

AN AGE OF ABSURDISM:
TURKISH FOREIGN POLICY &
CLAIMS OF GENOCIDE

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Abstract

This thesis joins the increasing literature on the ontological security commitments of states. It focuses on Turkish foreign policy in the context of genocide claims and how it responds by keeping a consistent narrative. By focusing on Turkish identity, it is important to look at pressures created from within and outside the state. Since its foundation, the Republic of Turkey has maintained a self-reflection of historical purity that has been constant regardless of multiple identity elements such as Kemalist and Islamist in its one hundred years of outright denial of the Armenian genocide. Therefore, I argue that it is willing to jeopardize relationships with other states in order to keep a continuity of innocence in the face of genocide claims. In addition, the Turkish government's failure to adequately address and remember its past has played a severe role in hindering its global influence.

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List of Abbreviations

APK—Justice and Development Party

ASALA—Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia

EP—European Parliament

EU—European Union

TFP—Turkish Foreign Policy

MENA—Middle East and North Africa

NATO—North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NSA—Non-State Actor

UN—United Nations

Introduction

Every day one faces reminders that life is full of contraries and April 24, 2015 was no different. Two historical events took place that had contradictory meanings. Both were in celebration of centennial anniversaries—one in Yerevan and the other in the Gallipoli peninsula. Armenians gathered from all around the globe to commemorate the killing and deportations of their forebears by the Ottoman Turks, while Turkish officials honored a different centennial event that paid respects to the country's greatest victorious battle during WWI—the Battle of Gallipoli. The dual remembrances illustrates a lasting bitterness between Armenians, who call on the Turkish government to acknowledge as genocide the killing of their ancestors, and the Turkish authorities that hold to the position that the killing of up to 1.5 million Armenians was an awful but unintended result of a bloody war. While the display in Yerevan was sorrowful, calling upon empathy, the Turkish tribute sparked emotions of strength and purity that stick to the core of its identity since the nation-state was founded in 1923. In the background of this example, lies what Camus terms as an *age of absurdity*,¹ in which issues must be comprehended in a time of disagreement and contention over narration and character.² For example, most notably, François Hollande and Vladimir Putin joined in at the ceremony in Armenia, while various heads of states, including from Iraq and Pakistan

¹ Brian C. Sleasman, *Albert Camus's Philosophy of Communication: Making sense in an Age of Absurdity*, (New York: Cambria Press), 2011, 15

² Sleasman, 2

participated in Turkey,³ which illustrates that world leaders must navigate through this issue and engage where action or avoiding action bare consequence.

Another interesting aspect about this story is the speculation that President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan scheduled to have the Gallipoli event to purposefully overshadow the one in Armenia. If true, changing the date to coincide on the same day displays Turkey's strong dependence on ontological security, as it avoids increasing insecurity and anxiety about the future amongst significant others who do not shame them. Further, this trust in others develops in conjunction with the formation of an inner sense of trustworthiness, providing a basis of a stable self-identity afterwards.⁴ As a result, foreign policy decisions are influenced under such conditions.

Next, the importance in explaining and understanding a new Turkish foreign policy (TFP) starts at the crossroad of two major, although not totally unconnected changes in the world. The clearest change is the creation of a modern state out of the collapsed Ottoman Empire, while the second and more recent change is the end of the Cold War—both present challenges to Turkey to reevaluate its role in the world. For the dissolution of the Soviet Union forced a reconstructing of TFP. It could be said that Turkey is no longer just a buffer state of geopolitical importance, which has led to a new foreign policy behavior. Although the end of the Cold War, removed the Soviet threat, it also decreased Turkey's vital importance for a continued Western strategy. This once again brought up questions of Turkey's role in the West in general. A reason to focus on Turkey in a post-Soviet threat environment is precisely because during the 1980s and

³ Deniz Aslan, *Gallipoli events lose flair with many no-shows, low-level reps*, Today's Zaman, April 22, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_gallipoli-events-lose-flair-with-many-no-shows-low-level-reps_378693.html, (accessed May 13, 2015)

⁴ Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, (Stanford: Polity Press 1991), 94-95

1990s Turkey's cultural incompatibilities with the European Union were heightened, and the genocide issues were raised again, which gives justifications for exploring identity considerations.⁵

Since Turkey is a medium sized power, it is affected by global political events, which in turn affects its foreign policy. Lately there has been a lot of discussion in regards to the Armenian Genocide and its international acknowledgment or lack thereof. Truly, genocide is the biggest crime against mankind, and any allegations of genocide have serious legal and moral impacts for perpetrators that mightily resist and defy such claims and accusations. Briefly, genocide is an event of mass killing, but it should be understood that although there are massive numbers of victims there does not need to be massive numbers of killers.⁶

To date, the most known case of genocide denial is surely the Turkish stance that the Armenian killings in the early 1900s do not fall under the umbrella of genocide. While reshaping the past is hopeless, it is crucial to learn from it in the hopes of developing a better future for all. The long-term effects, which are both psychological and political, are more visible today than ever before. Turkey and Armenia still do not have strong diplomatic relations, while their borders remain closed. In the following chapters these concerns will be discussed in greater detail. Other than making reference to an Ottoman past to demonstrate the fluidity of identity in relation to a modern Turkish state, discussion pre-1980s will primarily be beyond the scope of this thesis. Since, much of the literature about the Armenian Genocide focuses on the events around WWI, and

⁵ Yücel Bozdaglioglu, *Turkish Foreign Policy and Identity: A Constructivist Approach*, (New York: Routledge 2003), 92

⁶ Ronald Grigor Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide*, (Princeton University Press, 2015), 361 (Kindle)

the early modern Turkish era, it will be beneficial to discuss developments in a post-Cold War environment. Also, I will be looking at how the Armenian question can be used almost as a barometer for the democratization process that Turkey is making or curbing.

Furthermore, this thesis does not intend to fill in any theoretical gap by contributing to historical or political quarrels but to provide solid theoretical information of genocide claims and its role in constructing TFP. I will conduct a discourse analysis that demonstrates how decision-makers respond to such claims and how it translates into its foreign policy. This is primarily library-based research that uses secondary literature in English. Also, there is reference made to official and unofficial speeches, policy briefs and reports. My main thesis question is although there have been changes to Turkish foreign policy, why are decision-makers unwilling to budge when it comes to confronting its past—namely the genocide confession? Therefore, I argue that Turkey is more concerned with a consistent self-narrative or ontological security, over that of physical security. Although there are multiple elements to Turkish identity, the foundational republic narrative attempts not to diverge from the idea of national purity. That is to say, romanticizing about the inception of the nation-state replaced the unbearable reminders of humiliating military defeat, lost land, and committed massacres. Essentially the nation-state was founded in struggle against its own social realities.⁷

Voltaire is known for saying, “*Those who can make you believe absurdities can make you commit atrocities*,” which drives the point that much destruction has been conducted and perpetuated by ordinary people in the face of nationalist imperatives.⁸

⁷ Taner Akçam, *From Empire to Republic: Turkish Nationalism and the Armenian Genocide* (New York: Zed Books 2004), 25

⁸ Richard Ashby Wilson, *Writing History in International Criminal Trials*, (New York: Cambridge University Press), 2011, 22

With that said, it is crucial to understand that this research is not intended to place blame on the present Turkish government for crimes committed under an Ottoman past. Also, it is important to keep the dialogue active from the outside, as has the Armenian diaspora, as well as from inside where civil society has grown increasingly strong within Turkey to challenge citizenship education. This in turn may inspire heads of state monologues to develop into “genuine” dialogue.⁹ The biggest hurdle to overcome is that there remain divergences in perspectives; meaning that atrocities are interpreted differently by different people—always with intent to downplay the accusations of guilt. In addition, within Turkish literature there exists multiple narrations that focus on the recent Ottoman-Turkish past, like the Turkish War of Independence, yet the Armenian question has only been pursued seriously within the last decade or so.¹⁰ The way forward may not be stressing the moral demand against violence because it often leads to a dead end since each side wishes to exemplify a moral narrative that is superior over the other. Informally, many historians and sociologists acknowledge the genocide, yet in the formal arena, acknowledgement by states is rather slow to progress, and powerful institutions like the United Nations (UN) do not show any signs to recognize it in the near future.

This topic is important because the use of history and memory has acquired a central role in national politics and international relations, and genocide is arguably one of the most sensitive issues in this respect. In addition, this subject is puzzling because there are incentives to acknowledge the genocide, which would bring about rewards for

⁹ Martin Buber’s phrase *genuine dialogue* goes further than just exchanging words but exists when there are no attempts to manipulate the relationship and the partner in dialogue is thought of as a person with whom shares this world.

¹⁰ Ronald Grigor Suny, *A Question of Genocide: Armenians and Turks at the End of the Ottoman Empire* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), See in particular the *Introduction: Leaving it to the Historians*

Turkey,¹¹ yet there remain stumbling blocks. In the first chapter, I will be outlining my research methodology and conceptual framework, which will include a review of the literary debates on the ontological security and realist divide in international relations that compete in explaining state interaction. Further, I devote discussion to the role of non-state actors, and the continued existential threats to the Turkish narrative of innocence. The second chapter will look at a case study, which revolves around the notions: law, land, and memory, and how it connects to Turkish foreign Policy (TFP), helping to preserve ontological security. The third chapter of the thesis will be an analysis through an ontological security framework, adapted by Anthony Giddens. Finally, this thesis will give concluding remarks established in its findings.

My research is based on a qualitative analysis of Turkish foreign policy, primarily reviewing secondary sources such as scholarly publications on TFP. In addition, I have carefully reviewed statements and speeches by Turkish decision-makers, mainly by President Erdoğan, the prime minister and foreign minister. I was restrained in some degree to secondary sources, meaning that I had to analyze Turkish-to-English translated speeches by Turkish decision-makers. The Turkish Foreign Ministry website offers an ample collection of speeches and articles about the Armenian question, which I examined in the search of ways the Turkish state pivots away from genocide confession. Furthermore, this thesis will build off of existing theories of ontological security, as it relates to the field of international relations. Its application to decision making in TFP will help to expand the scope of the theory in an area mainly unexamined.

¹¹ Ayşe Zarakol, *Ontological (In)security and State Denial of Historic Crimes: Turkey and Japan*, Sage Publications, 2010, 24 1, 4

In addition, applying this theory will assist in understanding the anomaly of contraries within the field of security studies. This notion will shift away from a realist core on physical security. I will scrutinize whether the theory of ontological security can clarify TFP in the face of genocide claims. By utilizing the method of discourse analysis, it becomes plausible to assess whether there have been variations throughout the years and determine the factors and explanations for such changes or continuations in TFP. As the research progressed, it became crucial to examine TFP and its significance in order to report an interpretation of the main puzzle. Nevertheless, the conscious aim to remain objective and to not stray from the set research program has been made.

Chapter 1—Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework used in this thesis combines multiple insights from ontological security theory, communication ethics, and collective memory studies. I argue that, first and foremost, Turkey's actions place commitments on securing self-identity to promote a healthy vision of itself to others. I am interested in the ways actors create meanings for their actions. Sociologist, Anthony Giddens discussed the impact of increasingly intensified 'dilemmas,' which are contradictory in nature, such as ontological security against existential anxiety.¹² Giddens gives the example of a child and a caregiver and the importance of routines needed to raise a child. He draws on previous physiological works, arguing that this example builds a basic trust, through which the infant can make sense of himself, the caregiver and the broader world he is situated in, and in return provides a fundamental sense of security.¹³

So, if Giddens is correct, the component of certainty or stability regarding one's identity is crucial for realizing a certain level of trust in future events. Therefore, the ontological security framework emphasizes the need to deter anxiety in respect to future happenings. In regards to ontological security, I hypothesize that TFP is particularly vulnerable to established anxieties. This is due to the fact that Turkey's belonging in the international area remains questionable.¹⁴ Also, Turkey tends to look for signals from the West before venturing into conflict.¹⁵ If Turkey backs down from allowing the United

¹² Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, (Stanford: Polity Press, 1991), 35-37

¹³ Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, 95-97

¹⁴ Zarakol, 6

¹⁵ After the condemned Cyprus invasion of 1974, Turkey has primarily played to the wishes of United States when it comes to military ventures, even with its recent increased regional influence and economic growth. Under the Clinton Administration massive arms sales went into

States from using its bases, it would strain the relationship significantly, as previously seen when Turkey refused to allow America to use its land in the 2003 Iraqi War, in return the U.S. has increased its support for the Kurdish minority population in northern Turkey, undermining Turkish sovereignty.

As these situations intensify, the state must confront existential dilemmas, such as genocide claims, which are ordinarily concealed by way of detachment.¹⁶ Since anniversaries are often acknowledged most during five and ten year intervals, it allows ample time to guard against seen-before routines that bring about insecurity. Furthermore, an ontological security context allows us to understand the importance it plays as a concept in international relations theory. Secondly, ontological security is explored to demonstrate how TFP continues to be based on the commitment to face threats to its self-identity, along with the external need to emphasize a social identity to the international community.

The account explored here is weighed more heavily on the constructivist end of the scale. In addition, the impasse between the desire for advancement and the desire for comfort can possibly be cleared up through closer inspection on the finer points of view of ontological security. Below is a chart that gives a basic outline of the differences between physical and ontological securities:

Turkey, which were used against the members of the PKK, and under Obama there is cooperation to help the U.S. train Syrian rebels to fight Islamic State militants.

¹⁶ Anthony Giddens, *The Nation-State and Violence: Volume two of a Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism*, (Oxford: Polity Press 1985), 326

Table 1: Variation in securities

| PHYSICAL SECURITY | ONTOLOGICAL SECURITY |
|---|---|
| Security of the body | Security of the self |
| Survival | Stability |
| Freedom from danger and threats posed by an external entity | Maintaining self-narratives, clear distinction between self and other, emphasis on routines |
| Fear | Anxiety |

In *Concept of Anxiety*, Kierkegaard discussed anxiety and fear to some length.¹⁷ At first look the words do not appear much different, while even mistakenly used as synonyms. First, fear has a definite object, which can be attacked, analyzed, or encountered. On the other hand, anxiety leads to the fact that what threatens lies nowhere. So, there is a fundamental anxiety that we will not be able to continue our being—this form of existence, as we know it. Therefore, it is common to transform anxieties into fears in efforts to control or cope. It is converted because fears are something we can deal with at an individual level and this transcends up to the state level. For example, Suny notes:

the inferior status of Muslims in the industrial and commercial world only intensified the sense of exploitation at the hands of Armenians and foreigners. Anxiety about the status, xenophobia, and general insecurity about the impersonal transformations of modern life combined to create resentments toward and anxieties about the Armenians.¹⁸

¹⁷ Søren Kierkegaard, *The Concept of Anxiety: A Simple Psychological Orienting Deliberation on the Dogmatic Issue of Hereditary Sin*, (Princeton: University Press, 1980), 109

¹⁸ Suny, 69 (Kindle)

Although at times hidden, anxiety is always present. The anxiety of coming apart, falling into non-existence through an existential interruption where self-narrative is questioned as being flawed by genocide claims by countries that can offer physical security, solidifies the importance of ontological security. So, for Turkish elites it is beneficial to maintain this conflictual narrative with Armenia because it serves their power purposes, meaning that embedded enemy images, and prejudices remain indefinitely, although Turkey cannot help but stare at the possibility of guilt in committing genocide.

1.1 Ontological Security & Realist Divide

In recent years, a number of scholars in international relations have argued that states not only pursue physical security, but also are in pursuit of ontological security to maintain a certain identity narrative. I will look at this debate within the field of international relations theory—the ontological security and realist schools of thought. Since there are multiple thoughts within each category, I will outline the general points of each. Both theories have ways of explaining foreign policy decisions but reach different conclusions. One definite result of the clear changes in TFP has been the plethora of theoretical efforts that focus on analyzing and explaining TFP as an alternative to the realist interpretation that has dominated the field since the Cold War era. This review will summarize and discuss the arguments brought up within the section.

Due to the changing climate after the end of the Cold War, it is only natural to see a shift in TFP direction, since almost all states were affected. This change did not come

quickly and there was hesitancy to develop a new foreign policy.¹⁹ Only was a clearer strategy developed when the Justice and Development Party (AKP) won in November of 2002.²⁰ Interestingly, there were two domestic identities shaping: one belonging to pro-Western elitists, and the other belonging to social actors that felt discluded and no need to make this identity shift. This follows up right into today where contested identities are troubled to find an equal balance, leading to a confused and disoriented foreign policy.²¹ Some scholars have interpreted and described these changes as neo-Ottomanism,²² due to a more self-assured position in an old Ottoman landscape. Although not intended to carry imperialist tones, it often conjures up negative responses from regions outside of Turkey.

Another way of looking at the modern state is through a Kemalist²³ image where secular elements balanced an Islamic society by incorporating nationalism. This vision endorsed a more democratic project, taking cues from the West. The flipside of the secularist Kemalists would be the Islamists, which tends to lean more in favor of an Ottoman past, disapproving closer ties to Europe in preference of stronger ones with Muslim states. So as represented by the different identities, TFP is challenging to analyze. To resume, the consensus among realists is that states rationally pursue specified

¹⁹ Göktürk Tüysüzoğlu, *Strategic Depth: A Neo-Ottomanist Intepretation of Turkish Eurasianism*, Mediterranean Quarterly, 25:2, 2014, 91

²⁰ Ahmet Sözen (2010) *A Paradigm Shift in Turkish Foreign Policy: Transition and Challenges*, Turkish Studies, 11:1, 104

²¹ Hasan Kösebalaban, *Torn Identities and Foreign Policy: The Case of Turkey and Japan*, Insight Turkey Vol.10, No.1, 2008 pp.5-30, 6

²² Hugh Pope, *Pax Ottomana? The Mixed Success of Turkey's New Foreign Policy: Political, Economic, Intellectual Roots*, Foreign Affairs 89, 2010, 6

²³ Mustafa Kemal Atatürk was the first President of Turkey who led a range of reforms which is known as *Kemalism*

goals in a state-centric structure while believing that states maintain fixed identities.²⁴ The image of the state is organized in a hierarchal manner where power is understood as the management over material possessions: the more powerful the state is, the freer or more physically secure it is and, thus, the closer it comes to the Westphalian model. Therefore it is common to ignore any social structural framework of foreign policy. To negate that one is joining an ongoing conversation of ideas is to ignore the ever-changing new thoughts as new people join into that particular conversation. Recently, realist schools of thought tend to have a harder sell in the world of IR (international relations) academe therefore its theories are most often supported and written about by not only academics, but also politicians and journalists. Mitzen notes that it is crucial to understand that ontological security is a core need, which can be likened to that of physical security.²⁵ While also adding, “no realist argument fully captures the identity effects of persistent conflict, because none acknowledges the social construction of state identity,”²⁶ yet seems to omit the importance of narration for self-identity. Yilmaz is in accord with this sentiment arguing, “Turkey has been recently pursuing a value based foreign policy” to attain its objectives: one that prioritizes values over interests.”²⁷

Ontological security theorists in IR wish to incorporate ideas in regards to an actors’ impression of subjectivity, where there is more to consider than say the balance of

²⁴ Faruk Yalvaç, *Approaches to Turkish Foreign Policy: A Critical Realist Analysis*, Turkish Studies, 15:1, 2014, pg 121

²⁵ Jennifer Mitzen, *Ontological Security in World Politics: State Identity and the Security Dilemma*, European Journal of International Relations, Vol. 12, no. 3, 2006 343 (accessed May 15, 2015)

²⁶ Ibid, 343

²⁷ Yunus Yilmaz, *Turkey’s challenge to the realist world order*. Turkish Policy Quarterly, Volume 10, Number 2, 2011, 88

power. It should be noted that ontological security does not negate the importance of a material world, but some facts are present only because we attribute a “certain function or meaning to them.”²⁸ Thus, power formation and its application are shaped by the actors’ identity opposed to universal anarchy. Further, Steele stresses that “elites and state masses will conform to this prevailing view of self-identity while attempting to quiet any discourses which serve to challenge it.”²⁹ As Kösebalaban argues, national identities do not only appear from state-to-state communication within the international system, but form through a process of constant interactions that compete at the domestic level.³⁰ For instance, there was an endogenous struggle to rid an elite Ottoman language by introducing a western alphabet. This was in no way an easy feat against government bureaucrats who called into question such a change,³¹ which was spearheaded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. Nevertheless, the romanization reform took place, modernizing a Turkish national identity where an increased sense of patriotism lifted with literacy, leaving behind the Ottoman mixture of Arabic and Persian. Writers with varying degrees of opinion such as radical Turkish nationalist Ziya Gökalp and communist sympathizer Nâzim Hikmet helped to pave the language reform that quieted a historic national character, calling on those to write as they speak.³² It is certain that the symbolic gesture of a new script was extremely important in shaping a new identity—showing the world its westernization in action, while simultaneously attempting to establish an untainted

²⁸ Stefano Guzzini, *A Reconstruction of Constructivism in International Relations*, European Journal of International Relations, Vol 6, No. 2, 2000, 160

²⁹ Brent J. Steele, *Ontological Security in International Relations: Self-identity and the IR State*, (New York: Routledge, 2011), 151

³⁰ Kösebalaban, 10

³¹ Laurent Mignon, *The Literati and the Letters: A Few Words on the Turkish Alphabet Reform*. Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland, 2012 (accessed May 20, 2015)

³² Mutlu Konuk Blasing, *Nâzim Hikmet: The Life and Times of Turkey’s World Poet, Persia 2013*, 80-83

republic. Therefore, a foundational shift from Ottoman patriotism to Turkish nationalism took root. It is crucial to understand that during the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire the nation within was in the works of being imagined.³³ As Celarent notes, since much of the Armenian population died, it left much of the last days of the Ottoman Empire majorly speaking Turkish, leading to its positive reconstruction.³⁴ Now, Turkish is the language of authority and nationality, placed in the balance of stability of location and cultural fashion. Also, name changes to historic cities and landmarks of non-Muslim origin were transformed into Turkish ones.³⁵ Just as art is created through abstractions and carvings, narratives about self must highlight some experiences over the expense of others.³⁶ Further, this sets parameters for a purposeful narrative that guides the self with necessary information that answers where we began, where we are, and where we could be going.

Giddens stressed the importance of biographical narrative, which works as an ‘anxiety controlling mechanism’ to provide ontological security in a community environment.³⁷ Fidan states that when it comes to conflict resolution, Turkey tends to abstain from using forceful means, preferring a reliance on diplomatic measures,³⁸ which is to say it values multiparty talks over unilateral moves. Within the realist understanding this makes sense because Turkey has less wiggle room to make errors in foreign policy as

³³ Suny, *They Can Live in the Desert but Nowhere Else: A History of the Armenian Genocide*, 356

³⁴ Babara Celarent, *Turkish Nationalism and Western Civilization*, American Journal of Sociology, Vol. 117, No.5, 2012, 1559

³⁵ Lusine Sahakyan, *Turkification of the Toponyms in the Ottoman Empire and The Republic of Turkey*, Arod Books, 2010, 7-8

³⁶ Felix Berenskoetter, *Parameters of a national biography*, European Journal of International Relations March 2014 vol. 20 no.1, 269

³⁷ Giddens, *Modernity and Self Identity*, (Cambridge: Polity Press 1991), 39

³⁸ Hakan Fidan, *A Work in Progress: The New Turkish Foreign Policy*, Middle East Policy, Vol. XX, No. 1, Spring 2013

opposed to the United States. Yet, the common motto: *Peace at Home, Peace in the World*,³⁹ is commonly expressed but remains highly questionable since there has been little peace at home in regards to its Kurdish minority population, where the government launched a major war in 1984 that resulted in massive ethnic cleansing along with thousands of destroyed villages.⁴⁰ Therefore, the Kemalist foreign policy guiding principle that is concerned with physical security of the state⁴¹ could easily seep into the cognitive level where *Peace of Mind* is the foundation that keeps a state stable. Next, some would equate Turkey's diplomacy to soft power as a way to strategize its foreign policy. This is questionable since it refers to soft power as an instrument of foreign policy just as realists refer to hard power in a similar manner—meaning a state-centric framework.

Further realist proponents focus on conditions where states must maximize relative power because the international system is anarchic, meaning that there is no higher authority that states can turn to.⁴² If states perceive the system as noncompetitive, they are susceptible to punishment for their idealism. Also, realists look at the overall grand strategy that must deal with its threat environment. Due to geographical placement, Turkey faces multiple problems sitting at the crossroads of Europe and Asia. Yankik argues that due to Turkey's unique locale, it constructs an identity as a meeting place of different continents where its Ottoman past is recalled to represent a multicultural

³⁹ *Turkish Foreign Policy During Ataturk's Era*, <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-foreign-policy-during-ataturks-era.en.mfa>, (accessed May 14, 2015)

⁴⁰ Robert Fisk, *Turkey prosecutes Chomsky publisher for essay on Kurds*, The Independent, 24 January 2002, <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/turkey-prosecutes-chomsky-publisher-for-essay-on-kurds-9147356.html> (accessed May 17, 2015)

⁴¹ Umut Uzer, *Identity and Turkish Foreign Policy: The Kemalist Influences in Cyprus and the Caucasus*, (New York: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd) 2011, 56

⁴² John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics* New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc, 2001 (EBOOK), 87

way.⁴³ There has been criticism by Benli Altuniş that Erdoğan has brought the Ottoman Empire and Islam back into the Turkish identity and state,⁴⁴ which can be thought to wedge a contradictory identity at the international and domestic level. Uzer states that identities as well as national interests are crucial in explaining Turkish state behavior.⁴⁵ His approach falls in between the constructivist and realist analysis, but it is challenging to adopt this view since it incorporates different starting points.

1.2 Nonstate Actors, Existential Threats, & Response

On April 12, 2015, inside St. Peter's Basilica, Pope Francis used the word "genocide" to refer to the mass killings of Armenians, which happened a century ago:

In the past century, our human family has lived through three massive and unprecedented tragedies. The first, which is widely considered the first genocide of the 20th century, struck your own Armenian people.

The Turkish Foreign Ministry recalled their ambassador to the Vatican, and summoned the Vatican ambassador in Ankara to express their unhappiness in the Pope's remark, claiming that these events transpired as a result to intercommunal violence during WWI. A church that has a billion followers can only have a strong impact. Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoğlu made accusation that Pope Francis "joined the conspiracy" of an "evil front" that targets Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party (AKP).⁴⁶ The Ministry of

⁴³ Lerna K. Yanik, *Constructing Turkish "exceptionalism": Discourses of liminality and hybridity in post-Cold War Turkish foreign policy*, *Political Geography* 30, 2011, 80

⁴⁴ Ibid, 87

⁴⁵ Umut Uzer, *Identity and Turkish Foreign Policy, The Kemalist influence in the Cyprus and the Caucasus* London: I.B. Tauris, 2011, 8-10

⁴⁶ Pope has joined conspiracy against Turkish government, PM Davutoğlu says, [in] *Hurriyet Dailey News*, 4/15/2015.

⁴⁶ Richard G. Hovannisian, *The Armenian Genocide: Cultural and Ethical Legacies*, Transaction Publishers, 2007, 416

Foreign Affairs has stated that Armenians have “attempted to extricate and isolate their history from complex circumstances...[and] choose their evidence carefully, omitting all evidence that tends to exonerate those whom they presume guilty.”⁴⁷ This dynamic is striking because it signifies the sufficient power that the Pope has in influencing major response as a non-state actor (NSA). It further illustrates the power of the external-unfamiliar that challenges Turkish identity on the anniversary. As mentioned, anniversaries are rather elementary to absorb and deflect as opposed to spontaneous actions that lie outside the purview of Turkish control. Also, it challenges the assumptions outlined in realism, which stresses that interactions between states are most important when examining international occurrences. Whereas political actors are largely constrained by pressures of society and the overall process of bureaucracy, non-state actors challenge the hierarchical frameworks that often have surprising results. No question that the statement by Pope Francis served as a catalyst, stoking a response by those who hold the existing UN Charter law as the highest ethical framework for genocidal claims.⁴⁸ General Ban Ki-moon deemed the 1915 incidents as an “atrocious crime,” standing in a neutral position to avoid taking sides. In addition, the Italian government distanced itself from the Pope as well stating it is a dilemma for historians to pursue not governments.⁴⁹

Since these communications took place, it is clear to notice the conflicting perspectives in the public sphere. Unfortunately for Turkey and Armenia, the lack of a

⁴⁷ *The Armenian Allegation of Genocide: The issue and the facts* <http://www.mfa.gov.tr/the-armenian-allegation-of-genocide-the-issue-and-the-facts.en.mfa> (accessed May 17, 2015)

⁴⁸ Ayşe Şahin, *Pope sees no support from West, UN rejects genocide definition*, *Daily Sabah*, April 13, 2015 (accessed May 18, 2015) <http://www.dailysabah.com/politics/2015/04/13/pope-sees-no-support-from-west-un-rejects-genocide-definition>

⁴⁹ Şahin, *Pope sees no support from West, UN rejects genocide definition*, *Daily Sabah*

common belief greatly obstructs their ability to carry out a constructive public dialogue. When efforts are made to recognize the Armenian genocide, Turkey exerts considerable effort to deflect them by threatening shifts in alliances. But whose image is really tarnished by recalling ambassadors and threatening states for the formal recognition of genocide?⁵⁰ As for the case of Turkish denial, realist explanations in IR cannot account why Turkey steers away from apologies when in return it would build valuable relationships, specifically with European nations whom acknowledge the genocide. It is interesting to recall Erdoğan's speech on April 23, 2014—the 99th anniversary of the genocide, in which he supports:

[an] opportunity to share opinions freely on a historical matter...[where] the incidents of the First World War are our shared pain...who will be able to talk about to each other about the past with maturity and to remember together their losses in a decent manner.⁵¹

The above highlights the pure denialist mentality that is still present but has transitioned into a bold claim of shared pain, which highlights a routine indifference and lack of engagement. So whereas the past represented an attack on people, the present represents an attack on the clarity of thinking. Precisely in the modern world the slogan: *agree to disagree* comes to mind. Oddly enough, a country that is certainly concerned about its international standing refuses to make concessions, leading to an unfavorable status.⁵² This further demonstrates the argument that Turkey's inaction to take responsibility for past failures is a maneuver to absolve itself. A confession for the acts under an Ottoman

⁵⁰ In 2015, Turkey has recalled ambassadors to Ankara from: Austria, Vatican, and Luxembourg. Brazil also passed a resolution on Armenian Genocide Recognition on May 29, 2015.

⁵¹ The Prime Minister of the Republic of Turkey, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, on the events of 1915, 23 April 2014, http://www.mfa.gov.tr/turkish-prime-minister-mr_-recep-tayyip-erdo%C4%9Fan-published-a-message-on-the-events-of-1915_-23-april-2014.en.mfa (accesses May 12, 2015)

⁵² Zarakol, 8

past does not necessarily mean total sacrifice in the present, but rather represents an adaptation and transformation of its own future purposes. Yet without addressing the issue head-on, there will exist future events that disturb the ordinary everyday conventions in the future. As Kierkegaard describes it as a time of *dread*, where anxieties plague the very roots of our orderly ‘sense of being in the world.’⁵³

As illustrated in *Table 1*, on page 22, there are creative ways that Turkish decision-makers deflect accusations of genocide. These are primarily in response to Europe’s view of the historiography. Within this chart, a denialist refutation based on: law, religion, historical purity, and outright anger are common utilizations in sidestepping guilt. My interpretation is that the Turkish decision to enact such responses seems to satisfy their internal and external innocence. It could be that the actors in the Turkish foreign ministry are merely growing incapable of handling a unanimous assertion by European states. Further, Turkish posturing against such claims guarantees an unobtainable EU adoption, seen by the AKP’s Middle East pivot. In a way, Turkish decision-makers must recognize that maintaining established community-based narratives takes precedence over what could possibly qualify them in collective European acceptance, including future physical securities. Therefore, the ontological security reading understands the Turkish actions in a more comprehensive way than one based upon state survival, by its continued shift away from survival motives.

⁵³ Giddens, Anthony. *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. Stanford University Press, 1991, 37

Since Russia acknowledges the genocide, as do forty-three states in the United States,⁵⁴ a twisting off the head to the East or West challenges Turkish biographical narrative. Previously, Turkey has been very cautious when it comes to Moscow, remaining virtually silent when it comes to the Russian genocide claim. The Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated:

We reject and condemn the labeling of the 1915 events as ‘genocide’ by the president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, despite all our warnings and calls. Such political statements, which are a flagrant violation of the laws, are null and void for Turkey.⁵⁵

Moreover, Russia is in a superior position to make such statements due to Ankara’s dependency on Russian energy resources. Perhaps what is most interesting, is the way Turkish decision-makers feel compelled to continually combat confession while ultimately knowing that this dilemma will haunt them in familiar and in unexpected ways in the future. Needless to voice that such an approach will forestall Turkey’s way to certainly break free, contributing to the ongoing struggle to truly mold itself into a modern democracy.

⁵⁴ Carol J. Williams, *As centenary of Armenian massacre nears, ‘genocide’ dispute sharpens*. LA Times, April 20, 2015. <http://www.latimes.com/world/europe/la-fg-armenia-genocide-anniversary-20150420-story.html> (accessed May 21, 2015)

⁵⁵ Gökhan Bacik, *Russia’s exceptional status in Turkish foreign policy: the end?* Today’s Zaman. April 26, 2015 (accessed May 20, 2015) http://www.todayszaman.com/columnist/gokhan-bacik/russias-exceptional-status-in-turkish-foreign-policy-the-end_379007.html

Turkey's guiltless self-identity in Modern World

Table 1: Turkish references to innocence

| State Agent | Position | Statement | Setting |
|----------------------------------|------------------|---|---|
| Turkish reply to Genocide claims | | | |
| Erdoğan | President | <i>"It is not possible for Turkey to accept such a sin or crime. I personally don't bother about a defense because we don't carry a stain or a shadow like genocide."</i> ⁵⁶ | Response to EP call to recognize the genocide |
| Çavuşoğlu | Foreign Minister | <i>"The term Genocide is not a generic term but it is a legal term. Therefore it should not be easy to characterize these events as genocide and is not possible to characterize it this way."</i> ⁵⁷ | U.S. News Interview |
| Davutoğlu | Prime Minister | <i>"Laying the blame on the Turkish nation by reducing everything to one word with hate speech is both morally and legally problematic. It is discrimination to focus on Armenians and not on Turkish Ottomans who died at the same time"</i> ⁵⁸ | Formal response on 100-year anniversary |

⁵⁶ Turkey cannot accept Armenian genocide label, says Erdoğan. The Guardian, April 15, 2015. <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/15/turkey-cannot-accept-armenia-genocide-label-erdogan> (accessed May 18, 2015)

⁵⁷ Turkish FM: Why we won't recognize the Armenian genocide, The Lead with Jake Tapper, CNN. April 21, 2015. <http://edition.cnn.com/videos/tv/2015/04/21/lead-intv-cavusoglu-dotcom-turkey-armenian-genocide.cnn> (accessed May 18, 2015)

⁵⁸ Ayşe Sahin, Turkey's PM Davutoglu extends condolences to the descendents of deceased Armenians. Daily Sabah, April 20, 2015. (accessed May 16, 2015)

| | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|--|---|
| Efkan Ala | Minister of Interior | <i>“They are accusing us of genocide, and they are making such decisions We deported them; deported.”⁵⁹</i> | Response to EP motion |
| Bulent Arinç | Deputy Prime Minister | <i>“We believe that there is no such black stain in our history.”⁶⁰</i> | Response to German Resolution |
| Cemil Çiçek | Parliament Speaker | <i>“there is such a smear campaign that is one sided What the Pope has done is slander, defamation and discrimination. This statement does not only contradict historical facts but is also a statement that will trigger such discomforts”⁶¹</i> | Response to Pope Francis recognizing there genocide |
| Kemal Kilicdaroglu | CHP leader | <i>“The word genocide has turned the issue into one about Muslims and and Christians and might risk international peace”⁶²</i> | Response to Pope Francis recognizing the genocide |
| Devlet Bahçeli | MHP Leader | <i>“The resolution is nothing more than a piece of garbage You can’t find a trace of genocide or massacre in the glorious history of the Turkish nation.”⁶³</i> | Response to European Parliament |

⁵⁹ *Turkish PM says deportation is a crime against humanity.* Hurriyet Daily News, April 22, 2015. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/turkish-pm-says-deportation-is-crime-against-humanity.aspx?pageID=238&nID=81445&NewsCatID=510> (accessed May 21, 2015)

⁶⁰ Erik Kirschbaum, *Germany, defying Turkey, to call 1915 Armenian massacre genocide.* Reuters. April 20, 2015, <http://ca.reuters.com/article/topNews/idCAKBN0NB1JZ20150420> (accessed May 19, 2015)

⁶¹ *Pope is ‘slanderer,’ says Speaker of the Parliament Çiçek.* Agos. <http://www.agos.com.tr/en/article/11265/pope-is-slanderer-says-speaker-of-the-parliament-cicek> (accessed May 21, 2015)

⁶² *Davutoğlu accuses Europe of racism after ‘genocide’ vote.* Today’s Zaman. April 17, 2015. http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_davutoglu-accuses-europe-of-racism-after-genocide-vote_378296.html (accessed May 21, 2015)

⁶³ *Davutoğlu accuses Europe of racism after ‘genocide’ vote*

In addition, it is important to highlight the psychological aspect that elite decision makers within the foreign ministry find themselves. As previously mentioned, ontological security can also include prolonging conflicts. This is because to a certain degree the elites are psychologically attached to the conflict, and to some extent they find meaning in keeping the conflict alive. This works on both sides of the deciding Armenian and Turkish agents, which is easily witnessed by the fact that efforts to find a resolution have been ill founded because in this example identity formation is immune to this incentive to reduce or resolve the narration conflict. Within a rationalist explanation conflicts are prolonged because they serve the interests of elites, where the solution for intervention would be aimed at changing incentive structures. Also, there is the social-psychological explanations where conflicts are protracted due to identity images. The way identity formations processes work through in-group and out-group differentiations because there exists imbedded enemy images and prejudices that tend to also be immune to incentives to some extent. Social psychological approaches work at changing individual and societal attitudes and beliefs, which is touched upon below.

One way to confront such prejudices is to have third party interaction in hopes of producing a change in opinion towards a given country. This is what Kelman calls *interactive problem solving*, in which there is a shared problem that a group addresses through direct interaction.⁶⁴ Recently, there have been Turkish-Armenian peace-talk workshops at universities such as Koç⁶⁵ and American University of Armenia⁶⁶ that

⁶⁴ Herbert C. Kelman, *Interactive Problem Solving: Informal Mediation by the Scholar-Practitioner*, ZKM—Zeitschrift Für Konfliktmanagement March, 2009, 79

⁶⁵ Koç University's Office of International Programs had a "Peacemakers Workshop" called: "Leadership for Peacemaking: How to Overcome Prejudice with Dignity." The aim was to bring students from Armenia and Turkey to talk about prejudices and overcome them in the beginning stages of life. See in particular, <http://leylek.ku.edu.tr/file/510b7190e368f/subat2013-en.htm>

brought together students, diplomats, and members of the public to work out issues. These workshops are in no way sessions of negotiations, and are not meant to be a substitute to negotiations. Specifically, negotiations can only be carried out by those authorized to make binding agreements, and workshops are unofficial.⁶⁷ Yet a major strength to run such problem-solving workshops is the potential influence they could have on official leading figures.

⁶⁶ Forum Theater (NGO) put together a workshop and performance—part of the “Cross-cultural Bridge between the Youth of Armenia and Turkey. See, <http://armenia-turkey.net/en/Forum-Theater-presented-the-results>

⁶⁷ Kelman, 75

Chapter 2—Case Studies: Land, Law, & Memory

2.1 Territory in Turkish Foreign Policy

Although the Ottoman Empire was enormous in terms of controlled territory, modern day Turkey is still quite large and its size is commonly acknowledged as a major asset—spanning from East to West and placed at the apex of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. This gives easy access to the Balkans, the Caucasus and control of the Bosphorus Strait. Yet, it could also be looked at as a problematic at times. Specifically, old hatreds and mistrust leveled at the Ottoman Empire carry on as targets of modern Turkey. While the new republican regime tried to distance itself from an imperial past—reform and bury—efforts to address what happened to the Armenians remain cloaked. Obviously, this is witnessed between the Turkish and Armenian imbalance to square opposing narratives. Also, it is hard to ignore the threats that emanate from neighbors who may have territory claims such as Syria and Armenia to the Russian state, which annexed Crimea where a population of about 300,000 Turkic Tartars live.⁶⁸

The Turkish homeland is not only a vast territory where state sovereignty is pursued, but it carries a deeper symbolic relation to meanings of memory. The Ottoman Empire occupied nearly a one-fourth of the European continent.⁶⁹ Furthermore, the state's identity is an ongoing product of a process of interaction, not just unilaterally, but with other states that bring together an amalgamation of internal and external definitions

⁶⁸ Lamiya Adilgizi, *Old rivals or regional partners: Russia, Turkey and Crimea*, Aljazeera, March 16, 2014. <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/03/old-rivals-regional-partners-r-2014315144016585481.html> (accessed May 16, 2015)

⁶⁹ Iver B. Neumann, *The Uses of the Other: "The East" in European Identity Formation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), 40

of identity, and indeed territory and population are core referents.⁷⁰ Namik Kemal, who started his career in an Ottoman newspaper, and later befriended Young Ottoman circles, has written about the importance and idea of Turkish homeland and expressed it to readers:⁷¹

Homeland! Homeland! I said homeland is in danger. Don't you hear? Allah created me and homeland raised me. Allah is feeding me...Homeland filled my stomach. I was naked and was dressed by homeland...My body is from homeland soil...My breath is from homeland's air. If I am not to die for the sake of Homeland why was I born?⁷²

This illustrates existing sovereignty over a particular territory while showing that sense of community is crucial in establishing ways to evoke nationalistic sentiments. This narrative highlights the use of not only the body, but also the mind to locate collective consciousness in society to constitute rivals and friends. The fear of losing one's homeland by way of disrupting traditional ties of belonging, signifies that without steadfast allegiance to the state, there may be declining exogenous factors to face in the future.

Even prior to the Young Turks taking power, the way European foreigners perceived Istanbul during the nineteenth-century impacted certain transformations.⁷³ This signifies that even before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, there was initiative to modernize the city to emulate the gardens, parks, and avenues with European flavors,

⁷⁰ Ugur Ümut Üngör, *The Making of a Modern Turkey: Nation and State in Eastern Anatolia, 1913-1950*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2011), 52

⁷¹ Salih Biçakci, *Homeland and Nation on the Stage: A Review of Watan Concept in Abdalrauf Fitrate and Namik Kemal*, Oaka Cilt:1 Sayı:2, ss 149-161 2006, 154

⁷² Ergün Yildirim, *Symbolic construction of the Turkish national identity as a factor of international management*, Problems and Perspectives in Management, Vol.7 Issue 1, 2009, 247

⁷³ Ebru Boyar, *A Social History of Ottoman Istanbul*, (Cambridge University Press 2010), 309

which first included Taksim square.⁷⁴ Although constructed after the Ottoman collapse, due to insufficient funding,⁷⁵ Taksim is an important tale in the time continuum. Most recently, Taksim square has been associated with protests to protect Gezi Park—one of the last remaining urban green spaces in Istanbul. A major protest began in 2013 in efforts to save the public space, but was met with a police-crackdown approved by Erdoğan. The project is planning to change the park by building replicas of Ottoman-military barracks, which are still incorporated into the municipality's 2015-2019 budget plan.⁷⁶

Although Taksim is known for its lively crowds where all types enjoy their days, in search of peace of mind, beneath their once feet sat the Pangalti Armenian cemetery—established in 1837.⁷⁷ Even more confusing is that some of the headstones have been used for pavement blocks in Gezi Park.⁷⁸ After the genocide properties were seized and leveled by the new republic in the 1930s.⁷⁹ The confiscation of land, primarily in eastern Anatolia, livestock, and homes were indeed up for grabs after Armenians never returned.⁸⁰ Scholars such as Taner Akçam have made note of this modern peculiarity,

⁷⁴ Boyar, 246

⁷⁵ Ibid, 246

⁷⁶ Arslan Ayan, *Gezi Park barracks project still on table, budget plans show*, Today's Zaman. November 18, 2014. http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_gezi-park-barracks-project-still-on-table-budget-plans-show_364728.html (accessed May 20, 2015)

⁷⁷ Michael Kimmelman, *In Istanbul's Heart, Leader's Obsession, Perhaps Achilles' Heel*. The New York, June 7, 2013. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/06/08/world/europe/in-istanbuls-taksim-square-an-achilles-heel.html?pagewanted=1&_r=1 (accessed May 20, 2015)

⁷⁸ Umut Özkirimli, *The Making of a Protest Movement in Turkey: #occupygezi*, (Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), 126

⁷⁹ Emily Greenhouse, *The Armenian Past of Taksim Square*, The New Yorker, June 28, 2013. <http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/the-armenian-past-of-taksim-square> (accessed May 19, 2015)

⁸⁰ Üngör, 146

voicing that the land should be returned.⁸¹ The city transformation from an Armenian cemetery—a place of quiet sorrow, to Gezi Park—a hangout representing individuality and free expression, to an Ottoman military barrack—a takeover of public space where a symbol of nationalistic pride is to be built atop an ancient Armenian memory truly contains before and after juxtapositional aspects.

In the early stages of the nation-state, a lack of Turkishness in the eastern provinces, in regards to a different language spoken, monuments, and Christian architecture, only heightened expressions of suspicion of the Armenians and other minorities.⁸² It must be stressed that not only loss of life is crucial when discussing genocide, but the destruction of culture as well. So, when churches are converted to mosques, its foundation is hidden beneath the ground like the bones of unknowns that rest in Deir ez-Zor.⁸³ Thus, it is a way to transform the appearance of a state, which in turn tailors the daily life of citizens.⁸⁴ Furthermore, defining the nature of political community legitimizes culture as a basis of sovereignty and possession of homeland.⁸⁵ Young Turk supporter Ziya Gökalp stated, “The people is like a garden. We are supposed to be its gardeners! First the bad shoots are to be cut. And then the scion is to be

⁸¹ Taner Akçam, *Akçam: The ‘Foreign Connection’ is Me*. The Armenian Weekly, June 10, 2013 <http://armenianweekly.com/2013/06/10/akcam-the-foreign-connection-is-me/> (accessed May 17, 2015) see also Ugur Ümit Üngör, *Confiscation and Destruction: Young Turk Seizure of Armenian Property*. (London: Continuum International Publishing Group 2011)

⁸² Üngör, 40

⁸³ Deir ez-Zor is in the Syrian Desert where Armenians were marched to their deaths. It represents an all-time low of the Armenian experience. In 2014, ISIS destroyed the Armenian church in Der Zor that housed many of the victim’s bones.

⁸⁴ Emel Akçali, *Urban transformation in Istanbul and Budapest: Neoliberal governmentality in EU’s semi-periphery and its limits*, Political Geography 46, 2015, 80

⁸⁵ Suny, 356 (Kindle)

grafted.”⁸⁶ This metaphor has been used in later times as well. What directly comes to mind, is Bauman’s description of Nazi rhetoric used to justify administering and planning the destruction of human existence by scheming that society has been overtaken by weeds and cancerous tissues,⁸⁷ where gardening is an “activity of separating and setting apart useful elements destined to live and thrive, from harmful and morbid ones, which ought to be exterminated.”⁸⁸ Therefore, amongst this age of absurdity, the modern world remains a garden culture, insisting the crucial difference between the weeds that bring disorder and distrust and the gardener’s design. To illustrate, President Erdoğan, in response to the European Parliaments (EP) vote to recognize the Armenian Genocide, said that the EP’s results would go “in one ear and out the other,”⁸⁹ while shockingly voicing that nearly 100,000 Armenian nationals living in Turkey are not citizens, therefore, “we can deport them, even if we haven’t yet.”⁹⁰ This response is highly relevant as it demonstrates sentiments and actions echoed in a not so distant past. It begs the question, how exactly would you deport them? Would Talat Pasha’s so-called “Black Book”⁹¹ influence Erdoğan in pruning contemporary Armenians by deporting them from the Haydarpaşa train station like their ancestors whom were forced to exit? It also displays the threat to ontological security primarily because the EP’s decision was unknown and Turkey could do little but wait to hear a verdict of narration from a

⁸⁶ Ziya Gökalp, “Kizil elma,” translation from Graham Charles Kinlock and Rak P. Mohan, *Genocide Approaches, Case Studies, and Responses* (New York: Algora, 2005), 50

⁸⁷ Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust*, (Oxford: Polity Press 1989), 70

⁸⁸ Bauman, 70

⁸⁹ *Erdoğan threatens to deport Armenian citizens in Turkey*, Today’s Zaman, April 15, 2015. http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_erdogan-threatens-to-deport-armenian-citizens-in-turkey_378062.html (accessed May 20, 2015)

⁹⁰ *Erdoğan threatens to deport Armenian citizens in Turkey*, Today’s Zaman

⁹¹ Thomas de Waal, *Great Catastrophe Armenians and Turks in the Shadow of Genocide*. (Oxford: University Press), 2015, 52

perceived external threat. The chain of Othering combines the European Union, Turkey, and Armenia together in which Turkey cannot escape the middle position. Unfortunately for Turkey, its EU application status has barely improved in nearly a decade⁹² of consistent bids for membership. Sitting in a waiting room for consensus of EU acceptance, leaves Turkey characterized as an outsider. Specifically, since France and Germany⁹³ both acknowledge the genocide, options for Turkey to proceed without confession remains unlikely. Further, it seems highly probable that the initial EU aspiration was a miscalculation of what the future held. This could be interpreted as an example of shooting oneself in the foot—allowing external actors to dictate domestic narratives, which question its national purity by placing guilt at eye-level. It may prove to cost too much politically for Turkey, characterized by a major transformation of state structure and increased demands to rectify issues on Cyprus and Armenia.⁹⁴

Therefore, it only makes sense in the ontological security argument to continue its denial because in admitting guilt, the state confesses to the world that it is no longer innocent. The international element is most prevalent when applied to Turkey's relations with the Western hemisphere, specifically with Europe. Recently touched upon, Turkey's attempts for complete EU status go further than just economic fulfillment with the reward of Europeanness. Yet the continued rejection shows the limitations to Kemalist reforms. Hence the recent ways TFP has tugged in nationalistic and Islamists directions, witnessed in Erdoğan's recent decisions to pivot away from EU membership and realign itself as a role model in the Middle East. When Erdoğan was Prime Minister he irked members of

⁹² Turkey has had ties with the EU for nearly 50 years but negotiations between Turkey and the EU began in October 2005

⁹³ In 2015 Germany officially acknowledged the genocide as President Joachim Gauck used the term in a Berlin Cathedral in April

⁹⁴ Uzer, 68

the European Union by stating the acts unfolding in Darfur were not genocide.⁹⁵ Further, Erdoğan said, “A Muslim can never commit genocide,”⁹⁶ which he gave as justification for allowing Hassan al-Bashir to attend the Islamic nation summit.

The professed homogeneity and purity of the nation was not a conjunctural but a structural element of Young Turk ideology.⁹⁷ This sentiment is also illustrated in the Turkish educational system where the Ministry of Education administers textbooks⁹⁸ as way to create a people of unity, with a common mother tongue, and one ideal. This in theory would make minorities feel Turkish while curbing desires of loyalties to other nations.⁹⁹ Further, teachers were sent to the eastern provinces and commissioned as missionaries of Turkishness.¹⁰⁰ In addition, young students are enrolled in a mandatory course that is part of the high school curriculum—Studies in National Security, which is taught by military officers and military personnel.¹⁰¹ The required textbook promotes xenophobic positions against other countries that have so-called conspiracies to take over modern Turkish provinces.¹⁰²

⁹⁵ *Sudanese President Bashir's visit to Turkey in limbo*, Hurriyet Daily News. August 11, 2009. <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/default.aspx?pageid=438&n=a-muslim-can-never-commit-genocide-erdogan-defends-bashir-2009-11-08> (accessed May 19, 2015)

⁹⁶ *Sudanese President Bashir's visit to Turkey in limbo*, Hurriyet Daily News. August 11, 2009

⁹⁷ Üngör, 176

⁹⁸ Kenan Çayır and Ipek Gürkaynak, *The State of Citizenship Education in Turkey: Past and Present*, Journal of Social Science Education, Vol 6, No.2, Decemeber 2007, 51 (accessed May 18, 2015)

⁹⁹ Üngör, 176

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 177

¹⁰¹ Kenan Çayır, *The State of Citizenship Education in Turkey: Past and Present*, Journal of Social Science Education, Vol.6. No 2 Dec 2007, 5 (accessed May 18, 2015)

¹⁰² Çayır, 5

To some degree, there is legitimacy to this claim as Mount Ararat is a marker of Armenian national and sacred identity, lost in the Treaty of Kars,¹⁰³ and was even on Soviet Armenian flag.¹⁰⁴ It is clear that Armenia wants recognition of the genocide, but Turkey understandably remains hesitant in acknowledgment, speculating that demands for reparation of lost provinces would soon follow. Furthermore, the role of geography and identity was fundamentally important for Turkish foreign policy as it experienced loss of land, devoured by the Allies in the Treaty of Sèvres, where essentially the Middle East was to be divided in the interests of the victors. This initial trauma experienced remains, known as “Sèvres syndrome.” For instance, the anxiety of future external forces dividing its land is directed in the fears of the possible creation of a Kurdish state. Therefore, a Kurdish problem remains since there is Western support for the Kurdish minority, which in turn creates a stronger nationalist sentiment in Istanbul. This drives the point that the EU is creating problems to destroy Turkish unity.

2.2 Genocide in the Courtroom

Since the term *genocide* was introduced into the English language during World War II,¹⁰⁵ it has been a constant struggle for Armenians to rally support for its application to define a past era. Evidently, Lemkin thought the massacres against the Ottoman Armenians as a historical example of genocide: “I became interested in genocide because it happened so many times. It happened to the Armenians, and after the Armenians Hitler

¹⁰³ Armenia does not acknowledge the Treaty of Kars, claiming it was signed in violation of international law.

¹⁰⁴ Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking*, (Princeton University Press, 2001), 164

¹⁰⁵ Raphael Lemkin used the term to describe the Nazi destruction of European Jews. For more information, see: <http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cppcg/cppcg.html> (accessed May 19, 2015)

took action.¹⁰⁶ Turkish political lobbyists have detracted from accusations by not considering the evidence while downplaying intent to destroy to avoid falling under the UN 1948 definition, which defines genocide as, “a crime of intentional destruction of a national, ethnic, racial, and religious group, in whole or in part.”¹⁰⁷ Although Henry Morgenthau gave eyewitness testimony, there is not one document that entirely points the finger at Talat Pasha with a direct order to exterminate the Armenians; instead the words stress relocation to Syria.¹⁰⁸ To fulfill this narrative, during the 1970s, under state-sponsorship, Turkish intellectuals put together documents from the Ottoman archives to support their case in that deportations were peaceful.¹⁰⁹ Although there does not seem to be any documented evidence of goodhearted intentions once the Armenians resettled in the Syrian Desert,¹¹⁰ therefore one must question if the deportations were based solely upon economic justification or if it was a deliberate move to destroy a population.

2.3 Historical Stalemate

Clearly, the modern day problem in the Turkish-Armenian relations makes known a mixture of realist and constructivist interpretations. Yerevan has been in pursuit of exercising diplomatic pressure on Ankara for understandable reasons. Without a doubt Armenia is in no position militarily to use force to overpower Turkey whose active role in NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) demonstrates its significant advantage in military might. Therefore Armenia must attempt peaceful diplomacy in order to pursue

¹⁰⁶ Thomas de Waal, 133

¹⁰⁷ William A. Schabas, *Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide*. <http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/cppcg/cppcg.html> (accessed May 20, 2015)

¹⁰⁸ Thomas de Waal, 54

¹⁰⁹ Thomas de Waal, 60 (Great Catastrophe)

¹¹⁰ Ibid, 60

its cause. Although this has been primarily ineffective for Armenians for a hundred years, some gains have manifested through patience. Both Turkish and Armenian governments have agreed that the question of genocide should be left to historians.”¹¹¹ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, Turkey moved to calibrate its relations with nearby countries, which led to its recognition of the independent Armenia in 1991.¹¹² However this maneuver did not materialize into anything too fruitful, as Armenia has had issues recognizing the Treaty of Kars that was signed in 1921.¹¹³ The mark of the hundred-year anniversary of the 1915 events has continued spreading in the international arena due to Armenia seeking recognition from parliaments all over the world. Genocide recognition remains locked in sensitivity with no clear blueprint in overcoming the obstacle. Accepting responsibility would force a reforming of state identity where the people it represents are capable of committing such an act. Also, the question is wrapped in cultural identity and historical recollection, which perpetuates disagreements. The next biggest issue facing Armenia and Turkish relations is the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, which ended with Armenia in control of 20 percent of Azerbaijan’s territories.¹¹⁴ So these issues are knotted in territorial disputes, which appear to indicate that Armenia may have ambitions to recover lost territories as it refers to Eastern Anatolia as Western Armenia.¹¹⁵ Turkey has responded with criticism and that acceptance of its borders are a precondition to a normalize relations.

¹¹¹ Ronald Grigor Suny, *Truth in Telling*, American Historical Review, 2009, 943

¹¹² Alica Vidlickova, *Turkish-Armenian Relations and the Issue of the Recognition of the claims of the Armenian genocide*, Alternatives: Turkish Journal of International Relations, Vol. 11, No.1, Spring 2012, 15-16

¹¹³ Vidlickova, 16

¹¹⁴ Andrius R. Malinauskas, *Turkey-Armenia Relations After 2008*, European Researcher, Vol. 67, no.1-2, 2014, 164

¹¹⁵ Malinauskas, 164, refer to article 11 of Armenian declaration

Inside the lobby of the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a plaque lettered in gold gives remembrance to diplomats targeted by terrorist organization Armenian Secret Army for the Liberation of Armenia (ASALA).¹¹⁶ These were people serving in the Foreign Service during the 1970s-80s, who were murdered for the purpose of reminding Armenia diaspora in particular to not forget their past in the midst of European assimilation.¹¹⁷ In doing so a resurrecting of WWI fears spread within the Turkish government that Armenians are indeed a threat to the Turkish state—turning its anxiety into an identifiable threat. Again, this has resurfaced as ASALA threatened “counter-measures” for Turkey’s actions in Armenian communities in the current Syrian conflict.¹¹⁸

Up until 2008, Yerevan and Ankara had little to do with one another at the official level. However, an unconventional approach called football diplomacy took shape. Turkish President Abdullah Gül visited Armenia to watch a World Cup qualifier between both nations. Erdoğan heavily criticized him for so-called playing into hands of Armenians.¹¹⁹ The goal was to normalize relations, by signing two Protocols¹²⁰ but nationalist campaigns in both countries stifled the agreement, primarily over the Nagorno-Karabakh dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan, which would supposedly weaken Azerbaijan position, if the protocols were formalized.

¹¹⁶ Waal, 151

¹¹⁷ Ibid, 152

¹¹⁸ *ASALA threatens Turkey over Syria*, Hurriyet Daily News, May 31, 2015. (accessed May 31, 2015). <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/asala-threatens-turkey-over-syria-.aspx?pageID=238&nID=28244&NewsCatID=359>

¹¹⁹ *Erdogan Slams Gül over ‘football diplomacy’ with Armenia*, Today’s Zaman, May 08, 2015. http://www.todayszaman.com/anasayfa_erdogan-slams-gul-over-football-diplomacy-with-armenia_380124.html (accessed May 12, 2015)

¹²⁰ “Protocol on Establishment of Diplomatic Relations” and the Protocol on Development Relations”

2.4—U.S. Role in Maintaining Contraries

It does not take much analysis to come to the realization that the United States interests lies in the geopolitical realm when it comes to Turkey's importance. Although, the U.S. Armenian lobby has been somewhat successful in certain outcomes, for instance raising issues to political leaders and raising significant financial assistance for Armenia, its ability to reach the executive branch remains an obstacle.¹²¹ With no sight of ending future engagements in the Middle East, U.S. military base access in Turkey is strategically crucial in its continued Global War on Terror, specifically in regards to the proximity of areas currently controlled by Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), which trumps the Armenian lobbies impact when faced against the unwavering power of the Pentagon in its loyalty to Turkey's NATO membership. So yes, there is indeed Congressional Committees who have adopted invalid resolutions to recognize the Armenian Genocide, most recently with forty-nine U.S. lawmakers writing a letter to the White House, addressing President Obama to recognize the Armenian Genocide in his annual April 24th statement,¹²² but it did not come to fruition, yet when Obama was Senator he formally recognized it, confirming a self-contradiction.¹²³ Indeed, this leads to mixed messages among diaspora living in the United States, it is estimated that around

¹²¹ Julian Zarifian, *The Armenian-American Lobby and its Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy*. Society 51, no.5, Oct 2014, 503.

¹²² Mahir Zeynalov, *49 US Lawmakers urge Obama to recognize Armenian 'genocide' in letter*. Today's Zaman. April 4, 2015, http://www.todayszaman.com/diplomacy_49-us-lawmakers-urge-obama-to-recognize-armenian-genocide-in-letter_377142.html (accessed May 16, 2015)

¹²³ Zarifian, 509

500,000 Turks¹²⁴ and about one million Armenian-Americans,¹²⁵ reside there. Also, about 30,000 Armenians entered the U.S. between the dates 1914 to 1924.¹²⁶

2.5—Disrupting Narrative Within: Hrant Dink

Marching along Kurtuluş Street, people rallied on the 8th anniversary of Hrant Dink’s assassination, with signs that read, “We are all Hrant, We are all Armenian.”¹²⁷ Inside the city of Istanbul, Hrant Dink, a Turkish-Armenian journalist was killed on January 19, 2007. Dink was gunned down in the light of day in front of the Agos newspaper offices in which he worked. Although the killer, a seventeen year-old Turkish nationalist, confessed to the crime, what makes this case unique is that Turkish security knew of a plot to murder him but ignored to protect him, turning a blind eye. As if placed within the novella—*Chronicles of a Death Foretold*—by Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Dink was attacked from behind, like protagonist Santiago Nasar, as his end was inevitable, a dead man walking in a foreshadowed demise.¹²⁸ Since the Turkish state refused his protection, he was left vulnerable to be targeted as an outsider, simply less than human.

In the presence of judicial rule, Dink was criminally investigated for insulting “Turkishness,” emphasized by Article 301, a law restricting the language of non-violent

¹²⁴ Rima Assaker, *Census Takes Aim to Tally ‘Hard to Count’ Populations*, The Washington Diplomat, Nov 18, 2010. http://washdiplomat.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=6036:census-takes-aim-to-tally-hard-to-count-populations-&catid=205:april-2010&Itemid=239 (accessed May 20, 2015)

¹²⁵ Zarifian, 505

¹²⁶ Ibid, 505

¹²⁷ HDP rally for Hrant Dink, *Agos*, January 18, 2015 <http://www.agos.com.tr/en/article/10279/hdp-rally-for-hrant-dink> (accessed May 15, 2015)

¹²⁸ Gabriel García Márquez, *Chronicles of a Death Foretold*, (New York: Ballantine Book, 1984), 120

discourse.¹²⁹ Dink often called for reconciliation amongst Turks and Armenians, but criticized the government for refusing to acknowledge the Armenian Genocide. Therefore, he was marked as true enemy of the state, due to his publications that touched upon the issue of genocide. In the beginning the private court hearing ruled that the teenager acted alone and that no other investigation was necessary. True, a youngster took the fall but Dink was marked a target for anybody in society to remove, due to the newly instituted law change for which he was challenging: Turkishness—the sole reason for his murder. Dink essentially lived in a Hobbesian state of nature, full of death threats, where his life was brutally taken by the hands of another. More recently, Turkish authorities started to realize that the prosecutions under Article 301 were tarnishing Turkey's reputation internationally; therefore they reduced the amount of cases tried by reforming it.¹³⁰ In arguing that the judicial harassment against Dink, signaled the state's commitment to associate Armenians with the role of Other. Tuba Candar recalls the image of Dink as somebody who, *told us the whole Armenian issue when he was alive and it is as if he continued to explain with his dead body after he was killed.*¹³¹ This is due to his body being on the pavement for hours for the city spectators to view. This assassination signified a legitimate notion that Armenians are still an endangered people unprotected in a Turkish state. The man who committed the murder, Ogün Samast, said

¹²⁹ Bülent Algen, *The Brand New Version of Article 301 of Turkish Penal Code and the Future of Freedom of Expression in Turkey*, German Law Journal Vol. 09 No. 12, 2008, 2239 (accessed May 09, 2015)

¹³⁰ Algen, 2244

¹³¹ Handan Kazanci, *Hrant Dink: A life dedicated to Turkey's democratization*, Turkish Weekly, January 17, 2015 (accessed May 21, 2015) <http://www.turkishweekly.net/news/178779/hrant-dink-a-life-dedicated-to-turkey-39-s-democratization.html>

two senior police officials knew and backed the plot.¹³² First generation witnesses of the genocide often disengaged from the reports following the Dink assassination, wishing to repress historical memory.¹³³ This may be due to having personas fastened to a past of being survivors, the silent witnesses who cannot speak.¹³⁴

¹³² Mustafa Akyol, *The ever-reinterpreted Hrant Dink murder*, Hurriyet Daily News, January 24, 2015 <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/the-ever-reinterpreted-hrant-dink-murder.aspx?pageID=449&nID=77362&NewsCatID=411> (accessed May 18, 2015)

¹³³ Helin Anahit, *He is Armenian but he was born that way, there isn't much he can do about it: exploring identity in Turkey*, *Patterns of Prejudice*, 48:2, 220 (accessed May 16, 2015)

¹³⁴ Giorgio Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz: the Witness and the Archive*, (New York: Zone Books 1999), 15

Chapter 3—Analysis and Discussion through Ontological Security

Based on the previous chapters, the overview shows the importance of a consistent Turkish biological narrative in the face of threats. This thesis has presented a theoretical framework that demonstrated the ways the Turkish state utilizes the historical purity of the nation-state to respond to claims of genocide. Although, there are divergences in TFP identity, the narrative of innocence does not waiver since 1923. The argument of this paper is that the Turkish state is primarily concerned with ontological security over that of physical security. Further, the internalized perception of innocence is the main source of Turkish foreign policy's motivation in making decisions while pursuing social interactions with allies to help combat accusations. Since there is not a third possibility or option the EU has in accepting or denying Turkey, it is up to Turkey to protect its vision and values of what it has been or will be. Yet, the difficulty in admitting to past crimes can certainly be used against Turkey—confirming historical stereotypes such as being the “sick man of Europe.” By emphasizing the past narrative Turkey abides by, it is impossible to pull itself towards an opposing narration. Due to established routines of denying genocide it helps decision makers cope, leading to a predictable everyday life. Further, because of international law norms, developed in Europe, the demands exist to apologize since it has evolved within international society where condemning past crimes fits into European self-narratives of ontological security. Since Turkey is a somewhat powerful state, it is faced with the accusations that it could have acted differently while deporting Armenians, even if the results were unintended. Therefore, they are bare to different emotional threats such as shame.

Also, it is crucial to note that through the ontological security framework this biographical narrative works on two levels: the domestic and the international. Domestically it serves as a tool of legitimacy, while in the international arena it attempts to bolster claims that the state views as attractive. I have tried showing how threats to the nation-state identity makes Turkey feel insecure, which Turkey must take into account when making foreign policy decisions. Therefore they are both strained and empowered by their commitments to ontological security. The most notable shift, I have addressed is the President Erdoğan's apologetic remark to the grandchildren of Armenians killed during World War I, but was emphasized with 'our shared pain, that runs parallel with genocide denial. This could be interpreted as a crack in the ceiling scenario because it is an elaboration on an event, which in prior settings has been characterized by silence or unapologetic detachment. The image that one keeps of one's nation is closely linked, if not the same as one's self-image. This is precisely why it is troublesome to place distance between oneself and the acts of violence committed by one's homeland.¹³⁵ Also I have attempted to highlight how decision makers are faced with both internal obstacles and insecurity in regards to its relationships with other countries. Since history is used in consuming narrative, the tension for ontological security is connected with the agent association to become fixated on collective memories, where Turkish decisions are laden with anxieties of the future loss of provinces and external/internal threats when maneuvering away from genocide claims.

For the purpose of this thesis the discourse analysis has shown ways that Turkey pivots from acknowledging the genocide. Close to 100 articles of popular Turkish online

¹³⁵ Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism*, (London: Sage Publications 1995), 14-16

media were examined. Further the research was concentrated with the responses from President Erdoğan and decision-makers belonging to the Council of Ministers. Further, the majority of the articles examined were published in 2014 and 2015. Since the centennial anniversary of the Armenian Genocide Memorial took place in April of 2015, there was great attraction from news agencies. This dispute still continues as the foreign policy elites are continually confronted with a discourse that challenges their legitimacy by shaming them on the international scale.

The map used for this analysis derived and adapted from Anthony Giddens's framework, which examines the importance of a consistent biographical narrative to produce sense of self. Ever since Turkey joined NATO, Turkish foreign policy has aligned itself to consistently gain support and approval from the West. Its membership into the European Union was perceived as the final move towards complete acceptance, yet it continues to linger.

Certainly, there are a few limitations to this thesis. First, deals with the time constraint to undertake such a project. The second challenge is handling the discourse in an ontological security framework using an interpretive approach. Inasmuch as analysis of the actor's language can be read into too much. This is precisely because there is no possible way to read into the minds of TFP decision-makers. Therefore, a discourse consciousness—how actors are able to express their motivations verbally—is focused upon as the best way to grasp much of the decisions that are otherwise rejected in mainstream international relations. Furthermore, the context of social action can suffer against relativity—because of the difficulties in generalizing social actions, I tried to explain a continuity of decisions made within the Turkish government to secure its

identity through the ontological security framework. There is an assumption made that agents use politics in a way to protect its self-identity needs. Surely, ignoring physical security threats such as wars and nuclear arms races would be costly, but more work needs to be done on the consequences of discounting the threats when ontological security is ignored. As I have stated, there is no way to predict when and how critical events will manifest in the future to disrupt and threaten identity. Unlike the five and ten year interval genocide anniversaries, that are certainly disruptions for the Turkish state but are part of the familiar routines, bad disruptions such as the Pope's remarks or the assassination of Hrant Dink linger in the minds of the domestic and international community. This kind of disruption challenges the Turkish state and its citizens to face a self-interrogation where any slip of narrative can undermine the state's legitimacy.

A state's preference to maintain ontological security defends itself from the risk of falling into despair or homelessness. State embodiment of a particular biographical narrative is at the center at responding to the changing occurrences that invite disruption. In this age of absurdity, citizens view the past in a particular lens, which fragments history into a mosaic of different pasts and different sufferings. Therefore, a past is not necessarily shared because state narrative must shape its identity in contrast to its rival.

Concluding Remarks

This thesis has brought together issues of foreign policy identity, historical memory, geography, and ontological security factors that help to explain the Turkish position on claims of genocide. As argued against the realist interpretation of TFP, an implementation of ontological security has been employed for improved explanatory

power in understanding decision-making. The paper has regularly placed emphasis on actors within the Turkish foreign ministry, while simultaneously incorporating endogenous and exogenous threats that have critical impacts on its behavior and future. The tensions that exist by defending one's own perspective, illustrates that the Turkish-Armenian conflict remains focused solely on one's well-being.

An implementation of a pluralistic way of collective thought can help contribute to the advancement of freedom of speech. It seems that a dehumanized image of the other side is entrenched in the mentality of opposition. The Turks and Armenians have developed a certain discourse in which certain narratives about the past remain separate. Furthermore, this collective identity of separation promotes existing national prejudices, which impede common understanding. As for the term "Turk," one could say that there is a collective thought which is driven by historical events, and it would be to deny a certain policy as driven by what would be defined as the agent of this policy, which would be the "Turk," whereas the term "Armenian" is somewhat abstract but claims what happened in 1915 was indeed genocide. So, both of these terms have a symbolic meaning in the face of policy. I believe we can take these two terms deeper and fathom that they are constructed terms that have false generalizations. Sadly, it often happens when a Turk and Armenian meet for the first time, they tend to see one another as representing the other group. Simply, the Armenian has thoughts of his people being murdered from the past, whereas the Turk sees an Armenian traitor from 1915. Although being an American, I have maternal Armenian roots, and have felt this tension from a purely U.S. citizen's perspective when meeting somebody from Turkey—the uncomfortable lull in the air. In my great-grandfather's memoir, *A Shirt for the Brave*, he sought to bring reconciliation

between these two groups who shared the lands of Mesopotamia. He was often seen as a traitor amongst his Armenian colleagues while continuously threatened and mistreated by Turks.

In the end, the word genocide calls forth images of the most repulsive crimes pledged by states against a specified people. So strong is the term that it has been applied broadly to almost all mass killings seen in the modern world. While on the other hand, some academics, jurists, and writers have narrowed the word in its application to the exclusivity of the Jewish Holocaust. Regardless, in this age of absurdity it almost seems normal, as if part of a milestone, for a nation-state to have not only a national anthem but also a genocide.

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