görülmüştür. Dini ve toplumsal dayanışmayı ise acıları telafi ederek toplumsal bütünleşmeyi teşvik eden mekanizmalar olarak andıkları anlaşılmıştır.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Toplumsal Kriz, Toplumsal Hafıza, Afet, 6 Şubat Depremi, Hatırlama-Unutma

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Introduction¹

In social sciences, earthquake is generally handled within the scope of disaster sociology. Disasters are briefly defined as “natural or man-made events that cause physical, economic and social losses to people, disrupt or interrupt people’s normal lives and activities, and leave them with inadequate opportunities”.² “Thus, disasters are: events observable in time and space, in which societies or their larger subunits (e.g. communities, regions) incur physical damages and losses and/or disruption of their routine functioning.”³ One of the first theories that comes to mind when disaster is mentioned is the risk society theory. According to Ulrich Beck, all living beings in the world are under risk with the industrialization process. “Irreversible threats to the lives of plants, animals and humans are now at the center of the risks and consequences of modernization that pose threats.”⁴ Sociology as a scientific discipline has largely refrained from developing concepts and theories on natural processes such as disasters, as it focuses on rational and modern reality rather than natural and given reality. Beck’s approach tends to explain natural disasters by associating them with more rational processes.

According to this article, the social context of disasters is much more comprehensive than the unforeseen consequences of modernity, such as unplanned urbanization and ecological problems. In addition, this article argues that analyzing disasters according to macro structures such as urbanization and modernity limits the ability to see the social and cultural context of disasters. Therefore, the article claims that disasters should be analyzed within a framework that can bring together disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, allowing for the evaluation of natural processes and modern life together. Because disasters irreversibly interrupt the lives of individuals with the deaths they cause and/or the effects that destroy living spaces. With deaths and destroyed living spaces, the memories that make people a social being also disappear, and the chain of memory and the continuity of cultural life are irreversibly interrupted. The only way for individuals to cope with all this destruction and devastation and to reintegrate into social life is to make sense of the crisis and the pain it causes.

The social suffering caused by the crises that occur after disasters leads individuals to question the world and, through this questioning, to feel the need for the world to gain new meaning. “In such times, when expectations about how worldly life should continue are severely hit, it is necessary to develop an adequate explanation for the suffering of people

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- 1 We dedicate this article to the memory of those who lost their lives in the 6 February Earthquake.
 - 2 Tayfun Özdikmen, *Afet ve Acil Durum Yönetimi: Saha Uygulamalı Afet Yönetimi ve Acil Durum Metodolojileri* (Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık, 2014), 21.
 - 3 G. A. Kreps, “Sociological Inquiry and Disaster Research”, *Annual Review of Sociology* 10 (1984), 312.
 - 4 Ulrich Beck, *Risk Toplumu-Başka Bir Modernliğe Doğru* çev. Kâzım Özdoğan - Bülent Doğan (İstanbul: İthaki Yayınları, 2019), 14.

who suffer and to associate this with social memory.”⁵ In this regard, it is important for people who face the pain caused by crises to make their lives meaningful again and to re-adapt to society through meaning by finding logical justifications for the pain they experience. In making sense of pain, the reflexes of memory to forget and remember play an important role. Individuals produce a new social memory in order to integrate with life. The efforts of individuals to make sense of the disasters they experience and to record them in their memories reveal the necessity of discussing the disasters in the earthquake example in a social context and defining them as social crises.

Social crisis basically corresponds to the processes of social change that Arnold van Gennep and Victor Turner use to describe transitional processes that break the normal course of individuals’ lives. Roughly speaking, according to van Gennep and Turner, human life is a series of transitions. This series of transitions is caused by crises that accompany individual, ecological, biological and social transitions. These social crises correspond to a process of disruption in the normal course of everyday life, which involves a departure from the normal, followed by an intermediate liminal phase in which the normal social order and rules are abrogated, and finally by a process of reintegration into the social order and structure.⁶

The earthquake as a natural disaster can be concretized as a social crisis because individuals or communities affected by a natural disaster enter a period in which the social structure is temporarily suspended. This crisis period starts at the time of the earthquake and individuals are separated from their normal routines and their positions in the social structure during the earthquake. Following the earthquake, they experience an intermediate period and liminal phase in which norms and values are temporarily suspended for a while outside the social structure, away from their status and roles, and stand on the threshold of social life. At the threshold, there is a social life that does not function according to its normal flow. Like all other practices, the production principles of social memory are realized independently of the hierarchical relations of the social structure. Moreover, the remembering and forgetting reflexes of social memory help to make sense of the crisis. The threshold process results in reintegration with the social structure. Individuals and communities who experience the devastating effects of the pain caused by the natural disaster in the threshold phase continue to produce social memory on the axis of social structure, values and norms. While integrating with the social structure, the intensity and dramatic effect of the pain experienced in the threshold phase decreases, and with social integration, memories recorded with visual, auditory, material and spiritual symbols remain in the social memory.

5 İlkey Şahin, *Hayat Bir Oyundur Sosyal Acı, Teodise, Sosyodise ve Ritüel* (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2019), 112.

6 Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*. Translated by Monika B. Vizedom, Gabrielle L. Caffee. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960); Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-Structure*. (New York: Aldine De Gruyter, 1995); İlkey Şahin, “Arada Kalmak: Kalıcı Bir Liminalite Örneği Olarak Türk Modernleşmesi”, *Tarih ve Gelecek Dergisi* 5/2, (2019).

This study examines how earthquake survivors who came from different provinces immediately after the 6 February earthquake and who were placed in the KYK Gevher Nesibe dormitory in Kayseri made sense of the great pain and earthquake experiences they experienced and how they produced a social memory of their experiences based on the principles of forgetting and remembering. In this study, this temporary process, which coincides with the earthquake survivors leaving their homes, losing all their material and immaterial possessions, relatives and acquaintances, and leaving their cities, is considered as a kind of liminal phase. In this phase, the aim is to understand how earthquake survivors make sense of their pain, the impact of solidarity networks and religion in compensating for their pain, what they remember and forget, and their views and opinions on society's approach to earthquakes and earthquake survivors.

The research question was: "What role do social crises play in the formation of social memory? The following research questions were also identified "How do individuals remember/forget the pain they experienced during and after the earthquake?" "What is the significance of the social solidarity that emerged after the earthquake for social memory?" "Do individuals think that the institution of religion is important in the formation of social memory that is reshaped after social crises?" "What do people who experienced the earthquake think about remembering and forgetting the earthquake?" As the research problem of the study focuses on the earthquake experience of the earthquake survivors, a phenomenological approach was preferred, trying to describe the experience itself through the eyes and words of the earthquake survivors.

In this article, qualitative research was conducted to explore the issue in depth. The field of research consists of the earthquake victims staying in the KYK Gevher Nesibe dormitory after the 6 February earthquake. KYK Gevher Nesibe Dormitory is one of the places where earthquake survivors from different cities of the earthquake zone were placed after the February 6 earthquake. After the earthquake survivors were settled in the dormitory, those who wanted to provide material and moral support created an important interaction and solidarity network around the dormitory. In order to prevent the earthquake survivors, who were forced to spend their time only in the dormitory because they could not do their daily work and routines, from experiencing the same pain again and again, the people of the city visited the earthquake survivors. During the same period, since there were severe aftershocks in Kayseri and the people could not enter their homes or entered them to a certain extent, the pain experienced by the earthquake survivors was felt more closely; and sharing tendencies such as sharing their pain through visits, providing material and moral support, and being hosted in a home environment increased.

The reason for the selection of earthquake victims staying in this dormitory as the research field is that the researchers interacted and communicated with the earthquake survivors staying in the dormitory in the context of social solidarity established in Kayseri after the earthquake. The problematic of this study was shaped by our visits to the

earthquake survivors in this dormitory. During these interactions, it was observed that the earthquake survivors wanted to share their pain, tell and share their losses and experiences. It has been observed that one of the biggest concerns of the earthquake survivors is that this great disaster and themselves will be forgotten. In this context, the research problem was developed based on the informal interaction established between the researchers and earthquake survivors. In this way, it is aimed to provide an academic contribution to remember the pain caused by earthquake disasters in our country, beyond academic outputs. In order to increase the impact of this contribution, a phenomenological tendency was preferred in which the earthquake experience is narrated by earthquake survivors.

In this respect, the data collection technique of the research is structured in-depth interview. Interviewers were selected through purposive sampling, taking into account the research questions. The sample size is fourteen. Considering the special conditions of the field, it was concluded that the structured interview technique was more appropriate. The primary purpose of using the semi-structured interview form is to ensure that the interview process progresses in a controlled manner. Preliminary interviews were conducted while creating structured questions. In addition, since we did not want to unwittingly ask them details that might upset them, we used a structured interview form consisting of standard structured questions and expected them to share as much as they wanted from their experiences. In order to prevent the interview from affecting the sensitive psychological state of the earthquake survivors, interview questions were prepared and tested several times with preliminary interviews through exploratory research. In these preliminary interviews, it was understood that the earthquake survivors were very sensitive due to their pain and personal losses, and the focus of the topic discussed could easily change. Accordingly, it was understood that the structured interview as the data generation technique was more advantageous in terms of both the earthquake survivors and the collection of real information from the research. The structured interview form helped not to deviate from the research questions at the focus of the interview. In this way, it was aimed to prevent the opening of conversation topics that would upset the earthquake survivors who left their families, children and neighbors under the rubble and whose entire lives were irreversibly changed. In addition, it was aimed to prevent the earthquake victims who struggled to survive, encountered one of the most painful faces of death, and tried to cope with social, cultural and economic pain stemming from the long talk about the same subject and experiencing it over and over again. Moreover, since the earthquake survivors were very sensitive and stayed in the dormitory together, it was aimed to carry out the interview process clearly and in a short time by means of structured questions that were tested in advance in order not to cause any discussion and conflict among them. For these reasons, semi-structured interview questions suitable for the research questions at the focus of the research were clearly determined and interviews were conducted directly on these questions.

Interviews were held between 8 May - June 5, 2023. In order to conduct qualitative research in line with the determined subject and purpose, approval was obtained from Erciyes

University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee with the number 366. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and their consent was obtained before conducting the interviews in accordance with ethical rules. There was only one place in the field where the researcher was allowed to enter for fieldwork: the visitor's room. The visitor room, designed as a single room near the entrance of Gevher Nesibe Girls' Dormitory, had divan-style seating and a television. The researcher got together with the individuals who agreed to be interviewed in the visitor room. During the field research, the sensitive issues of the individuals affected by the earthquake were approached more sensitively. During the in-depth interview, it was observed that the individuals almost relived the moment of the earthquake. For this reason, they were not interrupted while they were talking, they were allowed to express themselves and they were listened to silently without interfering.

The field research was completed as data saturation was achieved. The data collected from the field was analyzed using the descriptive analysis technique of the qualitative research method. A method was followed to tell the experience itself, which includes the dynamics of forgetting and remembering about the earthquake, directly from the eyes and expressions of the earthquake survivors. In this framework, with a phenomenological tendency focusing on the experiences and views of individuals, the focus was on direct interview texts, and care was taken to quote the narratives heard from the interviewees verbatim and to give them in a descriptive manner. Therefore, while analyzing the data, observations and systematic or thematic analyses and interpretations were avoided, and the experience was tried to be reflected in the text from the earthquake survivor's perspective as much as possible. In this regard, the words spoken by the individuals were used in the study following the rules of direct quotation, by adhering to the original forms of the data obtained from the in-depth interviews. During the data interpretation process, participants were given code names.

1. February 6 Earthquake as a Social Crisis and Memory Production Process

While everything is going on in its normal course in the flow of life, everything can suddenly change with any event. When an unexpected event occurs with great intensity, it can lead to crisis/chaos/ uncertainty. As it is known "to the extent that the term crisis might be useful for historical analysis, it will need to draw attention to specific conditions that pose serious threats to the stability or even the survival of society."⁷ Social crises, which can be defined as events that deeply affect society and have destructive-damaging effects, can arise as a result of natural disasters such as epidemics, economic depression, earthquakes, and floods. Social crises occur when the whole or a significant part of society is seriously damaged by these disasters. Earthquakes are among the most recent examples of unforeseen disasters. When people choose to dominate nature rather than live in harmony with it, the natural flow of life can be disrupted. Buildings constructed without considering

7 Jerry H. Bentley, "Environmental Crises in World History", *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 77 (2013), 108.

terrain features (stream beds, agricultural lands, areas where the fault line passes, etc.) may collapse in an earthquake and cause loss of life.

The February 6 earthquakes centered in Kahramanmaraş also caused a social crisis and completely changed the lives of individuals directly affected by the earthquake. On Monday morning, February 6, 2023, at 04.17 am, a 7.4 magnitude earthquake centered in Pazarcık, Kahramanmaraş occurred. This earthquake directly affected the provinces of Kahramanmaraş, Hatay, Gaziantep, Malatya, Diyarbakır, Kilis, Şanlıurfa, Adıyaman, Osmaniye, Adana, and Elazığ. Many lives and property were lost in this earthquake. Before the shock of the intensity and destructive effect of the first earthquake could be overcome, a second earthquake occurred on the same day, centered in Kahramanmaraş Ekinözü. The second earthquake occurred at 13.24 at noon with a magnitude of 7.5, and most of the buildings that were seriously damaged in the first earthquake collapsed, causing an increase in the loss of life in the disaster. The severity of this disaster was so great that, apart from the 11 provinces and surrounding provinces mentioned, the countries that felt this earthquake very severely were Syria, Lebanon, Cyprus, Iraq, Palestine, Jordan, and Iran. This earthquake, which is considered to have been catastrophic coupled with the second earthquake, claimed the lives of almost 50,000 people. The large area affected by the earthquake reveals the magnitude of the disaster. This disaster has been called “the disaster of the century” to express the severity and devastating effect of this earthquake, which was felt very strongly by the surrounding provinces and neighboring countries. Due to the destruction/serious damage to their houses in the earthquake, individuals in the earthquake zone had to migrate to surrounding provinces to survive. The state has opened the doors of student dormitories to individuals who migrate to safe areas where they can stay temporarily.

This earthquake that occurred on February 6 is not the first earthquake in our country and it will not be the last. “Türkiye is located on the highly seismically active Anatolian plate, where major earthquakes have occurred throughout history.”⁸ “Türkiye has been exposed to significant earthquakes throughout history due to active faults within its borders. Of these faults, the Northern Anatolian Fault Line, which is approximately 1000 km long, and the Eastern Anatolian Fault Line, which is approximately 400 km long, surround the country on the east-west and southeast-northeast axis.”⁹ According to the research drawing attention to the time interval of the earthquakes that occurred in our country, “Looking at the major earthquakes in Marmara in 1999, Van in 2011, and Elazığ in 2020, a major earthquake occurs on average every ten years.”¹⁰ However, there is not even ten years between

8 Mehmet Fatih Altan - Okan Hastürk, “Deprem Ardından Kentsel Dönüşüm, Şehir Planlaması”, *Avrasya Dosyası Dergisi* 14/1 (Haziran 2023), 162.

9 Ömer Faruk Nemitlu vd., “Bingöl ve Elazığ İlleri Özelinde 2007 ve 2018 Türk Deprem Yönetmeliklerine Göre İvme Spektrumlarının Değişiminin İncelenmesi”, *Dicle Üniversitesi Mühendislik Fakültesi Mühendislik Dergisi* 11/3 (Eylül 2020), 1342.

10 Muhammet Fırat, “Doğal ve Toplumsal Bir Afet Olarak Deprem”, *Afet Sosyolojisi*, ed. İslam Can (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2020), 170.

the 2020 Elazığ earthquake and the 2023 Kahramanmaraş earthquake. This situation shows us that earthquakes can occur at certain intervals and the earthquake intervals may shorten significantly. Since Turkey is located on active fault lines, earthquakes are likely to occur in different regions in the future.

Geological engineer scientists researching earthquakes expect a very severe and destructive earthquake of magnitude over 7, especially in the Marmara Region, on a provincial basis, in İstanbul. An earthquake is expected here because “the faulting in the Sea of Marmara poses a great danger for the region. In this context, since İstanbul, like other cities, consists of structures that are not resistant to earthquakes, it is at risk, especially the coastal region of the European Side, where ground conditions are unfavorable.”¹¹ For this reason, scientists insist that this region should be made earthquake-resistant and the loss of life and property should be minimized. It is important to take necessary precautions against “beyond the risks and dangers that may arise, natural disasters, especially earthquakes, also have the potential to cause security problems”¹² through scientific studies. For this reason, such problems that can lead to social crises should be seriously considered, and awareness of crises should be created at the social level and acted on consciously. Acting with this awareness, social awareness should be created and studies should be carried out on ways to prevent social suffering caused by possible social crises. “If we do not apply all the principles of disaster management in a scientific and integrated manner and fulfill the requirements, it will be inevitable that the disasters we will experience in the future will cause great loss of life and property in our country.”¹³

The main reason why social crises such as earthquakes are so destructive and damaging in our country is that residential areas are shaped without considering the correct ground survey. The cities that emerged in our country, especially in the 1950s, when the urbanization process started with the industrialization process, started to be reshaped based on the industrial sector and were built on areas where the fault line passes such as stream beds, agricultural lands, etc. During the reconstruction of residential areas, building cities without conducting the ground survey has resulted in serious damages in possible social crises. In particular, “the fact that a significant part of the residential areas is located in or near tectonically active areas has led to the emergence of a significant earthquake hazard.”¹⁴ This has caused cities to suffer serious damage in any social crisis.

11 Erhan Atiker, “Toplumsal Açıdan Marmara’da Deprem Riski”, *İstanbul Üniversitesi Sosyoloji Dergisi* 3/17 (2008), 3.

12 Durmuş Eray Güçlüer, “Milli Güvenlik Meselesi Olarak Deprem”, *Avrasya Dosyası Dergisi* 14/1 (Haziran 2023), 205.

13 Mikdat Kadioğlu, *Afet Affetmez* (İstanbul: Tekin Yayınevi, 2019), 28.

14 Murat Utkucu vd., “Marmara Bölgesi’nde (KB Türkiye) Depremsellik ve Deprem Tehlikesi Üzerine Bir Tartışma”, *Hacettepe Üniversitesi Uygulama ve Araştırma Merkezi Bülteni Yer Bilimleri Dergisi* 32/3 (Nisan 2011), 188.

After the February 6 earthquakes, the countless loss of life and property once again demonstrated the need to create earthquake-resistant cities. Especially in the aftermath of this disaster, it was revealed that “the construction approach of a certain period produced buildings with similar qualities and building safety problems almost everywhere in Türkiye”.¹⁵ The urbanization process increased especially after industrialization in Türkiye and ignoring disasters like earthquakes and floods caused possible social crises. In this case, the so-called “disorganized urbanization” began to emerge, which caused Türkiye to suffer a lot of casualties due to social crises.

In this respect, building earthquake-resistant cities is a very important issue and a priority. It is important to give due importance to urban transformation and to carry out studies to help cities overcome these crises with the least damage in the case of any social crisis that may occur. As it is known, “urban transformation is defined as a comprehensive vision and action that provides solutions to urban problems and tries to provide a permanent solution to the economic, physical, social and environmental conditions of a changing region.”¹⁶ “At this point, awareness of earthquake risk and seeing urban transformation as part of a disaster preparation process becomes important.”¹⁷ Studies to be carried out in this direction will pave the way for cities to overcome any social crisis that may occur with the least damage.

In our country, the collapse of cities built with the construction approach of a certain period after social crises such as earthquakes causes the memories of individuals to disappear. Cities, which are made special by individuals’ sense of belonging, are not only living spaces but also areas where memory is shaped. They are places where people spend time with their loved ones, experience happy or sad moments and continue their lives. In this respect, cities are also important places as areas where individuals’ memories live. In this context, “concerning memory itself, we can note that our experience of the present is largely based on our knowledge of the past.”¹⁸ The destruction that will occur in cities, which are also the place of our memories, will lead to the destruction of our memories. As Nora puts it,¹⁹ with the destruction, what remains are memory places instead of memory environments. This situation plays a dominant role in remembering and forgetting.

According to Connerton, who has important studies on memory, the material practices taking place in modern life have a direct relationship with the process of cultural forget-

15 Bülent Güner, “Türkiye’deki Deprem Hasarlarına Dönemsel Bir Yaklaşım: 3 Dönem 3 Deprem”. *Doğu Coğrafya Dergisi* 25/43 (Haziran 2020), 149.

16 Gül Uslu - Bayram Uzun, “Kentsel Dönüşüm Projelerinde Deprem Etkisi”, *Harita Teknolojileri Elektronik Dergisi* 6/2 (Haziran 2014), 2.

17 Özgür Sayın - Veysel Bozkurt, “Kentsel Dönüşüm, Deprem ve Politik Güven”, *Türkiye’de Kentsel Dönüşüm*, ed. Mustafa Orçan - Yahya Aydın (Konya: Çizgi Kitabevi, 2023), 145.

18 Paul Connerton, *Toplumlar Nasıl Anımsar?* çev. Alâeddin Şenel (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları 2019), 9.

19 Pierre Nora, *Hafıza Mekânları*. çev. Mehmet Emin Özcan (Ankara: Doğu Batı Yayınları 2022), 19.

ting. Connerton classifies material practices into four categories with the category of temporality: “time in the labor process, time in consumption, time in career structures, time in information and media production.”²⁰ Each of these categories corresponds to processes of forgetting in memory. Consumption in line with today’s consumption approach causes individuals to tend to forget because it is very fast and based on hedonic consumption. On the other hand, developments in technology and media production, while providing ease of access to information, actually harm the value of the information acquisition process. In other words, since access to all information is just a click away today, people ignore real learning by focusing on instant useful information rather than focusing on learning. This causes us to get closer to forgetting.

Just as memory has a forgetting process, there is also a remembering process. As it is known, “the more abstract an action thought is, the more concrete remembering is.”²¹ For this reason, individuals can make their memories concrete through the process of remembering and expressing their thoughts about their memories through language. In this way, they can keep their memories alive by preserving their ties with the past. This makes it easier for individuals to remember. Cities that contain experiences are also important in keeping memories alive. Cities, which are also places of memories, play an important role in making life meaningful by forming an important place in the memories of individuals.

French sociologist Maurice Halbwachs, who is considered the pioneer of social memory studies, states in his work “Social Frameworks of Memory”²² that social memory formation first begins with a remembering/forgetting process in an individual context and that this remembering/forgetting process is not independent of society. Based on this idea of Halbwachs, this study examines the opinions of individuals directly affected by the earthquake about social memory, based on what they experienced during the social crisis.

During the early days of the 6 February disaster, aid was sent to the earthquake regions that were directly affected by the two earthquakes on February 6 both from other cities in the nation and foreign nations. This aid, which continued for a certain period throughout the country, started to decrease over time. At this point, our research problem begins to take shape depending on our research topic. Due to social crises, social solidarity emerges as “organic structures that can create a common will when there are problems that individuals cannot cope with.”²³

People in the earthquake zones directly affected by the February 6 earthquakes had to

20 Connerton, *Modernite Nasıl Unutturur?*, 47.

21 Jan Assmann, *Kültürel Bellek Eski Yüksek Kültürlerde Yazı, Hatırlama ve Politik Kimlik*. çev. Ayşe Tekin (İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları 2018), 46.

22 Maurice Halbwachs, *Hafızanın Toplumsal Çerçevesi*, çev. Büşra Uçar (Ankara: Heretik Yayınları, 2022).

23 Sait Başer, *Toplumsal Akıl Anlamak* (İstanbul: Post Yayın Dağıtım, 2020), 142.

migrate from the region for various reasons after these earthquakes, which deeply affected their lives. As Peker and Şanlı state, disasters such as famine, drought and earthquake are among the causes of forced migration.²⁴ For this reason, people of the region affected by the earthquake, who experienced the severity and destructive effects of the earthquake, had to migrate temporarily or permanently to the surrounding provinces with the effect of weather conditions. Housing and nutrition, which are prerequisites for survival, have had significant effects on migrations. In this regard, individuals affected by the earthquake met their need to be in a safe area by migrating to surrounding provinces. The primary goal here is undoubtedly for individuals to sustain their lives. In this regard, the first thing that needs to be done in terms of re-adaptation to life is “after healing the first wounds, accepting the tragedy, giving meaning to life again and continuing vital responsibilities from where we left off.”²⁵ For this reason, social solidarity plays an important role in the adaptation of individuals affected by the earthquake to life.

As mentioned by van Gennep and Turner, this period, which took place immediately after the earthquake and caused individuals to be left homeless, and in parallel to which a collective solidarity and religious compensation mechanism was operated, prepared the ground for the earthquake survivors to experience a liminal transition process. Earthquake survivors who lost their homes, neighborhoods, towns and cities, material assets and social status started to live an experience in which they remained outside the social structure, as Turner puts it. The most distinctive feature of this period is that they experienced a process of solidarity based entirely on humanitarian grounds. This humanitarian solidarity resulted in the formation of a national *communitas*. According to Turner, *communitas* is an egalitarian community form that emerges in the liminal phase of transition processes.²⁶

One of the most important features of this liminal phase, which coincides with the process of earthquake survivors living in temporary living spaces in the regions where the earthquake occurred or being placed in dormitories and guesthouses in the surrounding provinces, is the operation of the remembering and forgetting reflexes of social memory regarding what, how much and how they will remember in order to make sense of their suffering and to sustain their lives. In this phase, earthquake survivors have to produce a social memory by making sense of their earthquake experiences in order to cope with the earthquake experience as a devastating disaster and to be able to sustain their lives despite what they have lost. As long as they can make their experience comprehensible, they can be integrated into the social structure. In order to make the earthquake experience

24 Ayşe Esra Peker - İrem Şanlı, “Deprem ve Göç İlişkisi: 24 Ocak 2020 Elâzığ Deprem Örneği”, *Fırat Üniversitesi Uluslararası İktisadi ve İdari Bilimler Dergisi* 6/1 (2022), 125.

25 Şafak Nakajima, “Deprem ve Sonrası Psikolojisi”, *Okmeydanı Tıp Dergisi* 28/Ek Sayı 2 (2012), 151.

26 Turner, *The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-Structure*; Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*; İlkay Şahin, “Arada Kalmak: Kalıcı Bir Liminalite Örneği Olarak Türk Modernleşmesi”; İlkay Şahin, “‘Dünya Kurmak’: Ritüel, Gerçeklik ve Dünya Görüşü”. *KARE*, 9 (Haziran 2020).

comprehensible, earthquake survivors organize their memories in a way that will enable them to continue their lives, forgetting some and remembering others. 6 February earthquake survivors can become a part of the social order as an indicator of their integration into social life after making their earthquake experience comprehensible by operating the forgetting and remembering reflexes of social memory. On the other hand, while making sense of their experience, they find it strange that despite the devastating effects of the earthquake, the social order continues from where it is left off, entertainment, sports competitions or the continuation of routine practices; and they interpret it as an indicator that the earthquake and themselves have been forgotten.

2. Remembering and Forgetting on the Threshold: Suffering and Mourning

Following the 6 February earthquake, Kayseri was one of the places where earthquake survivors settled temporarily due to its location on the roads leading to the earthquake zone and its proximity to cities such as Kahramanmaraş and Malatya. Following the earthquake, some of the earthquake survivors, whose houses were destroyed or heavily damaged, rented houses with their own means and settled in Kayseri. A significant part of the earthquake survivors who migrated to Kayseri are from Kahramanmaraş and Malatya. There are also some earthquake survivors whose houses were slightly damaged and who settled in Kayseri temporarily until the earthquakes subsided. These earthquake survivors who temporarily settled in Kayseri were placed in public guesthouses or dormitories by the state. Gevher Nesibe Dormitory is one of the places where earthquake survivors temporarily resided in Kayseri. Gevher Nesibe Dormitory is one of the dormitories in the dormitories area in Talas, a district of Kayseri.

The earthquake was also felt strongly in Kayseri, and for the first few months after the earthquake when the aftershocks were felt, most of the people living in Kayseri city center could not enter their houses; some of them returned to their hometowns; some of them moved to their vineyard houses; and a large number of them stayed in the low-rise buildings of public institutions. This situation caused the earthquake survivors who migrated to Kayseri to experience the effects of the earthquake for a long time. It also led the people of Kayseri to understand the earthquake survivors and be more sensitive to them. In this context, despite experiencing a serious fear of earthquake and death due to the strong earthquakes, being unable to enter their homes and continue their normal lives, Kayseri residents have established a strong social solidarity network in the city center. These networks carried out activities to meet the material and spiritual needs of earthquake survivors who stayed in Kayseri temporarily. Members of these informal aid networks, which are usually formed by individuals coming together and organized through social media, have not only met their material needs but also tried to visit earthquake survivors to provide moral support and to organize social activities to alleviate their pain. Some Kayseri residents hosted earthquake survivors in their homes.

The earthquake survivors staying in Gevher Nesibe Dormitory are from different parts of the earthquake zone. There were those who stayed alone as well as those who stayed with their families. The earthquake survivors are individuals from different economic and social statuses, educational levels and ages, ethnic origins and religious orientations. The only thing they have in common is that they have experienced the earthquake of 6 February, which is recorded as one of the biggest earthquakes in the history of humanity, as one of the greatest pains that human beings can experience. In this respect, the earthquake survivors spoke a common language, the language of pain.

According to the information collected about the interviewees, their ages ranged between 13-71. Three respondents were male and eleven respondents were female. The hometown of ten respondents is Kahramanmaraş; the hometown of two respondents is Malatya; the hometown of one respondent is Gaziantep; and the hometown of one respondent is Hatay. Regarding the level of education, it was observed that one interviewee never went to school; two interviewees were primary school graduates; two interviewees were middle school graduates; one interviewee was a secondary school student; two interviewees were high school students; one interviewee dropped out of high school; two interviewees had an associate degree; two interviewees had a bachelor's degree; and one interviewee had a bachelor's degree. It was observed that seven respondents were married; one respondent was a widow; and six respondents were single. One of the two female students is a theology student and the other is a biomedicine student. The male respondent, who has a Bachelor's degree, is a graduate of the School of Physical Education and Sports. The professions of the interviewees are as follows: one interviewee is a hairdresser; five interviewees are housewives; one interviewee is a foreman; five interviewees are students; one interviewee is a physical education teacher; and one interviewee is a nurse.

Social crises that deeply affect the daily lives of individuals and cause suffering in individuals destroy the cities where individuals live and cause them to lose loved ones (children, siblings, etc.). This destruction and pain, which are the causes of social crises, make individuals suffer and question the world. This situation also causes changes in the information in the memories of individuals. This change in memory, which begins to form in an individual context, manifests itself in social memory, as Halbwachs also stated²⁷. From this point of view, the study focuses on the role that social crises play in the formation of social memory.

When asked to describe the moment of the earthquake, Emine, a 30-year-old woman from the center of Gaziantep, a high school dropout, and working as a hairdresser, described her family's experiences as follows:

27 Halbwachs, *Hafızanın Toplumsal Çerçevesi*.

Normally, the earthquake in Elazığ had happened in previous years, we thought it was something like that. When we went to the children's room, they were out of bed and they were struggling. Then my husband panicked a lot, extremely panicked. He came to the point of losing himself. I said, let's take shelter next to the children's bed, there is no way out here. I mean we can't get out; everything is over. I mean, we were shaking so much that we realized later that it was not like the one in Elazığ.

Yasemin, who migrated from the center of Kahramanmaraş to Kayseri, is 41 years old, graduated from primary school, married, mother of three children, and a housewife, stayed in a dormitory with her family. It was noted that she remembered the moment of the earthquake as follows:

We were asleep when the earthquake happened, my husband woke me up. The intensity of the earthquake knocked my husband from wall to wall until I went to the children. I woke up the children and said 'Allah Bismillah, Allah Bismillah!' and we all waited for the earthquake to pass. The shaking stopped and when we headed for the stairs to go downstairs, the shaking started again. The children were so sleepy that they did not understand what was happening. My youngest child is 6 years old and today is his birthday. That day he said to me, 'Mom, I was sleeping so well, why did you wake me up?' Even in the smallest thing, he now says; 'Mom, is there an earthquake right now, are we shaking, will there be an earthquake?' Not only ours, but also children's psychology has deteriorated.

Nazlı, a 30-year-old housewife and mother of two, graduated from secondary school, and Ekan, a 30-year-old construction master, came to Kayseri from the center of Kahramanmaraş. They stayed in the dormitory with their siblings, parents and children. This couple, consisting of a housewife mother and a construction master father, started our interview by stating that they were caught in the earthquake while they were sleeping like everyone else. Then they stated that they waited for the earthquake to pass and went out after the earthquake passed.

We were caught in the earthquake while we were asleep like everyone else, and after waking up, we waited for the earthquake to stop. As soon as we stopped, we left the building and entered the building again because we did not expect the second earthquake. We were in the building during the second earthquake, our building collapsed in that earthquake, and we lost our son in that destruction.

While describing the severity of the earthquake, Erkan said, "It was a very bad earthquake, I am a construction foreman. I cannot tell you how the earthquake moved the place that you cannot move with a bucked operator." 37 years old, associate degree graduate, housewife, mother of two children, Nergis came to Kayseri from Elbistan. She stated that she stayed in the dormitory with her two children. Stating that she had guests at home on the day of the earthquake, Nergis started to tell about the moment of the earthquake. She

stated that she went to bed half an hour before the earthquake and was woken up by severe earthquake shaking. She said that while she was in the same room with her two children, she thought that the building would collapse due to the intensity of the earthquake and hugged them tightly so that people would find her with her children. She stated that they quickly left the house after the earthquake stopped.

Hatice, 54 years old, illiterate, with five children and a housewife, came from Malatya and settled in the dormitory. Hatice, who stated that she was Kurdish, said that all her children were married and that she and her husband were staying in the dormitory. She stated that they first stayed with their relatives in Kayseri, but when they realized that their relatives started to be disturbed, they settled in the dormitory. “We were living in old Malatya. I got married there. Now we bought a house here and came to Malatya. That’s why we’ve been in this situation for 4 years, there’s corona for 4 years, and then this earthquake happens. That’s why we are struggling.” Hatice described the moment of the earthquake as follows:

We came out of the first earthquake. The earthquake occurred at 04:00 in the morning and the call to prayer had not been recited yet. I saw there was an earthquake. I tried to get out of the house, but I couldn’t, I fell down. The door was locked. Then it shook, we left and never came in again. Then there was damage to the house. We left and never went back in. The same thing happened again at noon. It was more violent then. Houses were destroyed. We came here.

Pierre Nora states that any destruction experienced in cities that are made special by the sense of belonging of individuals can also lead to destruction in memory, and that this situation can be expressed with the concept of memory space.²⁸ Şebnem, an 18-year-old high school student, stated that she came to Kayseri from Antakya, Hatay and stayed in a dormitory with her mother and two siblings. Şebnem said that her mother was from Syria and her father was Turkish. Şebnem stated that they were three people at home at the time of the earthquake; she was with her brother and mother. Stating that her father was in another city that day, she described the moment of the earthquake with the following statements:

My brother had just fallen asleep. We were three people anyway. Me, my mother, my brother. Here my mother was sitting, talking to my grandmother in Syria. Well, my brother wasn’t sleeping, but I fell asleep 10 minutes ago. ... When he took us out later, we had barely opened the door anyway. While we were getting out, everything in the closets collapsed on the beds. It was already raining heavily when we stood outside, so it was awful. Then my brother was with me, I was not surprised at all. I said, ‘The apocalypse has happened’ and something fell right next to me. I was scared and started crying. Then all the neighbors came out, my mother came out without a scarf out of fear. I wasn’t covered yet. Then it was like this, all the neighbors came out. A house in front of us burned down, and the building opposite us burned down.

28 Nora, *Hafıza Mekânları*.

Fidan, the daughter of our interviewee Nergis, who is a secondary school student, started her speech by stating that her aunt was their guest on the day of the earthquake. She stated that her father was on duty in Syria and she slept in the same room with her mother and sister. She said that she woke up 5-10 seconds before the earthquake and the earthquake started right after. Then her mother yelled at her and hugged her and her brother tightly. She stated that their house tilted due to the intensity of the earthquake and they were very scared. After the earthquake stopped, they left the house and went to the village to her aunt's house.

Seventy-one-year-old Gülümser, a primary school graduate and housewife, stated that her husband died six months before the earthquake and that she lived alone because her four children were married. She stated that she woke up to pray on the day of the earthquake and the earthquake started as soon as she tried to perform ablution. She stated that her children called her. Then her neighbor's son rang the bell and warned her to leave the building. When the earthquake stopped, she went out of her house on the second floor immediately and waited with her neighbors in their cars until sunrise. They stopped for a while after sunrise and entered the building again with their neighbor to have breakfast. After having breakfast in the building, while they were going out of the building to get water, the second earthquake started and they had to leave the building, albeit by force. She stated that as soon as they left the building, their building collapsed due to the impact of that earthquake; and they saved their lives at the last minute.

17-year-old Emre stated that he was a student at an open high school and played football in the infrastructure of Bursa sports team. They came to Kayseri from Göksun, Maraş. Emre stated that they were in their house in the village during the earthquake and their village was leveled to the ground in the second earthquake: "After the second earthquake, most people were trapped under the rubble." Coşkun, a 24-year-old professional volleyball player and coach said they lived in Kahramanmaraş city center before the earthquake and moved to the Gevher Nesibe dormitory with her mother after the earthquake. Describing the moment of the earthquake, Coşkun noted that the earthquake they experienced was very different from other earthquakes in terms of its intensity.

It was very different from the other earthquakes, it lasted a long time, and it was scary. The building next to ours also collapsed. We were able to leave the house after the earthquake. We didn't understand what happened. At first, I thought it was thunder, because, I don't know why, I woke up with rays. The weather suddenly cleared. Later, when I looked at the chandelier, I realized that there was an earthquake. We waited for the earthquake to pass for a long time. I was in the living room, and the others couldn't leave the room. We waited, and when the earthquake stopped, we got dressed and went downstairs. By the way, we were on the 7th floor.

Fatma, who is 22 years old and a student at the Faculty of Theology, stated that she came from Kahramanmaraş and stayed alone in the dormitory. Fatma, an undergraduate student from Kahramanmaraş, described the earthquake with the following words:

It was a very bad moment. I don't know, especially since the earthquake was so strong and it occurred at night while everyone was sleeping. It was a moment we never expected. We immediately went out as a family without taking anything on. It was freezing outside, but we had to get out that way. Afterward, we thought it had passed, but our house was detached and we had neighbors living in the apartment. They came to us. Nobody slept until the morning anyway, everyone was very scared. What happened in the afternoon was the most devastating one for Elbistan. When it happened at night, nothing much happened, but when it happened in the afternoon, it was not like that at all, everything was very bad. In the afternoon, everyone went out the same way. Everyone was caught very unprepared again. So, there were children, my siblings are younger, we waited outside in the car with them for a while. In the following hours, the electricity went out and the water went out. We had to go home, I mean, because it was very cold outside. After a while, electricity came on, water came on, etc. Afterward, debris removal efforts began. They tried to take care of the injured and pull out those left in the rubble. It was like this.

Asiye, a 44-year-old married mother of two and a nurse from Kahramanmaraş, stated that they were caught in the earthquake while they were asleep and that they could not even move from where they were due to the intensity of the earthquake. She said that her husband was able to go to the children's room with difficulty and called out to the children not to be afraid. She stated that she heard explosions coming from outside, blue and yellow lights appeared inside the house, and then the building collapsed. She lost her sense of time while under the rubble, and that her little daughter and husband were the first to be pulled from the rubble. Stating that her brothers pulled her out of the rubble, she added that her eldest daughter was taken out of the rubble around 9:45 p.m., but she received news that she had lost her child in the hospital. She also added that she would never forget the pain of the earthquake for the rest of her life.

Gülnur, a 20-year-old undergraduate student from Kahramanmaraş, stated that she actually had a practical exam at the university on the day of the earthquake, but the exam was canceled. She stated that after the exam was postponed, she went to her hometown to surprise her family and that she experienced the earthquake with her family in the morning of that day. She could not sleep that day and fell asleep shortly before the earthquake and was woken up by a violent shaking. She was able to go to her parents' room even though it was very difficult, and her father tried to protect her and her mother. She said that her parents recited the shahada, she accompanied her parents afterward, and she thought their house would be demolished, but even though it was damaged a lot, their house was not destroyed.

Four interviewees stated that they participated in the search and rescue, and two interviewees stated that they took part in distributing the aid they received. When asked about the most frightening things they remembered about the earthquake, their responses included the feeling of not being able to go outside; the loud noise during the earthquake; the

lights reflected in the houses; fear of losing their children; the intensity of the earthquake; fear; corpses; screams during the earthquake; people not being able to help even though they heard people calling for help under the rubble; and one interviewee said that the child he rescued died as soon as he was put on the stretcher.

Even though their arrival processes in Kayseri were different, the earthquake survivors had to stay in student dormitories because they had no other place to stay. They stated that when they came to Kayseri, the dormitory staff and the individuals living in Kayseri treated them very sincerely and warmly, and they had not encountered any other negative attitudes up to that day. While some of the interviewees planned to return to their hometown after leaving the dormitory, some stated that they wanted to settle in Kayseri and establish a new life for themselves there. While some interviewees thought they would receive help in the stages of rebuilding their lives, some stated that they thought there would not be any help. Individuals who have children stated that their expectation from the future is to create a good future for their children. Young participants stated that they wanted to start their careers and spend time with their loved ones as far away from earthquake zone as possible.

It has been stated that the elements that remind us of an earthquake are the slightest sound, rain, wind, any sudden shining light, the sound of screaming, and the sound of the tram turning when on the tram. There were also interviewees who stated that the loss of their children did not make them forget the earthquake and they remembered the earthquake every time they went to their hometown. Finally, an interviewee said that the term used to refer to them, “earthquake survivors,” did not let them forget the earthquake for a moment. Even the interviewees who said they wanted to forget the earthquake responded to the question of whether they wanted to forget it by stating that it was not possible to forget. Interviewees who did not want to forget stated that we, as a society, should learn a lesson from this earthquake and that we should work to build solid buildings.

When asked whether we, as a society, tend to forget this disaster immediately, some of the interviewees said that it is an accepted understanding that this disaster is forgotten in the eyes of society, while some other interviewees pointed out the magnitude of the event. One participant stated that it was impossible to forget the disaster. Some earthquake survivors believe that the February 6 earthquake has been forgotten and express this by giving the example of the football league championship celebrations. Asiye expressed this situation as follows:

I don't know if we have become a very insensitive society, I say. So, I'm questioning myself. This was not a small earthquake; it was not an earthquake that could be ignored. It was called the disaster of the century. It was said to be the only one in the world, but I think our people normalized very quickly. Okay, don't mourn for the rest of your life, life goes on, life will start again somewhere somehow. Of course, one should take steps towards life, one should start somehow, but the events I saw after the earthquake, (such as championship celebrations), bothered me a lot. It made me

very sad, the celebrations with drums and pipes and convoys, and especially the fact that this was done in an earthquake zone, in a region where the debris had not yet been removed and there were still no funerals. It shouldn't have been forgotten so quickly. I'm not saying people should become pessimistic and close themselves off from life, but it could have been celebrated differently. People could have been happy in a different way. People go to the rubble and cry, and I am one of them. I had neighbors here, I had my daughter here, she walked here, she ran there... the pain is still very fresh. The wounds haven't healed, there are bleeding wounds. There are people in the hospital, there are still people whose graves have not been found. So, it shouldn't have happened so quickly. We are the children of a society that does not turn on the television for three days even if a 90-year-old neighbor dies. We are the children of a society that does not do any work at home for three days and thinks it is a shame to do laundry or hang it on the balcony. Such a great disaster should not have been forgotten so quickly and should not have been covered up so quickly.

Learning how individuals directly affected by the February 6 earthquakes remembered/forgot the disaster during and after the earthquake was deemed important in determining the changes caused by social crises in social memory. Field findings revealed that the time category in information and media production, one of the categories that Connerton stated, corresponded to the process of forgetting in memory, corresponded to the impression that the February 6 earthquakes were forgotten.²⁹ In this context, the interviewees stated that developments in information and media production, such as football league championship, had left earthquakes behind.

When asked what factors remind us of such disasters, the interviewees generally answered that they begin to be remembered after such disasters occur. The negligence was particularly emphasized by Fatma: "I am talking about people's negligence. In my opinion, negligence manifests itself concretely at the slightest negativity. At this point, we remember major disasters such as earthquakes, and in fact, I think, as a society, earthquakes remind us of other such negative situations."

When asked what the most fundamental element that we should not forget as a society in the face of such social crises is, Şebnem said "We must keep in mind that we may die every second, and we must get closer to God. At least when we die, our good deeds will come to us in the afterlife." Hatice expressed a similar opinion as follows: "We must continue to fulfill our prayers, ablutions, and supplications so that God does not cause us such a disaster again." According to Emre, it was stated that people should not dig wells behind each other's backs. According to Nergis, discipline should not be forgotten. According to Gülnur, making an earthquake kit and preparing for an earthquake should not be forgotten. According to Fatma, negligence should be stopped and necessary precautions should be taken

29 Connerton, *Modernity Nasıl Unutturur?*

seriously. For Şebnem, great attention should be paid to construction inspections and human lives should not be played with so easily. Coşkun believes that the society needs to be educated more consciously and statesmen should take important precautions in building construction. Finally, when asked what can be done to prevent the earthquake from being so devastating, the majority of participants answered that solid buildings should be built and the buildings should be inspected by the state. In this respect, a significant portion of earthquake survivors actually criticize not the earthquake but the failure to create earthquake-friendly urbanization, thus supporting Beck's view that the unexpected consequences of modernity are a danger and risk for societies.

3. An Existential 'Communitas': Social Solidarity, Religion and Earthquake

According to Turner, in the threshold phase, which is the middle stage of social crises and which brings individuals and communities to an intermediate state outside the normal functioning of the social order, an egalitarian unity called "communitas" emerges. Communitas is an egalitarian and solidarity-based existential unity.³⁰ As the earthquake victims we interviewed said, the solidarity networks established after the 6 February earthquake have given the earthquake victims and the people of our country an existential communitas identity.

It was stated by earthquake survivors residing in KYK GN Dormitory that state officials provided first aid, people brought individual aid by car, people from other provinces brought aid, the philanthropists of the city were very helpful, the commanders on duty were there to help, and their own relatives (siblings) rushed to help. In terms of the level of delivery of aid, it is stated that no aid was delivered to Kahramanmaraş for the first three days, aid only reached the region at the end of the third day, and the aid delivered to other regions was adequate, even more than adequate. It was stated by the interviewees that even stocks were made due to the failure to distribute the aid in a coordinated manner. It was stated that at first food, clothing and blankets, and then tents were provided.

In response to the question of what kind of feelings the aid evoked in individuals, the following responses were given: feeling proud to be a son of a nation; feeling sad; feeling nothing; bitter happy (there are still good people in the world); and sad for being the receiver instead of the giver. When asked about the level of aid provided at the moment, the interviewees generally claimed that no aid was provided. Regarding the social solidarity remembered during and after the earthquake, it was stated that the nation was in unity and integrity, the nation was united for aid, and social solidarity was very high.

To determine how the traces left by the earthquake on individuals affect their religious lives, they were asked whether the earthquake was fate or not; how religion was positioned in their lives from the first moment of the earthquake up to that day; whether there were

30 Turner, *The Ritual Process, Structure and Anti-Structure*.

any changes in their views/beliefs about religion before and after the earthquake; and whether religion had any effect on remembering/forgetting the earthquake.

The interviewees responded to the question whether earthquake is fate or not in two different ways. According to some of the interviewees, earthquake is fate or even a natural disaster. Emine said that people have started to do a lot of bad things, that it has become common for spouses to cheat on each other and that people have started to dress too revealingly. She explained that the earthquake was destiny with the words, “My Lord, to whom I am devoted, said, ‘I am here.’” According to others, even if the earthquake was fate, the necessary measures were not taken. This is why so many lives were lost and cities were flattened. While it was possible to minimize the impact of the earthquake, the destruction and suffering was so high due to the failure to do so, which was the more dominant view expressed by the interviewees. It was stated that negligence; lack of supervision; favoritism incidents; and incompetent but wealthy constructors are issues that are too vital to be passed off as fate.

In general, the interviewees answered the question whether there were any changes in their views and beliefs about religion before and after the earthquake by stating that they did not experience any changes in their lives. They stated that they fulfilled the requirements of religion before the earthquake and continued to fulfill the requirements of religion after the earthquake. Only one interviewee stated that before the earthquake she used to pray without fail, but after the earthquake she could not pray and she did not know the reason for this. The same interviewee stated that she started to cover her head after the earthquake. In general, all participants stated that there was no negative change in their religious beliefs after the earthquake and that their religious beliefs became stronger. Especially young participants stated that their close friends became more attached to religion.

When asked whether religion has any impact on remembering/forgetting the earthquake, interviewees gave different answers. One interviewee stated that in the face of the severity of the earthquake, the victims looked at verses from the Holy Qur’an and tried to understand why the earthquake was so powerful and destructive. Another interviewee stated that the earthquake reminded them of death.

Conclusion and Evaluation

In this qualitative study, which was conducted to investigate the role social crises play in the formation of social memory, it was determined that individual suffering is at a level that cannot be forgotten for a lifetime and this situation will hold an important place in social memory. The dominant view is that the social solidarity experienced after the earthquake is at a sufficient level among the interviewees. Therefore, it can be stated that social solidarity has a very important place in the formation of social memory. Religion, which plays a very important role in enduring the pain experienced after the earthquake, is also

the key to the formation of social memory. Earthquake survivors think that the earthquake was quickly forgotten by society, drawing attention to the intensity of the earthquake; the size of the area where it occurred; and the loss of lives. Earthquake survivors stated that the responsibility for the damages experienced in this disaster should be assumed and necessary steps should be taken to minimize the damages in the following process. Earthquake survivors emphasize that the necessary research should be done, precautions should be taken and earthquake-resistant cities should be built.

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