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An Analysis of Biographies in Collective Memory Research: The Method of Socio-Historical Analysis

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Abstract This article explores the use of biographies in qualitative research about collective memory. It is argued that commemorative ceremonies, as well as changes appearing in macro-level structures within the time-span of individuals' life histories need to be included when analyzing biographies in collective memory studies. The article suggests enhancement of the biographical case reconstruction method (Rosenthal 1993; 2004) with two additional stages: analysis of the experienced past with more emphasis on socio-historical transformations; and inclusion and analysis of the ethnographical data collected from collective mnemonic practices. By providing empirical data from the research conducted with political exiles in Germany, these analytical steps of the method of socio-historical analysis are demonstrated in detail.

Keywords Biographical Research; Collective Memory; Mnemonic-Practices; Narration, Socio-Historical Analysis

Methods of interpreting biographies are a vital issue in memory studies, since the interaction between historical events and their representations in present societies are reflected in individuals' reconstructions of the past, hence construct-

ing we-groupings and collective consciousness. C. Wright Mills (1959) was one of the first sociologists who emphasized the importance of the interaction between biography and history in his classic work *The Sociological Imagination*. He argued that even troubles that seem to be personal and individual have their roots in structural transformations, and he claimed that studying a case without considering its structural transformations is like studying "the process of birth, but ignoring motherhood" (Mills 1959:147). Therefore, he asserted that "no social study that does not come back to the problems of biography, of history, and of their intersections within a society has completed its intellectual journey" (Mills 1959:7).

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In this article, I try to demonstrate how collective memory scholars could deal with the analysis of individual accounts (biographies) and biographies' intersections with structural transformations. I argue that the method of biographical case reconstruction is appropriate to the study of collective memory, since in analytical steps, the researcher has to connect life histories with historical upheavals and compare them with present reconstructions (life stories). Nevertheless, for a deepened understanding of collective memory, more attention should be paid to the analyses of the past political, economic, historical events (structural transformations) and their relation to life histories; secondly, life histories and life stories need to be analyzed in an ongoing dialogue with the data collected at commemorative ceremonies; and finally, hypotheses should be generated at a socio-historical level, rather than as psychological interpretations of individuals' actions, decisions, and expressions.

In what follows, I firstly outline the methodology of biographical case reconstruction with its advantages and limits for memory scholars. I then briefly explain Halbwachs' theory of collective memory. After demonstrating the dynamic social structure of collective memory, I will introduce socio-historical analysis of the biographies based on the empirical data from my research with political exiles living in Germany. I will elaborate on the inclusion of collective mnemonic practices (rituals such as commemorations) and public representations of the past (museums, monuments, memorials, etc.) to the biographical narratives. Finally, I will discuss how hypotheses need to be generated in the socio-historical interpretation of the biographies in memory studies at the macro level.

Analyzing Experienced Lives and Narrated Memories

To analyze and compare life histories and life stories as they are constructed as parts of a whole, the researcher needs to conduct biographical narrative interviews through which s/he will be able to have the whole life story of the narrator. The method of biographical narrative interviewing, as developed by Fritz Schütze (1976; 1983), allows us to grasp experienced events in a flow of narration. The biographical case reconstruction method's main characteristic is its distinction between the experienced life (life history) and the told life (life story). The approach of analyzing life history and the told life story separately is common to some other qualitative methods that deal with biographical narratives, such as: case history, longitudinal methodology, and narrative psychosocial analysis. Analyzing experienced life and told life stories separately is generated by researchers' interest in the interaction between the individual stories and social and cultural milieus.

The comparison between life histories and life stories is a useful approach to understand how individuals construct their experienced past lives—their life histories—within the present context. In other words, this analytical step helps us to understand the dynamic structure of the past and how it is being reconstructed within the present social frameworks. Making a chronological order of the objective data (date of birth, education, employment, information regarding family history, political and historical events that could be documented) from the narrations helps to compare what has been experienced

and how past experiences are being narrated. However, the researcher has to do an additional search of archives, newspapers, and any other records to find other historical events, which might have affected the biographers' lives in the past. This is also essential for the comparison of life stories (narrated past) and life histories. In the biographical case reconstruction method, researchers aim to understand what individuals experienced, what meaning they gave to their past experiences, and how they interpret that meaning in the present (Rosenthal 2004:49). Memory scholars, however, who intend to understand the effects of a past event or era on today's (and possibly future) societies, need to investigate how biographies are embedded in macro-level social transformations and vice-versa, instead of focusing on a "biographically constituted context." Unlike traditional phenomenological life-world analysis (Schütz 1962; Luckmann 1983), which begins with experiences of the individuals, for memory studies, it is vital to understand in which conditions and under which circumstances facts are experienced.

Socially Constructed Memory

With historical and social context of experienced past and past being re-made in the present, I refer to two main features of Halbwachs' collective memory theory, namely, memory as a social construction and as a dynamic process rather than a thing. A collectively shared perspective of the past is necessary not only for group solidarity, but also a group's "identity" depends on a common understanding of past things. Individuals perceive things together with their values and ideas,

which are open to change as the individual's position in society changes (Mannheim 1952). The construction of the past and recall are based on collective consciousness, and "it is in society that people normally acquire their memories. It is also in society that they recall, recognize, and localize their memories" (Halbwachs 1992:38). For a better understanding of the social frameworks of memory, Halbwachs (1992:76) analyzes various milieus "in which all men—or most of them—spend their lives," for example, family, religious groups, and social classes.

To provide solidarity and continuity, we-groups modify the memory of the past according to the necessities of the present. This is a dynamic process of constructing the past, and of generating a collectively shared present which is based on an "agreed" common past (Hobsbawm 1983). This agreed common past is transferred among generations to strengthen members' feeling of social belonging (Rosenthal 2016). Past and present are always in interaction in the collective memory of groups, since the continuity and solidarity of groups are essential for their survival.

Mills (1959:149) finds this effort of understanding single facts with the use of historical materials similar to the Marxist principle of historical specificity which refers to understanding any specific society according to the conditions, the institutions, the ideologies, and power relations existent in a specific given period. In the following, I try to demonstrate, through empirical cases, how we can understand biographical narrations of the past by keeping the principle of historical specificity in mind.

Socio-Historical Analysis of the Biographies

The characteristics of collective memory argued above, namely, that memory is socially constructed and has a dynamic structure, necessitate revision in the method of biographical case reconstruction for the scholars who want to understand how a particular event or period is being remembered in the present and what the effects of past events are on the present social context. The distinction between the experienced past and narrated past in the analysis of biographies is quite helpful in understanding the link between narration, experience, and memory (Rosenthal 2006; 2016). However, based on the hermeneutic tradition (Oevermann 1979), the method of biographical case reconstruction puts more emphasis on the structure of the interview text and individual interpretations of single accounts than social transformations from which the narrated past is generated and re-generated.

Although in her article about the development of the qualitative longitudinal case history method, Thomson (2009) thinks that the *individual provides a key to unlock the social*, she asserts that “interview-based research” is inefficient to understand the social context. She argues that even an analysis of two accounts, told life and experienced life, does not help to solve the problem of understanding the social and historical context. To overcome this gap, the method of socio-historical analysis suggests changes from the early stages of data collection to the analysis of collected data. Accordingly, in addition to the biographical narratives, detailed data from the field research is required. Researchers

should collect data from ceremonies, commemorations, meetings that are relevant to the topic of the research, and the memoirs and audio-visual data that are available.

Theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss 1967) is the main principle of sampling in the biographical narrative interview method. Selection of historical facts seems to be a more complicated issue. While dealing with excessive amount of historical facts, researchers are expected to select some of those facts while excluding others without developing a biased perspective towards the research subject. To overcome the problem of limiting facts, I suggest collective memory researchers adhere to the framework/design of the research, as well as to their main research question (points of interest) by asking continuously, “which of these facts/events/transformations help me to understand that specific event and past experiences of the biographers?” Second, data about historical events and social changes needs to be tested analytically with the interview materials to understand if there is an interaction, or it does not have a crucial effect on the researched subject. Finally, it is important to discuss historical data with other researchers to include other perspectives and to avoid developing a biased perspective towards the researched event, subject, or period.

The first step in the socio-historical analysis of biographies, similar to the biographical case reconstruction method, is distinguishing lived life and narrated life; in other words, the past as experienced and the past as narrated. In both analytical steps, socio-historical conditions and the effects of

those conditions on the narrations of individuals and narrations in social contexts are included in the analysis. The steps in the socio-historical analysis of biographies are as follows:

- a1. Analysis of the biographical data (chronology of the experienced life)
- a2. Analysis of the past social, economic, and cultural changes (chronology of the historical events)
- b1. Life-Story of the Individual
- b2. Story of the past as re-constructed in collective representations
- c. Comparison and categorization

The analysis of the experienced past is similar to the biographical case reconstruction method. However, in the socio-historical analysis of the biographies, we need to distinguish between a chronological ordering of events in the life-course of the biographer and historical events in general in order to see the interplay between the biographies of individuals and the social structures. The hypothesis should also be based on the interaction between events in general and biographical changes. The first step of the analysis, thus far called the experienced past, helps memory researchers to understand the social frameworks of memory in the past, whereas the second step of the analysis, namely, the narrated past, facilitates understanding of the present reconstruction of the past and how that specific past is being reconstructed in group activities, which in turn affects individual remember-

ing. In the following sections, I will elaborate on the use of the method through empirical data from research about remembrance of the 1980 Turkish military coup d'état.

The Research and the Case of Merve

The research about the remembrance of the 1980 military coup d'état lasted almost four years between 2009 and 2013. It was conducted in both Germany and Turkey for a comparison between the reconstruction of the past by exiles who live in Germany and people who stayed in Turkey.¹ This comparative structure aimed at understanding how the remembrance of the same past event is reconstructed in the present by members of the political left. In addition to the biographical narrative interviews and expert interviews, field notes were gathered on commemorative ceremonies and other mnemonic practices, places, and tools (such as museums, monuments, memoirs) through the participant observation method.

I am going to use the case of Merve² to elaborate the method of socio-historical analysis of biographies in

¹ For the study I conducted 19 interviews, nine with women and ten with men. Nine of these interviews were conducted in Turkey and the other ten were done in Germany. The oldest interview partner was 61 and the youngest was 43 years old at the time of the interview. Excluding these two, the average age of the interviewees was 54. Most of the interview partners, apart from the aforementioned oldest and youngest, explained that they began to have sympathy for the left movement when they were in high school and were engaged in the left movement towards the end of the 70s. Another interesting characteristic of the biographies common to many is the similarity of their migration background. In seventeen interviews, interviewees talked about moving from rural Anatolian towns to big cities.

² All personal names, as well as the names of the locations, institutions, and organizations are pseudonyms.

detail.³ The interview was conducted in December 2010 in Germany. Merve was born in 1958, in a small city on the Black Sea coast of Turkey. She was the youngest child of five (one brother and three older sisters). Her father owned a restaurant in the city, and her mother was a housewife. The family moved to S. (a small city in the south east) when Merve was 6 years old, because her brother got a job there as a judge. In 1968, the family had to move again to city A., which is a relatively big city in the south, and there Merve finished primary school and started middle school. In 1973, after an exam to get into the Faculty of Education, she registered in a regular high school in her hometown. In 1975, while studying at high school, she met her future husband, Mehmet.

Mehmet was born in 1948 and was teaching literature at Merve's high school. Merve started working as a clerk in a state institute after her second unsuccessful attempt to study at the Faculty of Education. During her relationship with Mehmet, she began sympathizing with the leftist movement and started taking part in local activities. In 1977, Merve married Mehmet, who at that time was one of the leading revolutionaries in the city, and active in the teachers' union. After their marriage, they had problems with the state authorities because of their

³ In order to explain the interaction between biographical narrations and collective narrations, I refer to the main characteristics of mnemonic practices in the case of the 1980 military coup d'état, based on the findings of my research that lasted about four years. Because of space limitations, I am not able to discuss more cases (similar and counter), or provide a detailed analysis of commemorative events. Moreover, the aim of the paper is not to analyze a social phenomenon as a whole, rather to explain the methodological approach of socio-historical analysis of the biographies by focusing on one case as a sample to demonstrate the use of the method.

involvement with leftist organizations, and therefore were expelled to other cities several times.

On the morning of 12 September 1980, Merve, her sister, and Mehmet were arrested at her parents' house and taken to the Faculty of Education in the city, where they were all tortured. Merve was released at the beginning of November and Mehmet was transported to a Martial Law Inquiry Center in a neighboring city for questioning, which took 75 days. After the questioning period he was imprisoned in the military prison. Due to the brutal torture, Mehmet suffered from serious health problems between 1981 and 1984, while he was still in prison. After a medical report stating, that "Mehmet has throat cancer at the level of risk of death," he was released from prison. The family fled to Germany for treatment in March 1984, where they requested asylum.

In 1986, Merve gave birth to their daughter, their first child, and three years later, in 1989, their son was born. Merve and Mehmet were both active in the establishment and activities of a human rights organization in Germany. In 2006, Mehmet's health problems got worse and he suffered from an embolism, and he died in March 2007.

At the time of the interview, Merve was 52 years old and working part time in the social services sector. Based on her biography and the data from the book she has written in memory of her husband, the chronological ordering of her lived life could be made from her date of birth until 2010, the date of the interview. I demonstrate here only the events in Merve's life history until her release from the prison in 1980.

Table 1. Chronology of Merve's life history.

Date	Events
1958	Turkey, small town (Black Sea Coast) Gender: Female Father has a restaurant 4 older siblings (one brother and 3 sisters) Migration of family from I. (city) to A. (town) 16th November: Merve was born in (town)
1963 (5 years old)	Merve starts primary school Father closes the restaurant
1964-1965	Brother graduates from the Faculty of Law in A. (western city) and starts working as a judge in (eastern city) One of Merve's sisters gets married and gives birth to Merve's first nephew/niece Family moves from A. (town) to S. (an eastern city) (except one of her sisters) Merve continues primary school in S.
1968-1973	Family moves to (big city in the south) Merve finishes primary school and starts middle school
1973	Merve finishes middle school Merve moves to (town where she was born) and there she starts high school
1975	February: Mehmet (born in 1948) starts teaching literature at high school (the same high school where Merve is a student) Merve meets Mehmet, who is her future husband Involvement in X (leftist organization) Graduates from high school Registered at the Faculty of Education in (big eastern city)
1976	Merve starts working at the Institution of Forestry She is fired from this first job after 3 months She finds another job at a credit institution
1977 (19 years old)	18th June: Engaged to Mehmet (28 years old) 16th November: Married to Mehmet
1978	Merve's involvement in Civil Servants' Organization Mehmet is active at (Teachers' organization / Left)
1979	Merve is expelled to G. (city at the Black Sea Coast) Mehmet is expelled to B. (city in the east) On Mehmet's first day in B. (city), he is attacked at the hotel where he is staying and goes back to A.
1980 (22 years old)	Mehmet is expelled to K. (small conservative town) Merve and Mehmet go to K. together for 2-3 days and return to A. 12 September: Merve, her sister, and Mehmet arrested early in the morning They were brought to School of Education in A. for questioning Both Merve and Mehmet are tortured The first meeting of Merve and Mehmet since the coup (after 30 days) at the prison Mehmet is sent to Martial Rule Inquiry Centre in another city E. End of October: Mehmet is brought back to A. prison Mehmet is sent back to Inquiry Centre in E. Merve is released (end of October, beginning of November) Starts running a newspaper kiosk with another friend

Merve’s life history, although chronologically ordered with every possible experienced event by using additional sources, is on its own not effective in understanding in what circumstances it was “made.” Therefore, before starting a sequential abductive procedure, we need a detailed chronology of the economic, historical, and social upheavals and transformations that appeared during this period of Merve’s life. This second step in the chronology of past events in general is fairly common to all interviews for a particular subject of research, in this case the 1980 military coup d’état in Turkey. Nevertheless, in this step, the memory researcher should work like a historian who tries to connect the micro effects of macro-level changes and vice-versa. This means for each biographer, we need to do additional research

to find out the socio-historical conditions they experienced in that specific region and time: what other events happened in the place where the biographers lived, the organizational and institutional changes in which they were involved, et cetera.

The experience of rapid changes mostly does not come up in the biographical narratives, since they become part of ordinary life. The biographers do not go into the details of these ordinary events; they may assume that these are already known by the researcher. Therefore, before going into a detailed analysis of Merve’s narration, it is helpful to look at the table of events which is used in the analysis of each interview for the chronology of the past socio-historical events of the 1980 military coup d’état.

Table 2. Chronology of the past events concerning the 1980 military coup d’état in Turkey.

Date	Events
1960	27.05.1960 military coup d’état against the Democrat Party (DP) government (Execution of the Prime Minister Adnan Menderes and other members of the DP)
1971	12.03.1971 2nd military coup d’état
1972	30.03.1972 Kizildere Massacre 6.05.1972 execution of 3 THKO members: Deniz Gezmiş, Yusuf Aslan, Hüseyin İnan
1974	Cyprus Conflict
1977	1 May: Bloody May 05.06.1977 (national elections, CHP obtained the largest share of the vote—41%)
1978	05.01.1978 new government is established by Ecevit 16.03.1978 attack against university students in Istanbul. 7 killed, 41 wounded 04.09.1978 massacre in Sivas 09.10.1978 Bahçelievler massacre (murder of 7 TİP militants in Ankara) 26.12.1978 massacre in Maras (150 Alevis killed by extremists in Maras)
1979	11.07.1979 military operation in Fatsa Ecevit government withdrawn New right-wing coalition government established on 25.11.1979 27.12.1979 a warning letter from generals to the president
1980	24 January: IMF’s enforcement of economic regulations and approval of neo-liberal economic plan May-July: massacre in Corum (57 Alevis killed, according to official records) 12 September: coup d’état

Table 2 consists of the political, economic, and social upheavals experienced between 1960 and 1980, during the time-span that is the subject of the research. Many of my interview partners were born between the years 1955-1960, and involved in leftist politics towards the end of the 70s, thus they have gone through the events listed above.

In the case of Merve, after the sequential analysis of her biography, we can see the frequency of radical shifts in her life. The first period of her life could be summarized under the concept of mobility: since she was born, she had to move from one town to another, and from one city to another city with family members. The second period of her life consists of her marriage, education, and employment, as well as when she was politically active. Between 1978 and 1980, Merve and her husband were expelled many times. Looking at this data, the hypotheses regarding the first period is generated based on the family's decisions, and for the second period her and her husband's political engagement and activities.

If the rising social movements of the '70s and its effects on youth are excluded when looking at Merve's biography, one could falsely interpret that she and her husband had extraordinary life experiences as leftist militants. One could even think that Merve and her husband Mehmet were "marginal," "illegal," and "radical" militants. However, knowing the political ambivalence and violence in the country, the frequency of murders even in the rural sphere, massacres of civilians, strikes, students' and youth movements' activities, the hypothesis should refer to the commonness of political engagement in society, as well as state institutions' oppressive actions and

how individuals' lives were affected by those conditions. A similar example is Merve's narration about her and her family's mobility between the years 1958-1975. However, the hypothesis should be generated through comparing two tables: the chronology of the biographer's life history and the chronology of the socio-historical events. While generating hypotheses about Merve's family's frequent mobility, one needs to ask in what socio-political conditions the fact of mobility took place, in addition to generating hypotheses on personal choices, individual motivations, and other micro-level interests.

The first date in the table of socio-historical events is the military coup d'état against the Democrat Party (DP) government in 1960, followed by the second military coup d'état in 1971. From the beginning of the 1950s, the DP government supported mechanization in agriculture as arranged by the Marshall Plan agreed between the US and Turkish governments in 1948. The second key project of the DP government, following the Marshall Plan, was to build road networks in the country instead of investing in railways (the negative effects of not investing in railways were experienced especially during the oil crisis of 1973). The short-term effect of agricultural mechanization was unemployment among the rural population that did not own any means of production other than their labor. This labor was no longer needed in the mechanized rural areas and hence the 1950s also witnessed a dramatic acceleration of rural-to-urban migration in Turkey. Both push and pull factors were behind this movement, as conditions in rural areas differed widely across the country. The development of the road network also contributed to the new mobility (Pamuk 2008:282).

The effects of these political upheavals could be observed in Merve's life history. Mobility, which is common to other interviewees who come from rural families, could be understood in relation to macro-level structural changes summarized here. The most visible results of this internal migration from rural areas to cities were housing problems, and, in the long term, social, cultural, economic, and political conflicts between "newcomers" and the settled urban classes.

Having done this research on the political and economic structures, my hypothesis about Merve's family's mobility focuses more on the possible conflicts family members might have experienced with the urban classes and their attachment and interaction with other "newcomers." Following the analysis of the life history and the socio-historical data, the narration(s) of the past need to be analyzed by doing thematic field analysis as suggested in the biographical case reconstruction method. The next section will demonstrate how collective memory scholars can analyze life narrations and narrations of the past in mnemonic activities.

Analysis of Narrated (Reconstructed) Past

The analysis of the narrated past aims at understanding how the past is being remembered in the present and how collective memory is being reconstructed within the present social frameworks. Therefore, as in the case of the analysis of the experienced past, the analysis of the narrated past also has two main steps:

b1. Life story of the individual

b2. The story of the past as re-constructed in collective practices/representations/presentations

The second step of the analysis of the collective commemorative practices, which is missing in the biographical case reconstruction method, is based on data collected during ethnographical fieldwork. Each piece of data collected (memos, visual materials, meeting notes, letters) in the field should be classified according to the types of events, and then sequentialized depending on the text structure. The aim of this stage is to understand which of the past events are frequently "re-visited" in collective ceremonies, in what context and in which structure those events are being narrated, and which of the events are left out of the collective narrations in these present-day constructions of the past. Through this analysis of the collective narrations we try to comprehend the interaction between the memory of the past as re-constructed by groups and individuals' reconstructions. To put it another way, the objective in this analytical step is to understand the presentist characteristics of collective memory, as Halbwachs suggests.

Similar to the biographical case reconstruction method (Rosenthal 1993; 2003), we sequentialize the biographer's narration depending on the turn-takings, textual types, and thematic shifts. For thematic field analysis, collective memory researchers should put more emphasis on how biographers make sense of their biographies in relation to the experienced socio-political events for a better understanding of the "embeddedness of the biographical account in social macro structures" (Apitzsch and Siouti 2007:7). I shall demonstrate this step of analysis by

using Merve's narration. What follows is the part of Merve's narrative about her high school years, her meeting with Mehmet, and their marriage, and involvement in the left-wing movement, until the morning of the military coup d'état:

and we were married. Mehmet is at that time an important person for (Location-City) (Revolutionary Organization). Our marriage has been so good. We cooked together, set the dinner table together. I mean, it was a kind of marriage, you know, it is always said theoretically, but many revolutionaries do the other way in practice. It is again the male hegemony at home. Our house was so different. Everybody used to visit us, the young. They stayed in our house, we eat and drink together. One takes a shower, the other takes one of my pullovers from my wardrobe; one wears my pullover, the other Mehmet's. Actually, it was such a life like a commune. It was a house everyone wished to come and stay. We had books, and lent them to friends, discussions, talks. I was in the organization of civil servants. We established it and I was working there. Mehmet was in (Organization-teachers' union). Our organizations were in the same neighborhood. We go to organizations after work, and from there to home. I come home late at nights and wash the clothes in the machine, whirr... No time. At the weekends seminars, we went to well...awareness raising, local activities, et cetera. It was a very busy three years. There were not too many fascists in (Location-City) anyway. Usually people are social democrats. But, the fascists could //...// come from other cities and attack. I mean the things like murders were done by unknown perpetrators, could happen in the darkness. I mean our house was, we were going through pathways in

a forest. Every day on the way home (we were worried) if an attack would happen. As you know, those were the days, on the news we heard about one or two missing teachers every day. (Location-city) had many funerals from other cities. Many of them were teachers. //...// We lived in such a good period. A life where we got to know friendship; a life full of love and where we could die for each other. I was a civil servant and Mehmet was a teacher, ahh //...// I was exiled twice. How many times was Mehmet exiled? //...// Three or so, he was also exiled. The change of decision takes such a long time of course, the change done by the high court, Supreme Court. When he started working, they exiled him again to somewhere else. He was exiled to (Location-Town). He went there, and the night he went they put a bomb in front of the hotel. Well, they threatened him and so on. It was a very fascist town. He came back and later //...// ahh... One day the movements, everywhere in Turkey, the workers were demonstrating for their rights, students and workers became more aware. Women started to become more aware, and wanted their free rights. We were in my mother's [house], one night //...// in the morning. But, the day before we painted our apartment, a friend came from (Location-city). He said, "You painted the house, but the future, the near future does not seem likely." He meant that something like a coup d'état could happen. I mean, we knew it and they knew it. Friends who were in charge did not do enough (preventive steps). Okay, they began in the villages. I mean, they began to dig the things, shelters and so on, but when I think now, we weren't cautious enough. That night we stayed at my mother's. Early in the morning came the police cars, announcements, the military, and a curfew.

Sequentialization of this part of the interview according to text types is as follows.

Table 3. Sequentialization of the interview with Merve.

Text type	
Report	Marriage. "Mehmet was at that time an important person for (Organization-Revolutionary)."
Narration	The early part of the marriage, like communal life with friends.
Report	Involvement in organizations
Narration	Attacks of "fascists" and fear because of daily kidnappings.
Description	She works as a civil servant and Mehmet as a teacher.
Report	Exiled to other cities and threat against Mehmet in a town.
Narration	Rise in the revolutionary movement in Turkey.
Narration	The morning of the military coup.
Argumentation	Friends knowing before, but were not prepared against military.
Narration	"Early in the morning came the police cars, announcements, the military, and a curfew."

In combination with this sequentialized data, we can now focus on the thematic field analysis by generating hypotheses according to thematic shifts and turn-takings. In this account, there is no turn-taking between interviewer and biographer; rather, it is

a flow of narration with frequent changes in structure between narration, report, description, and argumentation. Merve's and her husband's involvement in the left organizations and being exiled to other cities and towns come up as reports, whereas attacks, kidnappings, growth of the revolutionary movement, and the morning of the military coup d'état come up as narration.

The narrated life story should be analyzed together with the collectively narrated past: namely, the narrations of the past as re-constructed in collective practices, representations, or presentations. Mnemonic practices such as ceremonies and commemorations are particularly important for collective memory studies. This set of events and ceremonies is the phenomenon of ritual action, which is not only formal action that has expressive purposes, but also the practice of meaning-making and internalizing it. "Rites have the capacity to give value and meaning to the life of those who perform them" (Connerton 1989:45). By practicing ritual behavior, members of a group show their loyalty to that group and strengthen the idea of "we." The meanings of the ritual act which are embodied and transferred in and by symbolic texts, images, and figures are usually perceived and practiced without questioning. This does not mean that their existence is generated from some kind of abstract spiritual phenomenon, although they often appear to be, but from the material conditions of the present and the concrete needs of groups. We need to focus on how myths and rituals are formalized and performed, and on the ways they are effective in transmitting values, notions, ideas, and, in general, social memory, instead of seeking "to understand the 'hidden' point

that lies ‘behind’ ritual symbolism” (Connerton 1989:53).

Similarly, commemorative ceremonies are practices of constructing the past—who/what to remember, and how to remember. In other words, “the commemoration does the memory work for us” (Gook 2011:17). They are acts of collective remembering which in turn fill the gaps in individual recollections, emphasize some of the names, places, and events (i.e., ideas, notions, and values)—positively or negatively—and underestimate or exclude “others.” Commemorations are tools for making sense of history and constructing an agreed past. It is memory in practice, remembering with other members of the “we” group; in short, generating, strengthening, and “polishing” the collective identity. “The remnants of experience still live in the warmth of custom, in the repetition of the ancestral” (Nora 1989:7). Commemoration and rituals are the mediums that carry history/tradition into the present; they are the “place” where individuals can participate.

In my fieldwork, I participated in commemorations, conferences, and other ceremonies in both Turkey and Germany regarding the 1980 military coup d’état, mostly as a part of the audience. In some cases, I was invited as a guest by the organizers who knew about my research. Since my research question was about the remembrance of members of the political left in Turkey, I followed those mnemonic activities of the organizations that have connections with the left-wing movement in 1970s’ Turkey. I particularly followed the events in which my interview partners were involved either as organizers or as guests. Additionally, I have visited memory sites

(museums, monuments, prisons, exhibitions) regarding the past of the military coup.

The data from the collective activities needs to be categorized based on the thematized events and the structures of the narrations. While generating the hypothesis, collective memory scholars should ask what comes into commemorations, which events are narrated and how, what is left out, and how they are being told or presented. For memory sites and tools we also need to ask which images are dominating, what the order of the visual data is, and how it is presented. For instance, in my research of both memory sites and mnemonic practices, the narrations of the executions of members of the left movement are based on heroization and victimization. The past before the military coup d’état and the characteristics of those executed are glorified with the concepts of “the good old days,” “collectivism,” and “good friendships,” whereas the times after the military coup d’état are labeled with the terms “individualism,” “selfishness,” and “insecurity.”

In the comparison of the analysis of the commemorative events with biographical narrations, one can see the commonalities or differences between the individual construction of the past and social constructions of the past. It is worth analyzing which of the remembered events is similarly narrated, and which differ in commemorative ceremonies and memory sites. This helps us to discover the dynamics of reconstructing the past of a particular period or particular event(s) for a specific group of people (victims, survivors, perpetrators, or post-generations). In the case of Merve, she also refers to the “collectivism” between friends that is glorified, and

it is not difficult to assume that post-coup d'état, Merve's narration will continue with the destroyed relationships among friends and lack of solidarity, and hence the individualistic society in the present. For a better understanding of her narration of the "friendship," we need to generate our hypotheses considering the construction of this concept in the mnemonic practices. Similarly, while generating hypotheses on her narration of her husband, which is marked with concepts of "proud" and "pain," we need to consider the hegemonic discourse of victimization and heroization in the commemorative activities of the revolutionaries in general.

In my research on the commemorative events, I have observed the male dominance in the construction of the past of the revolutionary movement. Literally and visually, the gender of an "ordinary natural" revolutionary is pictured as male. Only in special circumstances, for instance, when talking about the resistance at the Mamak Military Prison, are the revolutionaries defined as "our female comrades," so "we" naturally refers to men. In the conferences and commemorative events, women are invited as witnesses to talk about their lost loved ones—husbands, brothers, or sons—but not to speak about their own experiences as revolutionaries. At conferences about the coup, there are usually separate sections named "Women and the '78s," "Women and 12th September," or "Women and the Revolution." This attitude is also observed at the Shame Museum, where the exhibited objects are selected by the organization of Revolutionary 78s. One small section on the top floor is given to female revolutionaries to exhibit their memories of 12th September. Even there, women are related with motherhood as baby clothes are exhib-

ited. Similarly, at Ulucanlar Prison Museum, there is almost nothing exhibited about the women revolutionaries who were imprisoned there and moreover the then-women's wing now serves as the gift shop of the prison museum. While generating a hypothesis on Merve's "overemphasis" on her husband's political activities, in addition to the hypotheses we generate on her personal explanations and structure of her narration, we need to consider the interaction between her narration and main characteristics of the narrations at the commemorative practices. In this case, we may, for instance, ask how the gendered image of "revolutionary" in collective representations and narrations affect Merve's narration of her husband's and her own political activities. This hypothesis needs to be tested by comparing similar and counter biographies.

For the step of final categorizations, both life story and life history analysis need to be compared and types and categories need to be constructed at an abstract level of the theory of collective memory. Some of the questions that need to be asked are: What are the main characteristics of remembering the past? Which actors play important roles and how? How do the group members remember the past in the present? Which events have left marks on the memory of this particular era and why? Similarly, which events are forgotten and why? Which of the political and social conditions are effective in remembrance of this particular event/era today? Asking these questions allows us to discuss remembrance of the researched event or era at the abstract level of understanding and contribute or challenge the theories concerning collective memory and biographical research.

Conclusion

In this article, I have discussed the method of socio-historical analysis and its use in memory studies. Similar to other qualitative research methods dealing with life stories, such as oral history, the life-history approach, the qualitative longitudinal and case-history methods, and biographical case reconstruction method, the method of socio-historical analysis aims at understanding the life stories within their social and historical contexts and tries to provide a “thick description” of a researched social phenomenon. To understand the effects of structural transformations on actors’ decisions and actions, longitudinal studies require “continuous research in the same small society over a number of years” (Holland, Thomson, and Henderson 2006:5). Based on the same need, the method of socio-historical analysis suggests analyzing social and political upheavals of the past that might have affected the narratives of the biographers.

In addition, the method of socio-historical analysis suggests a dual analysis of biographical narratives and narratives of mnemonic events in their socio-historical past and present contexts, which makes the

method particularly important for memory studies. Using the data from field research about the remembrance of the 1980 military coup d’état in Turkey, I have demonstrated two additional steps used in the method of socio-historical analysis: (1) chronology and analysis of the past social, economic, and cultural changes; and (2) analysis of the narration of the past as re-constructed in collective representations and practices. Through the case of Merve, I have demonstrated how biographies could be analyzed in relation to past socio-historical changes and present mnemonic practices. Such an analytical attempt to understand the interaction between biographies and socio-historical transformations could be perceived as an attempt to understand the use of the past by opposing groups (victims/perpetrators, authorities/general public, minorities/majorities, oppressed groups/dominants), power relations, and the dynamics of social belonging. Here, the method is discussed in relation to the theory of collective memory. However, I do believe that scholars from other disciplines could also benefit from this method, since the socio-historical analysis of narrations entails a discussion of memory in relation to construction of group solidarity, identity, and ideology.

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