

THE PSYCHOTRAUMATIC EFFECTS OF ‘DERSİM 38’ ON THE SECOND AND THIRD GENERATION

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ABSTRACT

Social traumas don't affect not only on the survivals but also next generations directly or indirectly. The generations which are affected by the trauma have some psychological and physical problems at later stages of their life. The purpose of this study is to reveal the psychotraumatic effects of "Dersim 38" on the second and third generations. This qualitative study sample consist of second (14 people) or third generation(13 people) living in Tunceli and who have Alevism belief. The data of research is collected by using semi-structured form with depth interview method and evaluated with content analysis method. According to the finding of this study, there are important psycho-traumatic effects on both generations. even though many years have passed, emotion focused coping method is still used; third generation has also tried solution oriented coping.

Keywords: Transmission of trauma, Psychological effects, Dersim 38, Second and Third generation

INTRODUCTION

Individuals take place at the last point where they have come with their successes, traumas, pains and memories since they were born. The present existence of people can be seen as a whole of all gains with their pasts. Like this, big groups also build their existence on their history. (Çevik-Ersaydı, 2013). The development of nations and communities in historic period, the interactions with other groups, wars, gains and losses, destructions make an impression on social memory. Especially some events affect the member of society so much that they always stay in social memory (Bombay, Matheson, Anisman, 2009; Çevik- Ersaydı, 2013).

There are also physical, psychological and cultural serious effects of traumatic events on the victims and survivals. It is stated that these effects can go on for years and that people who are exposed to trauma cannot go back their previous life. These effects may be lived for a longer time and more deeply especially in social traumas such as wars, natural disasters and genocide (Danielli, 1998). During these livings, if a group sees themselves as weakness, injured, desperate and victim against the other group, they carry out future it by perceiving them as ‘selected trauma (Göral, 2007).

If the members of affected group cannot change their shame, indignity and despair, and if they cannot mourn their losses, they force next generations to complete these uncompleted psychological processes. To be able to make realize this function, trauma is conveyed from the unconscious to children and next generations (Volkan, 2004). In this way, until the grief process is completed, the traumas will be carried into future by staying alive in the social memory. Accordingly, social traumas don't affect not only on the survivals but also next generations directly or indirectly and this situation is called “Intergeneration Transition of

Trauma (ITT)” (Bombay, Matheson, Anisman 2009; Dekel and Goldblatt, 2008; Kellermann, 2013). Intergeneration Transition of Trauma happens in consequence of that an adult externalizes his/ her traumatized ego on the emergent personality of a child unconsciously (Volkan, 2004).

According to the concept of collective unconscious of Jung and the researchers who study on traumas, social traumas can be passed down with symbols, affective situations, types of behaviors. (Ruppert, 2001; Kellerman, 2001) Adults don't always do this transfer consciously, but children become a store for problems and unsolicited status of the previous generation. (Göral,2007) According to Laub (2012), Things in itself that people who are exposed to convey to their children the traumas is also a trauma. In this context, transition of trauma to the second generation is called as “secondary traumatization” and the transition of trauma to the third generation is called as “intergeneration of transition of trauma” (Danielli, 1998).

The generations which are affected by the trauma have a difficulty in coping with stress and nightmares and they become tent to some problems such as poor affiliation, posttraumatic stress disorder. (Fossion et al., 2015; Mathews and Phillips, 2010) In some studies, it is seen that the next generations that is affected by the traumas have a world-view including guilt and obedience feelings and anticipation of disaster and terror, and that they are afraid of being understood their identities, and that they don't have social sense of belonging and they have more symptoms of PTSD and other depressive disorders. (Braga, Mello, Fiks, 2012; Dekel and Goldblatt, 2008; Smith et al., 2006; Baranowsky et al., 1998)

The interest about the intergeneration transfer of trauma has increased in recent years and a lot of studies have been done. Especially the studies of third generations are relatively a new study field. Genocides and wars are important among these studies. (Motta et al., 1997; Dansby and Marinelli, 1999; Kellermann, 2001b; Davidson and Mellor, 2001; Yehuda and Bierer, 2008; Yehuda at al., 2009) There isn't nearly any study about traumas except from Armanian Genocide. However, a serious social trauma which was taken place in Dersim in 1938 is unstudied and even isn't talked about it for a long time although a long time passed over it. The people who are exposed to the trauma and the next generations go on their lives by suppressing their feelings in the region where the traumas took place. Even though it has been talked about it in recent years, it is discussed by being skewed with regard to content of Dersim '38' events and by being ignored the traumatic effects on the next generations. Next generations can go through a trauma because a healthy facedown doesn't occur. Even if the effects of Dersim '38 on the people who are expose to it and the next generations can be observed, it is important and necessary that these effects are revealed scientifically. The purpose of this study is to reveal the psychotraumatic effects of “Dersim '38” on the second and third generations.

METHOD

This study is planned as a qualitative study to be investigated the traumatic effects of “Dersim '38” on the second and third generations. The sample of study comprises of people living in Tunceli and who have Alevism belief. People are reached by using purposeful sampling. The people who can give the best answers to the specific research questions are chosen. For this purpose, snowball sampling is used. The second generation (14 people) involves the children of the people who are exposed to the trauma and the third generation (13 people) involves the children of second generation.

The criteria which are included in the study:

- i. The ones whose father/ mother or grandfather/ grandmother are holocaust survivors.

- ii. The ones who don't have problem of perception and hearing.
- iii. The ones who are voluntary to join in study.

The datum of research is collected by being used the question form related The Intergeneration Transition of Trauma which is prepared by reviewing literature (Danieli, 1998; Baranowsky et al.,1998; Kellermann, 2001). The first six questions that take place in socio-demographic attributes list are related to ages, genders, educational backgrounds, marital status and occupations of participants. Seventh and eighth questions are related that participants are from second or third generations.

The total number of participants who are included in the study is 27. 14 of these participants are grouped as second generation and 13 of them are grouped as third generation. 70.4 percent of participants (n=19) are men and 29.6 percent of participants (n=8) are women. With regard to marital status, 66.7 percent of participants (n=18) are married and 33.3 percent of participants (n=9) are single. 33.3 percent of participants (n=9) are graduated from university and 25.9 percent (n=7) are graduated from high school, and 29.6 percent of participants (n=8) are graduated from secondary school. 7.4 percent of participants (n=2) are literate and 3.7 percent of participants (n=1) are not literate. In psychiatric background of participants, it is stated that one of a participant has sleep disorder and another participant has depression. Other 25 participants don't have psychiatric background.

The question form related to the intergeneration transition of trauma is prepared as semi-structured questionnaire. These are main questions in the form:

1. In which situations do you remember "Dersim 38"?
2. How do you think "Dersim 38" effect you?
3. What do you feel when you remember "Dersim 38"?
4. How do you cope with the trauma of "Dersim 38" so far?
5. When do you feel relieved about "Dersim 38"?

Before data is collected, a pilot scheme is done with 5 people and questions are restated. The data of research is collected with depth interview method in a suitable environment. The data obtained from researching is evaluated with content analysis method which is one of qualitative analysis methods. For this purpose, firstly straight-line coding is done and then last coding is formed by being come together related coding. Last coding is labeled by the expression of participants.

Ethic Dimension

It is received permission to be able to make the study from Ethical Committee of Tunceli University. Volunteer participants are chosen according to Declaration of Helsinki. The names of participants aren't declared.

FINDINGS

1. In which situations do you remember Dersim 38? (The images that remind Dersim 38):

When we lose someone, we try to create some symbols, places or object that remind him/her us or ev oke memories in case memories are erased because we want to keep alive the dead people. This situation is the same for society, too. A big group creates physical locations where the old feelings are resuscitated among the members of this group after a disaster. These locations are typically the places where someone is killed or is denigrated by the others. There are generally monuments in these locations. These monuments are constructed in order to be remembered a specific event. (Volkan, 2008) 'Hot place' is described a

physical place where old feelings are evoked by an ethnic group. (Volkan, 2001) All of these hot places evoke feelings of sadness, danger, victimization and so on. (Volkan, 2008)

a) Unmitigated screams of valleys/ I am still living those days

Participants usually show physical places as situations which remind them Dersim 37-38. There are streams and valleys among these physical places.

'The stream of Laç, the valley of Ahpanos, Harçik... I look at them whenever I cross. I am still living those days. There are bones in those places. I can hear screams of children. Even if I don't want, I remember those days. I am looking at the region where there are bones. When we wander there, we can hear the screams. (Man, second generation, age: 54)'

There are still traces in the region around stream of Laç where villagers take shelter in. (Woman, second generation, age: 42)

Third generation also has spatial imagery like second generation. While second generation has a detailed memory, third generation has more general imagery and it is level at association.

'We know the story of the rocky of 38. We can hear the screams. It is said that Munzur (name of a river) is full of blood. When I look at Munzur, I remember the children who are sent by train. (Woman, third generation, age: 31)

b) Living with the ones who wear Dersim '38

It is stated that fathers, grandparents and the olds are social reminders of massacre. The reminders are similar in second and third generation who live with the victims of massacre.

'There were traces of bayonet on my father's body. I saw them whenever I bathe him. (Man, second generation, age: 46)

'There was a bullet in my grandma's leg. When I sat on it, I felt that bullet. I was sleeping by listening to these events like a story. I couldn't forget the things which my grandma told me. I go especially these regions. (Man, third generation, age: 58)

'When I look at my father, I remember. I live them with my father because... My father gets rid of this massacre in this period. (Woman, second generation, age: 34)

However, social reminders are stated as imagery by third generation who doesn't live with victims of massacre.

'..when I see the wrinkles on the old people's faces, I remember Dersim '38. As if each wrinkle keeps a pain. (Woman, third generation, age: 26)

'I remember when I see the old people wearing traditional clothes..They live with their pains in that period.' (Man, third generation, age: 26)

c) There are traces in everywhere

The ruins from massacre remind and concrete Dersim 38 for second and third generation.

'Wherever you go, there are traces. I took off bones myself. When my grandma went there, she cried. She affects me so much. (Man, third generation, age: 45)

'There are caves opposite our village. People were killed there. The stories that were told us become integrated with bones in our minds. So people feel the pain of massacre on themselves. (Man, second generation, age: 57)

'When dogs came, they took bones in their mouth. (Woman, second generation, age: 80)

It is understood that both generations have faced with the ruins of massacre in every area of social life since their childhood.

'We saw women's hair and beads when we went to grass down the animals. (Man, third generation, age: 42)

'In our childhood, we saw small clips and ammo parts used by soldiers in mountains. Guns which killed our ancestor in Dersim 38..' (Man, second generation, age: 46)

d) Re-traumatisation (Later experiences became 39)

A lot of participations state that the experiences in 1994 remind 37-38 and they say they can understand much more Dersim 38. A lot of participants express this in an ironic way.

The later experiences (it means 90s years) became 39. (Woman, second generation, age: 34)

Our villages were quitted. I cried when I went to Dersim in 2005 and 2006 because villages were also quitted in 1938 and people came back Dersim in 1950s. I felt as if I lived the same thing. (Man, second generation, age: 73)

..feeling the same thing in 94. We thought that Dersim 38 could be lived again. (Man, second generation, age: 73)

2. HOW DO YOU THINK DERSIM 37-38 EFFECT YOU?

a) The feeling of rootlessness, 'we don't have any relatives.'

Because a lot of families die out during Dersim 38, later generations had the feeling of loneliness as a psycho- social reminder. It has been clear from the expressions that especially some tribes were died out. Survivors stayed alive accidentally.

'They cause our extinction. We learned our story from the woman who grew up our father.' (Man, second generation, age: 49)

'When I was a child, everybody had relatives but I didn't. I wondered why we didn't have relative. I understood the reason later.'

'We don't have any relative. How don't I effect? I would want to have an uncle, an aunt... Sometimes you need them so much.' (Woman, second generation, age: 34)

'We didn't have any relative. Sometimes my grandma forgot the names of them, because a lot of relatives were killed.' (Man, third generation, age: 58)

b) They didn't laugh, we couldn't laugh

Especially some participants from second generation say that their parents have a sad life and they have strict personalities, so they can't communicate with them easily. As a result of this, it affects their life in a negative way.

'My father's life passed with 'of, ah'. They couldn't be happy. This feeling also affected us. They always knitted their eyebrows. We grow up by hating the place where we lived. (Man, second generation, age: 46)

'We experienced the pains with them when our parents cried. Their faces couldn't smile even a day. (Man, second generation, age: 54)

c) Posttraumatic dreams

While third generation doesn't have posttraumatic dreams, second generations have dreams about Dersim 38. These are some statements:

'We saw Dersim 38 in our dreams. I dreamt that people jumped off the rocky and my grandpa was shot. (Man, second generation, age: 57)

'I lighted the candles the places where they were killed. I saw them in my dream and I cried.' (Woman, second generation, age: 80)

One of the participants says that she had dreams about Dersim 38 but anymore she doesn't have.

3) WHAT DO YOU FEEL WHEN YOU REMEMBER DERSIM 38?

a) Catastrophic

Especially second generation mention the feeling of sadness, fear, disappointment, anger, insecurity.

'I feel pain. I feel anger and disappointment.. Although the stream of Laç is very green, it looks me as if it is dry. I cried so much..' (Man, third generation, age: 26)

'You eat something and it sticks in your throat. It is like this. It is a fire ball and it burns in your heart. (Man, second generation, age: 49)

'38 is a wound in my heart. We are mentally depressed. We couldn't enjoy our lives. (Man, second generation, age: 73)

However, many of participants emphasize that the reason of the anger is not to avenge oneself. The reason of their anger is to hide the truths.

'Distorting the facts makes us angry. We don't want to avenge. They apologize in order to take vote. (Man, second generation, age: 54)

'We didn't have desire for revenge thanks to our ancestors. They were merciful in spite of everything. We want to be revealed the truths.' (Man, second generation, age: 46)

b) Mute pain

Some participants who especially didn't live in Dersim state that they couldn't tell Dersim 38 and they state even if they could tell, it couldn't be understood. Therefore they live with this pain quietly.

'I cried silently. I couldn't tell anybody easily. If you tell someone from west, it won't be possible to understand you. (Man, third generation, age: 29)

Some participants state that they couldn't tell it even in Dersim.

'When our fathers and mothers cried, we shared their pains. We couldn't speak. We couldn't speak even a few years ago. We always talked about it behind closed doors. (Man, second generation, age: 55)

c) Insecurity and fear of re-experiencing

It has been observed the feeling of insecurity in participants because nobody has taken concrete steps.

'Unfortunately this state is so. It is only showing-off. There is no justice. (Man, second generation, age: 73)

Especially second generation has the feeling of insecurity and fear of re-experiencing much more.

'I have fear of re-experiencing. We felt this fear in 90s years. I don't trust in people who I don't know. (Man, second generation, age: 42)

'I fear of re-experiencing because the system still sees us as opponent. (Man, second generation, age: 57)

Fear and insecurity have become a part of some of participants' lives.

'God forbid! It was a cruelty. I still fear of ringing the doorbell. I can't hold someone's hand. I grew up as if I were a boy because of these events. (Woman, second generation, age: 80)

4) HOW DO YOU COPE WITH THE TRAUMA OF DERSİM 38?

(FOCUS OF COPING)

a) Emotion- focused coping (one of my side is always in mourning.)

Even though 77 years have passed, it has been seen that emotion- focused coping method is used in both generations. All of second generation and most of third generation live catharsis during the interviews.

'I am crying. Not to cry, it is necessary to kill all feelings. I am going the region where massacre happened. (Man, second generation, age: 43)

'I am crying as I stay alone. I see the things which my father tells in my dreams...(Woman, second generation, age:67)

Although pathologic findings aren't searched, it is observed that participants have some symptoms like post-traumatic disorders even after years.

'I don't think I can cope with. I couldn't defeat it. I felt it to my hilt. I am affected as I look at photos.' (Woman, third generation, age:31)

'When I remember Dersim 38, I feel myself as if I am in a dark cave. I can hear the sounds of screams.' (Woman, second generation, age: 67)

'I don't feel well when I go the stream of Laç and the rocky of 38. (Woman, second generation, age: 51)

One of the participants tells the psychological aspects of trauma like this:

'The people who grew up us got weak. Our ancestors said that we jumped into water against even a small problem. Jumping into water is a method from 38s. It is thought that there are a lot of suicides in Dersim. This is related to our historic heritage. There are also a lot of suicides in mourning. (Woman, second generation, age: 31)

b) Solution oriented coping (Solidarity and Facedown)

It has seen that they use emotion focused coping method, because first generation was affected from their parents' experiences. However, some participants from second generation has also used solution oriented coping. Third generation states that solidarity and facedown make easier to coping.

'I cried. I cried when I perceived the trauma with social consciousness. Every person should cry. That I am in an organized society helps me to coping. Because there are a lot of people who experienced the same pain, I could cope with it. (Man, third generation, age: 45)

'My father showed me the place where his brother was killed. We cried together. We had a lot of losing. We tried to cope with it by solidarity. (Man, third generation, age: 42)

Also most of second generation and some of third generation mention that facedown, revealing the truths, archive research, making cenotaphs and other concrete steps are necessary for coping.

5) WHEN DO YOU FEEL RELIEVED ABOUT DERSIM 37-38? (Expectations about Dersim 38)

a) *The wounds will not heal*

Most of participants say that they don't expect anything from government, because they face similar unjust treatments. Especially third generation was much stricter about it.

Anything can't reveal me. We are experiencing the despair now which was experienced in that time. They use us as a political tool. (Man, third generation, age: 26)

Anything can't reveal me. If they would kneel down in front us, our pains can't be relieved. (Man, second generation, age: 46)

Whatever they do, our pains can't be relieved. Our pains still go on. (Woman, second generation, age: 23)

b) *Their honors are given back*

The expectations of both second generation and third generation are revealing the truths.

'Honor of people who were killed in Dersim 38 should be given back. Government parties always affront us. We don't want to call them as bandit. (Man, second generation, age: 51)

'It is necessary to be founded truth commission, be opened archives. They should express their apologies. Distorting the facts make us sad. (Man, second generation, age:54)

'We want to be revealed the truths. We couldn't express ourselves. If we could have expressed, they hadn't believed us. This massacre should be accepted and told to public. (Man, third generation, age: 36)

c) *Their graves should be definite*

The most common expectations of participants are that their graves should be definite. Because the places of their graves aren't definite, they feel guilty and they have severe psychological stress.

'Because their graves' places aren't definite, we always have feeling of uneasiness. It stayed as a wound in our heart. We want to our ancestor to have graves. We want to light candles and pray for them in their graves. We want to be showed the places of people who are scaffold. (Man, second generation, age: 57)

'I went to Bursa. They killed strangers but they have graves. We want only to know their graves' places. We want to light candles and pray for them in their graves. We don't want to take revenge. (Man, second generation, age: 73)

Participants also want to be founded cenotaphs in some special regions.

'We want to be done a cenotaph in Bridge of Pah. It is the place of massacre. Almost every family has a losing there. 200-500 people were killed there. (Man, second generation, age: 42)

If she has grave, I can cry. I can feel relax. (Man, second generation, age: 49)

Especially third generation feel guilty because there is no concrete steps about 37-38.

We couldn't do anything for them. I am very sad for this reason. We couldn't protect them. (Man, third generation, age: 36)

d) *The casualties should be found*

Participants state that their casualties should be found but anything hasn't been done for it.

There are still casualties in our families. It isn't known where the people who were forced migration. The casualties should be found. (Man, second generation, age: 67)

Lost girl in Dersim should be found. The state has official records of them. Cruelty goes on. (Man, second generation, age: 57)

e) Our olds shouldn't be crumpled

One of the participant states that the apology of state isn't important for them. He/she thinks that old people shouldn't be crumpled.

Nothing can correspond this pain. They should leave us in peace. They shouldn't disturb us. Whoever has a camera tries to talk with old people and this hurts our old people. A local commission should be found and should cope with this situation.

CONCLUSION

According to the finding of this study, there are important psycho-traumatic effects on both generations. Because they don't experience a facedown, these effects can be observed easily. Furthermore it can be concluded that reminders such as hot places, social factors provide with keeping alive these events in their memories; even though many years have passed, emotion focused coping method is still used; third generation has also tried solution oriented coping; both generation especially second generation has the feeling of sadness, anger, insecurity; most of participants think that their pains go on forever; third generation doesn't have big expectations about Dersim 38 and second generation expect that the graves of people should be definite; their casualties should be found.

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